

How to Eradicate the Porn Pandemic

Pornography is a modern-day pandemic. Not only is porn the top-searched subject at , an estimated \$14 billion is spent per year on pornography in the U.S. which is more than professional baseball, basketball and football rake in-combined.

Shockingly, one report says the majority of males consuming porn online are ages 11-15 years old, creating a future of men with distorted visions of romantic love.

While porn ravages families, fuels sexual addictions and the sex trafficking and slavery industry, some counselors still recommend couples watch porn to help “educate” and “explore” the erotic entertainment. That’s like trying to sell the added health benefits of “mercury” shots. Can you say, “duped”?

God created sex, and designed it for a man and woman in the context of marriage. Sex is sacred, and can be absolutely wonderful. Leave it to Satan to pimp porn and steal the magnificence of making love with your spouse.

If masturbation is a slippery slope, porn is the pit it leads to. If you’re watching porn regularly, then I want to let down some rope so you can climb out. To get out of the porn pit , first you have to realize the collateral damage it’s causing to your brain, body, and the most important relationships in your life.

- **Porn is potentially addictive.** Watching porn conditions your body and brain to react to the visual stimuli, creating a neural-pathway-or rut-in the pleasure center of the brain. When the body reaches orgasm, the endorphins and dopamine released have the same affect as snorting cocaine or shooting heroin. The result is a

feeling of euphoria that begins with watching porn.

- **Porn warps reality.** God is love and He teaches us to love others, not fantasize while watching porn. Your brain and body get conditioned to respond to the images on your screen, instead of responding to your spouse's physical touch and needs. Ultimately, it's possible, even likely, you will prefer porn over people.

For single, and unhappily married men, I believe the issue centers around the need for intimacy. We're built to give and receive love. But if you have an intimacy deficit, it's easy to go to the cheap stuff, not the good—or real—stuff.

The key is to replace, not resist. With porn, and sin in general, it's nearly impossible to resist the temptation once you are slipping down the slope. Instead, replace the negative with a positive passion.

To say no to porn, you have to say yes to something, or someone, else. Say yes to planning for porn. Say yes to God's spirit. Say yes to what's important in life.

Say yes to my five-point plan to beat the porn plague:

1. Punt my plan for God's plan. Surrendering your life, your will, your hopes and dreams to God may seem initially like a cop out. But when God is in control, and you are seeking to know him with everything you've got, then porn just doesn't compute.

2. Marinate your mind in the Word. Porn is a weapon used in the battle for your mind. Instead of allowing your mind to wander online, open the Bible. Memorize a scripture that directly applies to your life. Meditate on the verse and ask God to speak to you. He will. Then, you will see how he transforms your perspective, and you will sense a higher love than you may have ever known. The Bible puts it this way in Romans 12:2:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

3. Enlist strong support. Find other men you can talk candidly about this. The process of confessing and praying with other men is a powerful antidote to the porn infection. We ALL wrestle with sexual temptation and it’s only worse if you keep your struggle a secret. God knew this too, as written in 2 Timothy 2:22

“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

4. Implement strong boundaries. Get serious about eradicating the porn plague by planning ahead, and taking action. For example, throw out any “dirty” magazines, videos or posters. Next, download software to your computer that prevents access to internet porn. Don’t go to sexually explicit movies. What are your weaknesses? Then, built fortresses around them to protect yourself.

5. Nurture a healthy romance with your spouse. The Bible says to love your wife as Christ loved the church. It’s sacrificial and extravagant. It’s also highly rewarding and pleasurable to have a growing emotionally, physically, spiritually love life with your spouse. For the single men, you have to replace your desire for intimacy with loving God with your time and talents. Usually it’s serving others. Giving yourself for God’s worthy cause. Get involved instead of getting online. When you feel like your life has meaning and purpose, then you will replace loneliness with significance.

Finally, I highly recommend seeking God’s “presence” daily. When you feel His spirit of life, truth and love envelope your heart, mind and soul you will find intimacy worth cherishing.

And, the porn plague will be eradicated.

