

5 Essential Tools for Your Christian Walk

You know that when you set out to do a good work, it can't be done without the right tools. The job might be something as simple as hanging a picture frame to something as complicated as building a house. The right tools are essential to get the job done right and efficiently.

As a God-fearing Christian, you should always be looking for new ways to love and please God. Each Sunday service you attend makes you stronger, smarter and loads up your belt with another tool. Each great discussion with a Christian friend is like taking a grinder to a dull chisel. It may take a few minutes to work out the problem or thought, but you'll come away sharper.

So, what tools has God provided you with in your Christian walk? The thing to keep in mind is that there are so many great tools out there, and they can come in all shapes and sizes. As I personally continue to maintain my walk with God, I continue to discover what tools seem to be the most useful and make the most impact in my life. Be sure to share some tools that are in your belt as well.

Here are 5 essential tools for your Christian walk:

1. Accountability. Accountability in your Christian walk is huge! I can't say it or stress it enough. I know most of you think you are Superman and can handle any monster that comes your way, but you must remember there is an enemy, and he has his own set of tools to try on you.

What does being accountable look like? Well, it starts with every day. Join forces with a solid Christian friend of yours, and stay in contact daily. You can send him or her a verse, and they can send you a verse. Try to encourage each other and

build each other up. If bigger issues come up, talk about them. This tool is very essential and must be sharpened often.

2. A Bible. Reading your Bible often is a great tool to keep you sharp and alert. The lessons and examples in it can effectively help you live a better life and keep valuable lessons at the top of your head.

What does reading your Bible look like? The best way you can do it is to set up some kind of reading plan. YouVersion has some really great plans that you can download on your smartphone. You can also check the back of your Bible for checklists and more ideas. Grab this tool and start today!

3. Church. Attending a great church is a tool you should really have in your belt. Even if you don't get a lot out of the message each week, you can effectively build great relationships with like-minded people.

What does attending a church look like? At the very minimum, you should try to attend the Sunday service. Go further, and try to attend some small groups or classes. Through all of these avenues, be intentional about starting relationships with those who attend. Pray about it!

4. Small groups. As I mentioned above, you should definitely get involved in a small group or even a home group with people from your church. These get-togethers create some of the best times, strongest friendships and deepest conversations about God and life.

What does attending a small group look like? Be intentional. You can either ask your friends or church leaders for information, or you can read through your church bulletin or guide. Get into a six-week class with your spouse, or join a class specific to men or women. Don't wait!

5. Prayer. Jesus taught us all the power of prayer and daily communication with God. Your prayers may not always look or

sound pretty, but prayer is a tool you must be very intentional about. Like the heavy-duty carpenter pencil that gets used so often in your belt, prayer must be used often and sharpened daily. Get to work and pray!

These are just a few tools that I use and have had great experiences with over the last few years.

In your own experience, what have you found to be some essential tools in your own Christian walk?

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 .

Dating for a Godly Man: 4 Keys to Success

Dating is one of the most interesting social studies. Two people with different personalities begin a relationship. With past baggage, a variety of cultural expectations, socio-economic histories, family background, values, morals and faith, you might wonder if it's possible that dating can actually lead to marriage.

From the very opening line to the closing technique, finding dating truths for God's men can be difficult because there's

not much “dating,” as we know it today, in the Bible.

For example:

Do you ever wonder what Adam’s approach to Eve was? Something like, “Hey, God made me. He made you. Let’s get it on.”

Or Ruth, who slept at Boaz’s feet, in nonverbal communication that says, “Take me. I am yours.”

Samson jumped the gun with Delilah, falling deep into a premarital relationship that probably involved sex and eventually short-circuited Samson’s ultimate potential.

David never bothered to date Bathsheba; instead, he just had her husband killed.

Then there’s that book in the Bible called Song of Solomon. This interesting book is located in the very middle, or “heart,” of the Bible. It’s a lovelorn exchange of adoration between two people obviously very smitten. Song of Solomon shows me that God is a big fan of dating. It also tells me dating must involve respect, patience, self-control and fearlessness.

Respect. Each player in this love story humbles themselves while showing ultimate respect for the other. I know men love to feel respected, but in Song of Solomon, the male writer also shows respect for his woman with compliments, protective language and encouraging words.

Patience. When two people are dating each other and cannot be together, there’s a test of patience. In Song of Solomon, I see that each player dealt with their longing desire by taking time to write down their thoughts. This is a sign of patience. If they did not write out these love notes, they could have become impatient and looked for another substitute.

