

Should Gentiles Keep Torah: Part 2

Last week's blog received more attention than any blog I have written since the one on the fact that Israeli teachers don't carry firearms in schools. There were more than 200 comments on Facebook, plus lots of *likes* and *shares*. *Charisma* posted it on both its news and magazine sites as well. I had no idea that the topic would attract such interest.

But not all of the response was favorable. One self-proclaimed authority, with an alarming number of followers, wrote me and said:

"REPENT and start teaching the TRUTH: TORAH to the NATIONS. You are a FALSE teacher. Just as is Michael Brown and every other Messianic Jewish rabbi who teaches like you."

Just in case I was not taking him seriously enough, he sent me another message, stating his credentials:

"I am a Levite Cohein. I read Torah and ALL of Scripture in Hebrew, not English. I teach from Hebrew. You would do well to learn from my teachings ... Read my WRITTEN teachings. They will blow you away and astound you ..."

Confident? Yes. Humble? Hmmm

Well, first of all, it is an honor to be included in the ranks of the foremost Messianic Jewish apologist in the world, Dr. Michael Brown. Secondly, anyone who uses ALL CAPS that much, should NOT be taken seriously.

He was not the only one that responded in disagreement. The arguments went like this: *Yeshua told us to make disciples, to teach His commands, Yeshua kept the Torah and said He did not come to take it away, so "clearly" we must teach Gentiles to*

keep all of the Torah, as there is one law for all people. Other passages were quoted regarding the alien living amongst Israel—that they were also expected to keep the Torah in ancient times.

Let's Deal With the Alien Passage

This is shoddy scholarship at best, that picks and chooses passages that seem to support their theology, while excluding others. The One Law Movement seems to have key Scriptures that appear to prove their point, regardless of context or full exegesis, no different from *Jesus Only Baptism* movements or even Mormons, who memorize specific verses for purposes of outreach—without really being familiar with the Scriptures.

For instance, one verse pointed out to me over and over by probably more than a dozen people was:

“One Torah shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.” (Ex. 12:49)

Seems clear until you look at it in context.

1. It is referring to those in Egypt who left with the Israelites. These were non-Hebrews who became convinced, probably during the Ten Plagues, that it was time to hightail it out of Egypt. (Ex. 12:38) They recognized that Yahweh was God and united with the Hebrews. The Hebrew word (אֲרָם) translated stranger or alien, can also mean convert in Modern Hebrew.

In other words, they were non-Hebrews *seeking to be one* with the Israelites. God was merely saying, *okay, if you want to be part of my people, you have to go all the way.*

2. The One Law folks (or at least the ones who responded to my blog) seem to entirely miss v. 48, which sheds great understanding on v. 49.

“And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the

Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it" (Ex. 12:48).

We see here that in context it is referring to non-Jews who were living amongst Israel wanting to keep the Passover. So the inference is that non-Jews living amongst them could choose not to keep the Passover, and not be circumcised nor required to adhere to all ceremonial customs in Torah.

3. But even looking at v. 49 alone, "*One Torah shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you*" it is clear that is not referring to the entire Gentile world, but those "who dwell among" Israel; who live in an Israeli community. I doubt that even one person who challenged me lives here in Israel! Or, is even part of a Messianic Jewish community!

A Fundamental Change

Nevertheless, as stated in the previous blog, there was a fundamental change after Acts 15, that permitted fellowship among believing Jews and Gentiles without the Gentiles being expected to follow all of the Torah. This was a revelation from God to the Apostles. Paul refers to the fact that the Nations are heirs together with Israel as a *mystery* in Ephesians 3.

With the coming of the New Covenant, there is a change of relationship between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Since the New Testament teaches specifically on the relationship of Jew and Gentile in the new reality of the body of believers, we cannot simply transfer the practices of pre-Yeshua times into the New Covenant period. (Dr. Daniel C. Juster)

While I have fought long and hard against Replacement Theology (the Church is the New Israel), there were some changes

between the Old and New Covenants. Under the Old Covenant non-Jews who wanted to be part of the people of Israel had to convert to Judaism. By the leading of the Holy Spirit, this was changed in Acts 10 and 15, and restated in Acts 21:

“But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality” (Acts 21:25, emphasis mine).

Let me state again, Gentiles believers are free to be circumcised, keep the feasts, keep kosher and embrace all 613 laws identified in traditional Judaism. (To be clear, many of the laws are impossible to keep today—such as laws for owning slaves or making sacrifices, laws for the Levites and priests, laws for making war, and ones that only apply to a Theocratic state, etc.) But once we start *compelling* non-Jewish believers to do such things as God’s *perfect plan*, we head off into error.

