

How Are Men Doing in This Day and Age?

Demographically, men are quite different. They are black, white, Hispanic, rich, poor, rural, suburban, urban, white collar, blue collar, conservative, liberal.

For every man who sits on a board, another lays on a jail bunk. Some like to ponder over chess; others prefer screaming at touchdowns.

Yet whether I am speaking with men from Alabama or Alaska, at the Pentagon or in prison, executives in New York City or Mennonite farmers in Pennsylvania, cowboys in Texas or Chinese businessmen in Malaysia, I have found that our similarities dwarf our differences.

You've heard the numbing statistics about men and the havoc they have created. Instead of recounting those stats, I want to give you a psychographic profile of how men are doing. How are men doing, really?

1. Tired. First, men are tired. If there is one thing you can know for sure about your men, it's that they're tired. You know the words that get tossed around: *stressed, slammed, weary, in need of relief, wasted, fragile, short-fused*. They are all synonyms that add up to "tired."

The average Christian male is up to his gold cross in debts and duties. He has a picture in his mind of what it means to be a "good Christian." He believes in this picture—it's what he thinks he "needs" to do to be a "good boy"—to be happy:

- "I need to spend quality time with my wife."
- "I need to be a super dad to my kids and attend (maybe coach) all their activities. My dad did (or didn't) do this for me, and I'm going to be there for them."

- “I need to make lots of money so my family can live in a beautiful home in a better neighborhood, my kids can wear the right labels, there is less pressure on my wife to work, and I can become financially independent.”
- “I need to join a men’s small group where I can grow with some brothers.”
- “I need to attend a weekly home growth and fellowship group.”
- “I need to have a daily quiet time for fellowship with God.”
- “I need to keep the Sabbath and have my family in church to worship God.”
- “I need to serve God through a personal ministry—probably through the church.”
- “I need to be a good citizen and neighbor.”
- “I need to be a star at work if all this is going to happen.”
- “I need a successful and satisfying career.”
- “I need some time for myself.”

No wonder men wince when you ask them to do something. No wonder men plop down in front of the television to vegetate instead of reading a book or conversing with their wives. We have created a culture that requires more energy than men have to give. Sometimes we call this the rat race.

2. A lingering feeling. Second, men often have a lingering feeling that something isn’t quite right about their lives. This is the inevitable result of running the rat race. A woman told me she was having difficulty figuring out how to offer support to her husband. He loves his work. Occasionally, for stretches of months at a time, he will work 12-hour days. Then suddenly his mood will swing, and he will mope around for months.

“What is it that you want?” she asks him. He cannot articulate an answer.

She said, "I can chart these cycles on paper. They're completely predictable. I just don't know what to do for him anymore. He is extremely successful. He has the job he always wanted. We have a beautiful home and two lovely children. What's his problem?"

It does beg the question: How can a man get exactly what he wants and still not be happy?

3. Life is not turning out as planned. Third, men's lives are not turning out like they planned. Each week, on average, four to eight new men visit the Man in the Mirror Bible study I teach in Orlando, Fla. Our average visitor is typically friendless, overextended in most areas, has at least seen his Bathsheba, is up to his eardrums in debt, lacks meaning and purpose, feels under a lot of pressure and is generally miserable.

All of this is carefully masked behind a game face because the man knows that if the sharks smell blood, it's over.

Many of these men have made a profession of faith in Christ, but they have not been trained (discipled) to integrate their faith into their daily lives. As a result, they get caught up in the rat race—the conflict between who they are created to be and who they are tempted to be. When they lead unexamined lives, men tend to be Christian in spirit but secular in practice.

4. Unglued. Fourth, a lot of men feel like their lives are coming unglued. The problem is not that men are failing to meet their goals. In most cases they are meeting them. The problem, it turns out, is they're the wrong goals. A man in his 30s said, "When I got out of school, I made out a list of everything I thought I would need to be happy. Fifteen years later, I have everything on my list. Now I realize ... it's the wrong list." How does a man give his best years to a system that never had any possibility of satisfying the hunger of his

soul?

5. Nobody cares. Fifth, most men feel like nobody, with the possible exception of family, really cares about them personally. A pastor invited one of his businessmen—a prominent one—to lunch one day. The man took the pastor to his private club. After 45 minutes of eating and exchanging social pleasantries, they finished their meal. The man set down his napkin and said, “So, tell me. What’s on your mind? What can I do for you today?”

The pastor said, “Nothing, really. I just wanted to spend some time with you and get to know you better as a person.”

“Well, there must be something I can do for you.”

“No, not really.”

“Are you sure? How are our finances?”

“No, really. I just wanted to get to know you better—man to man.”

Two or three more similar exchanges took place.

The man sat there incredulous. Belief slowly crept across his face, and tears welled up in his eyes. He struggled to maintain control of himself. A minute went by. The man regained his composure and said, “In my entire career, no one has ever asked me to lunch unless they wanted something from me.”

Conclusion

No man fails on purpose, but most men are under a lot of pressure. When a man fails, it sets powerful forces of bondage and brokenness in motion. It can take several generations to break the cycle.

As America staggers beneath the load of a hundred major

problems like divorce, fatherlessness, poverty, pornography, adultery, abortion, disrespect for authority, ethical failures, and truancy—where have the men gone? What has happened to our men?

