

Man in the Mirror: A Son's Guide to Father's Day

Definitions

Mo · ther's Day (mutherz day) n. A day devoted to honoring moms.

Fath · er's Day (fätherz day) n. A day to beat up men for not doing a better job!

Guess what? Not this year. This year, let's bless our fathers!

"What?" you say. "You obviously don't know my father!" Don't have to. Heard it before. Been through it myself.

In 1926, when my dad was two years old, the youngest of four children, his father abandoned him. It is something from which our family lineage has still not fully recovered. The impact of a father, for better or for worse, is felt forward for many generations.

My grandfather, whom I never met nor ever even seen his picture, contacted my dad when I was in high school. My dad didn't want anything to do with him. I asked my dad, "Why didn't you let him come see you?"

My dad said, "I was only two when he left. I never knew the man. He didn't want anything to do with me then, so I don't want anything to do with him now." Back then, as a high schooler, I didn't know what to say. Today, I do, but it's too late. My dad has passed away.

Breaking the Cycle

My dad wanted to break the cycle and, in many ways, he did. He taught me integrity, the value of hard work, and how to respect a woman. I will always be grateful. But my dad also

let me down in some key areas. He didn't want to, but he did. He was a good man, but he had a lot to overcome. He suffered for the sins of his own father. The Bible puts it this way:

The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation (Ex. 34:6-7).

My dad tried to break the cycle and became a leader in our church. But, regrettably, our church didn't put a strong emphasis on building godly men, husbands, and fathers. As a result, we dropped out of church when he was 40 and I was in the 10th grade, the oldest of four boys.

Our entire family lineage is still reeling from that decision: two high school dropouts (I was one of them), drug addiction, alcoholism, employment problems, and divorce. I even have a brother who died of a heroin overdose.

One reason I'm so passionate about helping men become Godly men, husbands, and fathers is because of what I've seen God do in my own family line. By God's grace, I became a follower of Jesus in my early 20s. Since then, everyone in our family, except one brother, has put their faith in Jesus.

Patsy and I have been married for 30 years. My children can never remember a day they didn't know and love Jesus Christ. So, "Dad, if you can hear me, thanks for all you did. We did break the cycle, and we did it because of your determination. I have been able to finish in my generation what you started in your generation."

Still, I can't help but wonder, how would our family have been different if our church had a strong program to disciple men? I will never know, but your church can.

Your Church On Father's Day: If you really want to do something significant, why not announce on Father's Day that your church is committed to build a strong disciple-making program to build godly men, husbands, fathers, and boys? Attend a leadership training course at Man in the Mirror's Leadership Training Center.

A Father's Day Sermon: Pastors might preach a message on Father's Day about the crucial role that fathers play in family life. Pick an uplifting title, like, "Thanks, Dad!" or "Why I Love my Dad" or "Why Being a Dad Is Cool." Raise the bar on what's at stake when men fail. Send me an email, put "Father's Day statistics" in the subject line, and I will send you some great stats for your sermon (patrickmorley@).

Encourage your men for trying. Cite specific examples of men in your church who are great dads. Give men permission to make fathering a top priority—even if it means they don't spend as much time on church business.

Reconciling Sons and Fathers

Ed can only remember his father touching him once. When he was seven, his dad put his hand on Ed's knee to comfort him. What's so amazing about this story is not the absence of physical affection, but that a single touch would still be so vivid seventy years later!

When Ed turned sixty he went to his father's house and rang the doorbell. When his dad opened the door, he reached out and hugged his father. He said, "It was like hugging a cement telephone pole, but I'm so glad I did it. It's the only hug I ever had from him."

A little boy who grows up without an involved, affectionate, affirming dad can carry a lot of hurt and bitterness. If you had an absent, preoccupied, passive, or mean dad, you are probably an angry man.

If you had a father who let you down, you have some choices to make (if you have not already done so): You can repeat the sins of your father, or you can break the cycle. You can carry around your pain and bitterness, or you can forgive and redeem your family line.

Have you let God set you free, or are you still bound to the past by the sins of your father or father's father? This Father's Day, you can set your entire family lineage on a course of godliness and reconciliation for generations to come.

Practical Things to Set Your Family Free

Sons to Living Fathers: If your father is living, take him to lunch on Father's Day—maybe just the two of you. Prepare a list of things you appreciate and a summary of the ways you feel let down. Read the list of things you appreciate to him. Give examples. Then, tell him about the pain you have felt. Talk about it. He will probably express regret.

Regardless of his response tell him, "Dad, I thank you for being my dad. You mean so much to me. I forgive you for the past. I love you very much, and I want us to have a good relationship. Why don't we plan to spend more time together? Maybe we can have lunch or breakfast once every (week, month, two months, quarterly)."

Sons to Deceased Fathers: Write your father a letter. Spend a few days jotting down notes, then sit down on Father's Day and write it out. Tell him what you appreciate, the good things he passed along to you, all the things you miss, what you regret, the places where you think he let you down. Then, by God's grace, thank him where you can, and forgive him for everything else. If emotion comes, don't hold it back. A good cry can heal many hurts. Let it all go. When you are done, ceremoniously burn the letter as a symbol of putting the past behind you once and for all. If you can't let it go, consider

a few sessions with a professional Christian counselor. You don't have to spend the rest of your life with a seed of bitterness eating away at you.

