

How Volunteering Can Improve Your Health

“Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.” – Ruth 1:16, NIV

The above verse is a beautiful, poetic expression of selfless devotion spoken tenderly by a woman who'd lost everything to a woman who'd lost everything.

After a widow named Naomi lost her two sons to untimely deaths, she told her widowed daughters-in-law to part ways with her and return to their former homes to find new husbands who could support them. One of the women, Orpah, kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth remained, still clinging steadfastly to her mother-in-law. It is then that she promised a lifetime of loyalty to Naomi. She would travel to a foreign land, worship its God, and even be buried in its soil amidst a people that considered her an unwelcome pagan.

Needless to say, Naomi couldn't convince Ruth to depart from her, and so the two destitute women traveled to Bethlehem together in time for the barley harvest; perhaps they would be able to gather enough leftover grain to keep themselves alive.

Can you picture yourself in Ruth's shoes (sandals)? Imagine being overseas, thousands of miles away from your family and friends, when several deaths of loved ones devastate your household.

You and one other are young and resourceful; you can return home and start a new life. The other person under your roof is an old, pessimistic, and terribly despondent woman; the chances that she can provide for herself or be wed again are slim. She encourages you to leave and begin afresh. The next move seems simple: do as she says and leave.

What would you do?

To be 100-percent honest with you, the first thing I would do after the funeral is book the next flight home to Texas. I, out of sheer selfishness and fear, would be like Orpah. I would be inclined to retreat to greener pastures where a hearty meal and warm welcome were awaiting me.

Our society loves to transmit self-centered messages such as “Look Out for Number 1!” and “Love Yourself!” When something upsetting and unexpected happens, we’re encouraged to do whatever it takes to make ourselves feel better. We turn inward and self-medicate with media, alcohol, junk food, pills, and pampering without any regard for the nearby Naomi’s struggling and suffering far more than ourselves. We tell ourselves that when we feel better, *then* we can help those in need.

It turns out that what truly makes us healthier and happier is *not* looking after ourselves, but reaching out to others. In a survey commissioned by United Health Group, the vast majority of 3,351 adult participants reported feeling mentally and physically healthier after a volunteer experience.

- 76 percent of people who volunteered in the last twelve months said that volunteering has made them feel healthier
- 94 percent of people who volunteered in the last twelve months said that volunteering improved their mood
- 78 percent of them said that volunteering lowered their stress levels
- 96 percent reported that volunteering enriched their sense of purpose in life
- 80 percent of them feel like they have control over their health
- About a quarter of them reported that their volunteer work has helped them manage a chronic illness by keeping them active and taking their minds off of their own

problems

- Volunteers have better personal scores than non-volunteers on nine well-established measures of emotional wellbeing including personal independence, capacity for rich interpersonal relationships and overall satisfaction with life.
- Volunteering also improved their mood and self-esteem

Nowhere in the Book of Ruth is our humble heroine recorded as complaining or bemoaning her unfortunate lot. On the contrary, she doesn't hesitate to announce her unflinching faithfulness to Naomi. In essence, she *volunteered* to be her lifelong helper and friend by placing Naomi's needs above her own and promising to stand by her side come thick or thin, even unto death:

"Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried." (Ruth 1: 17)

Ruth is a stunning picture of a servant's love, the love that Christ has called us all to embrace and extend toward others. Her humility and selflessness so pleased the Lord that He gave her favor in the eyes of Boaz, a rich landowner who married Ruth and redeemed her family, as well as a place in Jesus' family tree.

What would our world be like if every follower of Christ gave of themselves as Ruth did? What would our own lives be like if we silenced our selfish desires, ignored our fearful impulses, and sought instead to follow our Shepherd and care for His flock?

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For the original article, visit .

Binge Eating: Emotional vs. Physical Hunger

In my “How to Stop Binge Eating” online course, a student asked me, “What does ‘hungry’ feel like and how far should we go with it?” Some people might think that is a strange question. After all, God gave us the ability to feel hungry so that we would know when the body needs nourishment. It is a natural sensation.

But what was simple for our ancestors has become complex with us; we no longer have to hunt or gather our food. Getting food is as easy as going to the grocery store or the fast food drive through. Not only that, but many also have a disordered relationship with food. They eat without regard to whether their bodies need it. Instead, they eat from boredom or to medicate painful feelings.

This disordered relationship with food is even more pronounced if a person goes on a restrictive diet. Severe diets make you preoccupied with food and when the diet ends, you end up overeating on the rebound. If this cycle continues, you end up losing touch with your body’s hunger signals.

But God wants you to live in balance; He created food good and it is a blessing to have food available to you. Praise Him for that! But realize that with abundance comes responsibility of ensuring that you are using your God-given resources to glorify Him: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are

not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Corinthians 6:12).”

If you are having difficulty deciding if you are physically hungry, then just do a stomach check-in. You see, physical hunger comes from sensations below the neck whereas emotional hunger is generated above the neck.

To check-in with your stomach, place your hands on it, close your eyes, and then rate your hunger according to the following scale:

- 5 – I have no hunger pangs at all; in fact, I am full.
- 4 – I have no hunger pangs at all; I’m not full, but I am satisfied.
- 3 – My stomach feels vaguely uneasy. I have a little food in my stomach, and I could eat something.
- 2 – I feel hunger pangs; I have no food in my stomach. I need to eat.
- 1 – I feel strong hunger pangs; I have a hunger headache and I can’t think straight; I want to eat everything in sight.