At the root of virtually every problem is the failure of a man, ironically a man who got up this morning wishing that his life would make a difference. He's a man for whom Christ died.

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

The preceding is an excerpt from Patrick Morley's book, Pastoring Men.

Jews Share Legitimate Historical Connection to Israel

Since time immemorial, the Jewish people have had a continuous presence in the land of Israel. Contrary to anti-Israel arguments, the Jewish people were returning to settle the land of Israel hundreds of years prior to the rise of the Zionist movement.

The anti-Israel community often attempts de-legitimize the

state of Israel by using the rhetorical argument that the Jewish people left Israel following the Bar Kokhba revolt, were absent from the area for 2,000 years and didn't return to their ancestral homeland until the rise of the Zionist movement. The reality is that the Jewish people were never absent from the land of Israel, for Jews continued to live in as well as settle the land of Israel despite all of the hardships associated with it since ancient times.

Jews Have Always Lived in Israel

For example, 34 synagogues were found in the Golan Heights dating from the late Roman era up until the Arab conquest. There was also a strong Jewish community present in Ein Gedi that continued to flourish up through the sixth century until Byzantine persecutions brought that community to an end.

Additionally, a Jewish community found in Baram existed up through the Crusader period, and population estimates from the seventh century as well as from 1517 following the Crusades and Black Plague also indicate a Jewish presence in the land of Israel.

The Sephardic Aliyah to Israel

Aside from ancient and medieval Jewish communities that existed within Israel, the Jewish Diaspora never lost touch with their ancestral homeland. Hundreds of years prior to the founding of the Zionist movement, there were Jewish communities that made Aliyah in the Middle Ages.

One of these medieval Aliyot was that of the Sephardic Jewish community that fled Spain following the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition in order to live under Ottoman rule in the Holy Land. Between 1391 through the 15th century, a significant number of Jews immigrated to the Holy Land as a response to the persecution they endured in Spain and Portugal.

According to the scholar Jane Gerber in her book *The Jews of*

Spain, “Entire family groups banded together and rented ships to make their way to Palestine since they were barred from Christian vessels. This movement contrasted sharply with the previous migration, which involved primarily the scholarly and the elderly who sought burial in the Holy Land. Soon, the Sephardic settlement in Jerusalem increased noticeably, and by mid-century, the community had become so heterogeneous that Hebrew, the only language shared by all, became its spoken language.”

Dona Gracia Nasi

In fact, during the height of the Ottoman Empire, one brave Jewish woman of the Renaissance, Dona Gracia Nasi, sought to set up a semi-autonomous Jewish province in the area of Tiberius, Israel. Despite local Arab and French opposition, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent supported the project. Many modern historians evidently view Dona Gracia Nasi’s attempt to establish a Jewish province in Tiberius as part of a larger attempt to revive Jewish statehood prior to the rise of Zionism.

According to Andree Aelion Brooks’ *The Woman Who Defied Kings: The Life and Times of Dona Gracia Nasi*, “In Tiberius, the newcomers were soon taking over abandoned structures, renovating deserted houses, restoring gaping roofs, clearing the rubble and quarreling in typical Jewish fashion. By 1564, the revival was sufficiently far along that yet another traveler recalled that the scent from the date palm, orange and pine trees was so overpowering that it was almost suffocating. Yet another talked effusively of a wilderness turned into a Garden of Eden. Almost all of the residents—one of these travelers noted—were former conversos from Spain and Portugal!”

Although the Tiberius community went into decline after Dona Gracia Nasi passed away, there are some Jews living in Israel today who can trace their residency in the Holy Land back to this Aliyah, known as the Old Yishuv.

For the original article, visit .

Israel Vows to Stop Syria's Use of S-300

Israel will prevent the S-300 anti-aircraft missile battery from becoming operational in Syria, National Security Adviser Yaakov Amidror told European Union ambassadors in Israel.

Amidror's strong message, delivered in a briefing to all 27 EU ambassadors last week, bolstered Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon's statement earlier this week that Israel would "know how to act" if Russia goes ahead with its plan to provide Syria with the S-300 system.

Israel's vow to act against the fearsome weapons system come as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was quoted on Thursday as saying that his country had already received the first shipment of the S-300 system from Russia.

"Syria has received the first shipment of Russian anti-aircraft S-300 rockets," the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar quoted Assad as saying in an interview due to be broadcast later in the day. "The rest of the shipment will arrive soon."

The Prime Minister's Office declined official comment on Amidror's statement to the EU ambassadors.

Earlier this week, Strategic Affairs Minister Yuval Steinitz said Israel viewed the S-300 as an offensive weapon, given that its 200-kilometer (125-mile) range would threaten Israel Air Force planes within Israeli airspace, undermining Israel's

aerial superiority in the region. Steinitz also said the S-300 would endanger commercial aircraft flying in and out of Ben-Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv.

Steinitz met with Russian ambassador to Israel Segei Yakovlev on Thursday morning. According to Steinitz's office, they discussed bilateral matters and strategic issues. It was not immediately clear if the Steinitz-Yakovlev meeting was directly related to Assad's announcement that he had already received the weapons system.

