

Dads, Do You Laugh With Your Kids?

I have always loved to laugh with my kids. Who doesn't, right?

A dad named Richard tells about one night when he was reading books with his 4-year-old son. Little Matt wanted one more book, but Richard said it was time for bed.

Now, Richard and his wife typically offer their children choices to help shape their behavior; the two choices, both of which are agreeable to Richard and his wife, establish appropriate boundaries while giving the children a sense of power in day-to-day matters.

Well, on this night Richard found out that Matt was catching on to his system ... sort of. When Richard said again, "Sorry, son, that's enough for tonight," Matt came back with, "OK, Dad. Would you rather read me another book or have me poke your eye?"

Fatherhood brings lots of those priceless moments of humor and joy to our lives—among many other benefits. But too often the serious and sober realities of raising responsible children overwhelm our spontaneous, witty and playful sides.

But we need to remember that humor and laughter promote health—physically, developmentally and relationally. Physically, laughter relaxes muscles, releases stress hormones, reduces pain and may even enhance our immune systems—according to Paul McGhee, Ph.D., who has done extensive research on humor.

As children grow, if they learn to appreciate humor, they will develop higher creative skills because humor and creativity both draw on divergent thinking—they bring new and unique insights to problems and situations. That capacity also helps

children deal well with the unexpected, which is beneficial for coping in day-to-day situations.

Surely you've surely seen the power of laughter in relating to your children. In tense situations, a good dose of laughter can open doors and restore a sense of hope. When you're having fun with your child, you both let your guard down and you're likely to have better communication and just enjoy each other's company. Laughter makes you more approachable—especially if you can laugh at your own shortcomings.

What are some ways to do this? From what I've seen, play and humor come natural for most dads. I've provided some suggestions in the Action Points below, but I'm really hoping you'll provide me (and other dads) with a bunch more ideas by leaving a comment either below or on our Facebook page.

Please let us know: How do you and your kids have fun and laugh together most often?

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Humor is a great strategy with children of any age, if you know how to get to their funny bone. Figure out how to have fun on your children's level by immersing yourself in their world. Hang out together, read their books, play their games, listen to their stories, etc.
- Play make-believe with your young child. Let yourself go! Shake hands with "imaginary friends"; use your silly voice; make the chair talk and the flowers sing.
- When something funny happens, capture it on video, audio, in a photograph or in a journal. Relive that memory when everyone is frustrated, depressed or just needs to laugh.
- What common interests do you have with your child when it comes to humor, and what you enjoy? What causes laughter and silliness in your daughter? What brings

that mischievous grin to your son's face? Find out, and then capitalize on it for the benefit of your relationship.

- Tell each child about the joy you felt at his or her birth. Recall other specific times since then when they have brought you joy.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes that every child needs a dad they can count on, and uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need. Subscribe to his weekly email tip by clicking here: "Yes! I want tips on how to be a great dad who lives out loving, coaching and modeling for my children."

For the original article, visit .

4 Health Dangers of People-Pleasing

The Bible makes it clear that when we give our word, our yes should mean yes and our no, no. This sounds easy enough, but if you're anything like me, meaning what you say isn't exactly your forte.

There are often times when I know good and well that my yes would be better defined as a maybe, and then days, perhaps minutes later, I'm wondering if it's too late to change my this-feels-like-an-optimistic-maybe yes into an absolutely-not-but-I'm flattered-you-asked no. (Have I lost you yet?)

Even when we're less than enthused about scheduling one more activity into our weeks, volunteering on another committee, joining an early a.m. gym class with a friend or hosting our 18th baby shower this year, we give our yeses readily for this simple reason: We're people pleasers.

I think it's fair to presume that most of the time, we all say yes with the best of intentions. We want to bless people with our talents, honor them with our time, relieve them with our strength and energy, and encourage them with our kindness. We know how much more "blessed it is to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) because we have felt the ineffable waves of well-being that rush into our hearts and flood our souls after we do unto others with love and grace, joy and selflessness. But sometimes pleasing people becomes an all-consuming compulsion, one that replaces the sweet delight of do-gooding with an ironic dose of bitter displeasure.

If you're a chronic people pleaser, you could be on a dangerous path that could potentially harm your health and damage your relationships. Here are four warning signs to watch out for:

1. You're neglecting your health. If you're constantly saying yes, you're very well saying no to yourself too often. Wanting to care for others, of course, is not a bad thing, but when your own health is neglected, you won't be able to be your best for those you love most. If you don't set aside time throughout the day to eat healthy meals, exercise, pray and rest, you will quickly burn out and find yourself too tired, weak and weary to give your all to the tasks you're currently committed to, much less agree to take on more!

