

10 Ways Money Can Mess Up Your Family Life

The pursuit of personal achievement and financial gain can often create a destructive gap in your family life. Parenting requires a delicate balance of both. If you only make time for the highlights of your child's life, then you will have upset the balance ... forcing you to always make adjustments just to keep from toppling over.

That kind of lifestyle leads to an unsatisfying experience for everybody involved. Hey, we know you gotta make money. It's a fact of life. In some cases, however, we can get so focused on the bottom line that the pursuit of money becomes an addiction the same as any other. We all know what addictions do to families.

Here are 10 ways money can mess up your family life.

1. Broken promises. In order to climb the corporate ladder, to claim that extra bonus, to gain favor with the boss, we can choose to sacrifice so much along the way. When we place too high a priority on money, a long string of broken promises usually lie in the wake. "But Dad, you promised you would be there." Almost nothing can make a man feel lower than seeing the disappointed eyes of his child staring up at him saying those words. Just like at your job, let your word be your bond. If you make a promise to your child, keep it.

2. The parentless child. The decline of the American family can be directly traced back to the rise of the two-income household. To get the "right house" in the "right neighborhood," they need just a little more money. So Dad works 60-70 hours per week and is often out of town. Mom works 40 hours per week and has long commute times to and from work. Morning time is a blur. Dad's in a rush to get to the airport.

Mom's in a rush to get the children ready so she can beat the traffic. The family does not assemble again until sometime around 6 p.m. on the way to soccer practice, karate and gymnastics. Dinner isn't eaten at a table but is quickly wolfed down as Mom zooms through a drive-thru. By the time the lights go out, everyone is exhausted.

This is far from a healthy family life. Is the exhaustion and depravation really worth it? We are not certainly condemning every two-income household. It's a necessity for some, and the family can be fine. But if the motive is primarily to work to support a greater lifestyle, something is amiss.

3. Missing the small things. When your humble author here had his first child, my father said he was going to give me his best advice for parents: "Don't miss the small things." That is all he said. It took several years to figure out what he meant.

As parents, we tend to put a great deal of emphasis on the big moments, but life really happens during everything in between. Random moments of joyous laughter. Inside jokes that come from a great deal of time spent together. These moments are the bricks for creating strong family foundations. If dad builds a hugely successful business and a good name for himself, what he misses in the meantime are all the small things at home. Build what will last—your family.

4. The materialistic child. When family existence revolves around money, the end result is children who are skewed heavily toward materialism. Money becomes the family religion. Is this positive parenting? When you held your newborn girl in your arms, you dreamed many things for her. It's doubtful any of those dreams included a shrill-voiced teen girl screaming at you for the credit card. Did you dream she would demand a brand new BMW on her 16th birthday? Placing money at the center of your family life leads only to disciples of the deity you have created.

5. Disregard for those in need. Every closet, cabinet, nook and cranny in your home is at full capacity with “stuff.” You don’t even know what most of it is. Meanwhile, just down the road, a child is eating ketchup packets for his dinner. It goes without saying that’s an unacceptable reality.

We should already know how to help children in need. Yet in most cases, we just don’t seem to get it. We hold on to things we will never use when we could share. Wealth should be shared, not by force, but by generous hearts that see a need and offer a solution. A heart that loves money at the core has great difficulty giving things away. To be a successful family, you need to be able to embrace generosity.

6. Loss of sleep. Time is money, right? Who needs sleep? In our quest for the almighty dollar, we give up many things, but the first to fall is generally sleep. However, the first advice most parenting articles will give is to make sure everyone in the family gets the proper amount of rest. The right amount of sleep is essential to our health and happiness. The pursuit of money is relentless. The man on the chase usually does so with blurry eyes and a yawn when nobody is looking. Love of money has many consequences.

7. Stressed to the max. Money worries create high levels of stress. Stress is a killer. Just as with lack of sleep, stress is highly detrimental to your health. It also spreads itself to many other areas of your family life—an unpleasant demeanor toward your wife and children, for starters. Money is at the root of more divorces than any other factor. That’s something to think about.

8. One-trick pony. The man obsessed with financial matters is generally a one-dimensional individual. But life is about experiences and the wisdom gained from them. Your mother made you take piano lessons because she wanted you to be a “well-rounded person.” Remember? You can talk all day about why the market will stay above 11,000, but can you hold an intelligent

conversation on any other subject outside of money matters? Even if you can, you will quickly grow bored with it and guide it back to your comfort zone. Mom didn't raise you to be a one-trick pony.

9. Justification. Sometimes we use the need for money as a justification for escape from an unhappy marriage or family situations we do not understand. As an example, a man with a special-needs child may use the real problem of education costs as a justification to work extra hours to meet the need. The reality is that he could make other adjustments to absorb the additional costs. He could cut off the cable television or drop the gym memberships. Instead, the man focused on money will chose being gone more as a solution. Escape. Are you using money to run away from your troubles?

