

# Do Your Life Goals Include Marriage and Family?

Life and everything in it revolves around balanced equations. The numbers are critical. Just the slightest imbalance, and big issues arise.

Keeping this in mind, when setting personal goals we should first take stock of where we already are. Perhaps you have done quite well financially but your personal relationships are severely lacking. Maybe your marriage is secure and amicable but in the area of romance, the fire has long dimmed.

We need to take an honest assessment of where we have succeeded and where we have failed. Then we can determine how to proceed forward.

With this in mind, here are 10 primary areas of life to focus on for the next 10 years of your life plan.

**1. Marriage and family harmony.** Maintaining and expanding, as well as restoring and healing, in this area should absolutely be a top priority in your personal goals. Pinpoint the relationships in the direst condition. It could be that your marriage is in severe trouble. Possibly your relationship with your ex-wife creates great pain in your entire family. Perhaps you have effective communication issues with your children. Wherever the danger points are, the goal is to determine them and devise a plan on resolving the issues. Be sure to highlight where you have succeeded, as well, and how you might grow those seeds elsewhere. The goal is a family living in peace and harmony.

**2. Proper mind-set and balance.** What is your attitude like? Are you overly aggressive and abrasive? Timid and self-defeating? Your mind-set needs to be in proper balance. Too much or too little of any one particular ingredient can send

you in the wrong direction. Personal growth occurs as we begin to learn exactly who we are—our strengths and our weaknesses. Smart goals are ones we set that evolve us in a positive fashion. Carefully consider the man you truly want to be, and set your sights on how to achieve it.

**3. Commitment to improved physical health.** A good place to start when talking about life goals is to make sure you actually have a life 10 years from now. That certainly starts with good physical health. There are no guarantees on living a long life, but it is possible to greatly increase your odds. Listen to your doctor when he tells you to lose those 25 extra pounds. Create an exercise plan that you enjoy and relish. Make sure that 10 years from now, you are as vibrant and capable as you are right now.

**4. Career passion and personal satisfaction.** When people set goals, they almost always look toward their careers first. That is a mistake, but that's not to say your career isn't important—because it certainly is. Are you a workaholic? On the flip side, are you lazy and uninspired? Once again, balance is required to fully reach your career potential, no matter what it is you do. Employers respond very positively to employees they can trust. A healthy attitude, strong aptitude and good people skills are essential to “get ahead.” The 10-year goal here should be to passionately enjoy your chosen profession while maintaining excellent balance between home and work.

**5. Discover your softer side.** *Balance*—it's obviously the operative word in this entire piece. As men, we tend to chug along, aspiring to be what men should be: strong, protective and determined providers. But what about the other side, the softer side of life? Compassion, gentleness and tenderness when required, and the ability to tell the people who mean the most to us that we love them. You can change your life instantly for the better by taking off your armor from time to time. Ten years from now, strive to become fully complete

emotionally. Strive to be Superman.

**6. Financial stability.** At every turn, you hear talk about financial discipline or the lack thereof. In Washington, D.C., in the states, in local government and in your own home, financial matters are of top concern. Getting your “financial house” in order is an essential priority in your 10-year planning. Strive to dramatically lower or eliminate your debt. Increase your savings and build on your family security. Check out All Pro Dad friend Dave Ramsey for great advice in this area.

**7. Service and social responsibility.** Despite our severe issues, America is still the wealthiest nation on earth. We have a duty and responsibility to do good works with our blessings. For instance, Coach Tony Dungy places a high priority on mentoring. Do some research, and discover an area of need that ignites your passions. Create a 10-year plan to become permanently active in the needs of your community, and include your entire family.

**8. Stress-busting leisure time.** We have talked about healing family relationships, moving ahead in your career, straightening out your finances and serving others, but how about a little “you” time? Stress is a cold thug killer. It is of utmost importance that time is set aside to relax and just enjoy life. However you see fit to do so is up to you. Just make sure that in your 10-year planning, leisure is included.