Ideally, you want to eat when your hunger level is either 2 or 3. You require food, plus you’ll be able to think clearly and make wise decisions as to what to eat.

Strive to retrain yourself to do a stomach check-in before you eat as I’ve outlined above to be sure that your body needs food at that moment. If you are hungry, then eat by all means!

But if not, then ask God to show you what is going on in your mind/heart that is driving you to eat. What feeling are you trying to escape? Confess 1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

God is faithful and He will honor your desire to be a good steward over all the resources He has given you. Good stewardship includes using wisdom regarding the food He has given you the power to purchase and eat.

*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' (). Charisma readers can get a discount today with the coupon code: Charisma.*

How to Turn Bored Men into Bold Men for Jesus

One of my fondest memories of pastoring in California during the 1990s is of a trip I took with a group of men to a Promise Keepers event at the Oakland Coliseum. It was truly an awesome experience to be in attendance with 50,000 other Christian men from around that region.

Hearing so many guys singing together was emotionally overwhelming. The speakers motivated and challenged all of us. The pastors who attended received prayer from the men who were with them. The stadium was riveted with excitement as men engaged in uninhibited worship and genuine fellowship. It was a powerful time.

But as soon as many of those men returned home, out of the glare of the lights and the manly environment, many fell back into their boring routines. Life went back to normal. Today, the typical American congregation draws an adult crowd that is 61 percent female and 39 percent male. This gender gap shows up in all categories, according to a recent study.

The question, "Where are the men?" has pastors across the country baffled and leaders of men wondering if endeavoring to reach men is worth their time.

In 1 Samuel 22, King David is running for his life from King Saul. Saul has tried to take David's life before, so here we see him fleeing first to the land of his enemies, the Philistines, and then to a cave in Adullam where he hopes to find some much-needed rest.

The last thing on David's mind is people. However, an additional 400 men arrive in his camp, each with his own issues. The Bible describes these men as troubled, in debt and angry. As a leader of men, I have met a few of these guys, and they always present a challenge! The amazing thing about David is that he saw something in these 400 "losers" that motivated him to become their leader (see 2 Sam. 22:2).

As you continue to read David's story, you can see that a transformation takes place in many of these men. They are no longer the troubled, bitter misfits of old, but "mighty men" (2 Sam. 23:8); they are not just oddballs in David's ragtag army but they become leaders in the nation. The account of David and his mighty men should give hope to all pastors and leaders that men can be radically transformed and become mighty men of God.

Do you believe this is possible? I know it is! Transformation is defined as the act, process or instance of changing a thing into something different, often involving major change in form, nature or function. Transformation of bored men into bold men requires passionate commitment by pastors and men's leaders.

The Secret of Reaching Men's Hearts

In biology class, children are taught about the metamorphosis a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. This type of transformation can also happen within the lives of men. But

where do you start?

David saw the value that God had placed in the lives of each of his men. It was through realizing this value that he gained a passion to become their leader.

The Genesis account is the first place the Bible talks about the value God placed upon man. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (NIV).

Man was created to reflect the image of God and was blessed and commanded to "be fruitful and multiply" and to "fill the earth and govern it" (v. 28, NLT). God validates the value He places on man when He says, "Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!" (v. 31, NLT)

The solution for having a life-changing ministry to men is wrapped in value. It's only when pastors and leaders see the value God places in men that we become deliberate about ministry to men.

Oftentimes, when one asks a man to define greatness, the explanation involves social status, financial means, athletic ability or some other form of recognition. Every man desires to leave a legacy. The Gospel of Mark even records an episode when two of Jesus' disciples, James and John, had the audacity to ask if they could sit in positions of honor next to Jesus when He ruled.

This is not just a desire of men who are highly driven. God has instilled this craving for legacy in every man. One of the greatest passages for men in Scripture is found in Ephesians 2:10 (NIV): "For we are God's workmanship ["masterpiece," NLT], created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (This is not to say that God hasn't placed a desire in women to do good as well. However, my personal belief is that women generally express this desire much differently than men.)

4 Critical Questions Men are Asking

1. Who am I? This question speaks to a man's identity. The most important thing about a man's identity is what God says. At his baptism, God the Father spoke to the identity of Jesus when He said in Luke 3:22, "You are My beloved Son..."

2. Whose am I? This question speaks to a man's significance. Fathers need to solidify the significance of their children in the same way that God the Father told Jesus, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased" (NASB). Every child needs to hear his father say, "I love you, and I am proud of you." Many men struggle with their own significance because the affirmation of a father's love is missing in their lives.

3. Why was I created? This question speaks to a man's purpose. A man's purpose flows out of knowing his identity and understanding his significance.

Jesus entered a synagogue one Sabbath and read about His own purpose in the book of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor... Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:18-21, NIV; ref. Isaiah 61:1). This passage is an encouragement for men to realize that God has a purpose for their lives as well.

