

Christian Population in Israel Grows, but Prejudice Remains

A 2012 report by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) reveals that Christianity is growing at a rate of 1.3 percent annually in the Holy Land. Clerics, however, recently expressed a concern about the life challenges faced by the Christian population there.

CBS reports that two percent of the country's population—or 158,000 people—claim to be of the Christian faith. What may be surprising to many is that 80 percent of those are Arabs.

Officials from many denominations met earlier this week with international journalists in Jerusalem's Old City to discuss the plight of Christians in Israel. Clerics are worried that Israeli Christians face an identity crisis among the general population, as well as major limitations when it comes to job opportunities and housing.

"We're having some difficulties in defining ourselves in the Holy Land," Father Pietro Felet of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land told *The Jerusalem Post*. "We are not a national church, we are a mixture of Arab Christians, Hebrew-speaking Christians and Christians from the former Soviet Republic. About 45 percent are Catholic, 40 percent are Orthodox and 20 percent fall under the category of 'other.'"

The CBS report indicates that the majority of Christian Arabs live in northern Israel, including 22,400 in Nazareth and 11,700 in Jerusalem.

Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa of St. Savior's Monastery in Old Jerusalem says the Catholic Church has an 800-year presence in Israel, giving legitimacy to the sect. He noted

that although the education level among Christians is high, many have had difficulties finding sustainable employment.

CBS reports the employment rate for Christians in Israel stood at 63.8 percent for men and 45.3 percent for women, compared to the national average of 75 percent and 66 percent, respectively. Among Christian Arabs, the number is 48 percent overall.

Pizzaballa says the church has built hundreds of housing units for Christians in the Old City's Christian quarter, with projects planned in Jaffa and Nazareth. Fiscal limitations have prevented more being built.

"One of the problems for the Catholic Church in Jerusalem is land and housing, which is very expensive," he told *The Jerusalem Post*. "To get more land that means money, but for a normal family, the prices are almost impossible [to afford]."

Pizzaballa says through recent negotiations between the church and the state, he is encouraged that the standard of living for Christians in Israel will improve soon.

Another issue that worries the church is hate crimes against Christians, including vandalism of holy sites. Israeli police and authorities have worked with the church to reduce the number of hate crimes, but Pizzaballa says they are still prevalent.

"If you don't denounce these issues when they happen, they will continue. We need to work on this," he says.

The church's concern for the "alarming level of ignorance about Christianity in Israel" is very real. Lutheran World Federation President Bishop Munib A. Youman—a Palestinian—says the Hebrew media propagates the bias and denounced travel restrictions for Christians from Bethlehem and Ramallah to Jerusalem.

“When I read in the Hebrew about Christianity, I wonder if I’m Christian,” he told *The Jerusalem Post*. “One of the things we face as Christians are generalizations about us being persecuted in Palestine or Israel. There are issues between us and the governments, but please don’t say ‘persecution.’ Everybody wants to be in Jerusalem. Why can’t a person cross with dignity? This is not acceptable.”

Not to be confused with Christians, Maoz Israel reports there are approximately 15,000 Messianic Jews—Jews who have accepted Christ as their Savior—living in Israel. Challenges for that sect of the population are also numerous.

King David Palace Discovered, Archaeologists Report

A seven-year-dig by a team of archaeologists has produced what it believes to be the remains of a palace belonging to biblical King David. Other Israeli experts, however, dispute the claim.

Most scholars who have reviewed the evidence suggest that there is no physical proof of King David among the ruins discovered by archaeologists from Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Israel’s Antiquities Authority. Critics, like archaeologist Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, have said the 10th century B.C. site “could have belonged to other kingdoms of the area”—such as the Canaanites or Philistines—and not specifically King David.

Finkelstein told the AP that without a monument to King David himself, there would be no way to verify who built the palace.

The discovering archaeologists, however, claim that Khirbet Qeiyafa, in a fortified complex west of Jerusalem, is authentic.

“Khirbet Qeiyafa is the best example exposed to date of a fortified city from the time of King David,” Yossi Garfinkel, a Hebrew University archaeologist who led the dig, told the Associated Press.