**9. Continuing education.** Every day lived is another piece of your education. What are you doing with the knowledge you have absorbed? Ten years from now, you will not be the same man and have the same thoughts. That process needs to be focused and nurtured. Do not fear change, because it’s going to come anyway. Embrace it and shape it instead. Set your goals so that 10 years from now, you are wiser, more adaptable and more complete.

**10. Expanding and growing faith.** With all due respect to the readers who consider faith a silly notion, it is the most important item on this list. Without faith, a deep belief in meaning and purpose greater than you, this whole list is pretty much pointless. If there is nothing greater and nothing beyond, then who really cares about any of this? Start and finish your 10-year planning based on growing your faith and becoming the man God created you to be. Ultimately, it's not 10 years from now you should be worried about. Eternal salvation is the end goal.

*"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves." –Thomas Edison.*

**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**.

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## **God Affirms Powerfully With Four Simple Words**

What is the most powerful thing another man has ever said to you? Think back. What words can you remember like they were spoken yesterday?

For some, the most powerful thing ever said to them may have been an extremely negative experience. I speak with young men

all the time who have the condemning, disapproving words of a father haunting them. This is a sad reality. Most men that I know have never experienced powerful affirmation from other men.

Others were blessed to have great men in their lives who spoke powerful affirmation to them as men. I love meeting these guys. They tell beautiful stories of how their father, grandfather, mentor or coach sat them down and said four of the most important words a young man could ever hear: "You are a man."

The first time I ever heard a man say those words to me, I was 27 years old. This happened a few years ago, when I was blessed with the opportunity to be part of a church-planting residency in Little Rock, Ark., called Fellowship Associates.

My time in this program prepared me for life, marriage and church-planting more than I could have ever imagined. But even with all the great things I learned, there was one day in that residency that changed me forever.

I was sitting in the office of one of the leaders of the program, complaining about the pains of trying to plant a church. He waited until I was finished and then simply looked at me and said, "Matt, did you know you are a man, not a boy?"

I was completely taken aback. I didn't know what to say or do. I just started to cry. No one had ever told me that before.

Why did this impact me so much? Why was I so shocked by those words?

We are hardwired for affirmation, and on earth we seek it from older men. However, the ultimate and decisive declaration of affirmation comes from God. When this man told me I was a man, he preached a biblical manhood sermon to me.

This message is found throughout the Bible. One of the

clearest examples of this is when the apostle Paul writes to young Timothy: “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:11-14, ESV).

Do you hear what Paul is saying to young Timothy here? Paul is saying, “Timothy, you are a man. I have charged you as a man of God!”

Men need to hear those four amazing words: “You are a man.”

Here is the good news: If no man has ever told you that you are a man, the ultimate man, Jesus, came, lived and died so you can be adopted by God the Father. In this adoption, God the Father looks down on you and says, “This is My man.”

Rest in this. Now that God has affirmed you as a man, go forth and look young men in the eye and tell them that they are now men, too, not boys.

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

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# Islamists in Sinai Claim Attack on Israel

Islamist militants in the Sinai Peninsula claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on the Israeli Red Sea resort of Eilat on Wednesday, and Egyptian security sources said the rockets had probably been fired from the Egyptian territory.

In a statement posted on its website, the hardline militant group Magles Shoura al-Mujahddin said it had targeted Eilat with two Grad missiles on Wednesday morning, and then withdrew safely.

It said the attack was in retaliation for what it described as the Israeli army's attack on protesters demonstrating over the death of a Palestinian prisoner.

The Israeli military earlier said two rockets fired from Sinai had struck Eilat, causing no casualties or damage.