10. The company we keep. There are many types of parenting. There are many ways to come to the same successful outcome. There are just as many ways to mess things up. The people we surround ourselves with have an enormous influence on the type of person and parent we are. Generally, when money is at the forefront of our existence, we are surrounded by those of like minds as well. Consider the company you keep. Are there diverse and varied schools of thought? Do they challenge you as person and not just as a breadwinner? When you begin to surround yourself with high-quality, well-rounded people, you will begin to see your own life take the same shape.

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**.

Common Cookout Criminals: 4 Foods to Watch Out for This Summer

Barbecue season is officially here, and so are all its festive fixins! One's mouth can water just imagining buttery corn on the cob, succulent baby back ribs and a delectable ice cream sundae that puts the cherry on top of a delicious but not-so-nutritious summer season.

On my radio show this week, I had as my guest one of my dear friends, fellow fitness enthusiast and personal trainer Marquette Falbo. Together we discussed the foods we feel are the unhealthiest of summertime as well as better alternatives that will ensure you enjoy full-flavored fare without the guilty aftertaste.

Criminal No. 1: Corn on the Cob

First off, I'd like to share with you a little-known fact about corn: It isn't a vegetable! It's a whole grain. So if you're trying to form a balanced meal by adding an ear of it to your plate of beans and brisket at the next barbecue, you'd better also reach for something else—something green, preferably.

Often slathered with butter, corn can be a rich source of unhealthy fat and excess calories. Try to go light on the butter, or even forgo it altogether and use a touch of olive oil and some herbs and spices to flavor it instead. Or be a

little crazy and just have it plain!

Criminal No. 2: Potato Salad

Homemade potato salad receives most of its calories from potatoes, eggs and mayonnaise. Of course, your diet can accommodate these items, but it is better to consume them separately and in limited quantities. Traditional potato salad with full-fat mayo and eggs delivers 358 calories, 20 grams of fat and 170 mg of cholesterol per 1-cup service. (For cholesterol, 300 mg per day is the max limit for healthy people and 200 mg for those with high cholesterol.) The decadent dish may also compose more than *half* of your daily allowance of sodium.

Enjoy a healthier version by creating your own recipe using low-fat mayonnaise, egg whites (no yolks) and more flavorful veggies and seasonings like onion, cauliflower, celery, minced garlic and mustard. You can even replace the bulk of the mayo with Greek or fat-free yogurt. You'll eliminate a great deal of fat and get all the health benefits of yogurt, such as protein, calcium and B vitamins. For an added nutritional bonus, leave the skins on the potatoes; they offer more nutrients than the rest of the potato! You can also use purple potatoes, which boast higher levels of polyphenol antioxidants than white potatoes, not to mention they will no doubt make your potato salad look super-cool!

Criminal No. 3: Barbecue Ribs

Did you know just three ounces of ribs could easily contain 337 calories? The total fat and cholesterol can add up to be more than 33 percent of the daily value, leading to fatty plaque buildup in your arteries. Suffice it to say, ribs are not heart-healthy! On top of that—literally—ribs are often covered with salty, sugary barbecue sauce, which means more sodium and calories.

Be sure to trim the fat off the ribs and then season them with

herbs and spices rather than sauces or other highly caloric liquids. Before putting them in the oven, brown them in a skillet. Not only does this break down the fat, it also adds flavor. Place the ribs in a 325-degree oven, so the fat can drip away from the meat as it heats. For a nice crust, remove the rack from the oven, baste the ribs with olive oil, and then grill them over direct heat for just two minutes each side.

When it comes to barbecue sauce, BYOB—"Bring Your Own Bottle." Find a sauce that contains less than 500 mg of sodium per serving and less than 15 grams of sugar per serving, and avoid brands that list high fructose corn syrup among its first few ingredients. (Items listed first are heaviest by weight.)

Criminal No. 4: Lemonade

OK, I know lemonade is technically not a food, but this popular poolside beverage isn't as sweet as it tastes! One cup of the refreshing concoction often contains 105 calories and 25 grams of sugar—that's about six teaspoons!

Tropicana, known for its freshly squeezed orange juice, produces a lemonade that is full of added sugars and manufactured ingredients. The second ingredient listed on the label is high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), which I briefly mentioned earlier.

Here are a few of the health hazards associated with HFCS:

1. Significant risk of weight gain and obesity. A study conducted by Princeton University found that rats that were fed HFCS gained fat 300 percent more quickly than those fed an equal (or slightly larger) dose of fruit-derived sugar.

2. Hypertension and elevated "bad" cholesterol levels. High fructose doesn't just make your body fat, it also makes your heart fat. There is a strong link between the irresponsible consumption of high fructose corn syrup and elevated

triglyceride and LDL (bad cholesterol) levels. Together, these can cause arterial plaque buildup and lead to heart problems including hypertension, heart disease and even stroke.