What’s the Big Deal

“What do you care Ron, if Gentiles feel compelled to keep Torah?”

This is an important question. Messianic Jews are often accused of going back *under the Law*. We are often misunderstood in our desire to both serve Yeshua (enjoying the FREE gift of God, not obtained by keeping the Law) and live as Jews according to Torah.

It is very unhelpful to our cause, and the cause of the Lord, for non-Jews and even some misguided Messianic Jews, to pressure Gentile believers to do what so clearly the apostles told them was not required.

I can’t tell you how many times I have encountered people with only a peripheral knowledge of Messianic Judaism, who assume

that we want them to live as Jews. I get emails regularly, hearing stories of families split because one member decides not merely to keep the Sabbath, but goes on to condemn the rest of the family for not. That is why this is a big deal.

Next week, I will post 13 points displaying the error of the One Law Movement. To be clear, I am not saying that these folks are not *in the fold*. Other than a few crack pots, most of them love Yeshua and want to please Him. While in my opinion, this error needs to be addressed, I am by no means saying that those who embrace the One Law theology are not believers.

Let us continue to strive for truth.

Part 1 is here.

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

When Out of Control, God Can Anchor Your Emotions

A lady recently wrote to me about the turmoil going on in her life. She described her emotional state as “like waves tossed to and fro.”

Sounds like a lot of moving, doesn't it? Anxiety can cause emotional instability and when you are unstable, you are most likely to make decisions that you will regret later.

Thinking about her description, I also remembered the Scripture from James 1:5-8. In the first part of the Scripture, he advises us to ask God for wisdom. But then, he gives a warning:

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

So this lady's description of her emotional state as like "waves tossed to and fro" tells me that doubt is ruling her mind at the moment. Boy have I been there!

I used to be particularly vulnerable to this emotion around income tax season. Because I am self-employed, I reacted with fear, anxiety and worry over any potential tax bill.

But a few years ago—when I felt my old emotional reactions rise up—something even stronger rose up inside me at the same time. It was like a big stop sign that brought those feelings to a halt by commanding, "Stop. You are not going there."

This new determination to control my emotions surprised me. And you know what? It felt great!

In that moment, I was determined to set my mind on faith. I would be single-minded. I was determined to trust the situation to God no matter how I felt according to Psalm 55:22: "Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved."

God taught me something important during that experience: "Faith is a supernatural act."

I recently studied the story again of how God commanded the Israelites to go in to possess the Promised Land (see Numbers, chapter 13). Unfortunately, they chose to do the natural thing: They looked at the giants in the land and compared themselves to them. And because they saw themselves smaller in comparison, they reacted with fear and refused to do what God called them to do.

If you limit your mind to the natural, then you narrow the options that God has to change your situation. But if you elevate your mind to the supernatural realm through faith, then you are able to take action based on confidence in God's care for you.

So keep in mind: When you become single-minded, keeping your mind stayed on God's word and refuse to be moved, then you open the door for God to move in supernatural ways on your behalf!

This content was excerpted from Kimberly Taylor's new book The Anxiety Relief Scriptures.

Kimberly Taylor is the author of The Anxiety Relief Scriptures, The Weight Loss Scriptures and many other books. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify of God's goodness and healing power. Visit and receive more free health and weight-loss tips.

Struggling Marriage Remedy: How to Be a Hero at Home

Every young sports fan dreams of being a professional athlete—the physique, fame and fortune. Unfortunately, when we

pick up the sports page or log on to the Web, we see on a regular basis that not all athletes are as strong at home as they are on the field.

That's because there's one more thing that often accompanies professional athletic success: adoring women.

Sex scandals have taken down some of the most amazing athletes and their marriages. Sitting atop of their game, many athletes don't know how to deal with the adoration of women, and fall to a lack of self-control and/or short-term memory loss. Then POOF—their marriage is in shambles, reputation tainted, costly divorce proceedings, and the media hyenas eat up the infidelity stories until there is nothing left on the bone.

You might be surprised to know, however, I don't think the No. 1 threat to marriage is infidelity. Of course, cheating can certainly cause divorce and make it extremely difficult to recover a healthy marriage. And, yes, I agree women can be highly tempting, but they are merely accomplices—because the hunger for power, money, fame and success can also consume a man and wreck a marriage.