Among the items Garfinkel and his team discovered were “cultic objects typically used by Judeans,” subjects of King David.

Garfinkel told the AP that critics like Finkelstein are relying on outdated theories.

“I think other people have a collapsed theory and we have fresh data,” he said.

Garfinkel’s group isn’t the first to make claims of discovering a 10th century B.C. King David palace. Israeli archaeologist Eilat Mazar made such a claim in 2005, one that was disputed by Garkfinkel.

How to Make Your Wife Feel Beautiful

Shaunti Feldhahn is a Harvard-educated social researcher who has polled thousands of women to find out what really motivates them, encourages them and discourages them in their relationships. Here is what she learned about how to make your wife feel beautiful:

1. Reflect back the truth about her. You’re her most important

mirror—the man who can reflect back to her how lovely you think she is. The man whose opinions of her are the best antidote for the damaging internal dialogue and external pressure that stalk her thoughts.

2. Say it. Think of few affirming words or phrases—and say them.

3. Say it now. Train yourself to say right away, whenever you think it! What she's looking for is the immediate, reflexive response that proves you've been wowed.

4. Erase "Fine" from your response options. "Fine" is not fine unless used in the sense of "She's so fine." What your wife is looking for is reassurance that you think she is beautiful and stunning. "Fine" and "OK" are not even on the same planet as that.

5. Answer her real question: "Do I still rock your world?" When she asks the dreaded question, "Do these jeans make me look fat?" she's not asking if she can leave in that outfit. Instead, she's feeling insecure about her body, her beauty and whether you still love and appreciate her. If she does truly want feedback on her outfit, ask in advance if she needs reassurance or to know whether an outfit looks good.

6. Let her know you're on her side. If your wife is overweight or looking to lose weight, realize that she feels terrible about it already. Knowing you are disappointed makes it worse. Be willing to help. Whenever possible, make the effort with her, and keep affirming her in those areas you *do* find beautiful, including her loveliness as a person.

7. Don't take no for an answer. You might be thinking, "I try to compliment my wife, and she always brushes it off." Take her reluctance as a sign that she needs affirmation even more. Her flaws loom large in her mind—even if you hardly notice them. For her, knowing that you find her lovely outside and inside will go a long way.

8. Remember the power of the hammer. As your wife's reflective mirror, you have the power to shatter her. If your eyes begin wandering to another woman, she won't feel affirmed and will feel as if she is in competition with the world again—including the one man she thought she already had. A woman whose husband doesn't control his looking will feel she can no longer measure up to what her husband wants.

9. Porn sends her a message. You injure your wife when you look elsewhere for a thrill that you vowed to look for in only her. You break her trust. And you shatter your ability to reflect beauty back to her.

10. Be her hero. Each day, your wife holds out to you her intense, God-given, little-girl desire (and right) to be treasured. Each day, she's threatened on all sides by an offensive and abusive world. And each day—with kind words and faithful eyes—we, too, can be our wife's protector and hero.

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**.

The preceding is based on an excerpt from the newly revised For Men Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Women by Shaunti Feldhahn.

Why You're Never Too Far Gone for Faith or Fitness

If you've read my book or followed me for a while, you probably know I'm quite fond of drawing parallels between faith and fitness, between lifting weights in the gym and bearing the burdens of life, between cheering on our friends during a workout and encouraging them during life's trials and storms.

A few of my faith/fitness analogies include:

- Warm up is to workout as this earthly life is to eternal life.
- Resistance training is to body as trials are to spirit.
- Healthy food is to body as God's Word is to soul.

Recently, I've made yet another comparison between our faith and fitness journeys, one inspired by the multiple passersby at our CrossFit gym who stop in, see the high-intensity workout underway, the sweat dripping, the weights hitting the floor, the music blaring and the adrenaline pumping. They definitely *seem* interested, even excited by what they see, but their bright eyes are quickly dimmed by thoughts of fear and doubt creeping into their minds.

"I need to get in shape before I do this," the curious spectators often say. I try to convince them that they can start CrossFit *any* time, that it's mine and the other coaches' pleasure—not to mention our job—to help them get in shape and that everyone trains at a different level and every workout is scalable.