3. Liver damage. Like anything else you eat or drink, your liver, gallbladder and kidneys process HFCS. And it's especially destructive to your liver. If you don't lead an active lifestyle, permanent liver scarring can occur. This greatly diminishes the organ's ability to process out toxins and, over time, can lead to a wide array of other negative health concerns.

4. Mercury exposure. Did you know high fructose corn syrup is often loaded with alarmingly high levels of mercury? One study found mercury in over 50 percent of samples tested. Mercury exposure can result in irreversible brain and nervous system damage—especially in young, growing bodies.

Odwalla Lemonade Quencher is made with all-natural ingredients and is high in vitamin C. It's fat-free, cholesterol-free and sodium-free. But like most naturally-sweetened, store-bought lemonades, it contains a whopping 41 grams of sugar, so remember to monitor your consumption. Santa Cruz Organic Lemonade offers additional vitamins and fun, fruity flavors such as mango, raspberry, orange and pomegranate.

Even better than organic lemonade from a grocery store aisle is the kind blended up in your very own kitchen! Here's an easy recipe I found on :

Ingredients

½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

6 or 7 strawberries

3 packets of Stevia powder (or liquid Stevia drops, to taste)

3 cups filtered water

Directions

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend it up!

I hope this article and its tips will help you enjoy a fitter, healthier summer! And remember, it's okay to bite into a buttery ear of corn on the cob every once in a while, or lick your fingers clean after finishing off a few ribs slippery with sauce. Just don't make it an everyday occurrence.

Stay fit, stay faithful.

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For the original article, visit [Creation House's Fit for Faith](#).

Is There Such Thing as Holy Frustration?

You could almost hear the ticking—the countdown before the eruption of uncontrollable outrage. John attempted to suppress it, but it just kept building and growing until the sweat on his forehead, the clenched jaw and his narrowing eyes foretold the upcoming explosion.

John's anger had caused damage to personal possessions and included fights with strangers and broken relationships with loved ones. Society, with all of its checks and balances, began to resist his reputation of rage. Family members began

to isolate themselves from his temper tantrums. His sudden outbursts had caused so much pain, they simply didn't want to have anything to do with him.

John's co-workers no longer made excuses for his outbursts. His tenure on jobs became more and more short-term. Once, he was considered a high producer, but now his increasingly volatile temper was causing his productivity to plummet. He even began to blame potential customers for his inability to make the sale on their "ignorance."

John's face began to reflect his anger. His eyes had yellowed. His mouth turned in a constant frown. His brow wrinkled with forceful intensity. He was no longer a young man fighting for a better future; he was an embittered old man frustrated with his life.

Anger is usually caused by unmet expectations. You see it commonly displayed in the checkout line of the local grocery store. Children burst out in childish rage, hoping to get the attention of their distracted parents. They want something, and they want it now.

Unfortunately, a lot of men never grow out of the tactic of clenched fists and stomping feet. As adults, their intimidation no longer works, and their anger boils.

"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (Eph. 4:26-27, NIV).

Do not allow the day to pass without ridding yourself of anger.

Going to sleep while angry can cause delusions. Our nemesis will use anger to get a foothold on us through unchecked emotion. Anger digs deep into the soul of a man. It can draw out buried emotion from years past in an instant. It is very important that we distinguish the different types of anger and

extinguish the harmful emotions it brings.

The Four Faces of Anger

- **Rage** is an anger that causes us to flurry about with over-expressed gestures, clenched jaws and boisterous words, even calling down curses. This kind of anger typically comes from frustrated expectations. Expressing rage causes people around us to stare in disbelief, confusion or embarrassment.
- **Fury** is a stronger type of rage. This destructive form of rage often leads to a depraved mind and delusional violence. Fury is motivated by evil. Fury often results in physical harm to others, sometimes even in murder.
- **Indignation** is a righteous anger caused by witnessing or experiencing injustice, shame or evil done to innocence. It is the correct use of the emotion of anger. Indignation motivates us to protect and risk our lives for the cause of others.
- **Wrath** is the godliest form of anger. It is an anger that responds to evil with pure judgment. Wrath is what causes men to correct a wrong and to rid the earth of evil.

Some men have been taught to sequester their anger, to be stoic in their emotions. Yet anger does have a role to play in our lives if our motivations are pure and our response is disciplined.

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires” (James 1:19-20).

Many of our problems with anger arise from a lack of communication. We fail to listen and then fail to express what is causing this pent-up frustration. Our inability to communicate becomes a weakness to express our emotions.

Paul explains this frustration in Romans 8 when he talks about the frustration of birth pains the earth is suffering. Out of its inability to communicate, the earth quakes, trembles and suffers violence. It is awaiting its redemption from decay, longing for the “sons of God” to be revealed.