4. What am I destined to become? This question speaks to a man's potential. Many times we stop short of reaching our potential in the Lord because of our own inadequacy and distorted mindsets. Potential is unrealized possibility. Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesians, "... God prepared in advance for us to do [good works]" (2:10, NIV). We have been destined for greatness, and our potential is our God-given ability to walk out God's plan for our lives.

At the heart of nearly every social issue in our nation you

will find a man. That's why the solution to nearly every problem will often be found with men. Men are influencers, for either good or bad, righteousness or unrighteousness. We are at a critical time in America's history, where the need for bored men to become bold men is imperative. The consequences of continuing with the status quo will only result in more casualties.

Years ago, I read a Christian brother's testimony that appeared in Charisma's *New Man* magazine. This man wrote:

Five years ago, my faith in Christ was hanging by a thread. I loved God, but I hated going to church. Sunday morning would find my body in the pews, but my heart was elsewhere. I was so desperate I began exploring alternative religions, including Islam. Did I mention I was an elder in my church?

I was not alone. Truth is, a lot of faithful, churchgoing men are not all that excited come Sunday morning. Quite a few attend out of habit, surviving on the memories of victories won years ago. Others attend services simply to keep their wives happy. Most guys do nothing midweek to grow in faith. Few churches are able to sustain a viable men's ministry.

Why are men so bored in our churches? Of course, there are the hypocrites. But even men who are born-again, Spirit-filled, longtime Christians are clamming up and dropping out. What's going on?

A business guru once said, "Your system is perfectly designed to give you the results you're getting." Christianity's primary delivery system, the local church, is perfectly designed to reach women and older folks. That's why our pews are filled with them. But this church system offers little to stir the masculine heart, so men find it dull and irrelevant. The more masculine the man, the more likely he is to dislike church.

What do I mean? Men and young adults are drawn to risk,

challenge and adventure. But these things are discouraged in the local church. Instead, most congregations offer a safe, nurturing community—an oasis of stability and predictability. Studies show that women and seniors gravitate toward these things. Although our official mission is one of adventure, the actual mission of most congregations is making people feel comfortable and safe—especially longtime members.

I am a “results” kind of leader. I want to see things happening. I want churches to start men’s ministries, successful men’s events or conferences. When I feel we’ve hit a wall and ministry to men is stagnant, I’m encouraged by Jesus and His men—men such as Peter, James, John, Andrew, Matthew and Philip. When I read their stories, I find they were ordinary men who struggled with sin, commitment, attitudes, truthfulness and fears. They were simple men who lived routine lives. They did the same job every day.

Jesus understood the principle of transforming bored men into bold men. He issued them a challenge: “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19, NIV). Jesus called them to a life of adventure, to a playing field where they would learn teamwork and to the harvest field where they would learn the principles of losing to win and dying to live. Their story is remarkable as we follow them through three years of mentoring by the Master who made them fearless and bold disciples.

Let me draw a picture of what the typical church looks like on Sunday morning:

- The typical U.S. congregation draws an adult crowd that is 61 percent female and 39 percent male. This gender gap shows up in all age categories.
- According to Christian researcher George Barna, almost 25 percent of married, churchgoing women will worship without their husbands on any given Sunday.

- On any given Sunday there are 13 million more adult women than men in America's churches.
- Fewer than 10 percent of American churches are able to establish or maintain a vibrant men's ministry.

I think you are getting the picture. During this critical time when churches and denominations are abandoning men's ministries, it's time to get serious about reaching and equipping men for Jesus Christ. The problem is not going away. It's time to become intentional and passionate about men's ministries.

As a denominational leader, pastors often ask me, "How do I start and maintain vibrant men's ministries?" I have given much thought to the question and offer the following suggestions:

1. It starts with vision. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (KJV). The pastor must have a vision for men, or men will perish.

2. Provide pastoral support, not micromanagement. There is a major difference between supporting and leading. Many pastors become discouraged with men's ministries because they often end up having to lead the ministry. You must find others to carry this load.

3. Find the right leader. The right leader is the difference between success and failure. The pastor's delegated man can lead other men and complement the pastor's vision.

4. Develop team leadership. Don't leave the leader out by himself. This will only result in discouragement and failure. The leader needs to be surrounded by a team who will help shoulder the responsibility.

5. Know your plan and implement it. Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose

that prevails" (NIV). As with all ministries, the purpose of God is foundational to the success of ministry.

Is all this possible? Can it really happen? Do we value the men in our churches? Can bored men become bold men?

I often use Paul's challenge to Timothy in my men's training conferences and seminars. I love the way The Message Bible paraphrases 2 Timothy 1:6, 7: "The special gift of ministry you received when I laid hands on you and prayed—keep that ablaze! God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible."

Scripture says that Peter and John were once men of routine. But once they were filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, they were transformed into bold men. During their defense before the Sanhedrin, they did not buckle under pressure, but spoke with authority concerning salvation in Jesus Christ.

The Sanhedrin could not dispute what they witnessed. Acts 4:13 says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus" (NKJV).

This same marvelous transformation can happen today in our churches if we will introduce men to a bold, daring and adventurous Christ!

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What Can God's Man Do About Bullying?

Imagine being 6-feet, 5-inches tall and weighing more than 300 pounds. You look like a human tractor capable of plowing holes up the middle for football running backs and protecting quarterbacks from agile defensive lineman.