Kenny Luck, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

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

Don't Be Naïve About Your Kids and Sex

A friend of mine who was an outstanding youth leader was dumbfounded when his daughter told him one day that she was pregnant. He had given dozens of talks about sex and relationships, yet somehow failed to recognize the needs of his own daughter.

Another friend was the campus minister at a private conservative university in the Midwest. He provided individual counseling to students, and one year he had counseled 20 female students who had problems related to being sexually involved with their boyfriends. During their counseling sessions, he discovered that none of the twenty coeds had a satisfying relationship with their dad. All described their father as either absent or distant.

You might assume your children are different from the rest of the world when it comes to sexual activity. But statistics show this isn't the case.

Among 18-year-olds, 65 percent of girls and 68 percent of boys have experienced sexual intercourse. You'll find that the percentages start pretty low for 15-year-olds, then rise rapidly by age 19. Are you open to the possibility that your son or daughter could be in that percentage?

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying you should control or even feel totally responsible for your children's sex life. But you need to be involved. Communicate with them and help them understand the way they are made, the gift of sex, and its positive expression in marriage.

And start young with an age-appropriate approach. If you feel a little out of touch with your child, then you may need to rebuild the relationship a bit before delving into anything serious.

But even if you have a strong relationship with your child, don't assume he's completely innocent or naive in this area. Be interested. Be involved. Be alert enough to notice potential trouble spots so you can take action to help.

Don't be intrusive or assume the worst. You'll only stifle the relationship with mistrust—and lose the window of opportunity to help. Ask him questions because you're interested in him, not to confirm your suspicions or exert control.

Sexuality is an area where we need to be involved, aware fathers. We can play a key role in teaching, nurturing and protecting our children.

Dr. Ken R. Canfield is founder of the National Center for Fathering and served as its president and CEO from 1990 through 2005. He is the author of *The Heart of a Father* and numerous other books including the award-winning *7 Secrets of Effective Fathers*.

Maturity: Submission Is a Two-Way Street

The wife must submit, and so must the husband. The fact of the matter is that you both must submit to God first and then to each other. For those of you whom this truth irritates, this post is specifically for you. Now that I have your attention, let's ask some questions.

In the many marriage conferences I have attended over the last few years, I always hear about the longstanding debate where the wife must submit to her husband. This, of course, always brings up some tension mainly among the ladies in the crowd. The men nod their heads, of course, but are quickly sustained.

I also hear a lot of confusion on this topic with couples that are struggling in their marriages. Typically, the husband is trying to drive home the point that the wife must submit to him, not even knowing where it's written or how to actually define it; and the wife will naturally fight against his wishes because she is not aware of the rules on submission or love.

So, what are the rules?

1. What does the dictionary say?

- Submit: "to give over or yield to the power or authority of another."
- Love: "a profoundly tender and passionate affection for another person."
- Respect: "to hold in esteem or honor."

These definitions sound like the type of relationship we all

need to have with Jesus. Agreed? Now, what about our marriages?

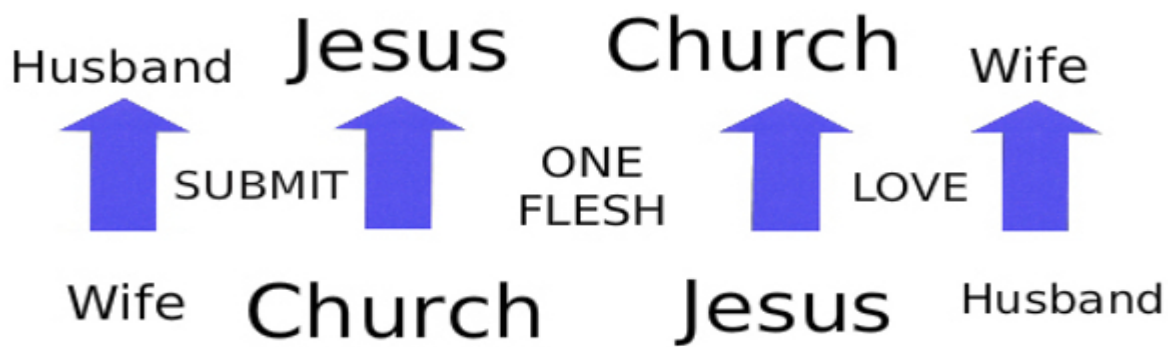
2. What does the Bible say about submission and love?