In the same way, we ourselves groan inwardly when we see the world with its “unmet expectations.” Frustration builds, and our weakness is revealed. We do not know what to say or how to respond.

Paul says, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans” (Rom. 8:26). This is a holy frustration. It is a frustration that causes us to pray for God’s purpose to be revealed upon the earth.

As men, we must realize that the help of the Holy Spirit can correct our lack of communication. It is only then that we can actually see the will of God work “all things for the good” (v. 28).

Getting involved in the process of establishing God’s will on the earth, especially in our lives, our families and our careers, will allow us to properly direct those things that frustrate us. We will properly manage those frustrations, actually understanding that it may just be a holy frustration, prompting us to pray.

So, the next time that you find yourself building up anger, ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your weakness to pray to the perfect will of God so that His purpose can be fulfilled upon the earth.

*FivestarMan was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God’s Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical*

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

10 Things I Have Learned About Fatherhood

As a new father of only five months, I have already come to learn the value and necessity of having a son in my life. Before he was born, I thought I had life all figured out.

I was told by some of my close friends that life would change. But not having gone through it yet, I thought they were just trying to scare me.

I was wrong.

At first it appeared life had changed for the worse—waking up in the middle of the night over and over again, a crying baby that I had no idea how to help and a sometimes-frustrated wife who didn't want my help. I thought to myself, "What did I get myself into?" As time passed, my wife and I continued to work together, and we were soon lean, mean, baby problem-solving machines. Well, maybe not quite that ...

In the aftermath of my wonderful first Father's Day, I came up with my top 10 things I have learned from fatherhood—or top 10 things I have improved in my life. Word it however you like.

1. Love. My parents taught me about love, my wife showed me how to love, but my son has taught me about the strong bond of love. When it took months for me to realize I loved my wife,

it took "first sight" to love my son. My love continues to grow for him each day, and I pray daily that God would help me maintain that love for him and my wife (1 Cor. 16:14).

2. Value of Time. I can't count the times people have asked if the baby was sleeping well or if we've slept at all in the last week. I also wonder what my wife and I did with our time before we had our little guy. From late nights to early mornings to staying at home a lot more, I have learned that my time is passing and I want to spend it loving my wife and son to the best of my ability. It's a daily prayer to make sure I am not overly distracted.

3. Necessity of patience. I really like to think I was a patient man before our little guy, but after about a month of frustrating occurrences and small battles with my wife, I had to dig real deep and pray for more patience. God is always good and has helped me to become a more patient man. And don't think this is just at home; this patience shines in all that I do now (Gal. 5:22-23).

4. Great communication with my wife. My wife and I were fortunate to be blessed with many years of marriage before our son arrived. Through many ups and downs, we were able to establish a strong sense of communication with each other. We discussed many times before our son was born that we were going to have to take this to the next level, and we have. My wife is a wonderful mother to our son, and we pray daily that God would help us be the very best parents we can be for our son (Eph. 5:22-25).

5. Strong protector. Being the protector of my family already fell into my role when I became married to my beautiful wife, but with a son it has become an even stronger trait I try to possess. From making sure he stays safe and comfortable at home to making sure he is properly fed and then spending quality time with him when I am home, I want my wife and him to know that they are in safe hands and that I will do

everything to protect them. I pray daily, especially when I leave them alone, that God would protect our family (Phil. 4:13).

6. Selflessness. Many of us can admit we were selfish and self-indulgent before a child came into our life. The weekends revolved around the wife and me. The dogs were no trouble when thrown in the kennel, and we did what we pleased with our time. These days our schedule revolves around our little guy, and because of our deep love for him, this is not a problem and we are glad to it. This might be one that I need to pray about more (James 4:6).

7. I am blessed. Knowing that I have a great wife and a happy son, I am fully aware that I am blessed. As I seek prayer in each of the areas listed in this top 10, I make sure I let God know how thankful I am for what He has blessed me with in my life. I have to stay aware that all of this could change at any moment and that I must continue to seek and rely on my God.

8. Teamwork. As the time approached to have our baby, we knew we were going to need the support of friends and family. God has blessed us with some amazing people from our church in our life, and they were more than willing to help us out. I suppose through this I learned to put a bigger value on their friendship and do a better job at making myself available and to honor the relationship more consistently.

9. Fatherly maturity. The story of Maturity continues to progress as I add the role of fatherhood to my life résumé. The last few years have taught me the value and strength of having God in my life and maintaining a strong and healthy marriage, but fatherhood makes me want to know more about maturity. I firmly believe every man must mature, and the path is very similar for all men. I pray that I can be the mature father my son needs me to be (Prov. 22:6).

10. God's love. Our church recently ran a series about God's love, and I think it came at the perfect time in my life. As I could feel that I loved my wife and son more, I still wanted to know more about God's love and what it meant in my life. The verse at the end of this paragraph says that God is love and that we must love as well if we are to know God. I can't say everything about this verse now, but knowing that God commands us to love makes me want to be a better man, greater husband and stronger father (1 John 4:8)!