Self-control. When reading this book, I wonder what self-control they actually had. For God’s man, dating must be an

exercise in self-control. (I'll explain in future articles the difference between "quick" and "quality" dating.) Ultimately, controlling your thoughts, words and behavior will show your potential mate you can be trusted. So, how do you show self-control? Trust God's plan and obey His Word. She will totally dig this about you!

Fearlessness. Let's face it: Dating is scary. There's a lot on the line, including your heart. You have to take a step of faith and be fearless for God's way. But if you have respect, patience and self-control operating in you, then there's no need to fear. You can rest in the peace that God's plan is good and you are following His path.

Kenny Luck, founder of Every Man Ministries and 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.

Survey: Yom Kippur Not as Important to Younger Jews

Older and younger Jews agree that Yom Kippur tops Passover as the most important Jewish holiday. But the Jewish Day of Atonement, which falls on Sept. 13, is not as important to younger Jews.

Asked in a Public Religion Research Institute survey "What is the most important Jewish holiday to you personally?" Jewish Americans of all ages picked Yom Kippur. Traditionally, the fast day has been considered the most solemn of the Jewish

holy days, a time which God determines whether one will live or die in the coming year.

But those 60 and older were far more likely (53 percent) to pick Yom Kippur than did those in the younger 18-39 cohort (37 percent).

The percentage of younger and older Jews who chose Rosh Hashanah—the Jewish New Year, which begins on sundown on Wednesday (Sept. 4)—hovered around 10 percent for both age groups.

Hanukkah presented another generational divide. More than three times as many younger Jews called the Festival of Lights, which celebrates religious freedom, their most important holiday, even though traditionally it is not considered a major holiday.

In these Days of Awe, as Jews call the 10-day period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we asked students and staff at Hillel, the largest Jewish student organization in the world, to share their thoughts on the Jewish holidays and the PRRI survey results. The survey, of 1,004 Jewish American adults, originally was released in March 2012.

Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: Is it a problem that more younger people don't consider Yom Kippur the most important Jewish holiday?

A: “No, it would be problematic if younger people found nothing to be important. It's great that they are connecting with a variety of holidays.” —Sheila Katz, 30, director of the “Ask Big Questions” program at Hillel's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Her favorite Jewish holiday: Passover

Q: Why do you think more older Jews consider Yom Kippur their most important Jewish holiday?

A: “I believe Yom Kippur to be, in many ways, the heaviest of Jewish holidays, and the most serious. This new generation of

Jews appreciates Judaism more for its meaningful customs that may not be so serious, because they have less of a direct connection to the Holocaust, but this is not necessarily a bad thing.” –Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, 19, Hillel of Princeton University. His favorite Jewish holiday: Yom Kippur

Q: Overall, is it a good thing that among both younger and older Jews, Yom Kippur is considered most important?

A: “Yom Kippur is important, but no more than any particular Shabbat. It is comforting that the most introspective and solemn day of the Jewish year resonates with so many. Still, if it is the only point of connection for some, then there is a risk that Judaism will seem too serious and stale, formal and detached. There are plenty of joyous reasons to be Jewish that don’t involve traffic jams, tickets, fasting and long sermons.” –Rabbi David Komerofsky, 41, executive director of the Texas Hillel. His favorite Jewish holiday: Shavuot

Q: “Why is there a big difference between older and younger Jews on Hanukkah?”

A: “I can see that Hanukkah, a holiday that often coincides with Christmas, would be seen as a more important holiday in the eyes of younger Jewish Americans ... I would imagine that young Jewish Americans trying to fit in with their peers would put more of an emphasis on a holiday that they feel all Americans can relate to.” –Kayla Joy Sokoloff, 20, member of the Texas Hillel Executive Board. Her favorite Jewish holiday: Passover and Purim

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Why Can't We See the Church's Greatest End-Times Role?

When you think of what we have been taught thus far through end-time books and DVDs on Israel and the church, it seems as if the church has no spiritual ties or connection to Israel toward the end, that G-d is going to awaken them all by Himself and bring us together after Jesus returns to the earth.

However, when has G-d ever done anything on the earth of such great significance without using humankind as His intercessor? From Noah to Abraham and Moses and David to the prophets and of course to Christ Himself who came in the flesh, G-d has always chosen His earthly vessels to do His bidding here on the earth, and there has always been an intercessor to bring about G-d's plans and purposes for humankind. So, why would the end be any different from the beginning, or even the middle?