The standard for this information can be found in Ephesians 5:21-33, and the big verse that stands out for **wives** and **submission** is verse 22: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." The next big verse that stands out is verse 24, which says, "Now as the Church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

The big verse that stands out for the **husbands** and **love** is verse 25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her." The next big one is verse 28: "In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

These verses bring up the exact points that wives are to submit to their husbands and that husbands are to love their wives. Note that there is no hierarchy mentioned here in these verses. There are different roles mentioned, but they are equal. This might be the key point.

To put these verses in a better perspective, I made this infographic below to help you understand those Scriptures. Review the graphic, and then review your marriage and relationship with Jesus. What are you waiting for?



EPHESIANS 5:21-33
MANTURITY.COM

The infographic helped me understand the connection between our roles in marriage and our roles in our relationship with Jesus. All at the same level, the wife must submit to her husband just as the church submits to Jesus, and the husband must love his wife just as Jesus loves the church.

Do you agree with this graphic? Expand on your thoughts in the comments.

So is that it? Are husbands exempt from any form of submission? Absolutely not.

In fact, if you read all of the verses in the Ephesians passage above, you would see that the first verse says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Another hot verse on submission can be found in James 4:7, which reads, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

These verses make it clear that both men and women, married or not, must learn how to submit to God. If you take the initiative to be submissive to God and understand what it means, you will be able to better apply the principles in your own relationship or marriage. Starting to make sense?

So, what is the bottom line?

It's simple. Both spouses must learn the details on submission and love. Jesus sets the example for us in the Scriptures, and you must learn to live them out in your marriage.

In the case of submission, yes, the wives must learn how to submit to their husbands according to the Scripture. But in the same sense and on the same level, husbands must learn how to love their wives according to the Scripture.

If you are personally living out these principles in your walk with Jesus, it will be much easier to live them out in your marriage. As we are all the body of Christ, we are all one flesh. As a married couple, we are and have become one flesh.

So, here's your challenge:

- Husbands, ask your wife today how you can love her better.
- Wives, ask your husband today how you can submit to or respect him better.

What aspect of love or submission do you struggle with in your own marriage? Feel free to share your thoughts in the comments below.

Manturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Manturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

8 Ways to Show Passion in the Marketplace

In the current economic climate, the job market has become increasingly volatile. Therefore, just showing up is not enough. We have to set ourselves apart from our peers. Keeping the edge is important.

1. Look professional. Your physical condition is important, but dressing properly can be even more important. Recent trends have made work attire more casual, but that doesn't mean it should be sloppy. Target your attire to be a notch above the norm. Don't overdress, but certainly don't allow yourself to be underdressed for the job. A gallant man is groomed, fit and always appropriate for the occasion.

2. Be a team player. Let go of self and embrace the team. Companies exist to turn a profit. If its workers are not producing as a team, the company will cease to exist in the future. I was recently in a store where the workers had such a lousy and selfish attitude that I wanted to leave immediately to find another place to shop. Workers should not take a customer for granted, especially not in today's economic climate.

3. Be a solution, not a problem. You are not hired to cause problems; you are hired to solve them. If you are not solving business problems for your employer, you will soon find yourself solving a personal problem—looking for a job. I always say, “When you see a piece of trash, you own it.” That means you should take the initiative and pick it up. Take ownership. The small act of eliminating a piece of trash may seem meaningless, but it shows you are ready to act as if everything depends upon you.

4. Know your competitor better than they know themselves. I

had a board member who was a renowned expert in his profession. He was the go-to guy for advice in his field of expertise. He told me, "Pastor, when I enter a meeting, I've read everything I can find on their business. I know more about them than they know themselves. Therefore, I am always in control of the subject."

5. Forecast trends. You can be ahead of the curve if you study trends. Where is the market going in your business? What do your customers want you to provide for them? It's amazing how obsolete a company can become simply by allowing the market to move away from them. Can you imagine being in the vinyl record industry today? Or trying to make it as a cassette tape supplier? Even compact discs are becoming obsolete. Take some time to forecast trends in your field.