Sometimes hope and confidence replace the worries and uncertainties, and the anxious onlookers become dedicated CrossFitters before week's end. But some continue to insist that they're "too old," "too fat," "too slow," "too lazy,"

“too weak” to stick around. They scurry away, defeated before they’ve begun.

This brings me to a fourth analogy:

- Fearful onlooker is to CrossFit as “unworthy” unbeliever is to Christianity.

You’ve most likely heard said or sung the phrase “Come just as you are.” It means that no matter how dirty we are inwardly, no matter how polluted our minds are or reprehensible our pasts, we can come before the throne of God without having done so much as washing the metaphorical filth from our hands.

There are no prerequisites for becoming a Christian. You don’t have to know the call letters of your local Christian radio station or be able to recite the lyrics to “Amazing Grace.” You don’t even have to know John 3:16 by heart. You just have to know three things:

- You’re a sinner.
- You need a Savior.
- That Savior is Jesus.

Then it’s up to you what to do with that knowledge and conviction.

The hesitant observers who stop by CrossFit have the choice to either walk out the door and try to forget what they’ve seen and felt, or take a step of faith and embark upon a life-changing journey, one that’s guaranteed to be tough but also more rewarding and full of joy than one could ever imagine.

For non-believers faced with the most important decision of their lives, the choice is often between continuing to blatantly lead a life of sin, selfishness and humanistic pride, and humbling themselves, acknowledging that they, like all of us, are sinners in need of grace; all they need do is confess they need Jesus Christ and then accept Him as Savior,

King, Healer and Friend.

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved” (Rom. 10:9-10, NLT).

I love to see people come to embrace, enjoy and, for lack of a better phrase, “become addicted” to CrossFit, just as I love to watch new Christians fall more and more in love with Jesus. Those who have swallowed their pride, banished their fears, filled up their water bottles and laced up their tennis shoes for their first CrossFit workout have accomplished a tremendous feat.

One of the hardest things we do as human beings, I think, is explore the seas around the cozy-cool Island of Me. Trusting a strange new coach to help you reach your fitness goals, surrounding yourself with sweaty people who cheer you on like you’re an Olympic sprinter, performing exercises you haven’t attempted since your afternoons spent on an elementary school playground when you were seven—it all resides on a nearby island that seems miles and miles away. But you can get there. The seas are fair; the natives are friendly. All you have to do is trust the captain and the crew he’s provided to see you there safely.

I’d like to encourage you not to let anyone—most of all not the devil—tell you you’re too far gone to get fit. Remember, the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy, and if he can keep you from eating right and exercising regularly, he’s gained a small victory in your life (John 10:10). If starting an exercise program seems frightening to you, pray and ask God to replace your fears and trepidation with peace about how you should proceed.

Everybody is different, just as every soul before it comes to

know Jesus is different. Some have old injuries—old aches and pains and scars they're frequently reminded of. Others have been worn down by poor choices, bad habits and ongoing stress. But just as God yearns to redeem and sanctify your soul and spirit, He wants your body to prosper too. Ask Him today to help you become fitter both spiritually *and* physically.

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (3 John 1:2, NIV).

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

See Red and Lose Weight

Tomatoes are one of our favorite fat-burning foods. They help reduce inflammation and reverse leptin resistance. Reversing leptin resistance is the key to losing those stubborn extra pounds. That is why tomatoes are used almost daily in *The Fat Resistance Diet*.

Tomatoes are excellent sources of potassium and several vitamins:

- Folic acid
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E

Tomatoes also contain important anti-inflammatory nutrients

called carotenoids and bioflavonoids. Key tomato carotenoids are lycopene, a red pigment with potential anti-cancer effects, and beta-carotene, an orange pigment that is an important antioxidant to protect against damage from sunlight.

Bioflavonoids, which are concentrated in the tomato skin, counteract inflammation and allergic reactions. The main compounds are quercetin and kaempferol.