Now imagine being educated at a place like Stanford University, making you a man with brains and brawn.

At a glance, a man of this stature could never become the target of harassment and bullied to the point of depression and resignation. Yet, Jonathan Martin, an NFL offensive lineman for the Miami Dolphins, recently walked out of the locker-room and perhaps his football career, because of the treatment that afflicted him at the hand of his fellow teammates. I'm glad he did and put bullying into the spotlight because bullying is not just for kids. It's costing people their lives.

After reading this brief blog, I hope you and other God's men will be able to identify bullying at home, school, and at work, and be able to apply some Godly muscle to all parties involved.

I read a recent article about several college-age women who were bullied to death, shamed into suicide after classmates posted illicit photos on social media sites while they were drunk, drugged or both. Young men, disconnected from empathy, abusing unsuspecting women and getting away with it, while the victims try to survive the torment from peers. It's sad, but after learning more about bullying, I believe it's more pervasive than these top news stories.

Bullying starts with gossip, "joking around," sarcastic comments that escalate into verbal and physical threats,

aggression and violent behaviors. Bullying is defined as a form of harassment, purposeful attempt to control another with physical or verbal abuse.

One report said bullying is the most common type of violence in contemporary society. Here are some startling statistics:

- 1 in 3 students, grades 6-10 are affected by bullying
- An estimated 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation
- 35 percent of kids have been threatened online
- 40 bullying boys had three or more arrests by 30 years old
- 75 percent of school shootings are linked to bullying
- 64 percent of children don't report it.

What can God's men do about bullying?

Expect it ... always. Regardless of age, we are all vulnerable to bullying tactics. Jesus told us in John 16:33 that "in this world, you will have trouble," so we need to expect it and not be ignorant about it.

Recognize it ... early. Don't condone bullying you see on TV, in a movie or in your life; instead point it out as a teaching example of what not to do. Here's an example:

The other day, while taking my daughter and friends home from school, I heard them chatting about other girls at school, not at all flattering. One of the friends stayed silent. Recognizing the gossiping poison, I had to say something, "I'll bet it's really hard being a girl at your school." The silent friend spoke up sheepishly, "Yes, it is."

Merely identifying this fact brought the conversations to a close.

Endure it ... wisely. Jesus tells us in Luke 6:27-28 "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse

you, pray for those who mistreat you.” If you see or experience bullying behaviors, the loving thing to do is to pray for the bully, and share God’s love, and don’t repay the slanderous words with bombs of your own. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 4: 12-13 “When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly.”

And, if unkind words escalate into abusive behaviors that control you or someone else, the compassionate thing to do is report the bully to authorities.

Jesus showed us how to deal with a bully when he was harassed in the desert by Satan. He used scripture to defend himself. We need to know the word, and apply it to the circumstances.

Prevent it ... at home. God’s men must not participate in bullying behaviors at home to control your spouse and/or children. This includes gossiping about others, using sarcastic tones to drive home a point, and definitely using verbal or physical abuse to get your way. We also learn that bullies are born out of rejection, so spend time with your kids, talk with them and hold them with love.

Why would someone bully another? What are they thinking? Feeling?

I believe bullies aren’t thinking, and aren’t feeling at all. Their behaviors are results from a broken male culture and broken families that leave children with low self-esteem, self-hatred and jealous natures. Studies show bullies that are often abused as children experienced social rejection by their fathers.

If they only knew, we all have the most perfect, loving Father in heaven. I hope this message can break through the bullying barriers. But it requires a God’s man to show up in society.

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and YouTube. For the original article, visit .

The Bulldozer: A Walk to Remember

In the fall of 2000, then leader of the opposition, Ariel Sharon took an extraordinary walk that changed his destiny. Sharon, even as a powerful politician, was considered a has-been. In fact, if Benjamin Netanyahu had not taken a brief respite from politics, he would not have been in that position.

The King of Israel

In the late 1960s and 1970s, he was nicknamed *The King of Israel* and *The Lion of God* for his extraordinary leadership in the Six-Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973). At the time, he was considered the greatest field commander in Israel's history.

However, over time his reputation would take a hit. He failed to prevent massacres by Lebanese militias against Palestinians in Lebanon in 1982. He also led a harsh retaliatory raid against the Jordanian village of Qibiya in the 1950s after an Israeli woman and her two children were murdered by Arab infiltrators.

Known also as *The Bulldozer*, he was fearless and at times ruthless when it came to stamping out terror. "Sharon had a reputation for pushing the license and limits of his orders to the maximum." (TimesofIsrael) Once making a decision, he never second-guessed himself—something his soldiers deeply admired.

He was a champion of the settlers, those who believe in building Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). “Sharon doubled the number of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during his tenure.” (Wikipedia)

In 2000, at 72 and grossly overweight, few Israelis expected Sharon to reinvent himself and become the ‘grandfather’ of Israel. Against all odds, he became the Prime Minister for the next five years, and was set to win four more years when he suffered a stroke that would take his life. Even in death he was defiant—fighting for eight years before finally giving in this past Shabbat.