6. Work while you are working. I am amazed at how little people actually work. Develop a work ethic. Don't waste time casually browsing the web or fiddling with your cell phone when you are supposed to be working. Focused intensity can produce amazing results.

7. Speak positively about your company. Even if your company is not doing well currently, start turning it around by speaking optimistically. It will not help you or your company if you tear it down.

8. Show up on time, and be prepared. It's ridiculous when people are constantly late for work or assignments. It is slothful and unethical. They are robbing the company of progress and will eventually cost the company everything. There is no excuse for it.

These eight simple, relatively easy steps can set you apart from the crowd. Mastery of these skills will most certainly bring you promotion.

*FivestarMan was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of*

ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.

For the original article, visit .

10 Strategies to Help Solve Your Marriage Problems

Many good marriages slip into crisis because we don't or won't believe how much work it takes to keep relationships humming at optimal levels. Another reason is a simple failure in imagination.

But—if successful courting requires commitment, hard work and imagination to pull off ... then why does it surprise us when neglect hurts relationships after we walk down the aisle? She wouldn't have married you if you took her for granted—why risk everything now?

There are many good strategies if we want to restore a problematic—or “under the weather”—marriage. All Pro Dad suggests the following 10 for men who want to get the ball rolling:

1. Pray for your spouse. Chances are you launched your marriage with both promises and prayers. Pray for your spouse, and ask for guidance as you pledge to make the kind of effort that simply won't float without turning to God every day.

2. Surround yourselves with people in healthy

relationships. Some of those negative patterns involved friends. Hook up with a faith community where marriage is valued and there's widespread support for making yours work.

3. Choose to love. Love may have come easy when it was brand new. But love over the long haul is as much a choice as it is an emotion. Choice is an act of maturity and it has a much better track record than emotion left to make its way on its own.

4. Act as if your spouse's happiness is more important than your own. Putting our spouse first nurtures trust, gratitude, generosity and affection. It can also lead to kissing!

5. Put the relationship ahead of everything, including your children. It's unfortunate, but time has a way of eating away at our priorities. "You're the most important thing in my life" gives way to "My work ... the family business ... the children ... my aging parents ... even golf, football or drinking ..." Marriages don't work well when our partner plays second fiddle to anything – even the children. It's a fact – the happiest kids are those with parents who love one-another best.

6. Start over from scratch. Ask her out. Make sure you remember why you did the first time and build from there. When did you last talk for hours, hold hands at a movie, or smooch behind a plant in the mall? Get silly about one-another. If you don't feel like it, do it anyway- then you'll remember why.

7. Stop taking one-another for granted. Say "thank you" for that cup of coffee. Celebrate obscure anniversaries. Tell her how much it means to you that she cooks a great meal–or vice versa. Notice the haircut. Ask her out. Clean her car. Pay attention to the little things and act like someone who values the relationship.

8. Get counseling. You say you can't afford it? Believe us,

it's cheaper than divorce! Most counseling simply involves a few sessions to get the communication flowing again. For guys, a willingness to talk in that context sends a huge positive message to your spouse.

9. Follow the counseling with an action plan. Just like a personal fitness program, counseling comes with homework and an action plan over time. Draw up the plan, ask friends you trust to help hold you accountable, then follow through. When both spouses take responsibility, anything is possible.

10. Change the patterns. Do you always come home angry? Then stop the car a block away and pray about it first. Does she always nag you when you leave dirty clothes on the floor? Try getting changed in a different room and initiate a new reflex. Do you always fight about discipline? Try agreeing with her decisions and supporting her 100 percent—you may find the kids act better because you're not fighting. You've heard the old joke:

– *Patient*: “Doctor, it hurts when I do that ...”

– *Doctor*: “Well, don't do that anymore!”

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**.

Are Genetically Modified Foods Harmful or Helpful?

Genetically modified foods (GMO, GE, or biotech foods) are foods produced from organisms that have had changes introduced into their DNA through methods of genetic engineering.