Residents of the coastal city said that the rockets first exploded, and only afterward was a siren heard. Army Radio said the IDF was checking why the siren system failed to identify the incoming rockets, even though they landed in an urban area, a new housing construction site in the city, and why the Iron Dome system, deployed to Eilat only two weeks ago after intelligence warnings of possible rocket attacks, did not intercept the rockets. Israel Radio reported that the IDF was looking into why the vaunted system did not spring into operation and launch interceptors at the rockets.

An IDF Spokeswoman told Reuters that Iron Dome didn't intercept the rockets "for operational reasons," without elaborating.

The sirens were heard shortly after 9 a.m. Security forces

canvassed the area and were able to locate the remnants of two rockets.

The rockets that struck Eilat were part of a volley fired from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, the army said. Two other rockets reportedly hit Jordan. A Jordanian official told Israel Hayom that one of the rockets exploded in the city of Aqaba's industrial zone.

Following the rocket fire, the airport in Eilat was temporarily closed to takeoffs and landings. Students at schools in Eilat took cover in protected spaces. By noon, the city returned to normal.

In Sinai, Egyptian security forces began a search of the border area to investigate the Israeli claims.

"There is not yet any evidence indicating that these rockets were fired from Egypt," an Egyptian security source told Reuters.

"Contact has been made with all the security points along the border and they confirmed that they did not monitor any unusual activity in the area and did not hear the sound of any rocket launches from Sinai."

But despite the claim made to Reuters, an Egyptian source told Israel Hayom on Wednesday that the assessment in Egypt is that Salafist extremists or Palestinian terror groups based in the Sinai are responsible for the firing of the rockets at Eilat.

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## **Get Out of Your Comfort Zone**

# and Take Action

Video games are a modern-day reference, but the temptation to embrace a life of ease and comfort while forgoing a life of action and adventure is an age-old story.

Consider the story of Abram.

Abram stepped out of his father's household and ventured into unknown territory simply because he heard the voice of God say to him, "Go to the land I will show you." It takes a bold and adventurous young man to leave the comforts of home to wander in the wilderness.

As a result of his action and sense of adventure, Abram was blessed beyond measure. His enterprises grew to such a large scale that he employed hundreds of men. By all accounts, Abram had it made. He could have kicked back and enjoyed a life of comfort and ease.

But Abram had developed an incredible skill to lead men. Not only did he teach his men a trade, he taught them to fight as well, for he knew the time would come when others would come to steal what he had built:

"When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken prisoner, he lined up his servants, all of them born in his household—there were 318 of them—and chased after the captors all the way to Dan. Abram and his men split into small groups and attacked by night. They chased them as far as Hobah, just north of Damascus. They recovered all the plunder along with nephew Lot and his possessions, including the women and the people" (Gen. 14:14, MSG).

You've heard the mantra of Texans: "Don't mess with Texas!" I have another one: "Don't mess with Abram!"

Abram's retaliation against the marauders was quick and

decisive. When his nephew, Lot, was captured, Abram sprung into action and rallied his men—318 of them—to go after and rescue his nephew.

He organized his men into small groups and attacked guerilla-style, invading the enemy by night. He retrieved Lot and all the women, children and possessions that had been stolen and then plundered those who initiated the raid.

That's a strong and decisive man of action.

As men, we need to be prepared for action. We may not have to train our employees to be men of war, but we certainly should train ourselves to be aggressive and strong when it comes to doing what's right. We need to be eager to respond, not delaying, not pausing, but ready and willing to move to action.

What are you preparing for? Are you conditioned for action? Are you training your employees to be ready for action? If the conditions for you or your company were to suddenly change and immediate action was needed to take hold of new business, are you ready?

Men of action and adventure are prepared.

*For the original article, visit [Fivestarmen.com](#). Fivestarmen was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. He has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

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# Stomach CT Scans May Help Find Osteoporosis

Doctors can use a patient's abdominal CT scans to also check for signs of the bone-weakening disease osteoporosis, according to a new study.

The researchers, who published their findings in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* on Monday, compared patients' CT scans to their dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA), which is traditionally used to diagnose osteoporosis.