The Temple Mount

What was the moment that changed his legacy? It was a walk that Sharon took on the mount of the ancient Jewish Temple. In July that year, U.S. President Bill Clinton was desperate to see an agreement reached between the Israelis and the Palestinians. He put tremendous pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to make concessions no Israeli Prime Minister had ever made. He offered East Jerusalem as a Palestinian capital and custodianship over the Temple Mount—the most significant Jewish holy site.

Arafat rejected this generous offer and returned home to a hero’s welcome, ready to start the second *intifada* (uprising) against Israel. I have long maintained that Arafat had no intentions of peace. Leading a popular rebel army is far easier than governing a nation.

Barak, on the other hand, returned home battered and bruised for making so many concessions—most notably, regarding Jerusalem. Sharon, leader of the opposition, said in a TV interview:

“One man, the Prime Minister, without discussing the issue with the inner cabinet, without bringing it to the government, without bringing it to the Knesset, without asking anyone of

the Jewish leaders around the world, decided to hand over the holiest place of the Jewish people. That is something that no one can understand.”

To demonstrate that Israel would never relinquish control over the Old City of Jerusalem, Sharon said he would take a walk on the Temple Mount. To be sure, the Temple Mount is the most disputed little piece of real estate in the world! This infuriated Arafat. Despite the fact that Sharon had walked there many times before and Israelis have been able to stroll on the Temple Mount for decades—this time was different—it was defiant. It was a message to Arafat that Jerusalem would never be divided.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

The *Bulldozer* made his point and Arafat started a war. Suicide bombers were dispatched. Israel defended herself vigorously. The world blamed Sharon for provoking the uprising, but there is ample proof that Arafat was planning war all along—he was just looking for the right moment. Israelis did not blame Sharon. Barak was disgraced and Sharon was elected prime minister in early 2001.

Between 2000 and 2005, in response to “hundreds of Palestinian suicide bombings and terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, [which] killed nearly 1,000 innocent people and wounded thousands of others” (), Sharon built Israel’s Security Fence. The Security Fence stopped the second Intifada in its tracks. The number of suicide bombers decreased by more than 90 percent!

Over the next several years, Israelis from the right and the left, to their great surprise, came to love Sharon. They discovered a gentler, more caring Ariel than the *Bulldozer’s* nickname would have led one to imagine. They felt protected by him.

Gaza Disengagement

In 2005, Sharon was all set to win another four years as Israel's premier—this time as leader of the new centrist party, *Kadima*. He had left the historic Likud party over a major rift. He wanted to get out of Gaza. Most Israelis, including me, felt that the resources used to protect less than 10,000 Israelis amongst well over 1,000,000 Arabs were not worth it. We were tired of seeing Israeli soldiers killed in this no-man's-land.

Sharon, against everything he stood for before, embraced the *hitnatkut—the disengagement*. During that time, there was not one Israeli who did not hear the word—*hitnatkut*—daily. Orange ribbons everywhere symbolized resistance. But the *Bulldozer* would not give in.

We were all duped. After forcibly removing 8,000 Jews from Gaza, it became clear that it was a mistake. Within a short time, the terrorist group Hamas was voted into power in Gaza. The Palestinian leadership and Hamas interpreted Israel's act of peace as weakness. Gaza is far worse off now, than before. Over 10,000 rockets and mortars have been fired from Gaza since Israel offered them an olive branch.

We emboldened the terrorists. Many believe that in his next term, Sharon was determined to evacuate large portions of the West Bank as well. But, we will never know if that would come true. Before the elections took place, he suffered a powerful stroke that left him in coma—until Saturday.

Most westerners, as evidenced by comments I saw on Facebook, know only one thing about Ariel Sharon—that he was the Prime Minister who evacuated Gaza. They know nothing about the General who took the Sinai desert in mere days, about the strategist who protected Israel from destruction in the 1973 Yom Kippur war, and they barely remember the man who took a bold, controversial *walk to remember* in late September 2000—a walk that thrust him into the prime minister's office.

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For the original article, visit .

Revitalize Your Body With A New Year's Cleanse

Is getting healthier one of your New Year's resolutions? Cleansing out old waste and toxins is one of the most important steps you can take to discover a "new, revitalized you."

It's estimated that the average person has at least 5 to 10 pounds of accumulated toxic waste in their cells, tissues, and organs. That's 5 to 10 pounds we could really feel great about dropping!

Toxic substances that accumulate throughout the body can weaken and congest our organs and systems of elimination. These substances come from a number of sources such as the environment, unhealthy food choices, and internal by-products of metabolism, called endotoxins. Toxic substances such as industrial chemicals, pesticides, drug residues, heavy metals, food additives, along with by-products from food digestion, as well as yeasts, fungus, and parasites can pile up in our system like logs jamming a river.

If they are not broken down and eliminated, they are stored in the intestines, gallbladder, kidneys, liver, skin, bone, and fat cells, making us sick, weak, overweight, unable to fight off infections, and causing pain in our muscles and joints. Toxic molecules, known as free radicals, damage our cells creating many health problems. This is why it's so crucial to periodically cleanse our body.

With thousands of new chemicals produced every year, we are exposed to a myriad of toxins on a daily basis!

How Toxic Are You?