Mounting research published in peer-reviewed journals reveals a wide variety of health hazards associated with consuming genetically engineered foods and the chemicals that accompany these crops:

“Independent studies with animals showed stunted growth, impaired immune systems, bleeding stomachs, abnormal and potentially precancerous cell growth in the intestines, impaired blood cell development, misshaped cell structures in the liver, pancreas and testicles, altered gene expression and cell metabolism, liver and kidney lesions, partially atrophied livers, inflamed kidneys, less developed organs, reduced digestive enzymes, higher blood sugar, inflamed lung tissue, increased death rates and higher offspring mortality as well.

“Two dozen farmers reported their pigs and cows became sterile when fed GM corn and 71 shepherds said 25 percent of their sheep fed Bt cotton plants died. Other reports showed the same effects on cows, chickens, water buffaloes and horses. After GM soy was introduced in the UK, soy allergies skyrocketed by 50 percent. In the U.S. in the 1980s, a GM food supplement killed dozens and left 5-to 10-thousand others sick or disabled.

Why GMO Plants Are Dangerous to the Earth

Genetically engineered (GE) super weeds and super pests are spreading across U.S. farm fields. Almost 50 percent of American farmers are now battling Roundup resistant weeds in their corn and soy fields. To get rid of them, they're forced

to resorting to larger amounts of Roundup herbicide, Monsanto's flagship chemical weed killer, and other even more toxic herbicides such as Agent Orange 2,4-D or Dicamba. Looking at the statistics over the last decade, there are actually more herbicides than ever being used. As a result, the industry's promise that GE crops would allow for fewer pesticides has failed.

The original rationale for using GE crops was that they could be sprayed with less toxic herbicides, such as Roundup—was purported to be harmless and biodegradable. However, mounting research reveals that Roundup may be one of the most toxic chemicals ever to enter our food supply. Some scientists, like Dr. Don Huber, believe it may be even more toxic than DDT.

“GMO Bt seeds are soaked in toxic fungicides called neonicotinoids, which have been linked to the mass die-off of bees in the US and around the world. This threatens about 70 percent of the US food supply (fruits, vegetables, berries and nuts that rely on bees for pollination), Their rapid demise has gained worldwide attention.

- The environmental impact of GE crops and associated agricultural chemicals, like Roundup shows how they destroy soil microbes and inhibit the fertility of the soil.²

5 Steps You Can Take to Avoid GMO Foods

1. Assume all non-organic corn, soy, cottonseed, sugar (from sugar beets) and canola (rapeseed) ingredients are GMO since they are the largest GMO crops in North America. Also if it says vegetable oil or oil blend, it's very likely canola oil. Avoid all processed food since it is likely to contain one or more of these ingredients.

2. Avoid artificial sweeteners. Aspartame is made with bacterial strains of genetically modified strains of E. coli. In addition, aspartame causes a host of negative side effects.

3. Be aware of hidden ingredients. Ingredient lists are often difficult to read or understand. Some of the ingredients are derived from genetically modified organisms (GMOs). A few of the more common products include: xanthan gum, glutamate, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, lactic acid, cellulose, citric acid, maltodextrin, and mono and diglycerides.

4. Buy only certified organic dairy products or those that are rBGH-free. Conventional dairy products are often made from the milk of cows raised with rBGH, a growth hormone likely to contain genetically modified components.

5. Don't trust PLU codes on fruits and vegetables. Though the 5-digit code beginning with an 8 identifies a GMO food, such identification is optional and apparently produce providers have chosen not to be so forthcoming. The one you can trust is the 5-digit code starting with 9, which identifies organic fruits and vegetables.

***Cherie Calbom**, MS, CN, is the author of 21 books, including The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies and Juicing, Fasting, and Detoxing for Life. She holds a Master of Science degree in whole foods nutrition from Bastyr University. Cherie and her husband Fr. John offer juice fast-raw foods retreats throughout the year along with health and healing conferences. For more information, see*

How to Persevere in Love When Parenting Teenagers

My daughter turned 13. We were already experiencing her gradual desire for more independence. But, are we the only parents who have experienced what seems to be a drastic change

once the teen years officially began?

We'd heard about the challenges that come with having a teen in your house, but we never paid too much attention to those "warnings." Well, if you have a young child, pay attention to what you're reading here, and get ready!