I think the No. 1 threat to marriage is *ourselves*.

You are a target and under constant attack. Your character and integrity are vulnerable, especially if you're not aware of the battle going on in your life—the spiritual battle to destroy you or deliver you.

In Ephesians 6:10-12, the apostle Paul writes that God's man needs to "be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." If you don't suit up for the real battle being waged for control of your energy and expression don't expect to win it.

So how does a God's man protect against the No. 1 threat to marriage? Be a hero at home. Here's how:

1. Power up. Paul writes to "be strong in the Lord" which means to seek God, know God and obey His word. There's power in knowing scripture and doing His will.

2. Protect your spiritual self. Paul says to put on "the full armor of God," describing it and our weapons in Ephesians 6:14-17.

3. Pray on all occasions. In verse 18, Paul says to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." Even in the midst of temptation, we should pray.

4. Partner up. I believe God's man need accountability from other men who can honestly discuss the challenges we face and offer loving guidance.

5. Join the program. We need to have the mindset that we are in a "character-development program." With that focus, knowing God is interested in molding us to His image, we should look at tests and temptations through the corrective lens of God's love and plan for our lives. We need to emulate the ultimate model, who is always faithful and keeps His promises—God.

6. Pump up with practice. Practice making good decisions in your daily walk with God to pump up your spiritual muscles and avoid your carnal weaknesses. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, the Bible says, "Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." That takes practice.

I'm not saying marriage is easy. It takes work, communication, courageous love and perseverance. But, if we work on ourselves as much as we work on the marriage, there will be great earthly and heavenly reward.

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the

Lord has promised to those who love him," says James 1:12.

Are you struggling with your marriage, or know someone who is? Click [here](#) for material by Luck that will encourage and equip you to be her hero at home.

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

What Is a Key Indicator of Your Overall Health?

Posture has always been viewed as a key indicator of overall health. We usually associate good posture with beauty, confidence, youth and vitality—and for good reason.

According to the *American Journal of Pain Management*, "Posture affects and moderates every physiological function, from breathing to nervous system function ... Spinal pain, headache, mood, blood pressure, pulse and lung capacity are among the functions most easily influenced by posture ... To live a long, active, energetic life, few things matter more than good posture."

In the long run, good posture may be as important to your health as nutrition, sleep and exercise. Your body simply functions better with good posture. You will experience less pain, less fatigue and fewer long-term health problems. If you spend hours working behind a desk, imagine the gain in productivity, as well as the potential decrease in back and neck problems.

How's Your Posture?

Here's an easy way to examine your current posture. First,

look in the mirror and notice if your ears, eyes, shoulders and hands are level. Second, stand with your head, back, buttocks and heels against a flat wall. There should only be about an inch of space between the wall and your neck or lower back. Finally, let another person view you from the side. If you were to hang a string from the middle of your ear down to the floor, it should form a straight line down through your shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. If you notice problems with your posture, consult your physician or chiropractor. Bad posture is too serious to ignore.

Causes and Prevention

Bad posture has many causes: bad mattresses, unhealthy shoes, poor sleeping habits, poorly designed work environments, improper lifting, sitting too long, obesity, negative self-image—just to list a few. And it only worsens with age. Here are some tips for maintaining good posture.

- While sitting at work, keep your buttocks and back against the back of your chair. Keep your feet flat but elevated so your lower thighs are raised slightly above your seat. Your desk should be at elbow level and your computer screen high enough so you are not bending your neck very far forward.
- Use a similar position while driving. Don't sit on your wallet for long periods and consider placing a small pillow behind your lower back for support.
- Stand up and do a minute or so of stretching at least every 30 minutes while sitting.
- While sleeping on your back or side, your head should be level with your spine. A small pillow will accomplish this. Avoid thick pillows and saggy mattresses. To help maintain the appropriate curves, consider using a small pillow under your knees or lower back. Avoid sleeping on your stomach.
- Practice exercises that strengthen your core abdomen and pelvic muscles.

- Finally, discuss with your doctor any possible needs for calcium or vitamin D supplements.

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

How Not to Miss the Moments With Your Kids

What will you think 5, 10, or 15 years from now when your kids have grown and left your home? Will you—or your kids—have regrets on the moments you missed?

I remember how our 7-year-old used to give us the peace sign when he was younger. He'd put up his pinky finger and his ring finger. Instead of trying to correct him, we captured it with our camera knowing he'd learn the "correct" peace sign later. It was a simple, yet fun, moment that always takes us back.