Sons to Fathers-In-Law: My father-in-law has been my encourager, mentor, and champion. Why not send a special letter of gratitude to your father-in-law for welcoming you into his family, giving you the hand of his daughter, supporting you through the years, and whatever else you can say that expresses gratitude? If possible, consider going to lunch and presenting your letter in person.

Never Knew Your Dad? Write God a letter with all the questions you have about your father. Tell God how much you miss not knowing or not having a dad. Thank God for the men who have filled in gaps. Ask God to fill in everything else. Consider finding a younger man who doesn't have a dad in his life and get your families together on Father's Day.

A Final Thought

Any Christian counselor will tell you, "There is something about a man's relationship with his father that touches every aspect of his life." Indeed, ask a group of men on a retreat to discuss, "What was your relationship with your father like?" and you will soon have a room full of blubbers—many because their dads were so encouraging, and the rest because they don't feel like their dads loved them or were proud of them.

So, this is not a message about how to be a good dad on Father's Day, but a good son. Bless your father this year. If you can reconcile with your past, you won't be doomed to repeat the sins of your father or father's father. You will be a good dad to your own kids. You will have broken the cycle. You will be free.

Application

Share this article with other men and then talk about it. What ideas had the biggest impact on you? Why? What is a next step you feel compelled to take?

Pray about your relationships with your father (and father-in-law). How will you bless them this Father's Day?

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 non-profit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the bestselling author of The Man in the Mirror, No Man Left Behind, Dad in the Mirror, and A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines.

For the original article, visit .

Why Every Day Should Be a Competition

One day comprises 24 hours, 1,440 minutes, and 86,440 seconds. And businessman-turned-motivator Jake Thompson believes every single one should be spent competing, in one way or another.

Compete Every Day is the name of the company Thompson founded in 2011 on the compelling idea that *life is worth competing for* (a favorite Compete tank-top of mine says just that!) and that we must fight daily to not only achieve goals, but to keep making and striving toward others. Be it a sport, an education, a career or a relationship, everyone, according to Thompson, has something to compete for.

“There’s no such thing as staying neutral in life,” he says. “You’re either moving forward or you’re sliding backwards, whether you realize it or not. Our mission is to motivate people to take control of their lives, their communities, their families and ultimately their destinies.”

Described as a “lifestyle brand” Compete Every Day produces apparel (think brightly colored T-shirts with the words “Beast Mode” scrolled across them) and accessories such as wristbands, hats and posters that aim to bring out the competitor in you with galvanizing phrases like “Every Second, Every Day,” “Fall 99 Times, Rise 100,” and “When All Others Quit, Persevere.”

But Thompson’s vision for Compete didn’t stop with catchy, captivating clothes. Every day, Compete shares what Thompson refers to as “jet fuel”—that is, inspirational, real-life stories and thought-provoking quotations from poets, athletes and average Joes. Whether via Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest or Facebook, you can always find Compete Every Day permeating the web with refreshing rays of pure, positive sunlight.

Thompson himself is a perfect example of someone who has embraced the Compete Every Day mentality. As with many first-time business owners and entrepreneurs, he had his doubts about leaving the comforts of his successful consulting business and launching a brand-new company. And with a name like Compete Every Day, there seemed to be even more pressure.

“I had a friend of mine tell me, ‘No matter what happens, you have to make it work. ... Failure’s not an option,’” he says. “I knew he was right and that there was no way I could give up because then I wouldn’t be living the message that I’m trying to encourage others with.”

I asked Thompson to share a bit of advice on how to overcome the negative, complacent attitudes that so often hinder us from pursuing our passions and competing every day. Here are

four of his favorite tips:

1. Never say can't. “We all have those stages of life where you feel like you just can't catch a break,” he says. “You have to ultimately say, ‘This is my one life. I have one shot at it. I'm going to make it everything I can.’ There will be ups and downs, but know that the valleys won't go on forever and, if you stick with it, you *will* reach the top of the mountain.”

2. Use sticky notes. Thompson always has at least 10 sticky notes on his bathroom mirror. Whatever he feels God is laying on his heart to meditate on and pray about, Thompson writes it down and posts it so he can be reminded every single day. He even has notes on the dash of his truck so he can continuously be motivated with phrases like, “Make every interaction count,” and “Make each conversation meaningful.”

3. Don't dwell in despair. If and when a storm blows through and stalls your progress, you have “12 hours to sulk,” says Thompson. The Bible says sorrow lasts for a night, but joy comes in the morning (Ps. 30:5). Whether you get laid off from work or go through a break-up, don't linger in gloom too long. “I give myself what I call a ‘grace period’ to be upset, but after that I wake up and say, ‘What am I going to do now?’”

4. Be content no matter what. One of Thompson's favorite quotes is by Martha Washington: “The greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances.”

No matter how hectic or frustrating things become, no matter how bleak and clouded the horizon may appear, remember that the joy of the Lord is your strength (Neh. 8:10). Resting in the knowledge that He is the one who holds all things together and faithfully provides your every need will fill you with a peace that no predator, plague or pestilence in the world can take away (Col. 1:17; Ps. 54:4; Rom. 8:38-39). Make up your

mind to be content, whether abased or abounding, as the apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:12.

“Our mindset changes everything,” says Thompson. “You must compete for that too.”

You can connect with Compete Every Day at [www.competeeveryday.com](#), on Twitter and on Facebook. Check out my full Blog Talk Radio interview with Thompson [here](#).

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

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

Cleavage Over Christ: Satan Temporarily Wins

Mark has been a Christian for three years. His story is short and sweet.

