

5 Reasons Why You Need a Vacation

Americans forfeit 226 million vacation days each year, according to CNN, by not using the vacation days they earned. In fact, all of that unused time off adds up to \$34.3 billion annually in lost vacation days.

The ironic part is that many people skip vacation days because they think that using all their rightfully earned vacation days will hurt their job somehow, yet what really ends up hurting them is missing out on crucial time away from work and other daily stressors.

So, for those of you with vacation plans for this summer, congratulations! You can stop reading now. However, if you currently have vacation days without any plans, here are five great reasons why you need to give yourself a break.

1. Stop shrinking your brain. According to the National Academy of Sciences, chronic stress can shrink your brain as well as contribute to feelings of irritability, depression and constantly feeling unfocused. However, annual vacations have been found to cut the risk of heart attack by 30 percent in men and 50 percent in women.

2. Get some rest. Vacation time helps to reset your body clock and promote healthy sleeping habits. This is because chronic stress can slowly eat away at your sleep time, leaving you unaware of just how much sleep you end up missing each night. Getting out of that rut and taking a breather helps you get used to a full night's restful sleep and resets your body clock to a healthy schedule.

3. Reignite your spark. Vacations promote creativity and confidence. Studies have shown that problem-solving and quick thinking are two attributes of seasoned travelers—not just

while traveling, but back home on the job. After you've "conquered" a foreign location or accomplished an adventure you've dreamed about, tackling those office woes will be all that much easier.

4. Connect in new ways. Conquer that "fear of missing out," and then learn how to connect in new and interesting ways. Though the fear of missing out is a real emotion, travelers are usually surprised to learn they feel more connected—in fresh and different ways—to fellow travelers and loved ones during vacation time.

5. Have fewer regrets. The late Paul Tsongas famously once said, "Nobody on his deathbed ever said, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'" Now is the time to live the life you love.

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For the original article, visit drcolbert.com.

8 Ways to Lower Blood Pressure

Everyone wants to know how to lower blood pressure. Hypertension, or high blood pressure, may be the medical condition patients deny most frequently.

Everyone wants to believe that he or she only suffers from “white coat syndrome”—that is, that their blood pressure is perfect except in the doctor’s office. “The worry makes the reading high!” a typical patient protests. “Otherwise, I’m just fine.”

Doctors used to think the same thing and would pay little attention to slightly elevated blood pressure readings. Now we’ve found that “white coat syndrome” is in fact highly predictive of long-term problems with hypertension.

Once I was among those who denied my own hypertension. My readings were normal or only slightly elevated during my checkups. I had reason to suspect, though, that during my stressful workdays my blood pressure was anything but normal. Still, I let my hypertension go for years without treatment.

I never took my blood pressure seriously until I found myself in the hospital with a “widow-maker lesion” in the left anterior descending artery, which supplies half or more of the blood to the heart’s left ventricle.

The trouble is, a single, isolated reading is an insufficient gauge of a person’s blood pressure. I should have taken the time to keep a blood pressure diary over a two-week period, taking readings morning and night and at odd times as well. That’s the best way to know whether there’s a problem with hypertension. So if you have a problem with hypertension or know someone who does—please take the time to read how to lower blood pressure below, it just may save your life.

Here is my own eight-step plan on how to lower blood pressure:

1. Put down the salt shaker and learn to season your food with herbs and spices. Try curry, fennel, and garlic, for instance. Eat fresh food—real food—as often as possible, not prepackaged food that can sit on a shelf for months or even years and still be “edible.” Salt intake can be balanced, in part, by making sure you have enough magnesium, potassium, and

calcium in your diet. These reduce the ill effects of salt. Magnesium dilates, or widens, blood vessels and is used on pregnant women who have high blood pressure. The dosages of these substances, however, are hard to calibrate. Magnesium can be taken until it causes diarrhea, then lower the dose. Calcium and magnesium are best when taken together. Be careful, though, because too much potassium—that is, excessive amounts—can be lethal to your kidneys. All of these substances should be taken in consultation with your doctor.

2. If you want to avoid taking drugs for hypertension or stop taking them, the most significant thing you can do is get down to your ideal body weight. A loss of 10 pounds usually equates to the normal dosage of one medication. Many who suffer from hypertension see this condition completely vanish when they reach their ideal body weight – what you weighed, or close to it, in high school or college. Once again, exercise is crucial. Your cardiovascular system is alive and constantly changing. Exercise builds up the heart in the right way and helps restore elasticity to the arteries. The sequence of putting the cardiovascular system under exercise stress and then taking that stress away brings down blood pressure to what it would be if the person merely rested.