With all my heart, as a Jewish believer in the church, one who has come to love his Gentile family as his very own, I believe this theology to be incorrect and in great need of correction. In fact, I believe the church is to play a most significant role in G-d's end-time glory plan to show Himself to the world through Israel, which will become a great honor for all of us in the church who ultimately make this connection.

How Come We Can't See?

Please understand that I am not making this up but rather bringing to light what has already been spoken to us through the Word of G-d, which I will lay out in this article. But let me also state at the same time that there are important reasons for us to understand why we have not been able to properly see this until this time, which I will also address.

Some of this is a delicate matter and could be a challenge for us to process as Gentile believers in the church. However, please know this is written and bathed in a sea of Christ's love with no condemnation and is being addressed for the sole purpose of releasing G-d's healing touch in this area, which I believe is greatly necessary for the church at this time.

As we enter the time of transition in the kingdom of G-d between the fullness of the Gentiles and Israel's awakening, now is the appointed time for us to properly address these issues, so His family can finally become one between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 11:25-27).

G-d's Mercy Plan

"Just as you who were one time disobedient to G-d have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of G-d's mercy to you" (Rom. 11:30-31, NIV).

This is G-d's mercy plan: to actually awaken Israel through prayer and intercession and stir them to repentance and life through the mercy of G-d, for believers and followers of the Jewish Messiah Yeshua/Jesus to properly reflect the intimacy and personal connection that our new covenant relationship brings us into with their G-d, who is now also our G-d. For are we not grafted into their vine and their covenants? Even though at this time they have been temporarily broken off through unbelief (Rom. 11:23).



The Mysteries

Though Israel came first and was given all of the covenants,

G-d has actually chosen those who came after to give life back to those who came first. Wasn't it a mystery at one point how the Gentiles were to be brought into the kingdom of G-d? (See Colossians 1:25-27.) And now it is a mystery how Israel will be reconnected, which the apostle Paul challenges us not to be ignorant about, especially in this day as it is all about to take place (Rom. 11:25)!

We may conclude from this that the Father definitely likes mysteries and always manages to show up right in midst of them. How often in our own walks with the King does He decide to show up at the last minute, like He is an 11th-hour and 59th-minute G-d? So why should the end be any different? What an awesome plan of G-d to show Himself to the world through the reconnection of His own spiritual family between Jew and Gentile—all for the glory of G-d upon the earth!

The Paradox

The G-d of Israel actually has chosen the other children in G-d's family (John 10:16), the Gentiles, to be the vessel of mercy and grace to stir Israel to jealousy and win them back to faith. And indeed that this is G-d's mercy plan to show Himself to Israel. In fact, I believe it is G-d's mercy plan to show Himself to the world through Israel, with whom the church is to be reconnected as a spiritual brother and join the Father and the Son in their quest to reawaken them. What an honor for Gentile believers.

However, up to this point in time, the church has not properly understood this, and because of Israel's rejection and hardness, we have been unable to love them in our own humanity. Our ancestry greatly failed in this area.

Let's be honest: It is extremely challenging to love people who constantly reject you, which has been a dichotomy for the church regarding Israel. But beyond the church's misunderstanding regarding Israel, a good deal of the church

actually believes they have replaced Israel, of which the apostle Paul strongly cautioned us not to be arrogant and to always remember our humble beginnings of being grafted in as a wild olive shoot (Rom. 11:17-24).

However, in light of Israel's hardening, we have not properly understood the timing of G-d in keeping them to the end. Just as it is written, the first will be last! Not only so, but when the church began to organize by the fourth century, we broke away completely from the apostolic Jewish roots of our faith and turned vigilantly against the Jewish people, thinking that their judgment was final. Despite the numerous Scriptures and prophecies to restore them after they had been brought back to the land, it is a little easier for us to see now because of Israel's physical restoration.

Have the Gentiles in the church not been given an edict to make Israel envious?

"I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:13-16).

Has Israel not been loved on the account of the patriarchs, even though Paul warned us that they would be enemies of the gospel? (See Romans 11:28.)

Is Israel not a covenant nation? And yet how did the ancestral church behave toward the Jewish people? Did they not really behave like Joseph's brothers, who sold him into slavery and death?

The very vessel (the Gentile church) that G-d has chosen to win the Jewish people back to Himself through the mercy of G-d was instead used to persecute the Jewish people and wipe them out. I never want to give credit to the enemy, but what a

despicable plan! This is why Jewish people have such an aversion to Christian symbols, because what may be sacred to us as believers have been used as weapons against them.