His faith began when a co-worker invited him to a concert sponsored by his church. The music was awesome and allowed him to relax in a church environment in a way he didn't think was possible. His soul was being touched and when the singer opened his mouth about Christ it was like an episode of *Lost*.

A flash forward envisioned a relationship with Christ forever. A flash backwards brought up painful and regrettable choices that could now be dealt with definitively. A flash sideways

projected a lifestyle that could be better than the one he now lived.

It all added up and he went “all in” for Jesus that night. When I met him at a men’s conference a few years later, I chalked him up as a dedicated, growing man of God. That’s why the next chapter of the story confused me.

Through a friend I heard about Mark’s “lost weekend.” A March Madness trip to the NCAA Finals with few of his college buddies where 38-year-olds give themselves permission to act 18 again for a span of time. Nothing out of the ordinary, mind you, for a group of dudes who don’t claim to know Christ.

Whooping it up, Budweiser-induced carousing, and plenty of broken male thinking and acting out when they came in contact with the ladies. All these guys are married. All had kids.

But let’s put it this way: *Mark definitely checked his faith at the front door of Hooters that weekend.* I got to ask Mark about his weekend, the happenings, and how he felt about it. His response reflects a dangerous presumption: “It’s only one weekend a year Kenny. It’s my little indulgence. Believe me. I tow the line the rest of the year.”

In other words, he believes he can take a vacation from Christ. Wow.

Cleavage or Christ? Hooters or Holy Spirit? Feelings or Faith?

When push comes to shove it comes down to this question: *What is your source of authority?*

Every man has a filter for his decision-making in the moment when it comes to porn, sexual thinking and practice, marriage issues, relationships, and his own leadership of others that are affected by his choices in those moments. Some filters are horrible in the moment like your feelings, moods, or drunk

buddies. Some are good like wives, friends, and good advisers. But only one has complete authority and endorsement by both conscience and Christ every time—The Bible or God's Word.

The standard and rule for all believers is this: *God's man always defers to God's Word* and the way of being, believing, and behaving offered and seen modeled by Christ there. We do what will express love for God or love for people in any given moment.

It's only when, in our arrogance, we elevate our own opinion and mind on a matter or situation above God's revealed opinion and mind that we become truly stupid.

Cleavage wins. Christ loses.

Kenny Luck is the founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church. His 20th book, *Sleeping Giant: No Movement of God Without Men of God*, is the proven blueprint for men's ministries and was recently released through B&H Publishing. Watch and read more of Kenny's teaching at [www.everymm.com](#). Follow Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everymm) and YouTube.

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

Why the Peace Process Must Include Jewish Refugee

Validation

Last month, Ottawa once again took the international lead in raising an issue important to Israel and Middle East peace. The Harper government initiated hearings on the matter of Jewish refugees from Arab countries in the Canadian parliament.

The hearings are part of a new push by Jewish groups (including Canada's Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs, which I represent in Israel, and the World Jewish Congress) to highlight the plight of Jewish refugees in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The issue is important because it highlights the justice of Israel as the legitimate expression of an indigenous Middle Eastern people.

Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO of the Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs, told the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development that Canada should officially recognize the persecution and displacement of over 850,000 Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. "Much of the Arab-Israeli peace process is about validation, of the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state and the recognition of the Palestinians as a people," he said. "Redress for Jews displaced from Arab countries is another example of this, and needs to be included for true and lasting peace to be achieved."

Fogel noted, "Achieving peace in the Middle East is not a zero-sum game. The rights and claims of one group need not come at the expense of or displace those of the other. And thus, the purpose of incorporating the historic claims of Jewish refugees from Arab countries is not to diminish or compete with the claims of Palestinian refugees. The inclusion of the issue of Jewish refugees is meant to complete, not revise, the historical record."

As gavel-holder of the multilateral refugee working group (a moribund product of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference), Canada is uniquely placed to raise the profile of the Jewish refugee issue and to ensure that it is given the fair consideration it merits.

The initiative in Canada needs to be repeated everywhere. In fact, there is a bill pending introduction in the U.S. Congress that will require the State Department to report annually on what it has done to advance the Jewish refugee issue.

Why is this issue so important? Because it establishes that Israel is not a "foreign implant" in the Middle East, that Israel is not a mere byproduct of the Nazi Holocaust and of European war guilt. Rather, some 50 percent of the Jewish citizenry of today's Israel descends from Jewish refugees from Arab countries—Jews who lived in Middle East communities that stretch back 3,000 years.

As such, modern Israel is the legitimate expression of the self-determination of an oppressed, indigenous, Middle Eastern people. Israel is the nation-state of Jews from Arab countries with a long history in the Middle East, of Middle East Jews who were ethnically cleansed from Arab countries in the 20th century, both prior to and mostly after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

This levels the playing field in international debate over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It makes it clear that Israel deserves and demands justice just as much as the Palestinians do, if not more so.

Note this as well: The differences in the two refugee experiences could not be starker. Unlike Palestinian refugees who fled war, Jewish refugees fled systematic persecution. Unlike Palestinian refugees who for seven decades cynically have been kept in deprivation and isolation by their Arab

brothers, Jewish refugees have been welcomed and were successfully absorbed by their brethren (mainly in Israel, but also in Diaspora Jewish communities). Unlike Palestinian refugees, the narrative of Jewish refugees has all but been ignored.