I admit as we have entered this season, I have been a little testy and reactive. I'm working on not reacting, but responding with love to the way my daughter expresses her desire to be treated differently.

Your love for your child will be tested too. When they are young, it is easier to help and not be so frustrated by their behavior. But it has become a challenge to do the same as our daughter has grown.

You may be faced with the same challenge, but I encourage you to persevere in your parenting with love. If you are having trouble doing so now, or think you will in the future, take heart and persevere with love as a dad.

Remember, All Pro Dads love and lead their families in every season, even the challenging teenage years. Watch this video, The Love of a Father, and see how one dad remembered this only after a tragic accident.

Today we talked about how you can persevere in parenting. Be sure to check back tomorrow when we'll talk about how your kids can practice perseverance.

Huddle up with your kids tonight and say: "We may not always see eye to eye, but none of that will change my love for you and I hope the same goes for you."

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*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 .

What Are the Best Investments You Can Make?

As real estate values ride the roller coaster of an unsettled market and as stocks, bonds and financial investments sway with every innuendo posted on Twitter, it begs these questions: “Where’s the best return on my investment? Where can my money be put to good use? Where is there a guaranteed return I can count on like grandma’s pasta sauce—a winner every time?”

The short answer: God, other people and yourself.

This is serious business, by the way. If you are struggling with money, or even if you’re not, the following information has the power to change everything for a man seeking to know, serve and love God.

God

The first and best investment is in God’s work. God calls it a tithe that you give back to God (a 10th of what you receive) and God promises—catch that? He promises—to reward you for your faith. God even boldly suggests “Test Me in this” in Malachi 3:10:

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse [the church], that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it’” (NIV).

Interesting to note that if you don’t tithe, God says that you are “robbing” Him in verses 8-9 and that you are under a curse. Bottom line: Tithing is an investment backed by a promised return of abundant blessing. But if you don’t tithe, your financial world will be troubled.

The big idea here is that God doesn’t need your money but you need to give a portion of it to insulate your spirit from making money your god. The other point to ponder and apply is that we can never “out-give” God. He is just wondering if you will take Him up on this and test that He’s true to His Word.

Other People

The next best investment you can make is in other people. Jesus said the most important commandment is to love God and love others. Why is this such a good investment? Because the returns are multiplied with every person you touch with a loving word, serving act, gracious interaction or prayer.

Imagine the impact God’s man can have on one person. When that person shares what God did, the ripple effect of God’s love is spread among people like a wave on the ocean. They end up knowing a loving God, a future in heaven and hope for living in this world.

Think of the example in John 15 when Jesus compares himself to a vine. Notice the goal is to produce good fruit, which is God’s work—sending more people to heaven. This must be the ultimate investment. The bottom line here is wrapped in verse 16: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”

That's a good investment if we take advantage of the opportunities God presents us to invest in others in the big, but mostly small, spaces of our lives. Be on the lookout for these amazing investment opportunities, and risk investing yourself.

Yourself

So often, God's man gets caught storing up for himself on the outside instead of storing up on the inside. Your spiritual health is the best investment you can make. You are your own best investment. Think of yourself as a prize worth the price.

Investing in your spiritual health sows seeds that reap a harvest for God and your own livelihood. Pastor Rick Warren often says, "Invest where you want to be blessed." Want to be blessed? Want God to touch your life in a new way? Invest in your spiritual health and growth daily.

I think Matthew 6:19-21 explains the rewards we can expect in heaven if we invest in our spiritual health: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Struggling with your finances? Invest in God's work, other people and yourself. Your bank account on earth and in heaven will be blessed.

Kenny Luck, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

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How to Smartly Sip the Flavors of Fall

My favorite season has arrived! It's time for multihued foliage; for Christmas music to play prematurely in grocery stores whose halls are still decked with black cats, bats and witches' hats; for scarves to be wrapped snugly around Texan necks in 60-degree weather; and for poor innocent pumpkins to be carved into and transformed into terrifying front porch ghouls or minions from *Despicable Me*.