I also remember our daughter talking and talking and talking right as we were tucking her in to bed at night. That was her moment to talk about any random thing that came to mind. Now when it is bedtime, she would rather not say a word. Those conversations were precious and I admit I sometimes wish she would talk our heads off now at bed time.

If you are in the same boat as me, you may be wondering, "How do I not miss any more moments? How do I experience as much as

I possibly can with my kids?"

1. Begin with the end in mind. Steven Covey taught us in his book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, to begin with the end in mind. Have a clear picture in your mind of what a future day will look like. This may take you right to the moment of truth when your kids leave. Doing so will make you evaluate your choices at the point of a decision to spend time with your kids.

2. Make them a priority. One of the things you should see when beginning with the end in mind is the relationship you will have with your kids in the future. Keeping that in mind will encourage you to make your time together today a priority.

3. Plan things. Writing things down has proven to be an effective way to make something happen. Set aside some predetermined times to spend with your kids. Mark the dates in your calendar and make them non-negotiable. Have your kids do the same if they are old enough to keep track of their schedule and calendar.

4. Do them. It does no good if you do not follow through. You will do more damage than good if you plan it and don't do it. Remember the quote, "Do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, in the best way it can be done, and do it like this every time." When it is time to hang with your kids, do it, do it now, do it to the fullest, and put it on repeat.

5. Capture them. Cell phone cameras, digital cameras, and digital video cameras give you many ways to capture the moments with your kids. Don't be afraid to snap and snap away. Part of the fun of these moments is reliving them later in pictures and conversation.

How do you make sure you don't miss moments with your kids?

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**.*

Is Hamas the Loser in a Game of Middle East Upheaval?

In the shifting sands of the tumultuous Middle East, Hamas, the Palestinian terror group in control of the Gaza Strip, has found itself in an increasingly precarious position.

Feared for its massive arsenal of rockets and trained jihadis, the terror group is today also facing isolation and internal discord. With its Muslim Brotherhood allies on the run in Egypt, strained relations with former benefactors in Iran and Syria, and an increasingly technologically savvy Israeli enemy, the terror organization—while still dangerous—is facing a perfect storm of problems that threatens to undermine its power.

“While one cannot currently, say Islamist groups like Hamas are completely down and out, the removal of [Mohamed] Morsi’s government in Egypt and the subsequent crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood leadership, as well as the Muslim on Muslim fighting in Syria, together create serious problems for Hamas,” Matthew Levitt, senior fellow and director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institution for Near East Policy, told .

For many years, Hamas relied on Iran and its partners, Syria and Hezbollah, for military hardware such as rocket missiles, terrorist training, and financial support. It is estimated that Hamas at one point received up to \$250 million annually from Iran. But all that changed following exiled Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal's decision to close the Hamas office in Damascus in early 2012 and to pursue support from Sunni powers such as Turkey, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, all of which were on the rise at the time.

Today, analysts believe Iran's aid to Hamas has been significantly reduced following the two parties' fallout over Syria.

The relationship between Sunni Hamas and Shi'a Iran has always been united around their mutual hatred of Israel. In a region that is increasingly split between Sunni and Shi'a forces, Hamas somehow managed to bridge the deep theological divide between the two major Islamic sects. But in today's increasingly polarized Middle East, with Sunni and Shi'a forces squared off in a bloody battle for the future of Syria and further tensions in Lebanon, Iraq, and in the Persian Gulf, Hamas has become the odd man out.

"They [Hamas] are now largely isolated. They don't have Egypt or Syria and their relationship with Hezbollah and Iran is deeply strained, though not completely broken," Levitt told .

But in light of the changes in the Middle East, Hamas may be rethinking its strained relations with Iran.

"Qatar, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Sunni allies are not capable of supporting Hamas like Iran," Levitt said.

Qatar reportedly pledged more than \$400 million to Hamas in October 2012 during a visit to Gaza by Qatar's ruling emir at the time, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. Hamad, however, abdicated in June, and his son and successor, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has been less receptive to Hamas and the

Muslim Brotherhood. Rumors are that he expelled leaders of both organizations, Mashaal and Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, in late June during the Egyptian protests against the Muslim Brotherhood.

Turkey, another budding Sunni ally of Hamas, has also seen its fortunes fade under the leadership of Islamist Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The once-close Turkish-Israeli relationship has not recovered from the blow of the 2010 Gaza flotilla incident, as a result of Erdogan's steadfast support of Hamas, strong criticism of Israel's policies towards the Palestinians, and conspiracy theories such as his recent comment that Israel was behind the overthrow of Morsi in Egypt.