That Jews displaced from Arab countries were indeed bona fide refugees, under international law, is beyond question. This was recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1957 and 1967. An international committee of legal experts, co-chaired by Prof. Irwin Cotler and David Matas, produced an unassailable report which documents strong political and legal arguments for the legitimate rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries. And Stanley A. Urman, executive director of Justice For Jews From Arab Countries, wrote a Ph.D. thesis documenting the U.N.'s differential treatment of Arab and Jewish Middle East refugees.

There is no reason for any person involved in Middle Eastern affairs to be unaware of this important issue, and no excuse for the fact that, to date, few pro-Israel activists have made this an important part of their advocacy. (Judy Feld Carr, the heroine who almost single-handedly smuggled Syrian Jewry out of Syria, is a laudable exception. In the '70s and '80s she ran a Canadian Jewish Congress effort on this matter and was a founding member of the now-defunct World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries).

It is high time for us all to get educated. There is an excellent educational unit produced by Justice For Jews From Arab Countries available to teach students about the history, heritage and subsequent plight and flight of Jews from Arab countries. There are good resources online also from Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA) and a blog called "Point of No Return."

Key books on the topic are *Forgotten Millions: The Modern Jewish Exodus from Arab Lands*, by Malka Hillel Shulewitz

(Bloomsbury Academic); *The Case of the Jews From Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue*, by Maurice M. Roumani (WOJAC); *In Ishmael's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands*, by Martin Gilbert (Yale); *The Jews of Islam*, by Bernard Lewis (Princeton); and two JPS books by Norman A. Stillman: *Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* and *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*.

The state of Israel has been slow to recognize the importance of this issue. Only last fall, Israel's then-deputy foreign minister, Danny Ayalon, launched the "I Am a Refugee" campaign in a bid to create parity between the struggle of Jewish and Palestinian refugees. The Israeli Ministry for Senior Citizens is currently running a radio campaign to collect testimonies and claims from Arab-born Jews.

A bill has been tabled in the Knesset by Likud-Beiteinu M.K. Shimon Ohayon to set November 30 as the Memorial Day for Jewish Refugees from Arab countries. And only last week, Sir Martin Gilbert's book, *In Ishmael's House*, was released in Israel in its Hebrew translation.

It is important to note that this initiative is not about money, nor about launching legal proceedings to seek compensation. It is about rights and recognition—that Jews were victimized and became refugees—and about equality—that the international community must recognize equal rights for all Middle East refugees.

As Prof. Cotler says, "In the absence of truth and justice, there can be no reconciliation. And without reconciliation, there can be no just, lasting peace between all peoples of the region."

David M. Weinberg is a spokesman, speechwriter, columnist and lobbyist who is a sharp critic of Israel's detractors and of post-Zionist trends in Israel.

For the original article, visit .

Superman's Mom Is an Israeli?

This weekend, the blockbuster new Superman film, *Man of Steel*, is opening around the world. But unfortunately, it's destined to be a flop because billions of Israel-haters across the globe are obligated to boycott it.

After all, the actress playing Superman's birth mother is Ayelet Zurer. She is an Israeli movie star, born in Tel Aviv. That's got to be enough for BDSers.

What's that? You're not familiar with BDSers? Allow me to explain.

B-D-S is the acronym for the "boycott, divest and sanction" movement that encourages everyone, everywhere, to have nothing to do with Israel, until all the Jews leave and give the country to the Palestinians.

Seriously.

It's a global movement that's been going on for years. It's made up of fanatical activists in nearly every country who picket outside of Israeli-owned companies or just companies that do any business with Israel.

They storm into concerts by Israeli musicians wherever they happen to be performing around the world. They lobby lawmakers to label any goods produced in Israel so people will know not to purchase them. They urge artists not to do shows in Israel. They petition universities not to partner with Israeli institutions, and on and on and on. You get the point.

They hate Israel. Period.

But the good news for us, those who love Israel, is that:

a) These people are too ignorant to really run an effective and impacting campaign.

b) They're too hypocritical to really follow through on the goals of their campaign.

c) They haven't read the Bible, so they don't know about God's unbreakable promises to Israel.

It's the letter "b" that really entertains me the most—because for all of their bluster and hate-ranting, these guys can't or won't stick to their beliefs.

They're all going to see Superman this weekend; you just know they are. (By the way, I checked the website, and the film opens in Egypt, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates on Friday, so get your tickets now ... I mean, "don't" get your tickets now.)

You know that the BDSers also saw the Star Wars prequel trilogy, even though Queen Amidala was played by another Israeli-born actress, Natalie Portman.

How cool is that? Israeli women are both the queen of Star Wars and Superman's mom!

But I'm being hard on the BDSers. I mean, it would be seriously difficult to actually boycott everything Israeli. Where would you begin?

This week Google paid \$1 billion to acquire the Israeli company Waze. So, no more using Google, right?

In May, Warren Buffett paid \$2 billion to buy the Israeli company Iscar. (He already spent another \$4 billion a few years ago to buy part of the company.) So now the BDSers have

to boycott everything connected to Warren Buffett. That is a long list!

Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway company owns huge stakes in such companies as Coca Cola, Kraft, Johnson and Johnson, General Electric, Procter & Gamble, Wal-Mart, General Motors, Wells Fargo, American Express, Visa and on and on and on.

Yikes! Looks like BDSers are going to have to use MasterCard if they need a credit card. Oops, wait. Buffett owns part of them too. Oh well.