"What we found is that there is pretty good correlation," said the study's lead author Dr. Perry Pickhardt, professor of radiology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in Madison.

The idea, say the researchers, is doctors can use patients' CT scans that are ordered for another reason—such as looking for tumors—to also check for signs of osteoporosis. That may spare the patients from additional testing and additional costs.

In an editorial accompanying the study, however, experts wrote that using CT scans to gauge bone density could lead to some people being incorrectly diagnosed, particularly if people at low risk are tested.

In this study, the average age was about 59 years old—six years younger than the age at which the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, a government-backed panel, recommends all women begin being screened for osteoporosis. The disease affects over 12 million Americans over 50.

The panel also suggests younger women at an increased risk for bone fractures should be screened, but there's no recommendation for men of any age.

Despite DXA scans being safe and cost effective, Pickhardt and his colleagues say the test is underused. CT scans, however, are considered overused—with more than 80 million performed in the U.S. during 2011.

### **'Incidentaloporosis?'**

For the new study, the researchers analyzed test results from 1,867 patients, who had both types of scans performed within six months of each other over a 10-year period, to see if their CT scans showed osteoporosis as well as the DXAs.

Overall, about 23 percent of the people were diagnosed with osteoporosis, about 45 percent were diagnosed with some bone-weakening and about 32 percent were healthy based on their DXAs.

The researchers then found that their ability to accurately diagnose those same patients with osteoporosis from a CT scan depended on what threshold for bone density they used.

Dr. Sumit Majumdar, who wrote an editorial accompanying the new study, said a lower threshold for bone density would catch most cases of osteoporosis and limit “incidentaloporosis” – incorrect osteoporosis diagnoses “discovered” while doctors were looking for something else.

At the lower threshold, the researchers found 9 percent of those diagnosed with osteoporosis were misdiagnosed.

Pickhardt said the screenings would have to target the right groups of people to prevent overdiagnosis.

“Obviously it’s something we need to worry about, but if you apply it to a population that’s suitable for diagnosis you wouldn’t run that risk,” he said.

### **CT v. DXA**

Majumdar, a professor of medicine at the University of Alberta

in Canada, said CT scans are better tests, but stomach scans don't include the hip—like a DXA would.

A DXA can cost a couple hundred dollars, while a CT scan can cost about \$500. Both involve radiation.

Dr. Beatrice Hull, from the Center for Osteoporosis and Bone Health at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, told Reuters Health that she'd want her patients to have a DXA scan even with a diagnosis from a CT scan.

"I don't think at this point this one test is going to prevent further testing. I think it will identify patients who are at a higher risk and need more testing," said Hull, who wasn't involved with the new research.

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# **Disciple-Making      Releases Gospel      Power      to      Solve Problems**

We all know the problems—divorce, fatherlessness, domestic abuse, racism, crime, corruption, apathy and poverty, to name a few. Some of the stats are alarming:

- NBC News just reported 42 percent of women prefer cohabitation over marriage.
- 74 percent of people under 30 are not married.
- Today, the U.S. federal debt is \$53,350 per every man, woman and child.

- 41 percent of babies are born to single mothers.
- 18 percent of pregnancies are terminated by abortion.
- 28 percent of children live in a single-parent home.
- Church attendance has dropped to 17.7 percent overall and 13.3 percent among men.

Jesus sees these problems too. So, what is His solution? There is ultimately one—and only one—solution to these problems: a wholesale outpouring of the gospel of grace that changes our character and conduct.

But how do we release this gospel?

Making disciples is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on each and every one of these problems.

The Scriptures actually put disciple-making into the category of a moral issue—a choice between right and wrong, obedience and disobedience. But is that true? Is making disciples really a “moral” issue?

That's an important question, because the motivation to persevere after those first five minutes when any idea seems possible depends on whether or not you are a “true believer” in the idea.