According to an Israeli diplomatic official, Amidror delivered his message during a discussion he had with EU ambassadors to clarify Israel's positions on numerous matters and provide a situational assessment from the point of view of the Prime Minister's Office. Such discussions are held periodically.

Amidror's statement about the S-300 system came as he talked about Israel's efforts to prevent security deterioration in the region in light of the civil war in Syria and Russia's declaration that it would fulfill a contract to provide the Assad regime with the S-300 system.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jennifer Psaki on Wednesday reiterated Israel's right to defend itself.

In an interview that was set to be released by the Hezbollah-linked al-Manar television station on Thursday, Assad reportedly stressed ties between his forces and Hezbollah fighters now openly operating on the Syrian side of the Lebanese-Syrian border.

"Syria and Hezbollah are part of the same axis," he was quoted as saying.

"The Syrian army is the one fighting and leading the battles against the armed group, and this fight will continue until all those who are called terrorists are eliminated."

Assad also said he would permit groups to launch attacks against Israel in the Golan Heights. Israel took control of the Golan from Syria during the Six-Day War in 1967. The border has been largely quiet since the May 1974 disengagement agreement following the October 1973 Yom Kippur War.

“The Syrian government will not stand in the way of any Syrian groups that want to wage a war of resistance to liberate the Golan,” Assad was quoted as saying.

Hezbollah has stated it would be willing to support groups that chose to launch operations in the Golan.

On Wednesday, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem told the Lebanese television channel Al-Mayadeen that Israel would face immediate retaliation if it were to attack Syria again. In recent months, Israel has reportedly launched several airstrikes in Syria against shipments of weapons destined for Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Muallem said Assad would remain president of Syria at least until elections next year and that he might seek another term.

Syria’s foreign minister also said that an international solution to the Syrian civil war would have to be put to a referendum in Syria.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met on Wednesday with U.S. Senator Robert Menendez, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Netanyahu thanked Menendez for a bill the senator proposed that expressed support for Israel against the Iranian threat.

“Senator, I would like to welcome you as a great friend of Israel,” Netanyahu said. “You did it again. Your bill supporting Israel against the Iranian nuclear threat was passed by an amazing majority, I think 99 to 0. Very few people can accomplish something like that and it’s the second time you’ve done it, because you’ve also had the important

sanctions bill. And we know that you stand with us, as do the American people and the American government, the American Congress, against the greatest security threat of our time, which is Iran's quest for nuclear weapons."

Menendez said, "For 20 years, as a member of the House of Representatives and the Senate and now as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I've always asked two questions in terms of the U.S. foreign policy abroad: What is in the national interest of the United States? What is in the national security interest of the United States? And the answer to those questions, for myself, I've always dictated my views, my advocacy and my votes.

"And for 20 years, I've answered that question as it relates to the Middle East that it's in the national interest and the national security of the United States to have a strong, unwavering relationship with the State of Israel – a true democracy in a very tough part of the world; a major security ally of the United States; a major trade partner of the United States; and a country most likely to be voting in common cause with us in international parts."

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

How to Avoid Classic Marital Fights

The well-known adage for family gatherings goes something like this: "Never talk about politics, sex or religion." That's any family—modern family, traditional family, non-traditional family, you name it.

That well may be a practical suggestion for large get-togethers at Thanksgiving and Christmas, but it's not the best advice for your marriage. Avoiding difficult topics doesn't make the tension go away. To the contrary, unwillingness to communicate mostly serves to deepen the divide. Can you spell marriage conflict?

Here at All Pro Dad, we recommend a marriage that values communication and acknowledges the potential for conflict in the context of mutual respect and affirming love.

Simply put, we'd better talk about the things we fight about. If we won't talk, then fighting is all that's left in the way of communication. Parenting 101 and Marriage 101 are often, fundamentally, exactly the same class.

1. Money. Sit down together and work out a budget. Agree to take a look at expenses every month. If the meeting is pre-arranged and you both come to the table with 100 percent transparency, then the conversation about money can move from the emotional into the practical.

2. Family communication. "You never talk!" "You never listen!" Well, it's easy to be distracted, so try this:

- No TV during meals.
- Dedicate 30 minutes every evening to "conversation with coffee" (or the beverage of your choice).
- Go through a book such as *201 Great Questions*, and actually schedule time for a tête-à-tête every day.

3. Children. Of course you fight about the children! Recognize the fact that tensions run high because you love them so much. Then turn conflict into communication by saying, "I need your help figuring out how to deal with this," at the start of "those" conversations.

4. Intimacy. Intimacy? Who has time for that? Consider this, busy parents. You schedule everything else that's

important—the things that you believe you shouldn't miss. Isn't this part of your relationship worth a little planning? Call it "planned spontaneity" if you like. Here's an important truth: Planning doesn't kill spontaneity. It simply gives your creative impulse room to find its voice.

5. Time. You know the old Rolling Stones old tune, "Time Is on My Side"? Well, it's wrong. Time is typically the thief of family harmony. Couples fight all the time for a stake in how the 24 hours are divvied up. Instead of fighting, join forces: "Okay, here's the day/week/vacation. Let's figure out how to make it work for us." Make it a partnership against the conspiracy of time—the common foe.