3. Stress reduction is often the key to eliminating hypertension. Exercise is one means of stress reduction. Talking over life's challenges with one's family and friends is tremendously helpful and will greatly lower ones stress levels.

4. Stay away from stimulants like coffee, tea, sodas, alcohol, and cigarettes. You simply cannot smoke. Your doctor can advise you as to whether your hypertension warrants cutting out all stimulants, or if you can still enjoy a cup of coffee in the morning. Many people sip diet sodas throughout the day. These have caffeine and can raise blood pressure significantly.

5. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, at least 8 to 10 hours daily. Sleep deprivation is a leading cause of hypertension because it puts the body under stress. If your loved ones complain about snoring or especially snorting and snuffling during the night, you may be suffering from sleep apnea—a rapid cycle of waking up many times at night, periods during which the heart may stop. Sleep apnea puts the body under tremendous stress and causes secondary hypertension.

6. Live below your means so that you are not constantly stressed out about finances. You will find that living below your means translates into lower stress.

7. Don't forget to have fun! Enjoying social times, particularly with people you know well, helps you cope with stress. Keeping a quiet time each day is also very important, whether that means time alone or, much better, in prayer.

8. If you are found to have hypertension and your physician prescribes medication, take it! Take your medication at least until you can change your diet and exercise patterns to achieve an ideal body weight. That will obviate the need, in many cases, for continuing such medication. Many people feel energetic when their blood pressure is high and listless or fatigued when it returns to normal. I try to prescribe medication so that the person's blood pressure returns to normal not all at once but over a short span of time. This allows the person to adjust to what a normal blood pressure feels like. Most people whose hypertension is treated adequately and with a gentle hand feel much better as a result. Employ every weapon available to win the blood pressure battle!

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

For the original article, visit crandallheart.blogspot.com.

Is Someone You Love Not Walking With the Lord?

If someone you know or love deeply has professed Christ but now isn't walking with the Lord, you *never* have enough information to say, "They are not a Christian anymore." You don't know that—no matter how bizarre or painful their behavior. That's drawing a conclusion.

All you can do with certainty is make the observation, "They are not walking with the Lord." You can make the observation but not draw the conclusion. That's because, as Scripture says, "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7, ESV).

God has an altogether different way of thinking about His sheep when they go astray. The idea is simple: No one who has believed in Christ can ever fall so far that the hand of God will not rescue and restore him. Jesus put it this way:

"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever

comes to me I will never drive away. ... And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day" (John 6:37-39).

Theologians call this concept "the perseverance of the saints." Or sometimes "eternal security." It's the doctrine some of us refer to as "once saved, always saved." The Westminster Confession of Faith explains the details of perseverance like this:

"They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

"This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof."

That doesn't mean we're immune from falling into sin. Nor does it mean we'll get a pass on paying a David-like penalty for those sins. The confession goes on:

"Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves."

For these reasons, we must *never, ever* give up on anyone. We simply do not know what God will do or when. So do not grow

weary and give up. Hang in there. Keep the faith. Trust God. What else can we do? God wants that person to love Him more than we ever will.

Patrick Morley is founder and CEO of Man in the Mirror. After building one of Florida's 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, he founded Man in the Mirror, a nonprofit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the best-selling author of The Man in the Mirror, No Man Left Behind, Dad in the Mirror, and A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines.

Israeli Doctors Strive for Possible Parkinson's Breakthrough

An artificial sweetener known as mannitol may have the ability to halt the accumulation of toxins in the brain, which could ultimately lead to a new treatment for Parkinson's disease, according to a study conducted by Tel Aviv University.

Mannitol is a common component used in sugar-free gum and candy and is approved by the FDA to be used for medical treatment. Mannitol is already used to flush out excess fluids and ease the passage of other drugs during surgery.

Now scientists at Tel Aviv University have found that mannitol also prevents clumps of a protein known as α -synuclein from forming in the brain, which is a process that occurs when one has Parkinson's disease.

Upon discovering that mannitol could effectively prevent the protein from forming, the Israeli researchers studied fruit flies that had been genetically altered to carry the gene for a-synuclein by watching their behavior in a test tube. Only 38 percent of the flies infected with a-synuclein could climb a test tube at first, versus 72 percent of normal flies.