But the tide has changed in Turkey. Popular protests against Erdogan and his Islamist Freedom and Justice Party in early June reduced the prime minister's clout. Meanwhile, attempts by Erdogan to visit Gaza have been reportedly thwarted by Egyptian military authorities, who are upset over Erdogan's criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood's ouster.

While deteriorating relations with Qatar and Turkey have been setbacks for Hamas, by far the hardest pill to swallow has been its jihadi parent company's ouster from power in Egypt. Founded in 1988 as an offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas has always looked to the group for ideological inspiration. But Egypt's former secular President Hosni Mubarak, and his predecessors Anwar Sadat and Gamal Nasser, considered the Muslim Brotherhood—and by extension, Hamas—a top enemy. With Mubarak's removal in February 2011 and the election of the Muslim Brotherhood's Morsi in Egypt, Hamas believed it finally had a partner next door.

Under Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood promised Hamas that it would allow them to open an office in Cairo and ease border controls between Gaza and Egypt. But with Morsi's ouster and the crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood by the Egyptian

military, Hamas has been cut off. The Egyptian military is also deeply concerned with lawlessness in the Sinai Peninsula and has held Hamas accountable for the support of jihadi groups there.

According to reports, Hamas has been careful in its response to the situation in Egypt. It has not held any large-scale rallies in support of the Muslim Brotherhood, despite the offensive recently launched against the group.

Within Hamas, there has also been a debate over the future of the organization. Long-time exiled leader Khaled Mashaal sought to distance the group from Iran and align more with Sunni powers and the Muslim Brotherhood, whereas Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh called for more focus on Gaza. Meanwhile, other Hamas leaders such as Hamas's former envoy to Iran, Imad al-Alami, have insisted on a rapprochement with Iran.

In late July, Hamas representatives met with Iranian and Hezbollah officials in Beirut, the London-based Arab daily *Ashraq al-Awsat* reported.

"It is in the interest of Hamas today to revise its rapport with Iran and Hezbollah for many reasons," Hani Habib, a political analyst based in the Gaza Strip, told *Reuters*. "At the end of the day, all the parties have an interest in this partnership."

Iran, however, has made it clear that Hamas needs to fully revise its stance on Syria if it would like to be welcomed back into the Shi'a resistance club.

Domestically, Hamas may also be feeling the heat in Gaza. Despite its jihadist credentials, Hamas has long been a target of Islamic Jihad, another smaller Palestinian terror group, as well as ultraconservative Al-Qaeda inspired Salafi groups, who ironically consider Hamas too moderate and seek to replace Hamas with their own Islamic-style emirate in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Tamarod, the Egyptian movement that led to the protests and eventual ouster of Morsi, has recently set its sights on Hamas.

“It is time we rejected death forcibly under Hamas’ pretext of security. Our people, regardless of their political and even religious affiliations, have been targeted by their criminality,” a statement from the group declared. The group explicitly accused Hamas of murder, torture, sabotage, bribes, vandalism and smuggling, *Ma’an News Agency* reported.

Tamarod has called for Nov. 11 to be an official day of protests against Hamas.

“There is lot of public discontent with Hamas in the Gaza Strip,” Levitt told .

With the restart of Israeli-Palestinian conflict negotiations, which are being conducted with Hamas’s archrival, the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority, Hamas may be able to play the role of spoiler, launching rockets or terrorist attacks against Israel in hopes of derailing peace—a familiar role harkening back to the 1990s.

But last fall, Israel launched an eight-day air offensive known as Operation Pillar of Defense on Hamas in response to Hamas rockets that were terrorizing southern Israel. An Israeli airstrike at the beginning of the campaign left one of Hamas’s top operatives, Ahmed al-Jabri, dead.

Unlike previous engagements with Hamas, Israeli ground forces did not enter the Gaza Strip. Many analysts credit Israel’s groundbreaking Iron Dome anti-missile system for reducing Israeli civilian casualties, and thus alleviating pressure on Israeli leaders to launch a more comprehensive ground campaign. The Iron Dome, according to the *New York Times*, has shot down more than 400 Hamas rockets with an 85-percent success rate, effectively neutralizing Hamas’s primary weapon against Israel.