As a result, the devil has built huge rifts and divisions between the two groups, especially through the bloodline that only now the grace and mercy of G-d could possibly touch and heal, which is the plan of the Father at this time to bring His body together.

“For G-d has bound everyone over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all” (Rom. 11:32), and this has certainly been the case between the Jew and the Gentile.

Nor is Israel innocent either, who actually initiated the first persecutions. However, the church more than made up for it over the centuries. But G-d wants to heal the divides, the misunderstandings, the judgments, the hatred, the jealousies, and to clean the bloodline from our ancestral past so we can receive the Father’s love for this momentous task to help awaken Israel spiritually and see it restored. And nothing short of this will do, because we cannot love Israel in our own strength, as history has already clearly demonstrated.

Rather, we need the supernatural love of the Father to unite us, so that G-d’s spiritual family between Jew and Gentile can finally come together and that our L-rd can return to the earth and take full dominion. For this cannot happen until they say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the L-rd” (Matt. 23:39).

And who is going stand in the gap for them, that the Spirit of G-d may be released and breathed into them, that this may actually take place? Have we missed something significant here? For surely at this point, the first shall be last.

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to

them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Rom. 10:14-15).

It's Likened Unto a Wedding

The best way I can describe this whole relationship between Jew and Gentile is likened unto a wedding ceremony. We know from Scripture that Yeshua/Jesus is the bridegroom and that His body between Jew and Gentile is His bride, for whom He is coming back when He returns. And when the bride walks down the aisle, she is absolutely beautiful, and everything is glorious and wonderful, as it should be.

However, the hour before the ceremony, there is pandemonium, and everything is going wrong. This is the current state of Jew/Gentile relations that G-d has now decided to focus upon to release His mercy to bring forth healing and reconciliation, that we can truly become brethren in the Spirit so the end may finally come. What a glorious picture for the Father and for the end-time church (the other children in His family) to help take on the burden to reawaken Israel (His firstborn children), that we may become one and rule and reign with Christ when He returns!

My first book, *The New Covenant Prophecy*, addresses my own bloodline issues as a Jewish person coming to faith and the challenges G-d had to help me overcome. It's a fascinating read and will help you better connect with the Jewish mindset that we must learn to better understand in the hope of winning Israel back to faith.

As we enter the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), let the trumpet sound into the heart and soul of the church to awaken to its firstborn brethren to the call of unity in the family of G-d and say, "Israel, come forth!"

For part 1, click here. Stay tuned for part 3 in early October.

Grant Berry is a Jewish believer in Yeshua/Jesus and author of *The New Covenant Prophecy and The Ezekiel Generation*. He has founded *Reconnecting Ministries* with the specific focus to help the church reconnect spiritually to Israel and considers it vital to the kingdom of G-d in the last days. His message focuses on the unity, love and healing that the Father wants to bring between Jew and Gentile yet clearly points out the differences and misunderstandings between the two groups. Now is the time to look more carefully into this mystery to make way for healing and reconnection in the Spirit. For more information, please visit .

Daily Aspirin: It's Not for Everyone

Aspirin, the 100-year-old painkiller that's in almost every medicine cabinet in America, has been hailed by many doctors as a "miracle drug" that prevents many deadly diseases, including heart attack, cancer and Alzheimer's.

Some medical professionals advise that almost everyone should take a baby aspirin (81 mg) daily. Other experts believe that daily aspirin shouldn't be a blanket recommendation.

But should you take aspirin? The answer may lie in your specific health situation.

First, let's take a look at aspirin's benefits:

- **Heart attack.** Harvard Medical School experts say aspirin helps prevent heart attacks in people with coronary artery disease and also in healthy men over the age of 50. According to the National Center for Health

Promotion and Disease Prevention, aspirin lowers the risk of a first heart attack by 32 percent in men. Most experts believe aspirin does this by slightly thinning the blood, thus lowering the risk of clots.

- **Stroke.** The National Heart Foundation reported a study that found those who took aspirin reduced their risk of having a stroke by 25 percent.
- **Cancer.** A Harvard study found that women with early-stage breast cancer who took aspirin were half as likely to see their cancer spread and half as likely to die from the disease. A recent study from the American Cancer Society found that aspirin use reduced cancer deaths by up to 37 percent. Other studies have found that aspirin cuts the risk of prostate, colon, skin and lung cancer.
- **Dementia.** A study of more than 3,000 Utah citizens found that those who took aspirin, Advil or ibuprofen at least four times a week lowered their risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer's, by 45 percent. Researchers believe that aspirin's brain benefits are due either to its ability to reduce inflammation or its keeping dementia-causing amyloid plaques from forming.