After eating food with mannitol for almost a month, 70 percent of the a-synuclein infected flies could then climb the tube. The protein's presence in the brain had also been reduced by 70 percent.

Tel Aviv University reports, "These findings were confirmed by a second study that measured the impact of mannitol on mice engineered to produce human a-synuclein, developed by Dr. Eliezer Masliah of the University of San Diego. After four months, the researchers found that the mice injected with mannitol also showed a dramatic reduction of α -synuclein in the brain."

According to professor Daniel Segal, one of the researchers who partook in this study, this means that combining mannitol with other medical treatments for Parkinson's disease could make a major breakthrough in combating the disease. He believes that these other medications, which until now were ineffective, may be able to capitalize on the fact that mannitol has the ability to break through the barrier into the brain.

A Major Problem

Today, as many as 1 million Americans suffer from Parkinson's disease, with 60,000 being diagnosed each year. Worldwide, between 7 to 10 million people have this particular disease.

In the United States alone, the cost of Parkinson's disease, including treatment, social security payments, and lost income from the inability to work, amounts to \$25 billion per year, while each individual with Parkinson's disease usually spends

on average \$2,500 per year, and therapeutic surgery can cost \$100,000 per patient.

For the original article, visit unitedwithisrael.org.

What Health Habits Are You Practicing?

Lately, I've been thinking about the word *practice*, which the dictionary defines as "performing an activity or skill repeatedly to improve or maintain your ability."

You might think only athletes or musicians practice, but you practice too. Think about your daily health habits. Every time you do them, you are getting better at them.

Do you want to get better at the habits you are currently practicing? For some, it is a depressing thought rather than a joyful one!

You see, practice is great if your health habits benefit you, but it's bad if they are destroying you.

The Apostle Paul wrote about struggling with this issue in Romans 7:15: "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do" (NLT).

Paul recognized he was practicing a habit he hated. And he felt powerless to stop it. He was right—in his own power, he was at a disadvantage. But then came the revelation: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he could change what he was practicing! He could start practicing those things he wanted get better at daily—and with daily practice, he could see change.

Regarding your health, what habits do you want to practice in order to become better at them? Write down them down. These are habits you know will change you for the better and enable you to fulfill God's purpose for your life.

Be specific. A habit like "Eat better" is too general to do anything with. What does eating better look like to you? An example of a specific goal can be "Eat fruit for snacks at work instead of candy."

Now, here is a way you can practice the above goal. If you have a candy dish on your desk, then that will interfere with your practice, won't it? So, to make it easier, replace the candy with fruit that you love.

At the normal time you reach for candy, there is the fruit. You've made it easy to practice. Every day, make sure to bring your fruit to work and keep the candy away. In this way, you are supplying yourself with the necessary "equipment" to practice.

What if you make a mistake? Well, when you view your efforts as "practice," you realize mistakes are just a natural part of learning, not to be used as an excuse to give up.

What if you are practicing a destructive habit you want to change? Think of it as a building block tower that you need to dismantle, block by block.

You can start dismantling the habit by changing one or more of the following:

- **What:** What is the specific habit you want to work on, and can it be replaced? In the example above, you replaced the daily candy (destructive) with daily fruit (helpful). Both satisfied your hunger.
- **Where:** Where is this habit being practiced? For example, if you are overeating, you are probably doing it in the same location every time. To make yourself more mindful,

test out changing your eating location so that the automatic practice of the old habit is interrupted.

- **When:** You are probably engaging in the habit around the same time as well. If it is a habit that you want to get rid of, then you need to think of another activity to fill that time and occupy your mind.
- **Why:** This requires deeper thought. What circumstances led you develop the habit to begin with? If you are having difficulty with figuring it out, then ask God in prayer. With your new understanding you can make different, more empowering choices.

I've got a challenge for you: Read and meditate on [Romans 8](#) in the New Living Translation for inspiration today. This is the revelation Paul got that gave him hope that he could change. I pray that when you read it, you will feel encouraged and inspired to practice daily what you want to do. With that commitment and consistent daily practice, you *will* get better at doing it!

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 takebackyourtemple.com and receive more free health and weight loss tips.

The Gripping Story of Golan Heights Tells Israel's Tale

It is very rare that I visit a site in this tiny country that I have never visited before, but recently I had the awesome

privilege of overlooking the Valley of Quneitra into Syria from Mount Bental.

From there, you can see the border with Syria, and nothing can highlight the differences between the two countries like the fact that on the Israeli side, everything is green and plush, and on the Syrian, it appears to be a barren wasteland.