“It is not clear that Hamas is in the position to cause as much trouble as it once did. It has missiles and rockets to fire, but they also know it will be on the receiving end of strong Israeli response,” Levitt told .

is an independent, non-profit, business resource and wire service covering Jewish news and Israel news for Jewish media throughout the English-speaking world.

For the original article, visit .

For Fathers, Being a Role Model is a 24/7/365 Job

Several dads I admire have gone out of their way to help other people.

For example, one dad took an eleven-day trip halfway across the world as part of an outreach project for his church. I learned that another dad spends a couple hours on many Friday evenings transporting supplies for a local soup kitchen. Maybe you do similar things.

They aren't doing these things for recognition from me or anyone else, but it struck me that they were modeling for their children even though in these cases they *didn't* take their kids along.

Don't get me wrong. Volunteering and helping others are important things to do *with our children*. Those hands-on experiences as a family can be powerful.

And I know that a family character-building experience or lesson isn't the only goal or even the best reason to do those

things. I hope we try to make a difference in our world and our communities because it's important to us; it's part of our character; it's the right thing to do.

If we can model altruistic values for our kids in the process, that's a great side-benefit, and it's one way *we can give our children a bigger vision of who we are.*

It goes hand-in-hand with one truth that all dads need to really grasp and live with every day: *we're always modeling.* Our children are constantly watching us and taking mental notes. They notice what we do, and it affects them big time. Our character is always "on stage," and that means we should be purposeful about what we do—and what we don't do.

So this is a reminder of something I'm coming back to more and more as the years pass: *your legacy is also made up of who you are when you're not with your kids.* They may not see everything you do, but they can learn a lot from hearing about what you do—from yourself and from others, and maybe even years after you're gone. All the things you do help to make up your character.

This applies to how you conduct yourself at work. Your integrity there is part of your legacy. Like with the two dads I mentioned, your efforts to make sacrifices to try and help others are also part of the picture. If you're a non-custodial dad or in another situation that doesn't allow you to be with your children as much as you'd like, I believe that keeping your poise and doing what's right when you're apart will still influence your children in some way. It's part of who you are.

Dad, I would challenge you to get involved in helping other people—and that can include mentoring a younger dad, investing in a child who needs a father figure, visiting someone who needs a friend, or something that we more commonly associate with "volunteering."

Do include your children in these efforts when you can. But

know that even when you don't, you're still modeling for them and creating a fuller picture of what a man and father can and should be.

You'll be showing your children that *some of the important things in life are bigger than you and your family*. You'll help take the focus off of your family's issues and desires, and make them more sensitive to other people's situations. With that bigger vision, your children will be more likely to get involved in serving others more. And when difficulties do come their way, your children will likely handle them with poise and confidence.

Dad, how have you seen your character—or your mistakes—copied by your children? And what effect did that have on you? Share your insights with other dads below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- As we start a new school year, help your child look for opportunities to help people or be part of a program that makes a positive difference. Rachel's Challenge is one good example.
- Are there areas where you need to recommit yourself to integrity? Maybe related to your job or money, or specific relationships? Make it a priority to really address those. (It all makes a difference in your fathering.)
- Take one or more of your children along when you run errands. They'll get plenty of chances to watch you and learn from how you interact in different situations.
- Here are five virtues to focus on, where your modeling has extraordinary power: honesty, respect for others, humility, self-control, and being willing to admit you're wrong.
- What are you modeling at your child's sports events and other performances? Is winning or doing well more important than affirming high character?

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers who to make the Championship Fathering Commitment.

For the original article, visit .

How to Take Tiny Steps to Self-Discipline

Are you struggling with self-discipline in your health habits? Consider the wise advice given in Proverbs 4:26:

“Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established.”

A Chinese proverb says, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” But have you considered where your daily actions are taking you?

As a believer in Jesus Christ and one who obeys His word, you know that your ultimate destination is heaven once this life is over. However to make your journey smoother, ask the Lord to help you follow a disciplined path today.

I once heard a pastor talking about the need for self-discipline to get delivered from things keeping you in bondage. When he said the word “discipline” I immediately thought about the word “disciple.” What is a disciple? It is one who is being taught, a student.

With discipline must come a path of instruction!

Could your missing key to discipline be that you are so

focused on what you don't want that you aren't following a daily path toward what you *do* want?

You see, what you pay attention to increases in your experience. For example, if you tell yourself that you don't like being overweight, but do not provide a simple, easy path for yourself to eat healthier or exercise daily, then you won't change anything. As a result, what you don't want increases in your life.