Studies indicate that tomato consumption is associated with a reduced risk of:

- Prostate cancer
- Ovarian cancer, especially in premenopausal women
- Digestive tract cancers
- Cardiovascular disease
- Asthma and chronic lung disease

The absorption of carotenoids and flavonoids from tomatoes is greater from cooked tomatoes than fresh tomatoes, since cooking breaks down the tomato cell matrix and makes the carotenoids more available. The addition of olive oil to diced tomatoes during cooking greatly increases the absorption of lycopene. Oil is essential for absorbing carotenoids from tomatoes in salads or salsa. There is almost no absorption of these vital nutrients from salad eaten with a nonfat dressing.

The recipes and meal plans in our book give you a variety of delicious ways to prepare tomatoes. From our frittatas and omelets at breakfast; salads, sandwiches, and pasta at lunch; to appetizers, entrées, and salads for dinner, we show you wonderful ways to get tomatoes into your day.

Summertime is the perfect season to enjoy tomatoes. Look for fresh ripe tomatoes at farmer's markets in the city or a farm stand in the country or at your local supermarket. They are so tasty and plentiful now, you will want to stock up to make our delicious Gazpacho for your friends and family.

Further information about adopting a healthy lifestyle is available at .

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For the original article, visit .

Why Jesus Wept Over Jerusalem—and Why You Should Too

I write this article on the 9th of Av, the day of mourning the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:2). Two people are recorded in the Bible as weeping over Jerusalem: Jeremiah, in Lamentations 2:11, 18; 3:48; and Yeshua in Luke 19:41: “When He approached and saw the city, He wept over it, saying, ‘If you only knew today what would make for your peace.’”

While there is not much detail about Yeshua’s feelings, Lamentations has five full chapters about Jeremiah’s. Lamentations may be seen as an extended prophetic description of Yeshua’s feelings as well. Luke 19:41 summarizes in one verse the weeping and mourning of the book of Lamentations.

Yeshua and Jeremiah had much in common, and were perceived so by the crowds (Matt. 16:14). One reason is that they both

prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple—Jeremiah before the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.) and Yeshua before the Great Exile (A.D. 70).

Jerusalem is the capital of Yeshua's kingdom and the seat of His earthly government. When Yeshua prophesied its destruction, He did so with tears of grief and pain. For Yeshua, the destruction of Jerusalem was the destruction of His own capital. He prophesied this event repeatedly:

Matthew 22:7: "burned their city with fire."

Matthew 23:39; Luke 13:35: "Behold your house is left to you desolate."

Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2, Luke 19:44: "Not one stone will be left upon a stone."

Luke 19:43: "Your enemies will build an embankment against you ... on every side and level you to the ground."

Luke 20:16: "He will destroy the vine keepers and give the vineyard to others."

Luke 21:20: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is near."

Luke 21:24: "They will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles."

This was a central event of biblical history, similar to the exodus from Egypt and the flood of Noah. There is a profound parallel between the destruction of the temple and the crucifixion of Yeshua. May God grant us grace to understand the significance both of Jerusalem's destruction and its restoration!

For the original article, visit .

How to Overcome the 'I Don't Feel Like It' Demon

On Saturday, I was writing some notes for the Sunday school lesson I taught recently. Then I remembered that it was one of my exercise days.

"Ugh," I thought. "I don't feel like it."

Back in the day, that would have been the end of it; if I didn't feel like it, I simply wouldn't do it. That morning, though, another voice answered "I don't feel like it" with a question: "Does that mean that you are not going to do it?"

I laughed to myself. "Ha, ha! No—that just means I'll do it, but I won't feel like it!"

You see, what I've come to learn is that "I don't feel like it" only lasts a moment—if I take action. Unfortunately, I've also learned that if I listen to that voice, it will influence my whole day. I'll develop a pattern of procrastination—which naturally occurs when you have a habit of obeying "I don't feel like it."

This pattern has destroyed many peoples' dreams. It starts out stealing days, then weeks, then months, then finally years. "I don't feel like it" tricks people into thinking they have all the time in the world. They find out too late—they don't!

However, when you take action, no matter how small, you tell "I don't feel like it" to get lost. Because you make him unimportant, he has no choice but to leave. In the case of my workout this morning, my mind shifted to getting the job done. Even though I didn't feel like it at the beginning, by the end

of the workout I felt good!