Not for Everyone

Despite this overwhelming evidence, popping a daily aspirin is not for everyone, experts say. Certain people should stay away from regular aspirin use.

These include those taking blood-thinning drugs, such as Coumadin and Plavix; those at risk for gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding; and those with age-related macular degeneration, a common cause of blindness in seniors.

AMD Sufferers, Beware

Aspirin may cause excessive blood thinning and dangerous bleeding in people taking prescription blood thinners to

prevent clotting.

A study published last year in the journal *Ophthalmology* found that daily aspirin use more than doubles the risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

“It isn’t wise to recommend taking aspirin” for people with AMD, says William Christen of Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.

Biggest Danger

Stomach bleeding is most often cited as aspirin’s biggest danger.

“The number one cause of GI bleeding is aspirin,” David Brownstein, M.D., a leading holistic physician, tells Health Radar.

Peter Hibberd, M.D., says aspirin may not directly cause GI bleeding, but it may exacerbate bleeding that is already occurring.

“Normally, a baby aspirin isn’t going to set you up for an ulcer and cause bleeding in the bowel,” he says. “But if you have a small lesion, the aspirin may make the bleeding noticeable.”

This can actually be a good thing if the bleeding isn’t too serious and it alerts you to an underlying, untreated health problem, says Dr. Hibberd.

He usually recommends a daily aspirin for patients who have a history of heart attacks.

“If a patient doesn’t have heart problems but has high blood pressure or a family history of heart problems, they should probably take aspirin from the age of 40,” he says.

“It’s not a universal recommendation—there are exceptions,

such as if they are already taking a blood thinner. You should always seek the advice of your doctor.

“As a general rule, though, most people are going to benefit by taking a baby aspirin.”

For the original article, visit .

Nutrition 101 With the Almighty Professor

I hope y'all enjoyed a wonderful weekend of rest, relaxation and delicious, nutritious food!

Speaking of food, today I'd like to share a few fascinating things I discovered about the stuff back when I was writing my book *Fit for Faith*—namely, that creation truly does testify about its Creator. Romans 1:20 tells us that just about anything in nature can move us to worship if we regard its splendor long enough and thoughtfully consider its intricacies—even something as plain as a parsnip or common as a kidney bean.

During my last semester of college, I took a nutrition course that taught all about the vital nutrients found in fruits and vegetables as well as which diseases those nutrients help prevent and which bodily functions they facilitate. While studying for my first exam, I tried to cleverly devise an easy way to memorize which food did what. If only I'd known that many of the answers can be found in the food themselves!

If looking up at the night sky isn't enough to make you marvel at our Maker's handiwork, maybe you should try slicing open a

tomato. It turns out that a food's mere appearance indicates its importance to our bodies. The following chart illustrates a few examples:

Food	Appearance	Function
Tomato	Red, 4 chambers (like the human heart)	Contains lycopene, an inhibitor of heart disease.
Walnut	Looks like a brain with a left and right side and upper cerebrum and lower cerebellum. Even the wrinkles on the nut resemble the brain's neo-cortex.	Helps develop over three dozen neurotransmitters for brain function.
Celery, Bok Choy, Rhubarb	Look like bones	These vegetables are 23 percent sodium, just like bones. A lack of sodium in the diet forces the body to pull it from the bones, weakening them. These foods replenish the body's skeletal needs.
Grapes	Hang in a heart-shaped cluster, and each grape resembles a blood cell.	Contain flavonoids and phytonutrients that decrease risk of heart disease.
Kidney Beans	A no-brainer—these look like kidneys!	Heal and help maintain kidney function.
Sweet Potatoes	Look like the pancreas.	Balance the glycemic index within diabetics.

Eggplant, Pears, Avocados	Look like a woman's cervix and womb.	Balance hormones, help shed unwanted birth weight and prevent cervical cancer. It takes nine months to grow an avocado from blossom to ripened fruit!
Olives	Look like ovaries.	Assist the health and function of the ovaries.
Oranges, Grapefruits, Other Citrus Fruits	Resemble the mammary glands of females.	Assist breast health and the movement of lymph in and out of the breasts.
Carrots	A sliced carrot looks like the human eye.	Greatly enhance blood flow to the eyes.