2. You're growing resentful. If, while doing for others, you find yourself making sharp, acerbic comments or cracking subtle, sarcastic jokes, chances are good that your people-pleasing heart isn't in the right place. Maybe you said yes when you should have politely said no, and now you're

resenting the person you originally set out to help.

Passive bitterness can grow into relationship-destroying hostility, so when you feel resentment rearing its ugly head, take a few breaths and gently communicate your feelings before they come out in an unsavory manner.

3. You're becoming stressed and depressed. Constantly trying to please others can lead you to become chronically stressed and feel emotionally drained. Rather than looking to medication to help you cope, try looking to your calendar. When you feel overwhelmed, make a list of all of your obligations and identify which of those are musts and which are options. Then identify one or two of the options that could be eliminated to make room for more "you time." Write down why you're making this cut so if you feel guilty about saying no, you will have a note to remind you of the importance of your decision. Ask a friend or family member to help hold you accountable to your commitment to unwind and refresh for the sake of your health and relationships.

4. You no longer enjoy other people or God's presence. For this sign, I wish to share the biblical story of sisters Mary and Martha and their very special dinner guest, Jesus. Martha is a perfect example of someone whose passion for pleasing others and showing hospitality completely stole her ability to enjoy the company of others:

"But the Lord said to her, 'My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her'" (Luke 10:41-42, NLT).

If you've ever thrown a party or hosted a special dinner in your own home, then you can probably relate to Martha's worries. As soon as the invitations go out, the pressure is on to create for our guests a warm, inviting atmosphere, pleasant conversation, and, of course, a delicious meal that they'll be

raving about for days. However, I would venture to guess that none of us has experienced the stress levels that must have overwhelmed Martha as she swept, scrubbed, mopped and chopped for the King of kings!

It's understandable that she was "upset over all these details": she was serving Jesus, after all. So why did the Lord rebuke Martha just for trying to be like Martha Stewart? (Sorry, I couldn't help myself.)

Martha shows what can easily happen to us if we focus more on doing than loving. You see, her desire to please had become so overpowering that it soon overshadowed her ability to enjoy her guests and embrace the blessing of their company. Her drive to be hospitable had, ironically, driven her to be quite the opposite as she accused Jesus of not caring about her while simultaneously tattling on her sister Mary:

"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me" (Luke 10:40, NASB).

Martha probably had no intention of letting this get-together become a fretful, stress-inducing situation. It's doubtful she'd formulated a premeditated plan to embarrass or shame her sister in Jesus' presence. And I can imagine she wanted to kick herself with the foot she'd stuck in her mouth when she asked Jesus, healer of leprosy and opener of blind eyes, if He cared that she was serving Him solo. But what started out as a good-hearted act of kindness ended as a valuable lesson about priorities.

Notice that Jesus admonished Martha not for serving but for being worried and upset about serving. The Greek word used for Martha's "worry" and "upset" can be translated as "be anxious about" and "troubled in mind," respectively. Martha's preoccupation with being a perfect hostess had stolen the joy of simply being in Jesus' presence.

What insight this story holds for us today! In addition to the jobs, chores and distractions of daily life, we also have myriad commitments that require our attention. These commitments are good, in and of themselves; indeed, many people have responsibilities to organize, serve, manage and volunteer within the body of Christ. But even in godly pursuits we can find ourselves anxious and “troubled in mind.”

In all of our doing and helping, all of our planning and preparing, there is always just one thing we should be most concerned about. Mary, Jesus said, knew what it was: His presence!

As you go about your day today, be careful not to let the doing for others supersede the loving of others. Don't let time spent on noble tasks replace time spent with Jesus. And if you feel yourself becoming anxious, return to His feet and discover, as Mary did, the pricelessness of His presence.

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Before You Say 'I Do': Premarital Questions

Perhaps you are dating seriously, your kids are dating seriously or you are in the process of preparing your kids to

date seriously. Whatever the case may be, it's important that you have ways to get to know your potential mate well.

By spending time with them, listening to the way they talk and observing the way they act, you will learn much about their character.