I love pumpkins (*not* Jack-O-Lanterns). I love them so much that I purchased pumpkin face wash—"Christmas-scented," according to my husband—purely for the smell. (Sadly, it's too rich for my skin.)

When I was a little girl, I loved my mom's decorative papier-mâché pumpkin so much that I pretended she was a star pupil in my classroom of stuffed animals and American Girl dolls. Recently, I walked into the cookware store Williams-Sonoma with my mom to buy a potato peeler and was completely overcome by the intoxicating fragrance of pumpkins; I felt I had crawled into Cinderella's carriage as the clock struck midnight and that soon I'd be spitting out pumpkin seeds. Pumpkin candles, pumpkin butter, pumpkin plates, pumpkin loaf pans, pumpkin pot mitts, pumpkin patch wreaths. The presence of beta-carotene was turning my skin as yellow-orange as an autumn leaf.

Walking back outside, every other shopper had a Starbucks drink in hand, and I instantly thought, "Too bad a tall pumpkin spice latte from Starbucks contains 300 calories and 38 grams of sugar!" That's how my pumpkin fairy tale ended and

how I became inspired to write this article.

So, what's not nice about pumpkin spice? I'll tell you: Hot, festive fall drinks like eggnog, apple cider, hot chocolate and pumpkin spice lattes make for quick, easy, albeit delicious ways to take in lots of needless calories. As I mentioned earlier, a mere 12-ounce pumpkin spice latte from Starbucks boasts 38 grams of sugar. That fact is made even more alarming by recent studies that have shown sugar to be as addictive as cocaine.

Even in modest amounts, sugar activates the brain and releases a burst of dopamine into the bloodstream, much like cocaine's effect on the body. Just like drug addictions, the highs diminish with the more sugar you consume, so you develop an overwhelming desire for more and more to get that same feel-good fix.

So, is the price of a non-sugar-addicted body boring black coffee and uninspiring unsweetened tea? Perish the thought! Heart-warming cocoa and ice-melting mochas aren't all bad. In fact, indulging in chocolate, coffee and cinnamon has its perks—perks not solely related to caffeine, I might add.

- Coffee is full of antioxidants, which are molecules that are capable of preventing the damaging effects of oxidation within our cells. Research continues to prove that antioxidants help prevent heart disease, cancer, age-related macular degeneration and aging in general because they go to war against free radicals in the body.
- Professor Joe A. Vinson and other researchers at the University of Scranton have discovered that the antioxidants found in coffee play a role in enzyme and gene reaction and that coffee consumption daily cuts the risk of developing the most common form of diabetes.
- According to a Johns Hopkins study, a cup or two of coffee a day increases your sense of well-being and

happiness. However, more than two cups a day (about 200 mg) have been shown to lead to increased anxiety, jitteriness, nervousness and upset stomach. (More does not mean better!)

- After a hard workout, a cup or two of coffee has been shown to reduce muscle soreness more effectively than naproxen, aspirin and ibuprofen.
- According to a study conducted at Cornell University, the antioxidant concentration in hot cocoa is almost twice as strong as red wine. Cocoa's concentration was two to three times stronger than that of green tea and four to five times stronger than that of black tea.
- Professor Chang Yong Lee, the leader of the Cornell study mentioned above, added that the "hot" in "hot chocolate" is important as well; more antioxidants are released when it's heated up.
- According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, drinking hot chocolate can help you think better as well. The flavonoids (which also help your body process nitric oxide) increase the blood flow and oxygen to the brain. Since dementia is caused by a reduced flow of blood to the brain, researchers think it could be treated with cocoa.
- Cinnamon is one powerful little spice! It's been shown to treat diabetes, possibly prevent Alzheimer's, reduce blood sugar levels and lower the negative effects of high-fat meals. Cinnamon intake has also been associated with relieving arthritis pain, boosting the body's immune system, preventing the formation of blood clots and relieving indigestion.

As you can see, our beloved fall beverages, our cozy campfire libations, *can* do your body good; you just have to use a bit of creativity—and self-discipline—to imbibe responsibly. Here are a few tips to help you healthily sip the flavors of fall:

1. If at a coffee house, ask your barista for half a pump of

the sweetener, since this is the major culprit for excess sugar.