6. Priorities. Are they "my priorities," "her priorities" or "our priorities," and who has power of veto? First things first: Power in the marriage relationship equation is gained only by giving it away. It's important to remember that the first priority is always love—that love gives itself away and that "love does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking" (Paul, circa A.D. 70).

7. Jealousy. Jealousy is best defined as "resentment against a rival." In marriage, everything can be a potential rival: the children, possessions, friends, work, colleagues, church commitments. The perception of rivalry is as powerful as the reality of it and, as such, should never be discounted. So, All Pro Dads, make it your business to communicate what is true to your wife! You can't overdo this one, but you can undo your marriage if you take her for granted.

8. Religion. Some couples fight based on denominational preference; some fight over the fundamentals of faith; some fight regarding levels of commitment; and some fight about religion because one of them is interested and the other is not. Regardless of the fight, try to live your faith with authenticity, integrity and humility. The closer you are to God, then the closer (no matter where your spouse stands) you

are to your mate. The key point here is *your* faithfulness, not theirs.

9. Politics. Question: Do we have to talk about politics? Answer: Believe me, we do!

OK, so why do you fight? Is it because your spouse is wrong? Your spouse would surely come around to your way of thinking if you just repeated your talk-radio sound bite one more time, right? Or maybe the fight comes in response to the fact that you fail to value her opinion or she refuses to respect yours?

Again, the important thing here is to cultivate an atmosphere in which you can talk about anything, because your spouse knows you love and respect them regardless of disagreement. Browbeating your spouse into thinking in lock-step will not ever bring peace or joy to your household. Don't just agree to differ. Learn to understand your wife's opinion—you might just learn something.

10. The past. Here's a good rule of thumb: Never argue historically. But we do. We bring up the past and we hold it over one another's heads. Here's a good question to ask yourself if you're tempted to throw something in your wife's face that she can't do a thing about today: "So what?" You are not that same person anymore—and neither is she. The past is past. Let it stay there. Move on.

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 by-product, 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**.

How to Shed Pounds Fast This Summer

For many, summer weight loss is about getting into that bathing suit and feeling your best. With summer vacation just around the corner, what can you do now that will make a difference?

A few simple steps from our diet plan can help tame your tummy while supporting your health. It's a great time to try new foods that speed metabolism, which can allow you to lose the extra pounds and feel lighter.

Weight-loss tip 1: Get seven to eight hours of sleep. Not getting enough sleep could leave you drowsy—and heavier. Health research from the University of Wisconsin indicates that lack of sleep can interfere with the weight-loss hormone leptin. Leptin is a naturally occurring hormone in the body that helps to curb appetite and improve metabolism. The research found that seven to eight hours of sleep per night went along with higher levels of leptin.

Weight-loss tip 2: Eat omega-3 fats. Another way to help make leptin work for you is to eat foods containing healthy omega-3 fats. Studies at the University of Western Australia showed that a weight-loss diet high in omega-3 fats enhanced the body's production of leptin, in comparison to a regular weight-loss diet. Foods that are rich sources of omega-3 fats include walnuts, salmon and tuna. A rich source of omega-3 fats is flaxseed. Research indicates the health benefits of ground flaxseed are abundant and that it may include the ability to lower cholesterol and fight inflammation.

Weight-loss tip 3: Refresh yourself with tea. When you're

thirsty, you can slug down a lot of sugar and empty calories without noticing. If that frosty drink tastes like a milkshake, it probably has hundreds of calories and maybe even a few grams of fat. Instead of drinking your calories, make it a healthy habit to enjoy iced beverages without added sugar or artificial sweeteners. Regular brown tea and green tea contain beneficial nutrients that have been shown to enhance health. Green tea has also been identified as one of the foods that speeds metabolism. Nothing could be easier than brewing your own iced tea. Simply brew the tea the same way you would when making hot tea, but make it a little stronger so it stands up to ice. Then place the brewed tea in the refrigerator and let it chill. Add a little fresh lemon or lime to taste.

Weight-loss tip 4: Enjoy seasonal foods. You already know vegetables are good for you. But research now shows vegetables are powerful weight-loss allies. They contain powerful nutrients that can help turn on your fat-burning hormones, control your appetite and keep you youthful. Romaine lettuce can boost the levels of antioxidants in your body, protecting against the effects of aging. Green bell peppers contain lutein and zeaxanthin. They also contain carotenoids, which are important for maintaining healthy vision. Eating onions and garlic can promote detoxification. The list is endless, but the bottom line is this: Make sure to put vegetables into your routine. For optimum nutrition, try to have nine to 10 servings per day of fruits and vegetables.

Weight-loss tip 5: Get moving. With temperatures going up, you may be tempted to hibernate in the air conditioning. Get your body and metabolism moving again by finding creative ways to move your body. Not only can exercise burn fat, but it can also tone and build muscle and reduce stress. Pick cooler times of day to take a walk—early in the morning or in the evening. Walk in an air-conditioned shopping center. Walk back and forth in the shallow end of a swimming pool. Or simply move around your house. Always exercise smart by drinking

plenty of water and taking breaks. Of course, avoid overheating and working out in the midday sun!

Summertime provides motivation for getting in shape and adopting a healthy lifestyle. Exercise, adequate sleep and trying a few foods that speed metabolism can help put you on the road to achieving weight loss goals.