To go even deeper in understanding someone before you say "I do," here is a list of questions to be sure you discuss together:

Lifestyle

- Are they a morning person or a night person?
- Do they like to fall asleep to the TV or radio, or do they prefer quiet?
- Are they neat or messy? Do they pick up after themselves?
- Can they relax when there are chores to be done, or do they prefer working first, then relaxing?
- How often will they want to go out socially as a couple, on their own or with their friends?
- How much TV do they watch?
- How much time do they spend on their phone, on Facebook, on Twitter, on Instagram, etc.?
- How will you protect your time together? Will you set aside specific time each week for one-on-one time?
- Where will they want to spend the holidays—with their family or yours?
- How often will you spend time with each other's family?
- Do they like to exercise? How often? Do they expect you to exercise too?
- Do they drink alcoholic beverages? How often?
- Do they have the ability to make and keep friends? Do you like and respect their friends?
- Do they want to live in the same town, or are they open to relocating?
- Do they want to live in the city, the country or the

suburbs?

Children

- How many children do they want?
- How do they want to handle childcare?
- How do they want to handle discipline?
- Would they be open to adoption?

Faith

- What are their religious beliefs?
- How often do they attend worship services?
- How often do they plan on attending services once you are married?
- Do they plan on giving financially to their place of worship? If so, how much?
- What faith will you teach your children?
- What role will faith play in your day-to-day lives?

Commitment

- What are their views on divorce?
- In what circumstances would they consider divorce?
- Would they attend counseling if requested by you? At what point would they consider that an option?
- What steps will they take to “affair-proof” your marriage?
- What are their views on socializing with opposite-sex friends?

Financial

- Do they currently have a savings plan? Do they actually have money saved?
- Do they have a retirement plan?
- Do they have debt? What kind of debt? Credit card debt? Student loans? Car loans?
- Have they borrowed from family and friends? Do they still owe them?

- Do they pay their bills on time?
- Who will handle the bill-paying in your marriage?
- How much will you spend on gifts for family and friends?
- Do they have a budget plan for married life?

Ethics and Character

- Do they have clear-cut ideas about right and wrong, or do they subscribe to situational ethics?
- Will they lie if it makes things more convenient for them? (For example, calling in sick to work when they're actually well, cheating or being misleading in business deals, or saying they never got a request for something when they simply forgot to follow through.)
- How would they describe a person of good character?
- Are they willing to do hard work, or do they want instant success and quick money?
- Do they accept responsibility when they've made a mistake or try to blame others?

Personality Traits

- Do they have a quick temper? How do they show it? Screaming? Pouting? Walking away? Throwing or breaking things? Driving fast? Physical violence?
- Are they open to discussing sensitive subjects, or do they get defensive and withdraw?
- Do they take prescription drugs for mental illness? Would they be open to taking such medication? Would they be open to counseling?
- Do they hold a grudge, or are they forgiving?
- Do they complain often about people, work or other things?
- Do they criticize others, pointing out their flaws and shortcomings?

Intimacy

- Are you a virgin? Is your potential mate?

- How many sexual partners have you each had in the past? What does your potential mate think about those relationships?
- What are your expectations for sex with your potential mate, both before and after marriage?

Can you think of any questions I forgot? If so, please share your thoughts with me in a comment below.

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .

The Strangest Scripture in the New Testament

As a Jewish person, I can tell you that the word *baptism* conjures up horrible images for my people. From the early years of Catholicism, Jews were forced to be baptized as Christians. Sometimes it was under the threat of death. Other times the consequences of not being baptized was “merely” being thrown out of your home and country.

For example, the Spanish Inquisition declared that Jews who would not convert to Catholicism (and thus be baptized) must leave the country.

In some cases, Jews were kidnapped and forcibly baptized—one being the son of a rabbi in 1762. The worst case was in Russia just two centuries ago. The Russian empire kidnapped Jewish males from the age of 12 for military service. “The number of forced or virtually forced baptisms which resulted, probably exceeded all similar cases in other lands throughout history.”

He Did What?

Because of this thuggish history, Jewish people tend to cringe when they simply hear the word *baptism*. When news gets out of a Jewish person coming to faith in Yeshua and willingly getting baptized, they are disgusted. And it's understandable, based on the history. But it wasn't always like that.

And that leads us to what I consider to be the strangest verse in the entire Bible:

"How can anyone object to these people being baptized in water?" (Acts 10:47).

Who are "these people," and who is talking? The speaker is the Jewish apostle Simon Peter, and he is referring to Gentiles at the home of Cornelius. It was a major controversy for Gentiles to be baptized as believers in Yeshua. This had not yet been done. For the first nine years, the gospel was preached exclusively to Jews.

Simon Peter, after a vision and a word from the Lord (Acts 10), slightly confused, goes to the house of this Roman soldier and shares with the people in the house the message of Yeshua. The Holy Spirit falls upon these people in the midst his sharing. The Jewish believers witness this and are stunned—Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit!