I would love to hear what fatherhood has taught you over your years. Share in the comments below. For the original article, visit .

***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.*

10 Ways to Survive and Thrive in a Difficult Marriage

First, it's important that we understand that the concepts of "difficult marriage" and "good marriage" can be compatible. The fact is, the best relationships involve challenge because challenge is typically a prerequisite for experiencing the best.

If your marriage does not involve challenge (and even conflict) then you are, in all likelihood, barely scraping the surface of what is possible in terms of a life-charged relationship.

Here at All Pro Dad, we understand that life is always a work in progress. And so are the best marriages. Use these 10 ways to survive (and thrive) in a difficult marriage as you work out your commitment to create the best relationships possible.

Think “leading from the front with the heart of a servant,” and take it from there:

1. Understand that the word *commitment* is the most important element in the meaning of love. Great relationships are predicated on long-term faithfulness. Time is not just a great healer; time also provides the space we need to work things out.

2. Take a look at this [Biology 101 definition of *life*](#), and apply it to your marriage. Life is that which distinguishes something vital and functional from something that is dead. Life is a force associated with animation or vigor. Life is a state characterized by metabolism, growth, the ability to react, reproduction and constant adaptation via internal change.

3. Tweak your perception. Real life is challenging, and life without challenge is, by definition, lifeless. All of us enjoy a little calm. But try viewing difficulties in your marriage as opportunities to grow. Perception can be reality.

4. Consider the fact that there are always two alternatives to every situation. We can either elevate the experience or make it worse. Your response sets the trajectory and sets into motion what is possible.

5. Connect with a support group. Your wife and you both need to be surrounded by deliberate encouragement and loving

accountability. To find that, you need to surround your marriage with couples who are in strong relationships.

6. Commit to positive change—yourself. The only person you can change in a marriage is yourself. Positive personal growth can be the catalyst for positive change in the relationship.

7. Hold yourself accountable. Do you want your spouse to change? Change yourself first. When we are willing to be the change, we imagine we have already opened the gate for positive change in our spouse.

8. Never blame. Resist the urge to blame your wife for difficulties, even when you know you're doing your best. The assignment of blame is always a step backward.

9. Always affirm. Don't lie—because insincerity always falls flat. However, when we find positives and then follow them with heartfelt affirmation, we demonstrate both compassion and belief. Belief is a strong asset to a marriage.

10. Love with increasing eloquence. Always aim to raise your own game. When we love our wives with creativity and energy, we're doing the best kind of leadership available. It's called leading from the front with the heart of a servant.

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**.

Discover the Treasures of the Healthy Living Bible Study

One of my passions is discovering the practical wisdom in the Bible. So it was with great pleasure that I received a review copy of *Treasures of Healthy Living* by Annette Reeder and Dr. Richard Couey.

In the book, Reeder, who is a biblical nutrition consultant, and Couey help you uncover the Bible's wealth of information about how to maximize your health using foods that God originally designed for the body. If you are sick and tired of being sick and tired, then you owe it to yourself to grab a copy of this book and use it to give yourself a health makeover.

Not only does the book help you establish a strong nutritional foundation, but it helps you examine Scripture for yourself through an integrated Bible study. Through the study, you will gain God's viewpoint about health. In 3 John 1:2, we are told, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." In *Treasures of Healthy Living*, you discover that God not only wants us to be healthy, but also gives us the roadmap for how to achieve it.

Reeder starts the book by sharing her family's battles with cancer, depression, high cholesterol, weight issues and other serious health problems. However, God led her to take a closer look at the habits that threaten to destroy them. Through nutritional counsel, carefully searching the Scriptures herself and dedication to trying new dietary approaches, she made over her family's diet with good-tasting foods that healed, energized and nourished their bodies.

Treasures of Healthy Living is structured as a 12-week study; it can be used by individuals or church groups. In the first part, "Feasting in the Treasures of God's Design," you learn how to make wise choices in beverages, grains, fruits and vegetables, and proteins/meat. In the second part, "Guarding the Treasure," you learn how to protect your health through self-discipline, exercise and forgiveness. You also learn how to minimize your exposure to things that can destroy your health, like toxins in your environment.

I greatly enjoyed the book, but If I could think of any suggestions for updates, it would be to shorten the first week's lesson (I prefer shorter lessons) and to include a sampling of recipes at the end. While recipes are mentioned, the reader is referred to the companion ***Treasures of Healthy Living Cookbook*** for them. Instead, it would be beneficial to provide a few recipes in this book at the end but refer the reader to the cookbook if they would like more options.