Start today with a free online diet plan at .

Dr. Leo Galland is a board-certified internist who received his education at Harvard University and the New York University School of Medicine. He has held faculty positions at New York University, Rockefeller University, the State University of New York and the University of Connecticut. He has written three highly acclaimed popular books, The Fat Resistance Diet, Power Healing and Superimmunity for Kids. Jonathan Galland is a health writer for newspapers, magazines and major news websites. He is frequently interviewed as a weight-loss and health expert on the radio and has appeared on Martha Stewart Living Radio.

Discover the Mystery of the Hiram Code

Anyone who knows me or has watched my program *Ron Phillips From Abba's House* for any length of time knows two things about me.

1. I love Israel. God said of Israel, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you." The nation

of Israel and the Jewish people have always been close to my heart. I have traveled to Israel over a dozen times. We are a part of the One New Man partnership with Rabbi Curt Landry's ministry, House of David, in Tulsa, Okla.

We have invested time, resources and energy into bringing our viewers products made exclusively in Israel, such as the King's Oil, as well as the *tallits* (prayer shawls) our ministry offers. Every time someone buys one of these products from our ministry, it blesses the people of Israel.

2. I am fascinated by archaeology and science. I love the way God reveals Himself and proves His Word through nature around us as well as through archaeology and studying the past. In my more than six decades of life, I have learned that if skeptics and critics will simply be honest and look at the facts, the Bible will come out as being exactly what it is: the historically accurate account of the love of God to man—the true, living, and infallible Word of God.

With that being said, unlocking the secrets of the Hiram code was something I dove into with both feet! The more I read and studied, the more fascinating and intriguing it became. The revelations that scientists have made in recent years are shattering our understanding of our own history. For example, did you know ...

- That the ancient craftsmen Phoenicians intermarried with the Jewish tribes of Dan, Naphtali and Zebulun?
- That the Cherokee Indians share 26 genetic markers with the Phoenicians and five with the Jewish people?
- That depleted gold mines in the eastern United States, as well as depleted copper mines in Michigan, have been discovered that pre-date Columbus?
- That a stone containing Hebraic writing was discovered in Los Lunas, N.M.? The Los Lunas stone also pre-dates Columbus.

What is more interesting is that the Hiram code also holds valuable secrets that can unlock blessing in our lives today.

- How can we release prosperity as a nation?
- How do we become disqualified for blessings and favor?
- How can we be assured of walking in the presence of God

Want to learn more about the Hiram code and the implications it can have, not only on your life, but also on the future of America?

As a special offer from Ron Phillips Ministries, we are offering my teaching *The Hiram Code and Anointing* as well as a *tallit* (made in Israel) for your personal devotion and prayer time. For more information or to order, [click here](#).

*For more than 30 years, **Ron Phillips** has been the pastor of Abba's House (formerly Central Baptist Church) in Hixson, Tenn. As a lifelong Southern Baptist, a dramatic encounter with the Holy Spirit in 1989 changed his life and ministry to one that grasps who we really are in Christ and the gifts and fullness that are available to us through a Spirit-filled life. His television program, Abba's House With Pastor Ron Phillips, blends solid biblical exposition with a simplicity anyone can understand. In addition, for 14 years, Phillips hosted the daily 15-minute radio program CenterPoint across the nation via radio and throughout the world via the Internet. He has now authored more than 20 books, including Awakened by the Spirit, Our Invisible Allies, Everyone's Guide to Demons and Spiritual Warfare, The Foundations on the Holy Spirit series and his latest release from Charisma House, A God-Sized Future.*

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

5 Reasons Why Your Marriage Needs Church (and Jesus)

Congratulations, you're married! You'll never need help from anything or anyone ever again!

If you believe that, it's not very sound thinking. But I would think a lot of newlyweds or early married couples think in this kind of way.

Why? Sometimes marriage can make people think that the amazing person they just married will be their answer to life's problems. The reality? Without help, new marriages will suffer—and suffer quickly. Problems will arise out of the smallest things, and tempers will get worse over time. Welcome to marriage.

Although my wife and I grew up in Christian homes, went to Christian schools and attended a home church, we had a terrible time going to church together after we got married. We had just moved to a new area and really didn't know anybody. We thought we would be enough for each other to handle anything life could throw our way. We managed to meet a few local people and establish friendships, but we were still missing the solid foundation that only church could provide.

So after living life according to our terms for the first few years and almost getting divorced a couple times, we thought it might be time to see what having a home church would be all about. We got online one day, found a church really close to our house and agreed to try it out. We liked it.

However, after a year or so, we were still not attending regularly. We were trying to give God about half of our

marriage, and we still struggled in multiple ways. You know, you become the couple that looks and acts like they have it together, but ultimately the relationship could fail at any moment. Anyway, we finally agreed to take a stand in our marriage and attend a church full-time. It honestly transformed our marriage, our individual lives and our relationships with Christ.

So now that we know, here is why you need to know.

5 Reasons Why Your Marriage Needs Church

1. Great community. Isolation in early marriage is the wrong idea, but that is typically what happens. It might have even started when you were dating, when you started removing yourselves from other groups and friends so that you could be together more. Church is great way of joining in with a community. In our experience, we have found most of the people to be very helpful and accepting. Most churches will have a visitor area, where you can introduce yourself and your wife. This should be the time when you find out about the next step.