If you answer yes to two or more of these symptoms, it's time to cleanse:

- Lack of energy and fatigue
- Weakness
- Aches and pains
- Headaches
- Overweight
- Inability to lose weight
- Irritability
- Emotional and mental problems
- Constipation
- Acid reflux
- Bloating and gas
- Indigestion
- Sinus problems
- Cellulite
- Trouble sleeping
- Restlessness
- Stressful feelings
- Dizziness
- Visual problems
- Skin problems
- Arthritis
- Hormone imbalances

- Premature aging

Benefits of Detoxification

If you would like to experience more of these benefits, make cleansing one of your resolutions:

- Renewed vitality
- Better sleep
- Improved digestion
- Better health
- Stronger immune system
- Lessening or disappearance of pain
- Improved skin and younger appearance
- Cleared mucous and congestion
- Re-colonization of healthy bacteria
- Increased mental clarity
- More creativity
- Renewed joy
- Greater sense of well-being
- Fewer mood swings
- Weight loss
- Purify the blood
- Clear the digestive system of mucous and congestion
- Reduce or eliminate cravings (e.g. sugar, salt, junk foods, alcohol, and nicotine)

A Time to Cleanse

January is a great time to start a cleanse program. Cleansing will help you lose weight and get rid of toxins, old stored up water, and waste. It will help you feel lighter and more energized. Some detox experts say that if you cleanse with each season, you won't get sick. If you are ill, gentle cleansing will help you remove toxins and speed your recovery.

Your cleansing diet means you'll be drinking a minimum of two glasses of vegetable juice per day. You'll eat 60 to 70 percent of your diet raw. Avoid animal products as much as

possible while cleansing and eat no dairy products, sweets, or gluten. Don't drink sodas or alcohol and no coffee, if possible. Drink lemon juice in hot water with a dash of cayenne pepper first thing in the morning. This helps the liver to release toxins. There are many great recipes for cleansing in *The Juice Lady's Living Foods Revolution*.

Add unsweetened organic cranberry juice to some of your daily water intake, which should be at least 8 glasses a day, to help cleanse the kidneys. Mix about 1 tablespoon of cranberry juice into a glass of water. This acts as a diuretic and helps flush the kidneys. Also, add asparagus stems, cucumber, parsley, and/or lemon juice to your juice recipes for more diuretic cleansing action. This is also a good time to drink nettles tea for kidney and bladder cleansing.

A sauna is very helpful in the cleansing process too. Infrared saunas are especially good because the heat doesn't need to be as high to be effective. Unlike steam saunas that can hold toxins in the air, saunas provide a dry heat that encourages your body to sweat and release toxins. You can also take vinegar, ginger, epsom salts, or sesame oil detox baths. Mustard foot soaks are another good method to help remove toxins from the body.

If you'd like to lose a few pounds and revitalize your body, schedule a cleanse. You'll be feeling like a new person in short order.

Cherie Calbom is the author of 22 books, including her latest book *The Juice Lady's Remedies for Stress and Adrenal Fatigue*, *The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies*, and best-sellers including "Juicing for Life," with 2 million copies sold. Known as "The Juice Lady" for her work with juicing and health, her juice therapy and cleansing programs have been popular for more than a decade. For her free "Juicy Tips Newsletter" and more information, go to

Jody Burkeen: An Open Letter to Christians, Liberals and Atheists

As I write this letter, I am heartbroken over the lack of love, respect and regard we have for each other.

As humans, we ought to have an innate love for one another, no matter our beliefs or backgrounds. But what I have seen from the controversy of *Duck Dynasty* and homosexuality is ignorance, hatred and a complete lack of a common-sense debate.

First, let me tell you a little about myself. I am the founder of Man Up God's Way men's ministry. I am a former atheist and evolutionist and now a sellout for Christ. Because I am "sold out" for Christ, that makes me a Christian. With views that are formed from the Bible, I believe 100 percent of all that it says and try to live according to the rules, love and forgiveness it teaches.

I do not claim to be perfect, all knowing and/or sinless. I believe that the gospel (the Good News) is that Jesus came to us through a virgin birth, lived sinless all His days, and was crucified, buried and resurrected for me and you. He was there in the beginning (Creation, Adam and Eve) and will be coming back to claim those who follow Him (the church) and judge those who don't. It is through my faith (belief) in Him that I am saved, meaning I can go to heaven.

Because of my salvation, I will learn to love to do the things of the Lord, the Bible and the things the Holy Spirit directs me to (which are not easy). I am called to proclaim His name

and His ways and teach others to do the same. All in love!
That is who I am, a Christian.

So, this letter is to Christians. If you claim to be a Christian, act like it! Stop arguing, name-calling and getting angry over every little thing. But don't back down from ungodliness (sin). Know your Bible and stop paraphrasing His Word and use it wisely. Don't speak, debate or argue it unless you know it! If you don't know it, read the Bible, study the Bible and memorize the Bible. Stop being a hypocrite! Too many Christians are talking out of both sides of their mouths. Learn to live and talk like Christ.

If you can't do these things, stop telling people you are a Christian because you are just making it harder for those of us striving to be more Christlike.