2. Sweeten your beverage with a natural sweetener, such as Stevia, date sugar or a bit of raw honey. (Find out why I don't include Splenda here.)

3. Leave out whipped cream to save between 50 and 70 calories.

4. Use or ask for nonfat milk instead of the standard 2 percent. If you're lactose intolerant, almond milk makes a wonderful addition as well.

5. If you really want to save calories, order or brew for yourself a hot cup of calorie-free Tazo full-leaf chai tea. It's full of spices your nose and tastebuds will absolutely "fall" for (couldn't help myself): cinnamon, cardamom, cloves and ginger!

6. If you're craving hot chocolate, heat one cup of milk to scalding in a medium saucepan, add half of a vanilla bean (split), and let steep with the heat off for 10 minutes. Strain and return milk to saucepan to reheat milk. (You can use 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract instead and skip the steeping process.) Whisk in three ounces of semisweet or milk chocolate that's been cut into small pieces until melted and frothy.

7. Another Starbucks alternative is the Caffé Misto; the grande version of this simple steamed, 2-percent milk and brewed coffee combo has just 110 calories and 4 grams of fat. And it can be easily customized with a sprinkle of your favorite spice!

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

New Super-Nutrient Fights Aging

Astaxanthin, a powerful, natural antioxidant that gives the reddish color to salmon, is a new nutritional superstar. According to experts, this amazing supplement, which is in the carotenoid family, is thousands of times more powerful at scavenging free radicals than vitamin C and may be a major key to preventing the degenerative diseases of aging.

“One of the major ways our body ages is through oxidative stress, and astaxanthin is one of the most potent natural antioxidants available to help prevent this degenerative damage,” Joseph Mercola, M.D., author of the *New York Times* best-seller *The No-Grain Diet*, told Newsmax Health.

“Astaxanthin is hundreds of times more effective than vitamin E in squelching singlet oxygen free radicals and far exceeds the free-radical scavenging power of vitamin C, CoQ10, beta-carotene, and green tea,” says Dr. Mercola, director of the Optimal Wellness Center.

“It’s 6,000 times stronger than vitamin C, 500 times stronger than vitamin E, and 3,000 times stronger than resveratrol and quercetin.”

Studies have shown astaxanthin (pronounced *asta-zan-thin*):

Fights dementia. A study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that astaxanthin reduces harmful free radicals in the blood by 50 percent. “We have found that there is an abnormal accumulation of hydroperoxides within red blood cells in people who have dementia and Alzheimer’s,” says Dr. Mercola. “We now know that if you give these patients

astaxanthin, the amount of peroxides—harmful free radicals—is reduced by 50 percent. That’s a significant reduction.”

Reduces arthritis pain. When arthritis patients were given 4 mg of astaxanthin, they reported an 85 percent improvement in their pain and a 60 percent improvement in mobility. And 60 percent said the supplement was just as effective as prescription drugs.

Lowers cholesterol. People with high cholesterol levels were given 6, 12 or 18 mg doses of astaxanthin daily. At the end of 12 weeks, astaxanthin significantly decreased triglycerides and increased HDL (good) cholesterol, although total cholesterol levels were unchanged. The study, published in the journal *Atherosclerosis*, found the greatest increases in HDL cholesterol in the groups taking 6 and 12 mg.

Shields diabetics. A study published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* found that astaxanthin protects cells against damage caused by high sugar levels, reducing the risk of kidney disease, neuropathy and diabetic retinopathy.

Prevents heart disease. A report in *Future Cardiology* analyzed eight clinical trials and found that astaxanthin fights oxidative stress and inflammation—two main components in the development of heart disease. And a study published in *Nutrition and Metabolism* found that astaxanthin reduced levels of C-reactive protein, a biomarker of inflammation.

Other studies have shown that astaxanthin smoothes wrinkles, safeguards eyes, increases endurance and strength, boosts fat loss and improves male fertility.

Dr. Mercola believes astaxanthin is safe and effective and advises his patients to add it to their health regimen. A good food source of astaxanthin is Pacific salmon. Astaxanthin is widely available from websites, health food and drugstores.

For the original article, visit .