You are both the student and the teacher when it comes to discipline. As a student, you might stumble along the path. That is where you as the teacher must step up. A good teacher is patient and helps the student either remove the obstacles that are in the way, go around the obstacles if they can't be removed, or take a different path altogether.

If you lack self-discipline, then all it means is that you have not given yourself a daily path of instruction to follow. The best path to create is one that is comprised of tiny steps:

- Want to eat healthier? Then your first tiny step could be getting rid of one soda in your home.
- Want to exercise? Then perhaps you can start by walking a short distance down the street when you get the mail everyday.
- Want to watch less television? Then just start with keeping the TV off for 10 minutes and work your way up

So today, think about your daily habits and identify which habit causes you the most anxiety. Target that habit to change. Create a new path of tiny steps that lead away from that habit and toward one that serves you better. Remove obstacles and temptations that may cause you to stumble and make your path straight. You will arrive at your new destination sooner than you think!

Note: This content was excerpted from Kimberly Taylor's new

book “The Anxiety Relief Scriptures.” Learn more at .

Kimberly Taylor is the author of “The Anxiety Relief Scriptures,” “The Weight Loss Scriptures” and many other books. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify of God’s goodness and healing power. Visit and receive more free health and weight loss tips.

2 Dating Truths for God’s Man

A recent study reports one-third of new marriages start with online dating; obviously making the computer the latest, greatest cupid’s arrow. I can see where online dating websites can play a role in connecting two people, but they don’t replace two of God’s timely dating truths:

1. Where to Begin?

You can do relationships your way or God’s many adults take a vacation from God in the dating and sex arena only to wind up paying a steep emotional and relational price that will harm them for the rest of their lives. You may relate to thinking either you know better than God (pride) or that you will “miss out” (fear) if you honor him. Both impatience and arrogance breed horrible dating decisions.

God knows more. God loves you. God has your best interest in mind. That’s the mentality I wish more people approached dating with, and looked to God for how to do it right. God’s way in dating involves trusting in Him, His plan for your life, and trusting Him for your future partner—before you even start dating.

In Psalm 37:4-5, the Bible says “Take delight in the Lord and

he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will do this". How does this play out in the dating arena? Invest your time and energy in knowing God, delighting in the process, and committing to honor Him with your actions. If you trust and obey His plan, He will match you with the ideal mate when you are ready.

A healthy relationship requires two healthy individuals who are both seeking God and His plan for their lives. A relationship with God is the ultimate common trait men (and women) should seek in a future mate. Without that common bond, there are too many weaknesses – or targets—for the enemy to shoot at.

2. The Dating Litmus Test

The quality of your dating relationship will directly reflect the quality of your character. Men are prone to believing a culture that throws relationships to the wind, preferring to 'score' with chicks, get in-and-out of the sack without any harm, and racking up babes while protecting their hearts and avoiding commitment. But God's ultimate dating litmus test is this: The quality of your relationships directly reflects the quality of your character.

God's plan is a character-development plan, working on your true nature, and developing you for a future of adversity and abundance. If your character needs work, then your relationships are going to fail and be filled with hurt and pain. But as God prepares your character, you will be prepared for a relationship that honors God, your mate, your family and future.

Consider what the Bible says in Matthew 12:35, "A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart."

If you are committed to dating God's way, then you will be

patient with the process of knowing God and allow for character development so that when God puts your mate in your path, you are ready and able to carry out God's plan.

Please add a comment on the bottom of this article to let us know what your biggest challenges with dating are.

If you would like to be ready for God's mate for you, find Godly men to hang out with, focus on Jesus and your character development. Additional resources available [HERE](#).

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.

The 5 Big Needs of a Husband

We are all selfish; therefore, we all have needs. Whether single or married, men and women have different needs.

Above all, I think the need we hear most about is love. The thing about love, though, is that it is more of a woman's need than a man's need.

Are we together still?

Go up to any man and ask him what he needs the most from either a man or woman. I would bet to say that 95 percent of the time, a man is going to say respect. So what does respect look like to a man? How does a man gain or maintain respect, especially in his marriage?

Overall, respect is pretty cut and dried, just like your average man. The problem for most men is that as bad as they need it, they don't tell their wives what it looks like or how she can show it to him. In the meantime, since she understands love, she will continue to drive love into him, and in most cases the man will shut down.

So here's what I have listed below: the five big needs of a husband. Respect is still at the top of the list, but I have added a few aspects of it, along with some thoughts on desire at the end.