Simon Peter declares, "How can anyone object to these Gentiles being baptized in water?" This was a major controversy that wasn't settled for another 10 years at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

Reverse Controversy

But since when is baptizing Gentiles controversial? Can you imagine someone objecting at, say, First Baptist Church that they are baptizing non-Jews? That would be ridiculous. However, if they were baptizing large numbers of Jews, that might make some waves.

What most people—Jews and Gentiles—do not know, is that baptism (or water immersion) is Jewish. Long before Queen Isabella sought to compel the Jews of Spain to convert and be baptized, the Jews of Israel would wade through the waters of immersion.

When John the Baptist, the Jewish prophet, came preaching repentance through baptism, we have no record of anyone protesting, “What is this strange new tradition you are evoking?”

Water immersion was already a major part of Judaism. The Torah teaches that priests would need to be immersed in water as part of their consecration (Ex. 29:4-9). Before any Jewish man could bring a sacrifice to the temple in Jerusalem, he would first have to walk through a *mikvah*, a water immersion tank, to symbolize ritual cleansing.

Immersing 3,000 People Without a River

Furthermore, have you ever wondered how Simon Peter and the apostles immersed 3,000 Jewish men in one day in Jerusalem? Jerusalem is not Tel Aviv or a city in Galilee, where the Mediterranean Sea or the Jordan River could be utilized. Jerusalem sits on a mountain. There are no lakes, rivers or seas nearby. However, archeologists have unearthed nearly 50 *mikvot*—immersion tanks—that were used in temple worship. With 50 tanks receiving 60 people each, 3,000 could be immersed in a matter of hours. Without these Jewish *mikvot*, it would have been impossible.

Today, mixing Judaism with an act of water immersion, as we see among the Jews of the New Testament, is like mixing oil and water. But in the first century, it was not like that. The controversy of their day had nothing to do with Jews being immersed, but *Gentiles!* And Simon Peter heard from other Jewish people almost immediately after he did the “unthinkable”—baptizing Gentiles into the body of Yeshua.

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." (Acts 11:3)

How strange is this?

Ron Cantor is the director of Messiah's Mandate International in Israel, a Messianic ministry dedicated to taking the message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cantor also travels internationally teaching on the Jewish roots of the New Testament. He serves on the pastoral team of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. His newest book, *Identity Theft*, released last year. Follow him at @RonSCantor on Twitter.

For the original article, visit [.](#)

Spice Up Your Health With Seasonings That Fight Diseases

Common herbs and spices not only add flavor to your favorite dishes, but the right ones can also help fight cancer, diabetes and heart disease. How do we incorporate them into our everyday lives?

Many of us have lots of little bottles of herbs and spices in our kitchens. But too often they're just collecting dust. Sadly, we only use them for special occasions, like Thanksgiving.

Now it's time to open the right ones more often for better-tasting dishes and an even healthier lifestyle.

1. A pinch of cinnamon. Herbs and spices come from plants. The difference is herbs, like basil, rosemary and oregano, come from the leaves, whereas spices come from the other parts.

For instance, cinnamon comes from the bark; ginger comes from the root.

Celebrity chef Christina Ferrare shares cooking tips and recipes on her popular television show, *Home and Family*, on the Hallmark Channel. She says people would be surprised to know about the amazing health benefits of common herbs and spices, such as cinnamon.

"It can lower blood sugar and your triglycerides," she says. "And your triglycerides are a type of fat that are in your blood. And with people with Type 2 diabetes, this is also very good for them as well."

Just a teaspoon of cinnamon packs a powerful punch. Ferrare suggests adding cinnamon and a little brown sugar to plain yogurt to make a healthy fruit dip.

2. Paprika and turmeric. Another spice Ferrare loves to use is paprika.

"I put it on popcorn. I use it on rubs—rubs on chicken," she says. "It contains capsaicin, and it is an anti-inflammatory and has antioxidant effects that may lower the risk of cancer. It also lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease to help with that."

"It's great for arthritis," she adds. "I like to use it on most everything. Believe it or not, when I have pains in my joints, I will use that, and it really does help."

Turmeric is one of the healthiest spices around. In fact, it was actually used as medicine in ancient cultures.

Ferrare explains what makes it so powerful.

“Turmeric contains curcumin, which can inhibit the growth of cancer cells,” she says. “It reduces inflammation. It supports your immune system, it’s great for your liver function, and, as you know, it’s used in Indian cooking.”

Turmeric is a beautiful yellow color and has a rich, smoky flavor. Ferrare simply adds a little to water when making rice.