I do believe that by the time you finish the book, you will have the tools to increase your energy and change your health for the better. You'll be able to start your own action plan so that you can gain new strength to overcome life's challenges. After gleaning the wisdom in this book, you will be grateful that you invested in your health and have renewed confidence that you can do all things through Christ!

P.S. I've discovered that Annette Reeder's website, , has many great recipes available. She is offering *Take Back Your Temple* readers a 10 percent discount on book resources at the website. Just use coupon code *takebackyourtemple*.

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

For the original article, visit .

Kurdish Students Call for Relations with Israel

A group of Kurdish students has made its voice heard in clamoring for relations between Iraqi Kurdistan and the State of Israel.

More than 200 students at the University of Kurdistan recently took part in a debate on whether the Kurdish region in Northern Iraq should have relations with the State of Israel. Upon hearing both sides, a panel of judges determined that Iraqi Kurds should have relations with the Jewish state. One of the judges reported, "The arguments of the winning team focused on the historic relations between Jews and Kurds."

Head of the university's student union, Uda Sarhang, claimed: "The central argument for those calling for open ties with Israel was that a majority of Mideast countries have ties with Israel; ties conducted peacefully despite their dislike of Israel. So, why can't we have the same ties?"

Sarhang, a supporter of Israeli-Kurdish relations, claimed that an additional argument made during the course of the debate was the current relations that exist between Kurdish Jews and the Kurdish region of Iraq.

Prof. Ofra Bengio of Tel Aviv University, who has conducted extensive research on the Kurds, told *Yedioth Achronot*, "This is not a common thing, not in Kurdistan and not anywhere," adding that "from what I gathered from meeting Kurds from different regions of Kurdistan, there is some kind of sense of

a shared fate between us and Kurds, at least in the sense that we are both minorities in a region not interested in our self-determination.”

Israeli-Kurdish Ties

Regardless whether such an occurrence is common or not, there is huge potential for increased relations between Israel and Northern Iraq. Iraqi Kurds, who number around five million people, have enjoyed autonomy in a region cushioned between Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey since the 1991 Gulf War. This autonomy has been further enhanced as a result of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. However, despite the existence of autonomy, “The Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world without an independent state,” said Dr. Sherkoh Abbas, President of the Kurdistan National Assembly of Syria.

Nevertheless, should the Kurds, at least the ones of Iraq, Syria and Iran, be granted a state, they will not be a hostile one toward Israel. The president of Iraq’s Kurdish region, Massoud Barzani, has publicly stated: “It is not a crime to have relations with Israel. If Baghdad established diplomatic relations with Israel, we could open a consulate in Erbil.”

In the past, Israeli television has broadcast photographs from the 1960s showing Massoud Barzani’s father, Mustafa Barzani, with former Israeli defense minister Moshe Dayan. Furthermore, a 2009 poll conducted by Maariv found that 66.9 percent of Iraqi Kurds support having diplomatic relations with Israel. Additionally, Israel has offered agricultural assistance to Kurdish farmers in Northern Iraq.

In an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, Middle East specialist Dr. Harold Rhodes said that Kurds and Israelis would make good potential allies because of “shared challenges.”

“Like Jews, the Kurdish people have lived under foreign domination for millennia,” Rhodes said. “Kurdish suffering

under Arab and Iranian rule infuses them with a natural affinity for Jews and Israel. There are an estimated 35 to 45 million Kurds in the Middle East, many of whom have been secretly sympathetic to Israel for years and have even been labeled 'Zionist agents' in Iraq, Syria and Iran.

"The addition of millions of potential Kurdish friends, for micro-sized Israel with a mere eight million inhabitants, could enhance the Jewish state's security and regional position. While Jews were always considered politically and socially inferior in the Arab Middle East, Kurds generally did not discriminate against Jews, nor have they demonized Israel. In short, geography, history and destiny create natural affinities and interests between Kurds and Israelis."

For the original article, visit .

How the World Could Thrive in the Future

Confession: I was recently sitting at my desk at Maoz Israel Ministries in Tel Aviv, and I was only half-working. While I was getting my work done, I had open on my computer screen a live feed of the Israeli Presidential Conference.

It's an annual event, started a few years ago by Israeli President Shimon Peres, held here in Israel.

The nickname of the gathering is the Tomorrow Conference. The goal is to expose Israelis to the greatest minds in the world and to expose the greatest minds in the world to Israel and Israelis.

It's a three-day event that only grows in stature and impact each year. The topics discussed at the conference include business, finance, technology, the arts, societal issues, science, medicine, government and so forth.

This year's lineup of speakers was incredible! It included former U.S. President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, as well as actress and singer Barbra Streisand and actor Robert DeNiro. This is an A-list conference with truly the top figures in each field.

How do you top David Axelrod when it comes to discussing politics? The guy just got Obama elected ... twice! How do you top Larry Summers and Stanley Fischer for discussions on the global economy? They are the former U.S. treasury secretary and Bank of Israel governor, respectively.