This letter is also for the liberals. So many times you try to push a political agenda of certain things, thinking that it will make people "free." But it does nothing but enslave us. Our country was founded on biblical morals, which made us a free nation. The Bible tells us in John 8:31-32 that if you continue in God's Word, then you are truly His disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

We are no longer a free nation. Oh, we have rights to do just about anything we want, but that does not make us free. Can't you see where our nation is going? We have taken the Bible out of schools, colleges and a lot of churches. We have murdered 57 million babies since 1972 because of "rights." The family is being split apart because we don't sanctify marriage anymore. Suicide rates are up because of no foreseen hope. Drinking and drugs are being legalized even when we know they are killers of body, soul, and families—all in the name of "freedom." But I respect your view, even though I don't agree with it. Like you, I will not back down, but I will be bold in love. I hope you do the same.

This letter is also to the atheist, of which I was one. Why are you so angry? There is a void that you have in your soul—I know; I had it. With no hope, despair and anger kick in. You point your anger toward my belief, and your anger is frightening sometimes. You spout off things you don't have proof of and have no desire to seek otherwise. The path of evolution leads nowhere (it's still a theory). Your faith in believing in evolution, a godless nature and chance, are greater than most Christian's faith in a holy God, and for that I commend you.

It takes great faith to be an atheist. My view changed when I saw my children. In order for the body to function like it does, we have to have a Creator. Even if you had 500 billion years, a child just doesn't happen, much less two that are different sexes and that can procreate. Think about it.

And if it takes a Creator, wouldn't He want to have input in your lives? Wouldn't He want to see us live for Him and not ourselves? Isn't it sad to think that an average of 70 years of life on this earth is all there is? You die, and then there's nothing. It was sad when I was an atheist. But I respect your view even though I don't agree with it. And like you, I will not back down, but I will be bold in love. I hope you do the same.

I hope this letter allows us to talk, debate and search for truth in a loving manner, no matter our beliefs. My belief tells me to share the gospel, and I will. My belief tells me to do it in love, and I will. My belief tells me I will be hated because of it, and I am. I am to love others, but I am to hate sin. No matter if you are a liberal, atheist, pagan or even a fence-straddler, we all should try to be a respecter of persons. But my beliefs will never let me condone sin! I won't get angry over your stance, and I ask that you don't get angry over mine.

Proposed Peace Agreement Endangers Israel's Borders

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is continuing his travel across the Middle East in search of a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians.

One reported part of this agreement has many Israelis worried.

The Jordan Valley straddles the border between Israel and the kingdom of Jordan. According to some reports, Kerry is proposing an international force—perhaps U.S. troops—to control the valley and then eventually turn it over to the Palestinian Authority.

The Jordan Valley runs from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. It's about 75 miles long and nine miles wide. It forms a natural barrier between Israel and its neighbors to the east: Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Many see it as Israel's security belt, a geographical barrier and an indispensable military buffer. The Palestinian Authority is reportedly demanding this area as part of an agreement with Israel.

But should Israel give up this strategic piece of land?

"Israel is entitled to defensible borders which Israel can defend itself with its own soldiers, and the only defensible borders are here on the Jordan Valley," retired Israeli General Uzi Dayan told CBN News.

Dayan lectures military leaders worldwide about the strategic value of the Jordan Valley. He also points out it's only 40

miles from the Jordan Valley to the Mediterranean Sea.

“Almost everybody understands my three points which says defensible borders should give you strategic depth, the capability to defend yourself against outside attack and combating effectively terrorism,” Dayan said.

Dayan also says instability on Israel’s eastern front in Syria, Iraq and Jordan is another reason to keep the Jordan Valley.

David Elhaiini, mayor of the Jordan Valley Regional Council, wondered what happen if Israel’s friends are wrong.

“Our friends, the United States, the European states say take chance for peace, take risks for peace and give up all the area. And what will happen after 5 and 10 years? If we will take those risks and the border will be near Tel Aviv. And they will throw fire and bombs on Tel Aviv,” Elhaiini said.

“We can’t take risks. The Jordan Valley has to be under Israeli sovereignty,” he added.

Past history has made Israelis reluctant to give away land. In 2000, they pulled out of South Lebanon and Hezbollah filled that vacuum. In 2005, Israel pulled out of Gaza and now Hamas controls it.

As the peace talks go on, many are hoping the same fate won’t come to the Jordan Valley.

For the original article, visit .

How to Win When Goliath Attacks Your Health Goals

Most of us are familiar with the story of David and Goliath. It tells the age-old underdog tale of a scrawny, ruddy-complected shepherd boy slaying a giant who, although his height is disputed among theologians and historians, was undoubtedly a frightful force to be reckoned with.

This legendary story is so celebrated and frequently retold not only because of its triumphant, against-all-odds ending, but also because of its overflowing application for our own underdog scenarios, even those concerning our physical health.

From anorexia and obesity to a sudden cancer diagnosis or debilitating injury, our bodies will never have a shortage of foes to face. In fact, Scripture promises we will experience persecution, trials, storms and sorrows—*giants*, if you will—many of which will target our health directly. The question, then, isn't *if* we'll face them, but *how*.

It's the beginning of a brand-new year, which means resolutions are being made for a healthier diet, goals are being set for a more active lifestyle, courage is being mustered for joining a running team or a CrossFit gym—and the enemy is gearing up to attack our aspirations from all sides and steal our joy while he's at it.