3. Garlic and oregano. The great thing about using herbs and spices to flavor food is that we rely less on sugar and salt for taste.

Garlic, for example, is a versatile food that fits a variety of needs. To get the greatest health benefit, let it sit for 15 minutes after chopping. If you do cook it, make sure to keep the temperature low.

Ferrare uses lots of garlic in her recipes.

“Garlic is a superfood,” she says. “It destroys cancer cells. It disrupts metabolism of tumor cells as well, so they won’t develop. It reduces cholesterol and triglycerides. It’s anti-inflammatory and is a great source of vitamin B, vitamin C and iron.”

Add raw garlic to salad dressing, or cook it in pasta sauce.

Speaking of Italian cuisine, oregano, common in Italian food, is gram-for-gram the highest in antioxidants of all the herbs.

“It is an excellent source of fiber,” Ferrare says. “It’s rich in vitamin K, and vitamin K promotes bone growth. I use it on tomatoes, sauces, soups, and put it on pizza.”

Ferrare even takes her love of oregano one step further.

“I love oil of oregano or oregano oil,” she says. “You can get

it at any health food store. It comes in a little bottle, and I use it for whenever I'm getting sick or whenever I don't feel well. It's like a miracle oil."

4. Ginger and rosemary. Ginger is a healthy addition to tea, desserts, side dishes and main dishes.

"Ginger decreases motion sickness and nausea, and it may relieve the pain and swelling associated with arthritis," Ferrare says. "It can also hinder blood clotting."

Ferrare adds ginger to cooked carrots with a little butter and brown sugar. She also enjoys crystallized ginger on its own as a snack. Delicious!

Rounding out Ferrare's list of healthiest herbs and spices is rosemary.

"I put it on chicken, on potatoes. I chop it into my pasta as well," she says. "Rosemary stops gene mutations that can lead to cancer. It also helps prevent damage to the blood vessels that raise the risk of heart disease. I just love the aroma, and it's an excellent source of vitamins as well."

The wonderful flavor from herbs and spices translates into eating less because we tend to feel satisfied sooner than when we eat bland foods, according to research.

The active compounds in herbs and spices degrade over time, so purchase the brands with the "best by" dates on them.

Also store them in airtight containers away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

While dried is great, fresh is even better! You just need to use twice as much fresh than dried. You can find fresh herbs and spices in the produce department of your grocery store. You can also grow many at home—even inside!

So step out of your comfort zone and start using herbs and

spices in your everyday cooking—for better taste and better health.

For the original article, visit .

10 Ways to Boost Your Immune System

With the winter coming to its end and spring coming up, it is a whole new season ahead—that is, flu and cold season. The good news is that I have compiled a list of 10 immune-boosting tips to help you combat the flu bug away.

Try incorporating these 10 tips in your daily routine and you'll be sure to welcome the cold and flu season with a smile.

1. Enjoy a good laugh. A variety of studies have concluded that laughing activates the body's protective T cells and induces increased antibody production. So give in to the guilty pleasure of watching your favorite sitcom, watching some stand-up comedy or maybe reading a book that leaves you cracking with laughter.

The more you laugh, the more your immune system will thank you for it. Who knew that laughter is the best flu shot around? Bonus is the fact that laughter is contagious, so you are not only making your body stronger but helping others too.

2. Give good bacteria a go. What? Welcome some bacteria? Yes! Contrary to popular belief, not all types of bacteria are harmful. In fact, a group of bacteria that are commonly called probiotics strengthens the GI tract and is directly related to

the strength of your immune system. Probiotics are typically found in fermented food like miso, yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir and sourdough bread.

3. Load up on prebiotics. So we have probiotics, but what are prebiotics? Prebiotics are soluble fibers that are found in foods such as artichokes, leeks, onions and bananas. They help probiotics to do their function and thus help in strengthening the GI tract and the immune system too.

4. Munch on greens. Immune cells in your gut are ensured to be in their tip-top level of functioning when you munch on some green vegetables like kale, broccoli and bok choy, so load up on kale chips and have at least one glass of green smoothie a day to keep the doctor away.

5. Time to relax. Stress is the number one thing that weakens your immune system. When you are stressed, your body releases cortisol that then suppresses your immune cells. Any relaxing activities that calm you down and make you feel at peace and happy are a surefire way to a healthier immune system.

6. Engage in human touch. I have mentioned that cortisol weakens your immune system and relaxing strengthens it. What better way to relax than indulging in human touch? Be it getting a massage from your significant other, hugging your children or holding hands with someone special, all of these will effectively decrease your cortisol levels.