2. Join small groups. The church can provide a great way to meet new people of any age, but a small group or class will help you dial in with people your own age. I can't speak for every church, but our church has a marriage group going on throughout the year. You might find some classes that are held at the church, like "Love and Respect" or "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage." Or keep an eye out for groups that meet at their houses. Our local group of young and marrieds will meet up to hang out together, pray together, play games together and just discuss whatever is on their minds. These groups will help you and your spouse realize you are not alone in this crazy marriage dance and will offer great tools and resources for whatever problems you may be facing.

3. Relationship discipline. Wouldn't it be easier to wake up Sunday morning and turn on TV or just sleep in? Sure it would,

and I think we can all agree on that. But this is your marriage, and if you want it to be as successful as possible, you are going to need to mature and get God involved. Don't wait to decide to go at the last second. Let it be known the day before, and show some excitement. Don't just slap on an old pair of jeans; rather, put on some nice clothes. Schedule a small coffee date or something for after the services with your wife or with a few of your friends from small group. Attending church weekly will birth maturity and discipline in your marriage, and it will make a positive impact in other areas or situations in your marriage.

4. Knowledge of God. Don't just go to church for the small groups or community, but make it a main goal to go for the lead sermon or message. Small groups are typically more about a theme, like marriage, faith, manhood or something like that. The main service is a place to learn more about the Bible and Christ. There may be a theme, but it will most likely be on a subject that you have never heard before. Don't check out at this point, but rather grab a pen and take some notes. Take in what the pastor is preaching about, and find ways to apply it to your life, marriage, friendships or work. Write down a couple questions, and discuss the message topics with your wife afterward. She may have heard things that you didn't, and it will make for great conversation. The main sermon will offer you the diversity you need in your Christian walk.

5. Mentorship. While going through some issues in our marriage, my wife and I finally decided to seek help. The church we attend has a great marriage program, where older married couples make themselves available to help out younger or struggling couples. We were paired up with a great couple that would come over about once a month and just talk with us. After a while, we started to become great friends and actually started taking small vacations with them along with other friends from the church. If we would have never made ourselves open to doing this, we would have missed out on some great

friends and some awesome opportunities. Take a bold step and find a marriage mentor!

Are you ready to lead your marriage? What are some ways you have found church to be essential in your marriage? Share your comments below.

Maturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages, help men in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Maturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

Worship Leader Conquers Weight Problem With Mind Discipline

One year ago, 26-year-old hairdresser and worship leader Scott Fontenot weighed 460 pounds. And then one day he didn't—at least not in his head. You see, Fontenot had—like countless others who struggle to lose weight—tried diet after diet, workout plan after workout plan, but nothing worked because, as Fontenot says, he “wasn't ready.”

What it would require for him to stick to a nutritious diet and consistent training program wouldn't be the right trainer, the right supplement or the right juice cleanse. It would take

the right *mindset*.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, Fontenot believes that his body is a temple, holy unto God. Verses such as 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 state clearly that God's Spirit dwells within those who have accepted His Son as Lord and Savior and that maintaining tidy temples is no small matter to our Maker. The Holy Spirit elucidated this truth for Fontenot, helping him realize that losing weight and getting fit is about much more than leading a healthy life—it's about glorifying a mighty God. Fontenot jokingly refers to his epiphany as "The Day I Lost It."

"One day it just clicked," says Fontenot. "In my head, I didn't see myself as overweight anymore; I saw myself as thin and healthy."

Fontenot once again decided to change his eating habits and start working out regularly. Except this time, it would be different. This time, he would rely on God's strength instead of his own to help him stay the course. This time, he would strive toward the fit, healthy image he envisioned in his mind rather than be discouraged by the reflection in the mirror or the number on the scale.

In one year, Fontenot has lost 130 pounds and is aiming to lose 80 more. Below are a few things he does daily to make it to his goal, step by step.

Scott's Top 5 Weight Loss Tips:

1. Have breakfast. Before he "lost it," Fontenot would often skip breakfast and not eat lunch until one or two o'clock. Now he makes sure never to miss his morning meal. Eating breakfast ensures that your body doesn't reach an over-hungry state that makes it difficult to determine when you're truly satiated. Examples of quick go-to meals are scrambled eggs with salsa and a cup of fruit; Greek yogurt topped with almonds, berries and a bit of honey; or a smoothie made with naturally

sweetened whey protein, a cup of milk, half a banana, a handful of spinach and a tablespoon of almond or peanut butter.

2. Eat balanced meals. Eating a balanced ratio of healthy carbohydrates, protein and favorable fat at every meal helps keep hormones like glucagon and insulin stable. If you consume too many carbohydrates at once, insulin levels spike, causing the body to convert carbohydrates into unneeded—and *unwanted!*—fat. Having protein and healthy fats, such as avocado, nuts, plant-based oils and nut butters, help you feel satiated and energized after each meal rather than sluggish and unsatisfied. Including all three macronutrients at meal times also enables you to absorb the micronutrients we need for optimum health, such as beta-carotene, vitamin D, and vitamin E.