So here are the texts:

- “You will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8, NLT)
- “Go and make disciples.” (Matt. 28:19)
- “Equip God's people to do his work and build up the church.” (Eph. 4:12)
- “Teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” (2 Tim. 2:2)

It *is* a moral issue, and for those of us in men's discipleship, we could say this: Anything less than a plan to disciple every willing man is a catastrophic moral failure.

Disciple-making is every Christian's mission and duty—starting

at home. Failure here leads to failure everywhere. Problems get solved when the right kind of people are trying to fix them—disciples.

If we help people become who God created them to be, then they will do what God created them to do. They will become servants of God and agents of change in our homes, workplaces, churches and communities. They will populate our governments, school systems, health care systems and businesses.

Disciple-making is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on every problem we face. Everything else is lipstick and rouge.

*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.*

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## How to Determine Your Spiritual Gifts

The following comments were made during a small-group meeting I attended with a number of godly men. They are typical of the comments Christian men everywhere are making:

- "I finally have peace in my career. I want to do more for Him."
- "I just turned 40. I've been in the battle for 25 years. I find myself wanting to feel more significant."

- “My Christianity is like a savings account that has not produced a very good return.”
- “Will you pray for me? My passion to serve the Lord is gone, and I want it back.”
- “I only have one talent, but I want to be faithful with the one I have.”
- “I burn with a desire to serve this generation.”

## **The Great Desire**

The greatest yearning I hear today in my travels is that Christian men have an intense desire to make their lives count. “I want my life to make a difference. I want my life to have mattered.” I know that women feel this way, too.

However, there is a new sense in which men are thinking these thoughts. In the past, men wanted their lives to count in their work and families, and they wanted to achieve financial success. While these desires have not gone away, today men want more. Today men want their lives to count for God.

If someone wants to make a contribution to build the kingdom and tend the culture, one of the most important steps to take is for them to understand their spiritual gifts.

It would be foolish to try to become a salesman if you prefer to work with numbers. In the same way we pursue vocational employment based upon our aptitudes and abilities, we pursue our spiritual service based on an understanding of how God has gifted us.

## **What the Bible Says**

Every believer receives at least one spiritual gift: “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7, NIV). The Holy Spirit determines our spiritual gifts: “He gives them to each one, just as he determines” (v. 11). “Each one of you has your own gift from God” (1 Cor. 7:7).

The purpose of our spiritual gifts is to serve Christ by serving others, helping to fulfill the Great Commission: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pet. 4:10).

Spiritual gifts include service gifts, speaking gifts and signifying gifts. While theologians and teachers often differ on how to precisely classify and name these gifts, the following generally captures the gist of the different gifts.

### **Service Gifts**

Service gifts are the ligaments and muscle tissue that hold the church of Jesus Christ together. Service gifts are often low-profile, behind-the-scene gifts. They include showing mercy, service (or helps), hospitality, giving, administration, leadership, faith and discernment.

People who serve are eager for God to receive the credit for whatever good comes. "If anyone serves, he should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 4:11). Here are brief definitions of the service gifts with a few examples of how each gift may be used. These, along with the definitions of speaking and signifying gifts that follow, are adapted from the work of Carl Smith, Kenneth O. Gangel and Leslie B. Flynn:

- **Mercy:** Special ability to show sympathy to the suffering saints. Meals to the sick, hospital visits, phone calls and visits to the hurting.
- **Service:** Special ability to joyfully serve behind the scenes. Set up chairs, ushering, assist leaders.
- **Hospitality:** Special desire to offer home, food and lodging. Host missionaries, Bible studies, singles to dinner.
- **Giving:** Special desire and financial ability to give above and beyond a tithe. Generosity toward youth

mission trips, deacon fund offerings, parachurch ministries, a suit for the pastor.