Pretty amazing, isn't it? This knowledge gives us even more motivation to eat salads chock-full of garden goodness and to enjoy the sweetness of citrus on sweltering summer days. And how fun to know exactly what your pre-workout orange or post-workout sweet potato is doing for your body, besides providing energy and revving up your metabolism.

A Color-Coded Cornucopia

Not only can foods' looks give us a clue as to their function, but their colors advertise which vitamins and minerals they feature. I was definitely thankful to know this much while taking my nutrition class.

Color	Nutrients	Functions	Examples
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<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chlorophyll, calcium, folate, vitamin C, lutein, zeaxanthin</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reduce cancer risks, lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol levels, normalize digestion time, fight harmful free radicals, boost immune system activity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Green apples, arugula, asparagus, broccoli, lettuce, limes, avocados, zucchini, kiwifruit, green pears, leafy greens, green grapes, okra, peas, artichokes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Red</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lycopene, ellagic acid, Quercetin, Hesperidin</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lower blood pressure, reduce risk of prostate cancer, reduce tumor growth and LDL cholesterol levels, scavenge free radicals, support joint tissue in arthritis cases</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cherries, red apples, red bell peppers, guavas, red onions, red pears, strawberries, watermelons, tomatoes, red grapes, raspberries, radishes</p>

<p>Orange/Yellow</p>	<p>Beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, lycopene, potassium, flavonoids, vitamin C</p>	<p>Reduce age-related macular degeneration and the risk of prostate cancer, lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol levels, promote collagen formation and healthy joints, encourage alkaline balance, work with magnesium and calcium to build healthy bones, fight harmful free radicals</p>	<p>Sweet potatoes, pumpkin, oranges, carrots, cantaloupe, papayas, peaches, mangos, pineapples, yellow beets, yellow peppers, yellow summer squash, yellow tomatoes, sweet corn, tangerines, yellow apples, rutabagas</p>
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<p>Blue/Purple</p>	<p>Zeaxanthin, lutein, vitamin C, fiber, flavonoids, Quercetin, ellagic acid</p>	<p>Support retinal health, lower LDL cholesterol levels, boost immune system activity, support healthy digestion, improve calcium and other mineral absorption, fight inflammation, reduce tumor growth, limit the activity of cancer cells, act as anticarcinogens in the digestive tract</p>	<p>Blueberries, blackberries, eggplant, purple grapes, pomegranates, prunes, raisins, purple figs</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>Beta-glucans, EGCG, lignans</p>	<p>Provide powerful immune-boosting activity, activate natural killer B and T cells, reduce the risk of colon, breast, and prostate cancers, balance hormone levels, reduce risk of hormone-related cancers</p>	<p>Cauliflowers, dates, jicama, bananas, parsnips, potatoes, Jerusalem artichokes, shallots, white corn, white peaches, white nectarines</p>

So next time you're in doubt in the buffet line, pretend your plate is an artist's palette and load on the colors! After all, God said you were a masterpiece (Ps. 139:14)!

Fit Fact: To save money, buy foods that are in season and grown locally.

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

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

What's to Love About Being a Dad?

Being a dad is one of the toughest jobs in the world. It ranks right up there with being a husband. Let's say they are No. 1a and No. 1b. Wouldn't you agree?

But both have their perks. There aren't many things, if any, that can provide as much joy. If you have never been in love before, once you become a dad, it all changes.

1. You get to be a kid again. Remember when you were a kid and you always wanted to be a grown-up? Your parents may have looked at you and said, "Enjoy being a kid." Well, when you have kids, that big kid inside comes out, and you get to experience all those fun kid experiences again. I always say I am still a kid ... just a kid with responsibilities.

2. Being a dad keeps you young. Although you may not have realized it, there was a time when you were not only aging,

but you were acting and feeling like it. Your music choices changed, and you were unaware of a lot of things going on around you. When you become a dad, you quickly get up to speed on the newest things. You find yourself knowing what's hot and what's not, just so you can understand your kids a little better.

3. You find out how much you can love someone else. How often has your kid been sick and you wished you could trade places with them? When you are a dad, you have more than one heartbeat. You have yours and your kid's. When they hurt, you hurt. But when they have joy, you probably have more joy than they do.

4. You grow as a person more than you ever have. When our first child was born, I felt like I grew up overnight. Hanging out with the fellas and dragging into work the next day went out the door. Spending money like it was guaranteed to replenish itself the next month was no longer acceptable. Being the man I was at that point was not good enough to be the dad I wanted to be. My process of intentional growth began.