On Top of Mount Bental

Mount Bental was the location of one of the biggest tank battles in history—during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The Quneitra (pronounced *koo-net-tra*) Valley is called the Valley of Tears because of massive loss of life that took place there.

The Golan Heights is an immense, hilly plateau in Northern Israel. It borders Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Its average height is about 3,500 feet. Its highest point on the northern border of Mount Hermon tops 9,000 feet.

Syria Terrorizes Israel From the Highlands

When Syria controlled this region, she used the highland to rain terror on Israel's Galilee villages and farms with rockets and bombs, and PLO raids were launched against Israel from Syrian territory. Syria's attacks grew more frequent in 1965 and 1966. Often, Israeli children would have to sleep in bomb shelters. A final attack was unleashed against defenseless Israeli towns in April 1967. Israel responded by shooting down six Syrian MiG fighter jets and issued a stern warning.

In addition, Syria was seeking to divert water from entering the Sea of Galilee—Israel's main supply of drinking water. A country can't last long without water. This, in and of itself, was an act of war.

Having had enough, Israel defended herself in the Six Day War,

fighting—literally—an uphill battle. Israeli tanks stormed the Golan Heights and fought a bloody, intense battle. Israeli casualties reached 115 in just a few days, while Syrian casualties were 20 times that, at 2,500. In the end, Israel controlled the highlands.

Peace Rejected by Syria

It is important to note that just a few days later, on June 19, 1967, the prime minister and his cabinet voted to return the Golan Heights to Syria *in exchange for a peace treaty*. Disgraced, Syria would not be further humiliated and rejected the olive branch.

Attacked While Fasting

In 1973, as the entire country of Israel was fasting for Yom Kippur, a humiliated Arab world (from the Six Day War defeat) led by Egypt and Syria attacked Israel. The surprise attack caught Israel off guard. My wife remembers her brother being called out of the synagogue to report for duty, along with tens of thousands of soldiers and reservists.

However, initial gains by Syria proved fleeting. Once the reserves were organized, they launched a counter-offensive, regaining all the territory. In fact, by the end of the short war, Israeli shells were reaching the outskirts of the Syrian capital Damascus. Israeli troops extended their reach 20 kilometers into Syria!

Peace Agreement?

Several attempts from Syria to retake this land were rebuffed by Israel. Finally in May 1974, Israel and Syria signed a Separation of Forces agreement. Israel retreated to the Golan Heights, and Syria reoccupied areas lost in the Yom Kippur war. Again, just to be clear, Israel did not relinquish the Golan Heights, just the areas gained in 1973. There would be a demilitarized zone in between the two countries that would be

occupied by U.N. peacekeepers, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

After 40 Years, Peacekeepers Run

Amazingly the view atop Mount Bental has been Israel's quietest border until the recent Syrian civil war. Recently Austria pulled its 377 troops (out of 911) from the mission, after Syrian rebels briefly overtook the border crossing at Quneitra.

This is not the first time a U.N. peacekeeping mission abandoned its post on Israel's border. Leading up to the Six Day War, President Nasser of Egypt ordered the U.N.—what was then considered to be their great peacekeeping mission—to leave the Sinai Peninsula, where they served as a buffer between Israel and Egypt. And without a word of dissent, they left.

From my vantage point yesterday, high on Mount Bental I could see the U.N. outpost where rebel forces kidnapped 21 unarmed U.N. Filipino peacekeepers. I could also see smoke billowing out of New Quneitra—and I could not determine if it was the result of a rocket or some Arab burning trash. New Quneitra has been the scene of several bloody battles in recent months.

Syria abandoned Old Quneitra after Israel returned the land in May 1974 and simply built a new city close by. Old Quneitra now serves as a reminder that Israel, while desiring peace with her neighbors, is willing to defend itself against attack.

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.

For the original article, visit messiahsmandate.com.

Would Jesus Tweet?

Technology has shifted yet again—this time advancing from “communication” technology to “connection” technology.

- Technology 1 is *industrial* technology—mass production, systems, processes.
- Technology 2 is *information* technology—computers, copy machines.
- Technology 3 is *communication* technology—fax, overnight, email, the Internet.
- Technology 4 is *connection* technology—Facebook, Twitter, Caring Bridge, Instagram, etc.

Of course, former technologies don't go away. Instead, like amoebas, they divide and expand. While not every man will be drawn to technology at all, much less the “connections” of Technology 4, many men tilt in that direction, and especially younger men. In fact, it's hard to imagine being thought of as relevant by younger men if you are technology resistant.