Feel free to add your own in the comments.

1. Show respect. What is the actual definition of *respect*? The actual term means "to hold in esteem or honor." When was the last time you felt like you were held in honor or esteem, and wives, have you ever thought about your husband's position in this way?

It has taken a few years for my wife to understand what it means to respect me and for me to love her, but with more honest and open lines of communication, we are figuring it out.

A quick example of a time I felt disrespected was when we were in a large group of people and I answered a question incorrectly. She immediately told everyone I was wrong and corrected me in front of everyone. Although this seems like a mild case, my anger rose to the roof, and I completely shut down. My honor and respect had been destroyed by my own wife along with everyone else in the room. Fortunately, we were able to talk about it on the way home and resolve it. The interesting part was that she had no idea this situation spoke disrespect. And because she is a wonderful wife, she makes every effort to not do this again.

Men, does your wife understand what respect means to you? Do you know what it looks like? If you're struggling in your

marriage, sit down with your wife and let her know what respect looks like to you in a very loving way. Do it today!

2. Show appreciation. I don't know how else to say it, but men love to be appreciated. Even if we just took out the trash, we love to know that you noticed and are grateful. Call us shallow if you please, but it is just the way we were built.

Here are a few other examples of appreciation: "Thank you for working hard each day for our family," "Thank you for being a present and supportive father," "Thank you for being a faithful husband." Just as your wife needs to hear the words "I love you" often, we need to hear the words "I appreciate you."

Let's take this thought a step further, though. A couple of years ago, my beautiful wife and I decided to be grateful for all of the little things we do for each other as often as possible. What does this look like? "Thank you for making a great dinner." "Thank you for mowing the lawn. It looks great." "Thank you for doing the laundry."

There are no limits to showing appreciation for your spouse. The real trick is learning to be consistent. And be careful to never get into the habit of assuming your spouse knows you're grateful or knows they love you. Say the words, and say them often!

Men, are you leading a marriage that is appreciative and thankful? Dig deep this week and show appreciation to your wife for the many things she does for you. Before long, you will hear the words coming back to you. Do it today!

3. Show support. Showing support is a big part of respect. Wives, sometimes you may have to be supporting something crazy, but a husband needs to know you support him and will root for him. What are some examples of support? "You did a great job on completing that project for work." "You played a really great game tonight."

One of the great ways my wife shows support for me is in my writing of my blog. I love the fact that she has the site saved on her favorites. She will engage with me about posts I have written, and on occasion she will tell me how proud she is of me that I continue to write. All of that is a huge encouragement to me, and I love the support.

Men, are you struggling with this in your marriage? Again, this might be an area that your wife does not understand. In a loving way, let her know that you need and appreciate her support. Do it today!

4. Be encouraging. It can be a bold and brutal world sometimes, and sometimes the only encouragement we can depend on is from our wife. This is another critical aspect of respect and the needs of a man. What are some examples of encouragement? “Don’t give up; you’re doing a great job,” “Keep up the great work on the housework,” “Don’t worry; keep up the great work; the finances will pick up soon.”

There have been many times in my own marriage where I have been down or depressed and my wife has been there to encourage me and lift me back up. Wives, we need to know you are our biggest fan!

Men, if you feel like you don’t get any appreciation from your wife, let her know in a loving way this week. In the meantime, continue to encourage her in all of her endeavors. Do it today!

5. Be his desire. In most cases, men and women see desire in a much different way. One of the main reasons is that men are much more visual than women. How does a man deal with desire in marriage? First of all, you keep your eyes on your wife. As they say, “The grass is always greener where you water it.”

Men, we must stay focused on our wives’ inner and outer beauty and not get trapped into the false desires the world tries to offer us. Wives, when we comment on your beauty in any way,

embrace it! No matter how you feel about yourself or what other people say, indulge in the love and affection your husband is showing you. Your simple embracing of it will give him the encouragement he needs to continue doing it.

I struggled with telling my wonderful wife how beautiful she was when we were first married. I went with the “assumption” route as I mentioned above and figured she knew what I thought about her. This is the wrong path. Just as men need to hear encouragement, wives need to hear their husbands love them.

“I will keep my wife as my desire.” “I will keep my husband as my desire.” If you are having issues in this area, put your line above somewhere where you can see it everyday and be reminded. Do it today!

Questions, concerns, thoughts? If so, mention them in the comments section below and in the meantime ... get to work!

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.

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