3. Work out at a high intensity. It's very simple. If we speed our bodies up, it burns more calories. Not only that, but high-intensity exercise also burns calories *after* our workout has ended. The boost in metabolism after a challenging sweat session can last up to 24 hours, depending on the workout's length and intensity. High-intensity exercise has the potential to increase muscle mass, and the more muscle one has, the more calories your body must burn to sustain that muscle, even while sitting on the sofa enjoying a day off from the gym.

4. Keep it fun. Since September, Fontenot has been doing CrossFit, a strength and conditioning program that incorporates Olympic weightlifting, plyometrics, bodyweight and gymnastic movements, running and rowing into workouts that often last no longer than 10 minutes. Each minute, however, is spent giving an all-out effort to either finish the WOD ("workout of the day") as fast as possible or to complete as many rounds of a specific set of exercises as you can within a set time, be it five minutes or 15.

CrossFit also makes it easy to gauge your progress when it comes to monitoring your strength, your stamina, your lifting skills or your weight, if fat loss is your goal. Since starting CrossFit, Fontenot has increased his deadlift by over 100 pounds and can run a mile without stopping to walk or rest.

“It’s like a game,” says Fontenot, “and that keeps it fun for me. I never get bored.”

5. See the big picture. Fontenot began his journey with a vision in his mind of what he knew he could look and feel like if he persevered and relied on the Holy Spirit to guide him every step of the way. Since “The Day He Lost It,” he has been driven and inspired by that vision and the knowledge that every moment of the pursuit pleases and honors God.

Proverbs 29:18 says that where there is no vision, people perish. Instead of dwelling on past failures or grumbling about present frustrations that make progress seem impossible, ask God for a new vision and a fresh revelation of His will for you. Let His love encourage you and His strength carry you all the way to a victorious future, designed and prepared especially for you (Jer. 29:11).

Stay fit, stay faithful.

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](#).

Also, check out her *Blog Talk Radio* interview with Fontenot. For the original article, visit [www.creationhouse.com](#).

Diplomatic Crisis Deepens Between Israel, Russia

The goal of deploying advanced S-300 anti-aircraft missiles in Syria would be to shoot down Israel Air Force planes inside Israeli airspace, something that would completely change the face of future conflicts, Israeli diplomatic officials in Jerusalem have told Israel Hayom. The assessment from Jerusalem explains the deepening diplomatic crisis between Israel and Russia over Russia's plan to provide Syria with the fearsome air defense system.

Meanwhile, the *Daily Beast* reported that U.S. President Barack Obama has ordered the Pentagon to prepare plans for a no-fly zone over Syria. The leaked news comes as a response to Russia's statement a day earlier in which it committed to delivering the system to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Tuesday that his country would fulfill its contract to supply Assad's regime with the S-300. He said this might "help restrain some hotheads considering a scenario to give an international dimension to this conflict," a statement that was interpreted by officials in Jerusalem as a signal to Israel.

Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon on Tuesday called Russia's plan to supply Syria with the S-300 "a threat."

"I can say that the shipments are not on their way yet," Ya'alon said, adding, "I hope they will not leave, and if, God forbid, they reach Syria, we will know what to do."

Strategic Affairs Minister Yuval Steinitz expressed concern about the planned S-300 sale and said he hoped Russia would

cancel the deal.

“We think this behavior, of supplying such arms to Damascus, to Assad, in this crucial time of terrible civil war, we think that this is totally wrong,” Steinitz said.

“This is a kind of encouragement, a kind of support to this brutal regime that is totally wrong, also from a moral point of view. One cannot understand, one cannot justify such behavior.”

Steinitz said the S-300 is designed to shoot down planes and missiles at 200-300 kilometer (125-185 mile) ranges. As a result, it could shoot down aircraft deep inside Israel, he said. “Russia says it is a defensive weapon. But this is not true, it is an offensive weapon aimed at taking down Israeli planes over Israeli airspace,” Steinitz said Saturday on Channel 2 TV’s Meet the Press.

Steinitz pointed out that the S-300 could threaten commercial flights flying in and out of Ben-Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv.

Israeli officials have not given up on the S-300 deal being cancelled. Analysts said Russia’s statements about going ahead with the sale could be a tactic to apply pressure on the U.S. and Israel on other issues, and to better position Russia’s allies Syria and Iran ahead of the expected Syria peace summit in Geneva later in the summer.

However, there have been reports, unconfirmed in Israel, that Russian defense officials have travelled to Damascus to train Syrian military forces on how to operate advanced weapons systems.

The provision of weapons to the conflicting sides in Syria has become a wedge issue between Russia and the West. Earlier this week, the European Union lifted its embargo on the sale of weapons to the rebels. Britain and France led the push to lift

the embargo.

However, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said that there are no plans to send arms to the rebels in the near future.

Russia's Ryabkov said that EU's lifting of the embargo reflected "double standards" and called it a "direct blow" to international efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the Syrian conflict.

"You cannot declare the wish to stop the bloodshed, on one hand, and continue to pump armaments into Syria, on the other hand," he said.

The U.S. on Tuesday criticized Russia's intention to sell the S-300 to the Assad regime, calling it a "mistake."