It was particularly embarrassing when, in May, the world's so-called smartest man, Stephen Hawking, announced he would be boycotting a conference in Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians. Hawking is a renowned physicist who sadly is confined to a wheelchair due to a disease similar to ALS that keeps him from walking or even speaking. Hawking uses a computer device to speak for him. But embarrassingly enough, it was recently revealed that Hawking's computer runs on the Intel Core i7 chip that was designed by Intel's lab in ... you guessed it, Israel!

No word on whether Hawking is pulling the plug on this life-saving (Israeli) device.

Don't worry about the conference. We've got plenty of big names still coming, from Bill Clinton and Tony Blair to Barbra Streisand and Robert DeNiro.

Each time a high-profile celebrity announces a concert tour in Israel, a movie shoot in Israel or anything related to Israel, they get bombarded with threats and online campaigns to get them to change their mind and boycott Israel.

Say what you will about the pro-Palestinian crowd, but they sure know how to tweet and post on Facebook. (Nobody tell them Facebook was invented by a Jew.) They will fire off profanity-laced tirades until the artists finally give in. Some, like

Hawking, do. Most do not.

From icons like Madonna (who intentionally chose to launch her latest tour in Tel Aviv), Paul McCartney and Bob Dylan to the hip stars of today like Justin Bieber, Rihanna and Alicia Keys, nearly everyone ignores the BDSers and comes to Israel anyway.

In the last few weeks, there's been tremendous pressure on Alicia Keys, specifically, to cancel her upcoming concert in Israel. The pressure has come primarily from best-selling author, Alice Walker, who penned the classic *The Color Purple*. Walker is a staunch ally of the BDS crowd and has publicly called on Keys to boycott Israel, but to no avail.

This was particularly sad to me, because I love *The Color Purple*. The movie version of the novel was directed by Steven Spielberg (who's not only Jewish but finances a Jewish film archive at Jerusalem's Hebrew University) and stars Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah Winfrey. The film is a powerful tale of women overcoming great odds to persevere in life. My favorite scene in the movie is near the climax of the film, as a montage of events takes place set to the song "Maybe God Is Trying to Tell You Something." Every time I see it, I'm moved to tears, and I purchased the soundtrack just for that song.

The lyrics say:

Can't sleep at night and you wonder why

Maybe God is trying to tell you something

Crying all night long, something's gone wrong

Maybe God is trying to tell you something

Well, Ms. Walker, I believe God is trying to tell you something. He's trying to tell you that you're pouring your energies into something contrary to His will. Spending your time trying to convince pop stars not to do a concert in

Israel makes about as much sense as spitting in the wind.

And while we're on the subject of God, may I remind you He wrote a book too. It's called the Bible. It's set primarily in Israel.

And topping that, God decided to come to earth in the form of a man. And guess where He chose to be born and spend His entire earthly life? You guessed it again: Israel.

Gonna start boycotting God and His handiwork now? I don't envy you.

Chaim Goldberg is the director of media at Maoz Israel and writes a weekly column for Charisma Media's Standing With Israel website.

Why Belly Fat Is Dangerous

Some doctors will offer a lot of fancy explanations for what causes metabolic syndrome. But there's no need for all that. I'm going to give you the straightest answer possible: Metabolic syndrome occurs in people who are overweight.

In more than 25 years as a practicing cardiologist, I have rarely seen metabolic syndrome in a thin person. And typically the people who develop this condition carry most of their excess weight in their bellies. Although you may think of body fat as an inert blob, it's actually not.

Rather, body fat is made up of living cells. Those fat cells have two purposes: storing energy for later use and secreting hormones that help regulate appetite and blood sugar levels.

All people have fat cells. Slender people just have smaller fat cells. These secrete a beneficial hormone known as adiponectin, which helps your body use insulin efficiently.

However, if you're overweight, your fat cells are large and they tend to shut down the production of this hormone. This makes it more difficult for insulin to do its job—and the result is a condition called insulin resistance.

But there's another problem. When you have a round, heavy abdomen, there's more there than just the fat that's under the skin (called **subcutaneous** fat).

There is also fat inside the belly, underneath the stomach muscles. These hidden deposits of fat around your kidneys, liver and intestines are known as **visceral** fat. This type of fat is much more harmful than subcutaneous fat, because in addition to hampering the effectiveness of the insulin, these fat cells also produce other hormones and proteins that are dangerous—especially because they are located so close to vital organs.

For instance, visceral fat cells secrete a protein that contributes to inflammation, which fuels atherosclerosis, the disease process that clogs arteries and sets the stage for heart attack. These fat cells also secrete a protein that constricts the blood vessels, causing high blood pressure.

In addition, because this fat is located so close to the liver, the large fat cells drain right into that organ through a portal vein, raising LDL cholesterol. This type of fat is also linked with breast cancer and colon cancer and may contribute to dementia as well. It is crucial that you begin to lose weight, and especially the weight in/around your abdominal region. It is dangerous to your overall health and especially your heart.

There have been many books—especially diet books—that have been written to offer you the “secret formula” to losing

weight. Through my years of training and experience, I have come to realize that wheat and gluten are the main culprits of belly fat.

Recently I can came across a book titled *Wheat Belly*, authored by William Davis, M.D., and it gives a clear explanation of why wheat and its many relatives cause belly fat. If you are serious about losing weight, especially around your midsection, I highly recommend you read *Wheat Belly*—it just might save your life.