There were CEOs from Fortune 500 companies and new startups, artists, entrepreneurs, researchers, leaders in nearly every industry, presidents, foreign ministers, ambassadors and mayors from almost every country. Even Sharon Stone and Dr. Ruth gave lectures.

Now, that was a conference!

A panel on the afternoon I was watching featured an Arab-Israeli actor who stars on a hit TV show in Israel and an Iranian-Israeli singer who has become popular all over the world. It struck me as they were speaking that they probably don't have conferences like this in Iran. I'm only guessing.

So much of the Muslim world has become so focused on twisted theology, nuclear technology and jihadist ideology that it spends no time conferring on things like art, music, education, hi-tech, startups, cures for diseases or solving the world's problems. Instead, it spends most of its time plotting how to *be* the world's problem.

I'm reminded of Afghanistan before the U.S. invasion. Music

was outlawed, and education for women was outlawed.

In the West Bank today, people are arrested for “liking” posts on Facebook that criticize Palestinian leader Abbas. In Gaza today, they are closing Christian schools. In fact, they’re closing all schools that teach boys and girls together or that have male and female teachers working side by side.

In Egypt, they are arresting comedians who make fun of the Muslim Brotherhood government. In Iran, they arrest journalists who appear on American television shows.

And when it comes to religion, forget about it. Most Muslim nations don’t even allow Bibles to enter their borders or churches or synagogues to be built on their land.

Is it any wonder our nations are at war?

It’s not that the Arab people or Muslims are without creativity and ingenuity. It’s that their governments shackle them in theocratic prisons. They are people yearning to be free and yearning to engage the world.

Look at the Iranian elections this past week. The people of Iran turned out by the millions to cast their ballots. They know their country is ruled by the murderous dictator, the Ayatollah. They know he banned all but a handful of candidates that he deemed “appropriate.” They know he outlawed women from running for office.

But still they turned out to make their voices heard. They chose the best of the awful options of candidates put before them. The winner was someone that we in the West consider extreme. But to the Iranian people, he was the only one who gave the tiniest glimmer of hope that he might not be as awful as his predecessor, Ahmadinejad.

You could feel the desperation of the Iranian people with every vote that was cast. They so want to be free.

The people of Egypt are planning more protests on the upcoming one-year anniversary of their Muslim Brotherhood President Morsi taking office. They are not satisfied. They want something more. They want true freedom.

The people of Syria continue to fight for it and shed their blood for it.

Our enemies are not the Arab people, the Palestinian people or Muslims in general. Our enemies are their dictators—the jihadists who control governments and armies and school curriculum and television shows and summer camps. Our enemies are the indoctrinators of hate and anti-Semitism and sexism.

Our enemy is ignorance.

This week, we in Israel were privileged to have some of the world's great teachers here in our country to share their ideas and to listen to ours—to dream, together, about tomorrow.

I pray that one day soon our Arab neighbors will be free to dream with us.

Chaim Goldberg is the director of media for Maoz Israel and is a weekly columnist for *Standing With Israel*.

Why You Should Be Proactive With Your Health

Some people believe providers of medical and dental care or various government agencies are responsible for their health

care, but that is only part of the truth. The other side involves individuals taking a proactive stance in maintaining their good health.

An Ounce of Prevention

Make and keep regular medical and dental checkups. Use a date you'll remember as a reminder—for example, on New Year's Day, celebrate another year of good health by making a note to call your doctor's office the next day. Stay informed and up-to-date regarding products and practices that enhance health. Practice the healthful habits you are learning about in this book, and avoid anything that might threaten your health.

Monitor your weight and blood pressure; perform self-examinations regularly. Make your home safe from pollution, toxins, allergens and infectious bacteria. Take responsibility for your health and the health of those you care about.

A Pound of Cure

Take care of any developing dental issues as soon as possible. Be aware of your insurance coverage—and its limits. For example, mercury-free fillings might not be covered, but paying extra for the less-toxic filling material will benefit your health in the long run. Know your rights and responsibilities as a patient. You have the right to full information about the outcomes of the care, treatment and services you receive.

You have the right to refuse treatment and seek a second opinion. Make yourself part of your own treatment team. Become a consumer of health care information. Ask questions, read health care journals and magazines, and search the Internet to find information on treatment options.

Know the medications you're taking and why. Know their possible side effects and interactions with other prescription or over-the-counter medications or supplements you are using.

The preceding is an excerpt from Siloam Press' 201 Secrets to Healthy Living. The book can purchased at , or .

Discovering a Heart for God's Chosen People

First of all, let me let you in on a little secret: I'm not Jewish, nor is any of my family Jewish. I'm an English-Irish-born, small-town American who was raised in the Catholic church and who now calls himself a born-again Christian.

So, why would somebody like me be writing a story extolling the virtues of Jewish culture and history and Messianic Jews? That's a very good question, and one I would love to address.