5. You become a hero—instantly. When my youngest son looks at me now, he doesn't see my flaws. In fact, he probably sees me as invincible. When something scares him, he runs to me. When he wants something, he runs to me. (Well, sometimes he goes to my wife.) When he wants to play, he asks me to play. To our kids we are heroes, even when we mess things up.

6. You have the opportunity to pour into your kids. Your kids depend upon you to not just provide, but to teach them about life. You get the opportunity to train them up "in the way they should go" like the Bible says. What a great privilege and opportunity that is!

7. You get to hope someone is way better than you. Up until this point, your life may have focused on making yourself No.

1. But when you have kids, your focus shifts to hoping, helping and doing whatever you can to make sure they become better than you. And not just a little better, but way better!

There are so many things to love about being a dad. What do you love most about it?

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**.

5 Ways to Filter What You Say

I've often shared about the power of the tongue—how it can be used for good or evil. I recently thought about some filters our words should have to pass through before they come out of our mouths. If they don't make it through all of these five filters, then they probably should never be spoken.

1. Do I have good motives? Is my reason for saying it beneficial to the listener or only made for selfish purposes? I have to be careful on this one. There have been many times in my life that I've said something that is very true, but I only said it so someone will be impressed with me or because I was trying to manipulate them to do something for me.

2. Does it build up? Words are not neutral. They either tear down or build up. They are either hurtful or helpful. It makes

me sad that I've let my hurtful words toward my wife and children pass through this filter all too often.

3. Is it confidential? Growing up, my dad stressed to me the importance of confidentiality. If someone tells me something in confidence, my job is to make sure I don't ever mention it to another person.

4. If the person I am speaking about was present, would they be pleased with my words? You've heard this one before, but it's always worth remembering. We should always honor other people whether they are with us or not.

5. Is it true? Truth trumps all. If it's not true, don't say it.

Many of us have struggled with one or more of these filters. And, of course, none of us regularly pass our words through all of them. But these filters will hopefully guard our tongues from speaking evil and, instead, give us the freedom to speak good into people's lives.

Which of these filters is toughest for you? I'd love to hear your thoughts. Please share them below.

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [here](#).

Israelis, Gas Masks and Looming War in Syria

For the first time since we moved to Israel 10 years ago, I felt the need to dust off the gas mask and see how it worked. It was the first time I actually felt this information would

be useful.

Having seen the gruesome pictures of the results of chemical warfare coming out of Syria, I pulled the gas mask out of its box and strapped it on. A family friend gave me a quick lesson, but still I could sense that air was seeping through.

After wearing the mask a few minutes, I tried to imagine breathing in this thing for several hours. Knowing the impatience of Israelis, I am sure there are many who will never don such a contraption.

Despite that, thousands of Israelis stood in line last week in near-100-degree weather to get a gas mask. The mad rush revealed a shortage in inventory that enraged Israelis. My cohost of the Maoz podcast went to get one for his new wife and came home empty-handed.

Presently, President Obama has backed away from his threat to bomb Syria without Congress (or the rest of the world)—a wise decision, considering the Constitution declares that the president needs congressional backing before going to war.

And why now? Is this not the same president who criticized George W. Bush for going to war in Iraq because of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat? It would appear that his reasoning (in private) for striking Syria would be to save face, as he threatened over a year ago that using WMDs would be crossing a red line.

Now the world is mocking the president, and he nearly caved in to that pressure to use military action. Who's the cowboy now, Mr. President? Fortunately, he had a change of heart Friday night.

The U.S. doesn't go to war because our president is offended. That would be Syria, Iran and many of their neighbors. When Obama saw the world was viewing him as weak, losing the support of Great Britain—and now France—and having Putin call

him out, he nearly made an unconstitutional blunder. Sometimes it takes more courage to step back.

His big mistake was setting up "red lines" for Syria in the first place. If he intended to retaliate against Syria, he should have already had a Congress-approved plan in place. But going it alone, without even the support of your own country, would have been foolish.