Chauncey W. Crandall, M.D., ., chief of the cardiac transplant program at the world-renowned Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., practices interventional, vascular and transplant cardiology. Dr. Crandall received his postgraduate training at Yale University School of Medicine, where he also completed three years of research in the cardiovascular surgery division. Known as the “Christian physician,” Dr. Crandall has been heralded for his values and message of hope to all his heart patients.

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

How to Have Quality Time With Your Kids

Leading up to Father’s Day, there’s a national campaign to remind fathers of the important role they play in their children’s lives. It’s being promoted by the White House and various fathering groups, and it uses a common phrase for its slogan: *quality time*.

I endorse this, because we need dads embracing their roles, spending time with their kids and making memories together. And time is one of the most important, basic commitments that a father makes. Quality time with your kids is a great goal.

At the same time, I hope that term doesn't give you the wrong idea as you strive to be a good dad.

Here at the National Center for Fathering, we have found that most of the great dads we interact with—the dads who really *get it* when it comes to being there for their kids—are not talking about *quality* time. They know that it doesn't usually work to schedule quality time.

Most often, the quality time is unexpected—it just happens when you're practicing a sport, riding in the car or eating a meal together, investing *quantity* time in the relationship with your kids.

If you think about it, "quality time" is an adult concept; we want to get the most done in a given time period, and in relationships it adds an extra layer of pressure and expectations.

I know what dads do; I've done it myself. We tell our children we *wish* we could spend more time with them. We *wish* we could play a game of Monopoly or ping-pong. We *wish* we could take them to the park and push them on the swing. But right now, we can't. Our schedules are just too tight. Then we try to make up for it by doing something special.

Usually, when I hear dads talk about quality time, it's like they're making an excuse. It's difficult for them to give their kids a lot of time, so with the time they *do* have, they want to make sure it's meaningful. And when kids hear that phrase, they could easily get the message that they aren't worth more than five or 10 minutes of their father's day.

It's like approaching your daughter and saying, "OK, I have a

few free minutes. Let's have a conversation and really connect." Sounds ridiculous, right? A better plan is to spend a lot of time with her; then you'll probably be available when those times arise.

Those conversations often occur when a father and child are just hanging out. And in either case, those moments can't happen unless we've built a strong relationship during the everyday, unstructured times during day-to-day life.

I urge you to think about quality time from your children's perspective. To them, what time with you is *not* quality time? They don't make that distinction. Spending an hour shooting baskets or building a Lego castle or working on a geometry homework assignment with your child may not seem like a big deal to you. But your kids cherish those moments.

There's a powerful example of this from history, found in two short diary entries describing the same day's events. Charles Adams, the son of President John Adams, wrote this: "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted." The same day, his son Brook wrote this in his diary: "Went fishing today with my father—the most wonderful day of my life."

Our children want to know that they're important enough for their fathers to commit time in their schedule and say, "It's just you and me." Even if it doesn't end up being what *you* might consider quality time, it still could be for your child.

There are no secret weapons here; it's just a matter of putting in the time. Once you're together, good things will happen. So read a book together. Play a game. Go for a walk or a bike ride. Do a puzzle. Include your kids in your projects and errands to the hardware store or supermarket. Let them help with some tasks and projects around the house. Chances are your child will have plenty of ideas for what you can do together.

To be clear: You can and should plan special events and

activities with your children. But connecting with them is more about investing *quantity* time and making a *quality effort* by giving them your full attention as often as you can. Make the most of your opportunities to connect with them whether you're fishing or fixing dinner together, whether you're playing laser tag or playing Candyland for the tenth time that day. That's when the so-called "quality" moments are more likely to happen.

Dad, invest your time and energy to be the father your children need. That's a daddy's calling and privilege.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Being a great dad starts with *being there* ... showing up ... getting involved. Find one more way to be involved in your children's lives this week.
- Keep being faithful in the everyday responsibilities that too often get taken for granted: going to work to provide for your family; helping with a project; tucking in before bed; fixing a meal; attending games and lessons, etc.
- Put more thought into making everyday activities more fun for your kids. A trip to the grocery store can become a treasure hunt; an everyday chore like doing dishes or setting the table can be more fun if you make up silly songs about the activity.
- Whenever your child is talking to you, make the effort to stop what you're doing, get down on her level and *really* listen.
- Before you walk in the door after work, take a few minutes to gather yourself, release stress and adjust your attitude. Be ready to focus fully on your kids.
- Start the habit of sending your child short, affirming texts at various times in the day.

Please share your thoughts. When have you found quality moments with your kids in unexpected places? You can leave a

comment below.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering (NCF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes every child needs a dad they can count on, and it uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father-figures their children need. Subscribe to Casey's weekly email tip by clicking here: I want tips on how to be a great dad who loves, coaches, mentors and inspires his children.

For the original article, visit .

10 Things You Need to Know About the 5 Love Languages

The Five Love Languages is a wonderful best-selling book written by Dr. Gary Chapman. Dr. Chapman spent 30 years performing marriage counseling for couples.

Through his experiences, he was able to break down the different ways couples express love for each other. There are five completely unique ways for effective communication with your spouse. Love and marriage do not always coexist, as statistics readily will attest. Couples must constantly work on their marriage to keep it strong and healthy.

Learning how to improve communication with your spouse will certainly help keep the love flowing and the heart happy. Here

are 10 things you need to know about the five love languages. To take an assessment test and learn more about the book, [click here](#).