About a year ago, I was hired as an editor for *Charisma* magazine in Lake Mary, Fla. After a career mainly as a sports writer and editor, I was thrilled to finally be serving the Lord at a place where I knew He wanted me to be. I've always wanted to use my talents for God, and He finally placed me in this position in His timing, when He was ready. I'm grateful to be here, and it's a great place to work.

A couple months later, I was put in charge of four different websites for our *Charisma* brand. Lo and behold, Standing With Israel happened to be one of them. Now, I can honestly say that I haven't even known very many Jewish people in my lifetime. I had a friend that became a Messianic Jew back in my early college days, and she introduced me, however much on a limited basis, to Judaism through her family.

Jennifer wound up getting married and moving away, and I have not seen her for more than 25 years.

Since then, I'll admit that my exposure to the Jewish faith has been severely limited. Of course, I knew about the Jewish holy days of Yom Kippur and the season of Hanukkah. Most of what I knew was gained through movies like *The Jazz Singer* (the later edition with Neil Diamond) and the comedy *Keeping the Faith* with Ben Stiller and Edward Norton. Somehow, I didn't believe that last one was very indicative of the Jewish faith, but it was a funny movie nonetheless.

Now I am familiar with Shavuot, Tu B'Av, Yom HasShoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, and the celebrations that go along with them.

When I took over our Standing With Israel site for , my perspective on Israel began to change drastically. At first I knew it was going to be very awkward trying to land aggregate partners for the site and perhaps getting people to write for us. As it turned out, I was right.

Eventually, however, through emails and phone calls, I began to get comfortable with the site and with the Jewish and Messianic Jewish audience that we serve. In fact, I've not only begun to learn more about the Jewish culture and the tremendous courage of the Jewish people, but I have also begun to fashion some tremendous friendships with both Orthodox Jews and Messianic Jews.

Jonathan Feldstein, the director of Heart to Heart, has become one of those friends. He is an Orthodox Jew who writes a weekly column for us, and our friendship was cemented when he came to the Orlando area in May and we had lunch. That was a bit awkward because we didn't have any places with kosher food within a 20-mile radius, but Jonathan eased the tension by going to a restaurant with me and ordering a fruit salad-type dish. (Lesson No. 1 for me in my cultural diversity!)

Jonathan and I talked candidly about each other's culture and about life in general. It resulted in an invitation to come to Israel in January. More on that in a minute.

And then there's Chaim Goldberg, a Messianic Jew who is the director of media for Maoz Israel's website. Chaim also writes a weekly column for us. I've spoken with him on the phone (directly from Israel!) and we've emailed back and forth. Not only is Chaim a talented writer that puts out great blog posts, but he's a good person, from what I've gotten to know about him.

He and I have become friends without meeting, but I hope to meet him someday. He's got a real heart for God and a heart for winning souls, so I know he's a blessing to his audience.

I also have had the privilege of speaking and dealing with author Grant Berry, who cheerleads the Messianic movement and is a monthly columnist for us. I have yet to meet Messiah's Mandate's Ron Cantor, but we too have become friends through Facebook, and I love the heart he has for both the Jewish and Christian communities.

Now, I'm not saying that I'm going to be referring to Jesus as Yeshua from now on. I still hold true to my Christian beliefs and proclaim that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior and that He died for me on the cross. I try to live every day by Romans 5:17, which says, "For if by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life by One, Jesus Christ."

But I know that the Jews are God's chosen people, and we should never-ever-take that for granted. Genesis 12:3 says, in God's words to Abram, "I will bless those who bless you [the nation of Israel], and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

It has always amazed me how Israelis have stayed so calm in

the face of so much hatred toward them. They are well aware of the fact that there are probably thousands of missiles pointed at them from every direction, but from what I've been told, Israelis refuse to live their lives in fear. Jonathan told me they just go about their lives because they don't want to give credence to the enemy and allow them to impact their lives like that. I applaud Israelis for that.

We as Christians know (and should believe) that God will protect His people from such harm, and we should be in prayer for the people of Israel daily.

As I said before, Jonathan has invited me to come to Israel in January. I would love to be able to visit the Holy Land, for sure, and to take in the warmth and hearth of the hearts of the people of Israel, as well as see all of the history. I would love to see the birthplace of my Savior, too.

I'm not certain I'll have the time or finances to go there, however. Raising a family in America these days—as it is everywhere—is very challenging financially. Jonathan says it will take about \$700, so I'll have to do some heavy-duty lobbying with my wife.

For now, I'll stay connected with Israel and its people through my work with Standing With Israel.

We are always looking for fresh perspectives from people who live in Israel, so if you have an interesting story to tell, please write to me at @. I would love to hear from you.

God bless, and Shabbat Shalom!

Shawn A. Akers is an associate editor with *Charisma Media* in Lake Mary, Fla., .