Research has shown that 45 minutes of massage increases your body's white blood cells, therefore strengthening your immune response and reducing inflammation-causing cytokines—but how? Touch makes your body release oxytocin, which causes the cortisol levels to go down. Experts even recommend an average of eight hugs per day for maximum benefits from oxytocin. So don't be shy—give out some hugs!

7. Connect with people. The American Psychological Association recently published research that says social isolation

compromises the body's infection-fighting ability and weakens its immunity. Having and nourishing your social ties like marriage and friendship serves to strengthen your immune system. This gives a new meaning to the phrase "no man is an island" indeed.

8. Get enough restful sleep. Being deprived of sleep reduces your body's T-cell count that results in your body having a reduced ability to fight off disease-causing microorganisms. A solid session of eight hours of sleep is what your body needs for it to be able to tap into its self-healing powers, so ensure to invest some time in getting quality sleep.

9. Sing your heart out. Who knew that your shower concertos are an effective immune booster? Research has shown that people who sing are less likely to catch the flu and cold bug, so sing your heart out in the home—and especially in church!

10. Meditate. A healthy body starts with a healthy mind, physically, psychologically and spiritually. Meditating positively influences your immune response. One study has shown that people who have engaged in meditation for eight consecutive weeks have an increased response to a flu shot. Even just three minutes of meditation as a part of your daily morning routine is enough to produce results. It is in moments of being still that we are truly one with God. No wonder it reflects back as the gift of better health!

Don Colbert, M.D., *is board certified in family practice and in antiaging medicine. He also has received extensive training in nutritional and preventive medicine, and he has helped millions of people discover the joy of living in divine health.*

For the original article, visit .

Palestinian Authority President Flunks History

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has reiterated that he won't recognize Israel as a Jewish state, and he's claiming support for that position from an unlikely quarter: former U.S. President Harry Truman. But a closer look reveals that Truman's words are being misrepresented.

In a Feb. 3 interview with the *New York Times*, Abbas was asked about recognizing Israel as a Jewish state—something both the Israeli government and President Barack Obama have said the Palestinian Authority needs to do.

“This is out of the question,” Abbas said.

To justify that position, Abbas handed the *Times* interviewer a packet of documents, the first of which was a statement by Truman from 1948 in which the words “Jewish state” were crossed out and replaced by “state of Israel.”

Someone who didn't know better might think Abbas had scored a point. But in fact, the document in question does not provide evidence of American opposition to a Jewish state.

Here's how that cross-out came about.

On May 15, 1948, just before David Ben-Gurion announced the establishment of the state of Israel, Truman decided he would extend U.S. recognition to the state as soon as it was proclaimed. A senior aide to the president, Clark Clifford, telephoned Eliahu Epstein (Elath), who was the state-to-be's chief representative in Washington. Clifford told Elath to submit a formal request for recognition as soon as possible.

Elath wrote up the request during the minutes before the state was proclaimed. He did not yet know what its name would be. So he typed "the Jewish state." He gave the document to his assistant, Zvi Zinder, who ran outside to get a taxi to the White House.

Moments after Zinder left, Elath's secretary rushed in to say she had just heard on their shortwave radio that the state had been declared, and it would be called the state of Israel. Elath sent his secretary after Zinder and caught up to him at the gates to the White House.

Elath didn't want to delay recognition by having Zinder return and retype the letter. So he had instructed his secretary to make the correction by hand. Hence the famous cross-out to which Abbas referred. It was not a political or ideological statement; it was the equivalent of a typographical correction.

But none of this is a secret. Ambassador Elath described it in his book *The Struggle for Statehood: Washington 1945-1948*, which was published back in 1979, and it has appeared in other books since then. It's required reading for scholars and diplomats who have a serious interest in America-Israel relations. It's difficult to believe that Abbas and the PA aides who helped assemble his packet of clippings are unfamiliar with these well-known facts.

On the other hand, history has never been Mr. Abbas' strong suit.

Last year, he told a Lebanese television station that David Ben-Gurion and the Zionist movement collaborated with the Nazis.

"I challenge anyone to deny the relationship between Zionism and Nazism before World War II," he said. He claimed to have authored 70 books on the topic.

So far, only one of those 70 books has been published. That 1983 book, based on Abbas' Ph.D. dissertation at Moscow's Oriental College, argued that fewer than 1 million Jews were killed by the Nazis—and that those Jews were the victims of a secret partnership that Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders formed with the Nazis in order to have a basis for demanding a state.