1. Words of affirmation. The most infamous three little words in the world are, "I love you." Some find them almost too easy to say, and others can't muster the courage to say them at all. What is most important is that when they are said, it's genuine and backed up with heartfelt reasons. Your wife, who requires words of affirmation, needs to know why you love her. What is it that makes her special to you? Given reassurance, she will feel buoyed and euphoric. A good marriage is one where verbal communication flows free and honest.

2. Cease using words as weapons. Words can tear down and destroy just as easily as they can build and create. Words are powerful weapons. An unhappy marriage usually includes lots of verbal abuse between partners. These things tend to linger and create large divides that are not easy to repair. If you are in this type of situation, in order to save your marriage, drop the verbal assault immediately. Declare a truce, and begin to address the real issues that lie behind the masquerade of the harmful words.

3. Quality time. The gift of your time and attention shows your spouse that you truly find her important. When your wife has had a bad day at work and just needs someone to talk to, you earnestly listen—not offering solutions but just listening to her. She beams inside when you take a walk with her, talking about anything at all. True-blue quality time reassures her that you sincerely love being with her. It gives her the confidence in you she requires.

4. Avoid the cold shoulder. Try as much as possible to build your lives around each other. When you are both headed in opposite directions, how can you have a strong marriage foundation? Avoid giving your spouse the cold shoulder when she needs your time, such as watching TV and not listening to

her. Or breaking promised dates or being constantly distracted during them. These things send the signal that she is not a priority in your life.

5. Receiving gifts. Gifts come in many shapes, forms and sizes. True gifts are ones given from a place of genuine affection and admiration. It shows when you went to great effort to find just the right thing, like a rare book she adores or a beautiful piece of art she longed for glowingly while window-shopping with you. Gestures are gifts as well. A reassuring look when she feels nervous. Strong arms to hold her when she feels scared and tired. Gifts of this nature display great affection and strengthen your marriage immensely.

6. Avoid the bribe. When marriage problems exist, one of the typical ways a man will attempt to smooth things out is with a gift. All the diamonds in the world can't buy a single drop of true love, but men all over the globe do it anyway. Superficial relationships can co-exist in this manner, but that's not the goal we are aiming for. We are shooting for the stars and trying to earn real, down-to-earth, genuine love. Dropping a bribe in her lap when we screw up only shows her that she isn't worthy of your best efforts. Forgetting your anniversary and trying to quickly make up for it with a hastily bought gift at the closest store to your home is a cheap trick. Marriage counseling is in the near future for this husband.

7. Acts of service. Effective communication is also shown in actions. Women tend to put the whole world on their shoulders and attempt to carry it all. She works full time, cleans the house, feeds the kids, plays taxi cab and gets up to do it all over once again. Your assistance is greatly required, sir. Offering to lighten her load in any way at all means the absolute world to her. Take a regular shift on the taxi route. Get up and make the kids' lunches. Clean the dishes right after you enjoy the great meal she created for your family.

Teach your children to pitch in as well, and you will be displaying leadership skills that will make her heart melt with passion for you.

8. Don't be the lazy man-child. How do you save a marriage? One of your first steps is to not behave like a selfish boy in a grown man's body. Laziness and selfishness turn a woman off quicker than you can possibly imagine. She's busy changing diapers, cooking dinner and cleaning the spilled grape juice off the carpet, and you never look up from your PlayStation3 to notice. Marriage is a partnership, not a slavery ring. Do not treat your wife as if she is your mother and you are a spoiled teenager. Doing so typically will lead you back to living with your real mom in very short order.

9. Physical touch. Remember when you first met her? You just wanted to melt inside of her, holding her hand and thinking how it fit so perfectly with yours. The way her hair gently would sway against your skin. Physical touch releases powerful and wonderful feelings inside of us. Making love is only one expression of physical touch. It's the little things that really display the love in our marriage. When she lays her head in your lap and you gently run your fingers through her hair. The way you grasp the back of her neck just perfectly as you kiss her. She feels secure and very much loved and will return the feeling 10 times over.

10. Never abuse and neglect. On the flip side, physical abuse is a tragic and enormous issue in many marriages. When things reach this level, marriage counseling is not enough. Intervention is required, along with serious therapy for both individuals. Gentlemen, there is simply never an excuse to hit a woman. Ever. Physical neglect is also a form of abuse. Withholding of affection by either spouse is not only cruel; it will also destroy the bond and trust in your marriage. If these problems exist in your relationship, seek out help and resolve them without delay.

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**.

Netanyahu: Iran's Elections Won't Change Anything

Netanyahu said Wednesday that the coming "so-called" Iranian presidential election would not alter the Islamic republic's quest for nuclear weapons and that the regime would continue to pursue a bomb aimed at destroying Israel.

"I ask that nobody delude himself. The results of the elections in Iran won't change a thing," he said.

While Iran has not yet crossed the "red line"—a stockpile of enriched uranium sufficient to produce atomic bombs—the Islamic Republic is "methodically moving forward" with its program, Netanyahu said.

"This is a regime that is building nuclear weapons with the expressed purpose to annihilate Israel's 6 million Jews," Netanyahu said, alluding to the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II. "We will not allow this to happen. We will never allow another Holocaust."