In the end, people, churches, denominations and ministries that fail to make a place for connection technologies will be marginalized (e.g., think about the “old time” Christian radio shows that seem stuck in a time warp).

The first step is always to understand. Personally, I decided to spend 2009 to understand more about Facebook and

Twitter—enough to get involved. Now I love both. They're each a tremendous ministry resource and free.

About the only technology Jesus and His disciples had to use were roads. But they did use them. And every generation of Christians since has worked hard to fully exploit the best technologies available—the printing press, the telephone, radio, television, airplanes, computers, the Internet ... you name it!

So, would Jesus tweet and post on Facebook? Isn't it obvious? While there are many penultimate purposes, the ultimate purpose of technology is to fulfill the Great Commission. And I have no doubt Jesus would make the most of every connection technology He could.

Come to think of it, some of the best tweets I've seen merely quote Jesus!

Patrick Morley is founder and CEO of Man in the Mirror. After building one of Florida's 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, he founded Man in the Mirror, a nonprofit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the best-selling author of The Man in the Mirror, No Man Left Behind, Dad in the Mirror, and A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines.

Get Happy by Juicing

New research shows that adding more produce to your daily diet can also benefit your mental health and sense of well-being. One study of the eating habits and moods of 80,000 British

adults at Dartmouth and the [University of Warwick](#) found that those who consumed the most fruit and vegetables every day rated themselves as significantly happier and more satisfied with their lives than those who ate lesser amounts.

Researchers looked at three studies and discovered that the well-being score for people who ate seven to eight servings of vegetables and fruits per day was consistently three points higher than for those who ate little or none. Researchers pointed out that the happiness gap between the two groups was “notably large,” outweighing even the factor of unemployment. The study indicates a “strong positive” correlation.

Eating veggies also perked up college-age people. A study of 281 adults with a mean age of 20, conducted at the [University of Otago](#), New Zealand, showed that those who reported the highest daily consumption of fruits and veggies also declared they were happier, calmer and more energetic than those who ate less. But even better, the healthy foods left a beneficial carryover—participants who ate the most produce reported their positive feelings carried through to the next day.

Researchers at the [Harvard School of Public Health](#) concluded from a study of 982 Americans that those who exhibited the most optimistic outlooks on life also had the highest blood levels of carotene, a key antioxidant that’s delivered by a colorful array of produce: dark green spinach and kale, carrots and sweet potatoes, and vibrant yellow or orange fruits like peaches, papayas and cantaloupe.

Recent studies found that these veggie superfoods can actually ward off depression—while deficiencies can bring it on. At the other end of the age spectrum, researchers at [Duke](#) examined the diets of 278 subjects aged 60+ and discovered that those with the lowest intake of fresh fruits and vegetables were most likely to suffer depression.

According to a study of 1,798 U.S. adults published in the

[British Journal of Nutrition](#), robust blood levels of carotenoids reduced the risk of developing depressive symptoms by 59 percent. And if all this isn't enough to convince you, Spanish researchers found that the Mediterranean diet that emphasizes fruits and vegetables may help prevent depression.

Seven to eight servings may sound like a daunting amount until you consider that 6 ounces of juice equals one serving. Drink 12 ounces of juice in the morning, and start your day with two servings of happy juice. Have a juice cocktail before dinner, and you'll add another serving or two. So, drink to a happy mood that will last all day long!

Happy-Mood Morning

Fennel juice has been used as a traditional tonic to help the body release endorphins, the "feel good" peptides, from the brain into the bloodstream. Endorphins help to diminish anxiety and fear, and they generate a mood of euphoria.

1½ apple (green is lower in sugar)
4–5 carrots, well scrubbed, tops removed, ends trimmed
3 fennel stalks with leaves and flowers
1½ cucumber, peeled if not organic
1 handful of spinach
1-inch-chunk ginger root

Cut produce to fit your juicer's feed tube. Juice apple first and follow with other ingredients. Stir and pour into a glass. Drink as soon as possible. Serves 1–2.

Cherie Calbom is the author of 21 books, including her latest best-seller, *The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies*, and *Juicing for Life*, with 2 million copies sold. Known as the Juice Lady for her work with juicing and health, her juice and diet therapy and cleansing programs have been

popular for more than two decades. She holds a Master of Science degree in whole foods nutrition from Bastyr University. She has practiced as a clinical nutritionist at St. Luke Medical Center, Bellevue, Wash., and as a celebrity nutritionist for George Foreman and Richard Simmons. She and her husband conduct wellness juice and raw foods cleansing tetrates throughout the year. For more information and to sign up for her free newsletter, go to juiceladycherie.com.