“Since Zionism was not a fighting partner, it had no escape but to offer up human beings, under any name, to raise the number of victims, which they could then boast of at the moment of accounting,” Abbas wrote. “Having more victims meant greater rights and stronger privilege to join the negotiation table for dividing the spoils of war once it was over.”

The historical record can play an important role in addressing the conflicting claims by Arabs and Israelis about territories, refugees and other issues. But that record is ill-served when Holocaust history and American history are twisted into political cannon fodder by those who are less interested in the facts than in scoring points against Israel.

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For the original article, visit .

What Makes You Mad?

I was listening to an evangelist teach about how to know your calling in life. One of the questions he suggested you ask yourself is, “What grieves or angers you so much that you are moved to do something about it?”

After thinking about it, the thing that makes me most angry is the enemy deceiving God's people into believing they have no power. Because they believe his lies, they don't experience God's best. I was once there. I call it the "Charlie Brown" syndrome.

In the comic strip, Lucy always promises Charlie Brown that she is going to hold the football for him to kick. And every time Charlie Brown runs for the football and rears back for the kick, Lucy pulls the ball away, leaving Charlie Brown tumbling head over heels. Not only that, but she calls him "Blockhead!"

Now, of course, this event always happens because the comic strip creator wants to show you how hapless and naive Charlie Brown acts. But we believers in Christ aren't meant to be Charlie Brown!

We are called to be soldiers. We are not called to play in enemy territory. Instead, we must be fully prepared and ready to fight:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

The first call of a soldier is to be sober. *Sober* means to be clear-minded. A soldier cannot think clearly if his mind is muddled with drugs, alcohol or excessive eating. I see gluttony as food drunkenness. When I used to eat too much, I would often get brain-fogged and sleepy. It's hard to make rational decisions or keep control of your emotions when you are under the influence.

The second call for a soldier is to be vigilant. *Vigilant* means to watch carefully, to be on guard for dangers or difficulties. In the Scripture, it tells you the danger to watch out for—you have an adversary who wants to devour you!

Just imagine: If a lion escaped from the zoo and was spotted in your neighborhood, would you go out and try to pet him? I hope not. Surely you know the difference between a kitten and a powerful beast who could rip you to shreds.

But suppose a loved one was out playing in the yard, a little child who has no clue a lion is loose. You have no time to wait for the authorities, and you have a weapon. Would you just casually stroll outside to get the child? No—you'd be on high alert, walking out with your weapon raised, your mind focused on your end goal and your eyes scanning all around you, looking to see if that lion is around. You'll probably stay on high alert until you and the child are safely back inside.

As a soldier, the prime territory the enemy wants to take over is your mind. And if you have a mental stronghold, such as that driving binge or emotional eating, then he's already there. The deception is that when your feelings overwhelm you, he entices you to go into that stronghold. A stronghold is a place of survival, of refuge.

In my "How to Stop Binge Eating" online course, I've had a couple of students confess that have practiced this habit for so long that they can't even imagine living without it. That is a lie straight from the enemy—he's convinced them that eating is their place of safety, not God.

So whenever I face a similar situation in my own mind, I pull out my sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) and combat that lie with the truth:

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress;

My God, in Him I will trust'" (Ps. 91:1-3).

What is your calling? It's time to arm yourself and go forward in it, claiming the Victory in the name of Jesus!

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is the creator of the new online course "How to Stop Binge Eating."*

3 Serious Questions for the Undereater

After recently writing about overeating and the sin of gluttony, I thought it appropriate to also address its opposite yet equally dishonoring and destructive counterpart: undereating. This topic is particularly close to my heart because it is one that I have struggled with since my teen years.

A few moments of channel-surfing will remind you of just how image-driven our society has become. Hollywood's leading ladies and larger-than-life runway models flaunt flawless faces and svelte physiques. TV stars and pop singers flash dazzling smiles and perfect hair. Interspersed between the movies and shows are commercials touting diet products and weight-loss programs guaranteed to give you the body you've always wanted.

It's almost as if this subliminal message is being transmitted through the airwaves: You can have success, stardom, beauty and bliss. But first, you have to buy this product to get the toned legs of your favorite actress or the chiseled abs of your favorite singer!

"Physical perfection equals happiness."

That equation is the lie I began believing at age 17. It's one that many people, mostly women, buy into with their money, their time, their habits and sometimes, tragically, their very lives. For the sake of space, I won't go into details about my eating disorder in this book. If you'd like to learn more, please visit my blog, .

If you struggle with undereating, here are three questions to help restore a healthy perspective and free you from the chains of obsession. Answer them honestly, respond to them positively and promptly, and wait for God's Word and the Holy Spirit to replace all carnal, harmful thoughts with eternal, life-giving truths.