Instead of ending up with regret (which I would have if I had obeyed “I don’t feel like it”), I ended up with the pleasure of accomplishment.

To clarify, if I was feeling ill, then I might have just stretched a bit and taken the day off. But I was just feeling lazy. It was a case of “a body at rest tends to stay at rest.” However, you also learned in school that “a body in motion tends to stay in motion.” To stay fit and healthy, keeping your body in motion is essential.

“I don’t feel like it” knows that it takes energy to shift from rest to motion. So he does everything possible to keep you from shifting gears!

But all it takes to outsmart him is to stand up, put your shoes on, and start taking those initial movements. You exert energy to shift gears to motion, and when you do that, he has lost!

If you still don’t feel like it after moving for 10 minutes, then feel good about that, declare victory and stop. However, I’ve learned that it really is just pushing past that initial resistance—just like shifting gears in a car.

Another way to shift gears is to ask yourself, “Is this something I could do and should do?”

If it is something that you physically could do, then do it. But what if it is something that you *should* do but are afraid to do it? Watch out! In the Bible, fear was what kept the lazy man from taking action in Proverbs 22:13: “The lazy man says, “There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!” In other words, he allowed false fears to keep him from experiencing real results in his life.

“I don’t feel like it” could be playing upon some secret fear

you have about taking action. But don't let fear win. Scripture promises, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

Live according to your faith, not according to your fear. Stop letting "I don't feel like it" have a voice in your life. That is the only way you can live a life that pleases God—and have a life full of rewards rather than regrets!

Kimberly Taylor *is the author of 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.*

Don't Be a Lookie-Lulu: Fight for Focus

Don't tell me you haven't looked. You know what I'm talking about—women wearing skin-tight yoga pants. It's even big news.

Clothing maker Lululemon Athletica lost millions of dollars from investors earlier this year when reports came out that they had to recall their yoga pants for being too sheer. Imagine being in the store and seeing a woman having to prove the knit is too thin! Well, apparently the company fixed the sheer problem, but it leads me to think there's more to this story than meets the eye.

Many times, temptation starts with the eyes and where you look. In James 1:14-16, God reveals how sin starts with a look and ends with destruction: "But each one is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. Then when desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is full grown,

it gives birth to death.”

An example of this is Potiphar’s wife. In the story about Joseph in Genesis 39:7, she would “cast her eyes upon Joseph.” Every day, her longing gaze at the handsome Joseph fueled her lustful desires, until one day she forced herself on Joseph, pulling him to bed. Fortunately, in this story, Joseph fled and avoided sin.

But the moral of the story is: Don’t be a lookie-lulu, or else you will find yourself compromising yourself, your beliefs and your marriage.

And there are consequences. God spoke through Jeremiah in saying, “They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man’s wife. Should I not punish them for this? declares the Lord” (Jer. 5:8-9).

Your gaze is important business to God. God’s man needs to fight for focus on Jesus and His plan for your life, not the yoga pants in front of you in line at the store.

The apostle Paul explained it this way in Philippians 3:14: “I press on toward the goal [focus] to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

In other words, focus on what matters. Focus on Christ. If your gaze is pure, your mind remains pure. And you will be rewarded. Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Here’s the bottom line: If you’re a lookie-lulu, then you’ve already committed adultery in your heart. In Matthew 5:28, Jesus says, “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

It’s interesting that Jesus made these comments after addressing anger and disconnection in relationships in the

Sermon on the Mount. Jesus addresses obsessive desire in men. Makes sense that they come in this order. Anger and contempt in relationships, or contemptible attitudes inside of the heart, in any relationship creates disconnection and unmet needs, which inevitably draws people into the realm of fantasy.

It's better to skip the fantasy and focus on the prize awaiting you.

If you or a friend is struggling with being a lookie-lulu, sex or porn addiction, find godly men to hang out with, and stop looking at the yoga pants. There is a better way—God's way.

Additional resources for men regarding sex and porn addiction are 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.

5 Ways Self-Control Builds Maturity

Attaining and maintaining a high level of maturity may be one of the hardest things we ever experience in our lives. Two years ago, I had no idea what real maturity in life and in Christ meant, but with a name given to me from God like Maturity, I knew the truth would soon be revealed to me.