I'm currently part of a Facebook group that has a 30-day mission to inspire and encourage each other as we chase after one short-term goal this month. Comments such as "I've failed at _____ so many times, I'm so afraid I'll fail this time too," and, "My self-control and motivation are wearing thin—what do I do?" are popping up already, alerting me to the inevitable fact that Goliaths are being unleashed left and right to intimidate, discourage and belittle until every last

goal is given up.

How do we confidently combat the giants of self-doubt and negativity when our track record shows failure after failure, excuse after excuse, relapse after relapse?

When David boldly approached King Saul to tell him he'd fight Goliath, the king found David's audacity ridiculous, as anyone in their right mind would while peering down at a silly boy who'd spent his childhood playing soldier with sticks on a Bethlehem hillside. But while David might have been an unimpressive boy, he was also a formidable warrior who fought with the strength of the Lord.

David persisted in the face of Saul's doubt and derision by relaying to him all of the miniature battles he'd already won. When a lion or bear threatened a lamb in his flock, he went after the beast with a club and rescued the helpless animal. If the predator continued after him, he would take it by the jaw and club it to death. He knew the power and protection of God firsthand and would trust Him to give him victory over his fiercest foe yet.

This is the strategy we must employ when Goliaths interrupt our lives and mock our goals with boastful shouts of supremacy. The same God who gave you the willpower to study diligently in college and work hard for your job is the same God who will supply the motivation you need to exercise regularly. The same God who's faithfully provided the strength you've needed to overcome various emotional trials will give you the strength to resist the temptation of junk food, apathy and laziness. The same God who opened blind eyes and deaf ears is the same God whose Son healed your diseases by His wounds on the cross.

Don't let the Sauls inside your head tell you you're ill-equipped or too far gone to fight Goliath. Remember what God has done for you, and replace all thoughts of fear with

declarations of faith.

With God on your side, all it takes is one smooth, faith-propelled stone to slay the giant.

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*.

Men: A Marriage Bucket List

Bucket lists have been around for a long time. The idea has gained additional traction, however, since the release of the 2007 comedy-drama starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman.

We'd like to suggest an inviting, and doable, Marriage Bucket List for Men. You don't have to wait for retirement. You won't need to win the lottery. And we're quite sure a terminal diagnosis isn't required to get you motivated.

Take a look, think in terms of this coming calendar year, and try to check off this Marriage Bucket List for Men one item at a time over the next 12 months.

1. Plan, and execute, an anniversary celebration she'll never forget. Guys are notorious when it comes to not thinking ahead. The day doesn't have to be expensive, but it should demonstrate creative thinking and thoughtful planning that takes your "romance quotient" up a notch or two.

- 10 Ways to Romance Your Wife

2. Became a Servant-Leader. Many people look for change in a marriage by changing their spouse. Servant leadership always models by example. Become the husband who leads in terms of kindness, generosity, compassion, character, listening, and more.

3. Lose weight and improve your cholesterol. Want her to respect you more? Want to be around together for a longer time? Want a better sex life? Taking care of personal health is great for marriage in many ways.

4. Attend a couples' retreat. It doesn't matter how good a relationship is, there's always a lot to learn, both from one another and from the accumulated wisdom of others.

5. Add one new recreational activity to enjoy together. Marriages benefit from shared fun. Walking the dog, karate, gardening, art classes, tennis. The possibilities are endless and the results can be re-inventive.

6. Get on the same page financially. Create and share the same goals for your family and make every financial decision with that information in mind.

7. Attend a retirement seminar and begin to plan accordingly. You may only be in your twenties, or you could be approaching retirement. Regardless, getting your retirement ducks in a row is a marriage stress saver, and any reduction in marriage stress is a good thing.

8. Begin a shared devotional life. The cliché goes, "The family that prays together, stays together." Additionally, the family that prays together brings another source of strength into their relationships.

9. Institute a weekly date night protocol. Marriages benefit from the intentional commitment to continue dating and keeping the relationship fresh. Again, no need for expense; instead, use your imagination.

▪ 10 Ways to Save Money on Date Night

10. Eliminate criticism and harsh words. Research in education teaches, “It takes seven positives to overcome one negative.” We say, why risk it. In other words, even a one-in-seven ratio is too much. Make the commitment to be criticism free and then do it.

11. Uncover one of her lifelong dreams and then help fulfill it. This one will take some research. No worries, “Becoming a better listener” is a good goal too. Maybe she wants to take cooking classes in Italy? Maybe she wants to watch the President flip the switch on the White House Christmas Tree? Whatever it is, your opportunity is to make her dream come true.

12. Read an inspirational book together. Audio book in the car? Reading aloud together before bed? Reading chapters separately then discussing them over coffee? There are many ways to tap into inspiration together. The idea is to see your lives in the same light, then move forward into an inspired future together.

***All Pro Dad** is Family First's innovative and unique program for every father. Their aim is to interlock the hearts of the fathers with their children and, as a byproduct, the hearts of the children with their dads. At , dads in any stage of fatherhood can find helpful resources to aid in their parenting. Resources include daily emails, blogs, Top 10 lists, articles, printable tools, videos and eBooks. From , fathers can join the highly engaged All Pro Dad social media communities on **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube** and **Instagram**.*

For the original article, visit .