1. Am I serving God or self with this decision? By believing that we can feel prettier, find success, meet the right mate or manage our emotions by depriving ourselves of the nutrients we need to survive and thrive, we choose to worship our own bodies. Our temple of the Holy Spirit becomes an idol of self as obsessive thoughts focused on calorie control, rigorous exercise, what the scale says and what others think build a barrier between body and spirit. Eventually, we become slaves to this idol; we worship it not because we love and adore it but because it controls us. It has become our master.

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters. Either we are serving God through how we nourish our bodies or we're serving ourselves. Either we are loving our body because we view it as a member of Christ's body or we're hating it because we see it as a dispensable sacrifice to the idol of self.

The next time you want to skip a meal or severely cut calories, ask yourself who or what it is your decision is serving. There is no in between.

2. What are the consequences if I continue eating this way? Consider the following facts about undereating:

- It can lead to depression because our moods are affected by how and what we eat. Many of the nutrients in food affect the emotional centers of our brain, and reducing our intake of these nutrients has an adverse effect on the way we think and feel. Undereaters generally feel depressed and tend to become easily irritated or enraged.
- The effects of malnutrition on the brain also often lead to impaired concentration, a decreased sexual appetite, frequent panic attacks and irrational thinking.
- As for physical effects, undereating can weaken the heart, which can lead to an irregular heartbeat. Digestion often slows, causing misleading feelings of fullness and bloat. Skin takes on a yellowish tint, fingernails become brittle, and hair thins or begins to fall out. Osteopenia, the precursor to osteoporosis, becomes more likely because the body isn't receiving the vitamins and minerals necessary for strong bones.

If you sense, or someone else notices, that you're eating very little, seemingly preoccupied by food or just a little crankier than usual, reflect on the list above, then remind yourself that you're a precious, beloved temple of the Holy Spirit, and then ask the Lord to guide you toward healthier decisions.

3. Have you been in God's Word? Don't let pop culture tell you what's attractive or desirable. Let God's Word tell you. If you've starved yourself of the Bible's soul-reviving nourishment, it's time to dive into the psalms and remind yourself that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made." It's time to jump over to Ephesians and see that you've been created for "good things" which Jesus "planned for us long ago."

When you shift your focus from self to Savior, you will see just how beautiful, valuable and beloved you are as a member of the body of Christ. When you pour out your frustrations and

feelings of inferiority before the Lord, He will fill you to the brim with warm assurance of your acceptance, worth and victory through Him!

“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37, NASB).

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness* and her latest book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [www.dianataylor.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at *CrossFit 925*. Diana can be reached on *Twitter*.

Should Obesity Be Labeled a Disease?

Labeling obesity a disease may actually be counterproductive and not in the best interest of individuals who struggle with weight, according to new research published in the journal *Psychological Science*.

The findings suggest obese individuals who buy into such labeling place less importance on health-focused dieting and are less concerned about weight, which may in fact make them less likely to take steps to address the problem.

“Considering that obesity is a crucial public health issue, a more nuanced understanding of the impact of an ‘obesity is a disease’ message has significant implications for patient-level and policy-level outcomes,” says psychological scientist Crystal Hoyt, of the University of Richmond, who helped lead the research, which was prompted by the American Medical

Association declaring obesity a disease in June 2013.

“Experts have been debating the merits of, and problems with, the AMA policy,” she says. “Te wanted to contribute to the conversation by bringing data rather than speculation and by focusing on the psychological repercussions.”

For the study, Hoyt and colleagues recruited more than 700 individuals to take part in an online survey after reading an article related to health and weight. Some participants read an article that described obesity as a disease, some read a standard public health message about weight, and others read an article specifically stating that obesity is not a disease.

Researchers also tracked the height and weight of the participants and classified them as “average weight” or “obese,” in line with World Health Organization guidelines.

The results showed that the particular message obese participants read had a clear impact on their attitudes toward health, diet and weight, as well as their behaviors. Obese participants who read the “obesity is a disease” article placed less importance on health-focused dieting and reported less concern for weight, compared to those who read the other two articles. They also chose higher-calorie options when asked to pick a sandwich from a provided menu.

“Together, these findings suggest that the messages individuals hear about the nature of obesity have self-regulatory consequences,” Hoyt says.

“In our ongoing work, we hope to gain a greater understanding of how the ‘obesity is a disease’ message influences beliefs about the controllability of weight. In addition, we are also interested in investigating the role of this message in reducing stigma against the obese,” she says.

For the original article, visit .