I've recently been re-reading through most of the New Testament. This time, I'm heading through it, well, backwards; so much for self-control. Don't ask me why I chose to do it this way, but regardless, I have been able to pull out some powerful information.

As many of us know, Paul, Peter and the author of Hebrews lead the way with the teachings on the topic of maturity. Their inspiration, of course, is the life and example of Jesus. They don't really use the actual word *mature* too often, but if you have a heart to hear the many teachings, then all of that seems to come out it is the idea of maturity in our Christian life.

Without rambling too much, here are five ways self-control builds maturity in a man:

1. Our enemy is ready. Are you? First Peter 5:8 says, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." I have used this verse in the past and will continue to use it because it is true and it is powerful. Peter is giving the elders and the young men instructions on how to live their lives. Peter quickly goes over the elders training and jumps right into the training of young men.

The teaching of self-control in this verse is relevant today, because it is very obvious that there is an enemy lurking and waiting to attack. The enemy loves to attack when you are most vulnerable—tired, angry, sick, emotional, frustrated, etc. The enemy knows where you are weak and will attack at the first signs of weakness. Stand firm!

2. Learn how to tame your tongue. Titus 2:6 says, "Similarly, encourage the young men to be self controlled." Paul is giving Titus specific instructions on how to teach the various groups. When Paul speaks about the young men, the first thing he talks about is self-control. His more direct teaching after

this verse deals with speaking with integrity, showing seriousness and soundness in speech.

Paul's reasoning for this good speech was so that anyone who heard Titus would leave him and not condemn him—that they would have nothing bad to say about him. We must also pursue this type of sound speech as we learn and grow in our walk with Christ. This must be when we are at work, with friends, with our family and to our wives! Speak firmly!

3. Wake up! It's time to fight. First Thessalonians 5:8 says, "Let us be self controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet." Do you know why the breastplate was so important? The breastplate was worn to protect a soldier's vital organs, and without it he was as good as dead.

The same can be said for us. Unless we are wearing our breastplate of righteousness, we leave ourselves open for attack and fatal injury. Guard your heart! The helmet also plays a major role in keeping a soldier safe and does the same for us by keeping the enemy out of our head. A well-built helmet of salvation must be worn to keep out the evil thoughts and the false feelings of this world. Wear your armor daily!

4. Learn to live with maturity. Second Peter 1:5-7 says, "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love." Paul gives a wonderful example of godly living in these verses.

Self-control falls right in the middle of all of these qualities. I can agree that there is a learning curve that comes before understanding self-control, and there are apparently many things to come after self-control. Paul goes on to teach us that if we can live according to these things,

we will be effective and produce great works for Christ. Make every effort and be eager, gentlemen!

5. Be self-controlled, no matter what. Philippians 1:27 says, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." This was the only verse I chose without the actual words *self-controlled*, but I thought it brought the entire post home. Paul is writing to the people of Philippi while still in chains. His hope was that whether he was able to see them again or not, they would stand firm in their walk with Christ.

This verse does not leave any room for excuses. In all things and in all situations, gentlemen, we are to present an attitude and manner worthy of Christ. I think we all need to pray for strength on this one. It starts with prayer and consistency!

We must learn to be men that not only talk with maturity but also walk with maturity. Share how God has taught or shown you maturity in your life in the comments below.

Maturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages, help men 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 *Maturity* blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

How Dads Can Teach Sons to Respect Women

Are you being intentional about teaching your son the right way to treat women?

Honestly, some of what I see in the culture is out of whack. There are guys who think it's okay to "put a woman in her place" every now and then, even if it means getting physical.

Some guys feel justified in taking their anger out on their wife or girlfriend, like that is just what you do. Some think going out of your way to make her happy might be seen as a weakness.

I've also seen husbands withdraw and let their wives kind of take over and run the whole house. They don't see themselves being an active leader in the family, and that's another way of disrespecting her role and the importance of mom-dad teamwork.

There are a lot of myths out there about how a man is supposed to treat a woman, and this is on my mind a lot when I'm with my two sons, Marcellus and Chance, and the two other sons who married my daughters. I'm trying to school them up all the time.