Netanyahu's comments in Warsaw carried added significance since they came a day before he traveled to Block 27, the Jewish section in the former Nazi death camp of Auschwitz in southern Poland, where he was to inaugurate a new pavilion meant to educate visitors about the Holocaust and Nazi Germany's quest to exterminate the Jewish people. The project to renovate and preserve the structure is a joint venture between Yad Vashem and the Israeli government, at a cost of 30 million shekels (\$8.3 million).

Netanyahu, whose father was born in Warsaw, has an emotional connection to the Holocaust, although he has faced criticism for citing it frequently in the context of current events, notably over the potential nuclear threat from Iran. For years, Netanyahu has used his annual address on Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day to caution about the danger of a nuclear Iran and vow that "never again" will the Jews be powerless to defend themselves.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday, Netanyahu remained undeterred by the critics, insisting that the intentions of the Iranians are just as murderous as those of the Germans in World War II.

"The comparison is intentional. Does Iran want to destroy the state of Israel, first and foremost its Jews? The answer is yes," he said in response to a question from the Associated Press. "Here is where the comparison diverges, since there was no state of Israel back then that could defend itself. The difference is not in the hatred of Jews and the will to destroy them. This is something that is pretty consistent in history and even modern history. The Holocaust didn't change this situation."

Netanyahu and a team of five ministers met with their Polish counterparts and discussed security in Israel's neighborhood, including the stalled peace talks with the Palestinians, the conflict in Syria and a series of bilateral issues, such as Poland's possible purchase of Israeli armaments. Israel has

been urging Poland, as a member of the European Union, to declare Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

Speaking alongside Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, Netanyahu contrasted the painful Jewish history in Poland with the current strong relations between Poland and Israel.

“The histories of our peoples are intertwined over thousands of years, in great achievement and also in great tragedy,” said Netanyahu. “We are both shaped by our past, and we are both focusing together on shaping our future.”

Tusk concurred, saying, “We speak a common language with Israel.”

The Germans carried out the Holocaust to a large extent in occupied Poland, because it had Europe’s largest Jewish population and it was at the heart of a railway network that allowed the Nazis to easily transport Jews there from elsewhere in Europe. Many Israeli leaders are children of Holocaust survivors, and Israel has the world’s largest population of survivors.

In recent years, Poland has become one of the friendliest states to Israel.

Auschwitz remains the most vivid symbol of the cruelty of Nazi Germany’s genocide of World War II. The world marks its International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27, to coincide with the date of Auschwitz’s liberation in 1945. The new exhibit Netanyahu was to inaugurate will, for the first time, present Auschwitz in the larger context of the Nazis’ systematic attempt to exterminate Europe’s Jews.

More than a million Jews died in Auschwitz and the adjacent Birkenau death camp in gas chambers or from starvation, disease and forced labor. Auschwitz-Birkenau was the most notorious of a system of death and labor camps that Nazi Germany built and operated in Poland.

“We will never forget the victims of the Holocaust. We will never forget the ultimate crime against humanity,” Netanyahu said Wednesday. “And we will never forget our obligation to prevent this from ever happening again.”

For the original article, visit .

Why Solitude and Silence Are So Important

What if I asked you, “So, what have you been doing?” And you respond by saying, “Oh, nothing at all. I really wish I had something to do.”

Of course, no one would respond that way. Instead, you’d probably say something like, “I’m really overwhelmed right now. It’s crazy. I’m so busy.”

If so, you’re not alone. I can’t recall a time recently when I’ve spoken with someone who didn’t tell me how busy they were with work, with kids or with life.

If we aren’t careful, constant busyness will ultimately lead us to a searing desert where joy evaporates and emptiness fills our lives and relationships. But solitude and silence are an oasis where living water will refresh the scorched soul and renew the muddied mind.

At least once a year, I retreat to an “oasis” for reflection, refreshment and renewal. I find a place somewhere outside our home where I can spend the day alone, just me and God, without any connection to the outside world.

In the past, I’ve gone to places like a secluded beach, a

quiet park or a friend's condo. I sometimes bring some uplifting music. I often bring a pen and pad of paper to jot down what I'm learning. And I always bring my Bible, which pours living water into my soul.

From my experience, solitude and silence can do at least five things:

1. Solitude and silence can make you feel helpless. When you're alone and not "doing," you start thinking about how little control you ultimately have, and ever had, over just about everything that's important—your spouse, your kids, your work. Now, I'm not suggesting that we can't control how we behave—the way we treat our spouse, how we raise our kids or how we lead at work. I'm just saying that I can't ultimately control the outcome or results. We can't control someone else's heart and mind, and we can't control all of our circumstances. Only God can do that.

2. Solitude and silence can force you to address issues you'd rather avoid. When you stop and think, the root cause of your horrific marriage problems might become clearer. A retreat can also give you time to grieve a great loss—the loss of your parents, your child, your friend.

3. Solitude and silence can help you reflect upon your life. The purpose here is not to dwell on your mistakes that have been forgiven. The reason for this time is for you to think about, with true humility, any changes that need to be made in your life, not someone else's, from this day forward.

4. Solitude and silence can allow you to do some deep thinking and help focus your mind and heart on what's truly important. Loving God and loving others—your spouse, your children, your family, your friends, your enemies—should be at the very top of your list of what really matters.

5. Solitude and silence can be the wellspring of hope in your life. I'm not suggesting every time you spend this time alone

that your life will drastically change. But I am saying that this time can restore, renew and re-energize you toward a life of meaning and purpose.

Do you spend any time in solitude and silence? If so, what has been your experience?

*For the original article, visit . **Mark Merrill** is the president of Family First.*