One Critical Question for Every Man and Every Father

At the age of 19, during my freshman year at college, I decided I wanted to become a pilot. So I went for it.

When you train to be a pilot, you have to go through many hours of ground school and flight training. One thing you learn in flight school is that a critical responsibility of a pilot is to do a preflight inspection before he and his passengers board the vessel. He should check out the inside of the aircraft to make sure all the instruments are working, and he should inspect the outside of the plane, especially its integrity, to ensure there are no cracks in the wings or fuselage. Even a minor breach can spell disaster once the plane is in the air.

Integrity

Likewise, a father must ensure he is living a life of integrity as he carries his children on the journey. To compromise, even in the slightest, could be devastating for a child. Integrity is what you do when no one else is looking.

A Breach of Integrity

Dark secrets in your life can cause a dangerous breach in your fatherhood fuselage and keep you from growing as a leader in your home. Addictions—sexual, pornographic, gambling, drugs, alcohol—are primary culprits that will keep you from being the dad you want to be.

When something unhealthy or wrong tempts your heart, you must guard your heart against that temptation. Succumbing to temptation, simply put, is caving in to something because it will, at least temporarily, satisfy you. All of us are tempted. The question is what we are going to do with that temptation that constantly sneaks its way into our lives.

A proverb says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” When temptation calls our name and seduces us, rarely do we take a step back, look at it logically, and say, “OK, I see this thing that is tempting me. Sure, it is exciting, it’s fun, and it will make me feel so good. But I’m not going to go there because it not only will hurt me in the long run, but it will also deeply wound my wife and my children.” So, how then can we guard our hearts against being taken on down the wrong runway toward an [affair](#), gambling, greed, workaholism, or [pornography](#)?

Be Open for Inspection

One place to start is to be “open for inspection” at any time and at any place. Here are a few personal examples.

My wife, Susan, knows my computer password and can access it any time to see what I am reading and looking at. She can also see my calendar at any time.

Susan and my kids can also pick up my smartphone any time to read my texts and emails and check out what kind of music I’m listening to.

Susan has complete access to our financial accounts and can see where the money goes.

My trusted assistant of over 20 years knows exactly where I'm at and who I'm with most of the time and helps keep me on track.

A couple of my friends also know they have the freedom to probe into my life to ensure I stay on course.

I am fearful of messing things up. I'm just one decision away from doing something really stupid and giving up a lifetime relationship with my wife and kids for a moment of pleasure.

Being open for inspection is critical. So, the critical question for you is: Are you open for inspection any time and at any place?

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

10 Foods That Strengthen Your Immune System

God has provided us with everything we need, not only in our physical bodies but also in nature. I want to share with you some of my favorite immune system fortifiers and boosters that my clients have come to love as well. They truly make a difference.

Just try any one of the following gifts from God's garden, and experience a higher level of health.

10 Functional Foods That Build Immunity

- 1. Soy.** Twenty-five grams of soy protein a day may help lower cholesterol and reduce heart disease risk. Soy may also fight osteoporosis.
- 2. Tomatoes.** Cooked, canned or as ketchup, tomatoes are protective against prostate cancer when 10 servings are consumed each week. Tomatoes contain lycopene, which neutralizes harmful free radicals that can damage cells and trigger cancer.
- 3. Oats.** Oats have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease.
- 4. Grapes.** Polyphenols or flavonoids in red grapes may lower the risk of stroke and heart disease.
- 5. Tea.** One cup of green or black tea per day could cut the risk of heart attack by 44 percent.
- 6. Citrus.** Fruit and juices contain high levels of vitamin C, potassium and folic acid.
- 7. Fresh herbs.** Herbs are used to enhance the natural flavor of foods, thereby discouraging the overuse of butter and salt.
- 8. Spinach.** One serving of spinach per week can protect against colon cancer, twice weekly to prevent cataracts. Its vitamin K content helps to build strong bones.
- 9. Vegetables (cruciferous).** Eaten two to three times a week, these help prevent colon and lung cancer.
- 10. Vegetables (beta-carotene).** These are protective against heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

The preceding is an excerpt from Siloam Press' 201 Secrets to Healthy Living. The book can purchased at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [BarnesandNoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com) or [Christianbook.com](https://www.christianbook.com).