Men, we have to train our sons about what's appropriate in boy/girl relationships, and make respect for women a high priority. How can you do this? Below are some suggestions, and I should mention that several of these are also covered in our free ebook, *5 Things Every Kid Must Get From Dad*, which you can download right here.

1. Be a positive model. As with all other areas in life, your son is watching you. Use your powerful influence to model respect for women—to your sons, the boys in your neighborhood

and even other men. Demonstrate that women are to be valued for their character and integrity and the feminine personality traits that complement and complete our masculine approach to things. This is perhaps the most potent way to shape your son's character—by showing him what that respect looks and sounds like.

If you're married, let your kids see you show love to your bride. Be thoughtful and romantic. Put her needs above your own. Many of us never witnessed that with our own parents, but it's important that our kids see our commitment to our wives. They draw great security from that—particularly in today's world—and you're also setting a great model for them to follow someday in their own marriages.

If you're not married, do all you can to respect your child's mother and support her. If things are really difficult with her, taking the high road will serve your children well. They will respect you more and develop healthier attitudes about relationships.

2. Be proactive. Early on, your son needs to learn the importance of protecting a young woman's integrity and well-being. A lot of this can happen during teachable moments that come up in the course of life, as you talk through different situations and how your son needs to handle himself.

But please don't let these conversations just happen. *Take the initiative.* Ideally, that means looking ahead and preparing your son with some purposeful discussions. For example:

- Tell him what love is—how it often involves strong emotions, but it's more about a steadfast commitment and a decision to serve and seek her best interests, even when the emotions aren't there.
- Give him a long-range perspective. Most likely, a teenage dating relationship will not turn into a marriage, so why get serious with anyone at a time of

life when neither of them is really ready for it? Encourage your son to work toward creating a strong friendship, and if it does become serious later in life, that friendship will be the best foundation.

- With any girl he's interested in, encourage your son to get to know her parents. It teaches him to relate to adults, helps him understand how her family situation has influenced her and reminds him that any relationship is really bigger than just two people.
- Talk specifically about boundaries. What's appropriate with physical affection? Or time spent alone? What about risky behaviors involving drugs or alcohol that could arise?
- Invite his questions and be available to continue the discussion as time goes by. Check in regularly about this.

Also: Hold him accountable. Be willing to confront your son about improper behavior that you see. Sometimes you'll need to sit him down and say clearly, "This is unacceptable," tell him why, and challenge him to do better.

3. Get his mom involved. I remember when Melanie and I were dating in college, and I brought her home to meet my family for the first time. Sunday morning, we were getting ready for church. Daddy had his suit on, Mom was getting dressed, and Melanie said, "Sweetheart, could you go to the car for me? I left my Sunday shoes there." I said, "Yeah, sure," and I went and got them.

That day probably wouldn't have stuck in my memory if it weren't for what my mother did afterward. She pulled me aside and said, "Son, if Melanie ever becomes your wife, *don't you ever stop doing that.*"

After we were married, there was another time when we all witnessed a man being very rude to his wife. Once again, my mother pulled me aside and said, "I better not ever see or

hear you talk to Melanie like that.”

Like dads, moms have a strong influence over their sons, but they also have a sensitivity and keen insights about these things that most dads don't have. Your son will benefit greatly from that womanly perspective.

Dads, how have you taught your sons to honor and respect women? I'm eager to get your ideas on this. Share your ideas with me and other dads either below or on our Facebook page.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Schedule a trip or an outing for just you and your son, where you talk about the differences between boys and girls—physically and relationally—and how those differences bring can be fascinating and challenging at times.
- What did you learn about respecting women from your dad or other father figures? Share one or two of those lessons with your son.
- Train your son to look for ways to serve his mother, sisters and other women: holding doors, offering his jacket, giving up his seat, holding or offering an umbrella, etc.
- Ask your son to hold *you* accountable by pointing out when you drop the ball when it comes to honoring your wife or other women.
- A man I greatly respect—the late Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor, a pastor and professor—told a powerful story about the importance of respecting women. See this blog post to check it out.

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.*