"We're talking about a regime that's willing to go to enormous lengths to use massive force against civilians, including Scud missiles and other types of [weapons]," State Department spokesperson Patrick Ventrell said.

According to the Daily Beast report that cited two Obama administration officials, the Pentagon has been ordered to draw up plans to impose a no-fly zone over Syria that would be enforced by the U.S., Britain and France. The report said this was part of a dual-track policy of Obama to both seek a diplomatic solution to the Syrian conflict and plan for direct military intervention.

"The White House is still in contemplation mode but the planning is moving forward and it's more advanced than it's ever been," an Obama administration official told The Daily Beast. "All this effort to pressure the regime is part of the overall effort to find a political solution, but what happens if Geneva fails? It's only prudent to plan for other options."

A Pentagon spokesperson responded to the report, saying,

“There is no new planning effort underway. The Joint Staff, along with the relevant combatant commanders, continue to conduct prudent planning for a range of possible military options.”

Also on Tuesday, a White House spokesperson said the Obama administration knew in advance of U.S. Senator John McCain’s secret trip to Syria on Monday to meet with rebel officials. The White House declined to say whether McCain delivered any message to the rebels on behalf of the U.S. government.

Os Hillman: Your Work Is Your Ministry

Imagine for a moment that Jesus has just completed his three years of training with the disciples. He has been crucified and is now commissioning the 12 to go into the world and disciple the nations. Now imagine him also making this statement to them.

“Dear brothers, it is now time for you to share what you have learned from me. However, as you share with others be sure that you keep what I taught you separate from your work life. The principles I have shared with you only apply in situations outside your work life. Do not make them fit into this context. The miracles you saw in me can only be done in certain situations outside work life. Keep this in mind when thinking about praying for the sick or the lost. These truths will not work in the marketplace.”

Does that sound preposterous? It may, but this is the mindset of many in our world today. The spiritual does not mix with the everyday world of the workplace.

“What happens on Monday has no relationship to what takes place on Sunday,” they say. These are the thoughts expressed so much in our day and time, although they are not expressed in such direct terms. Let’s think more about this idea. When Jesus came to earth, how did He come? He came as a carpenter; a man given to work with his hands and to provide an honest service to his fellow man. He did not come as a priest, although He was both a King and a Priest (Rev. 1:6 KJV).

When it came time to recruit those for whom the church would be founded, He chose 12 men from the marketplace—a fisherman, a tax collector, a doctor, and so on. They all came from the marketplace. Interestingly enough, none of his disciples were priests in the Jewish church, a natural place to recruit from if you were going to start a religious movement. Jesus called them all from the marketplace of life. Was this any accident that Jesus called men and women from the marketplace to play such a vital role in His mission? I think not.

When God created the earth, He demonstrated something right up front to human beings. He believed in work. He was above all else, the Master Creator. He was an artist, designer, strategic planner, organizer, project developer, assessor, zoologist, biologist, chemist, linguist, programmer, materials specialist, engineer, and waste management technician. This work did not end when He created man, but was only the beginning in His continued care for mankind. Whether we call our work “sacred” or “secular,” all legitimate work reflects the activity of God. God is honored when we work with the goal of reflecting His life through our life and work. So why and how did society begin to draw a separation between faith and work?

The Great Divide

If you were to conduct a survey on an average city street if people thought religion belonged in the workplace, chances are high that they would say no. Most people today see no

relevance between God and work in today's fast-paced marketplace. Why is this? Why do many Christians even believe this? Well, it goes back to the early years before the protestant reformation.

Os Guinness, in his book, *The Call*, provides us the necessary history of how we got to this segmented view of work and life:

The truth of calling means that for followers of Christ, "everyone, everywhere, and in everything" lives the whole of life as a response to God's call. Yet, this holistic character of calling has often been distorted to become a form of dualism that elevates the spiritual at the expense of the secular. This distortion may be called the "Catholic Distortion," because it rose in the Catholic era and is the majority position in the Catholic tradition.

Protestants, however, cannot afford to be smug. For one thing, countless Protestants have succumbed to the Catholic distortion as Wilberforce nearly did. Ponder for example, the fallacy of the contemporary Protestant term "full-time Christian service"—as if those not working for churches or Christian organizations are only part-time in the service of Christ. For another thing, Protestant confusion about calling has led to a "Protestant distortion" that is even worse. This is a form of dualism in a secular direction that not only elevates the secular at the expense of the spiritual, but also cuts it off from the spiritual altogether."^[1]

Therefore, it is understandable why we are where we are today. Over many centuries, we have been trained to believe that the two worlds of spiritual and secular are to be separated. Now it is easier to understand why the separation of church and state is such a debated issue.

Jesus' and Paul's Ministries

Of 132 public appearances in New Testament, 122 were in the

marketplace. Of 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context. Of 40 miracles in the book of Acts, 39 were in the marketplace. 54 percent of Jesus' reported teaching ministry arose out of issues posed by others in the scope of daily life experience.

Work in its different forms is mentioned more than 800 times in the Bible, more than all the words used to express worship, music, praise, and singing combined.

Jesus and Paul saw their work as ministry. Paul wrote: "And whatever you do,

do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23).

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen. 2:15).

Os Hillman is president of Marketplace Leaders and author of Change Agent and TGIF Today God Is First, a free email devotional.