While we here in Israel would love see the people of Syria set free from the dictator Bashar Assad and a democracy rise up in its place, there are many questions to be asked before bombing Syria simply because you want to save face:

- Who will replace him?
- Who are the rebels? There is evidence to suggest that the original freedom-seeking rebels have been overrun by al-Qaida-type radicals.
- Is it worth sending a few missiles into Syria if then Assad is provoked to bomb Israel in retaliation? And if we retaliate, could that not unite Arab nations against us? Does Obama want to risk creating a regional conflict just so he won't be mocked?
- While it seems clear chemical weapons were used, it is possible they were used by rebels to make it appear Assad used them. If indeed the rebels are being led by Hamas-type radicals, their brand of Islam would have no qualms with killing 1,500 Syrians for the "greater good."
- There is another theory: The Saudis provided the rebels with chemical weapons. I am not sure how credible it is, but it is backed up by Associated Press correspondent Dale Gavlak. Quoting a well-known leader in Ghouta, Gavlak writes, "They ... used some ordinary rebels to carry and operate this material. ... We were very curious about these arms. And unfortunately, some of the fighters handled the weapons improperly and set off the explosions." If this is true, then the Saudis have

pulled off a real coup—although ruthless. Their goal would be for Assad to fall and be replaced with a Saudi-friendly Islamic government. (While this seems plausible, I think there needs to be more verification than just one reporter on the ground. And with France and NATO now claiming “proof Assad was behind chemical weapons attack,” this theory seems more unlikely.)

My daughter, who serves the Israel Defense Forces on the Syrian border, asked me yesterday why Assad would use chemical weapons, risking retaliation from the West, especially since he is winning the civil war. I told her there are two reasons that come to mind:

1. He knows (or thinks) Obama won't retaliate, and there is nothing that makes an Arab leader look like a hero more than thumbing your nose at and standing up to America or Israel. Just yesterday the Syrians, after hearing that Obama will take his time in responding, mocked the U.S. president in the Syrian press, giving credence to this theory. As one newspaper put it, “The state-run newspaper Al-Thawra, expressing official thinking, said Obama's turn-about on military action was ‘the start of the historic American retreat.’”
2. He is seeking to turn this into a regional conflict between Israel and the Muslim nations to take pressure off the fact that his country is in a civil war that has claimed over 100,000 lives—mostly civilians.

Of course, when dealing with demon-possessed murdering dictators, it is hard to know what they are thinking or not thinking. Demon-possessed folks don't reason like we do. The good news for us here in Tel Aviv is that we have the promises of God, the best-trained army in the world (and one of the best soldiers, Danielle Cantor) and my trusty gas mask!

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message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cantor also travels internationally teaching on the Jewish roots of the New Testament. He serves on the pastoral team of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. His newest book, Identity Theft, was released April 16. Follow him at @RonSCantor on Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

5 Tips on How to Avoid Heart Surgery

Here are 5 Tips to help you avoid the operating table:

In some cases, there is little or no way for a person to avoid heart surgery or bypass surgery. However, for most people, diet and lifestyle changes can ensure that you will never need these devices. Here are my five favorite tips for avoiding the operating table:

1. Bid farewell to eating red meat. Researchers who tracked the eating habits of 110,000 adults for 20 years found that just one 3-ounce serving of meat (about the size of a deck of cards) was associated with a 13 percent greater risk of death. People who ate processed meat such as hot dogs or bacon fared even worse.

2. For a healthy snack, try popcorn. Researchers have found that the hulls of popcorn are rich in polyphenols, antioxidants that prevent cell damage. They are also 100 percent whole grain. Popcorn is also rich in fiber, which makes it filling. Just be sure to enjoy the unbuttered, unsalted variety.

3. Indulge in chocolate. A new study shows that people who eat chocolate have a lower body mass index than those who don't. While the researchers were at a loss to explain the difference, they noted that chocolate is rich in antioxidants, and also may help boost metabolism. For best results choose a type that is at least 80 percent dark chocolate, and just enjoy a square or two a day.

4. Get enough sleep. Study after study shows that a lack of sleep is linked with heart disease. Sleep is also imperative if you are trying to lose weight. A new study conducted at the Mayo Clinic showed that healthy people overate an average of 550 calories when they were sleep deprived.

5. Pray daily. Regular readers know I am a devout believer in the power of prayer. But I am not the only one who finds prayer powerful. Recently, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine looked at 100 studies over the past century, and found that 79 of them showed that those who had a spiritual practice experienced significantly greater wellbeing, life satisfaction, and happiness. The bottom line: Pursue God now; it will change your health and your life.

Just adding these five steps to your daily routine can greatly affect your cardiovascular health in a positive way. So help "bypass" heart surgery by starting on a heart healthy diet and lifestyle today.

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message of hope to all his heart patients.

To get Dr. Chauncey Crandall's monthly newsletter, [click here](#).