- **Administration:** Special ability to orchestrate program details. Committee work, volunteer for church office, conference supervision.
- **Leadership:** Special ability to preside or govern wisely; boards of Christian ministries; visible roles, elders, deacons, committee chairmen, nursery program, fundraising.
- **Faith:** Vision for new projects that need doing and perseverance to see them through. Building programs, new ministries.
- **Discernment:** Ability to detect error. Meet with teachers who may be teaching incorrectly, letters to the editor.

## **Speaking Gifts**

Speaking gifts include knowledge, wisdom, preaching, teaching, evangelism, apostleship, shepherding and encouragement: "If anyone speaks, they should do it as one who speaks the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Here are definitions and examples of the spiritual gifts of speaking:

- **Knowledge:** Spiritual ability to search and acquire Scriptural truth. Academic pursuits, writing, teaching.
- **Wisdom:** Special insight into applications of knowledge. Counseling, teaching, discussion group leader, accountability groups, friendship.
- **Preaching:** Special ability to rightly proclaim and expound God's truth. Preachers, lay preachers.
- **Teaching:** Special ability to explain Scripture in edifying ways. Sunday school teachers, Bible studies, home groups, children and youth programs.
- **Evangelism:** Special ability to clearly present the gospel to non-believers. Sunday night church visitation program, share faith with contacts on job, sponsor outreach events.
- **Apostleship:** Special ability to begin new works.

Missionaries, church planters, Christian service organizations.

- **Shepherding:** Unique ability to care for a flock of believers over the long haul. Pastors, elders, nursery program.
- **Encouragement:** Special skill to inspire, encourage and comfort. Being a friend, counseling, writing letters.

People who have been given speaking gifts are able to help equip others to have a personal ministry of service. *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”* (Eph. 4:11-12).

### **Signifying Gifts**

The signifying gifts are miracles, healing, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

- **Tongues:** Spiritual ability to speak in a language foreign to speaker.
- **Interpretation of tongues:** Spiritual ability to interpret the message of one speaking in tongues.
- **Miracles:** Spiritual ability to actuate the supernatural intervention of God in ways beyond His ordinary working through the laws of nature.
- **Healing:** Spiritual agency of God in curing illness and disease and restoring to health supernaturally.

### **Two Recommendations**

To satisfy the deep longings of our hearts to do something significant for God, we must first know how God has uniquely gifted us. If you have never studied and understood your own spiritual gifts, let me make two recommendations.

First, take some time right now or during an upcoming quiet time to reflect on the spiritual gifts cataloged in this

article. Put checkmarks by the ones toward which you are drawn. Study the four passages of Scripture that deal with spiritual gifts: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; and 1 Peter 4:9-11. You may want to study the context by examining the verses before and after these specific references. Ask God to reveal His gifts to you and then show you the most effective way to serve Him.

Second, I have read two books which helped me tremendously: *Unwrap Your Spiritual Gifts*, by Kenneth O. Gangel (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1974), and *19 Gifts of the Spirit*, by Leslie B. Flynn (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983). You may want to read one or both of them. May you fully satisfy your desire to lead a life that counts for God.

May you be able to say, "My life made a difference. My life mattered." The life that counts the most is the one that fully employs the special abilities God gives.

**Patrick Morley** is the 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*.

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## 5 Things to Say to Your Kids Every Day

We've all seen the "cute" posters and bumper stickers that begin, "You might be a (fill in the blank) if ...". The opener is always followed by a series of serious or tongue-in-cheek

statements that serve to define the word in question.

For example, Jeff Foxworthy crafted the very famous “You might be a Redneck if ...” series. He says you might be a redneck if:

- You’ve ever financed a tattoo.
- You take a fishing pole into Sea World.
- Your stereo speakers used to belong to the drive-in theater.

Funny stuff. Well, it turns out there’s a lot that could be written to define an All Pro Dad. And one distinctive characteristic of an All Pro Dad turns out to be the kinds of things he says to his kids.

So here, All Pro Dads, is your very own list. You know you’re an All Pro Dad when you say these kinds of things to your kids every day.

**“Hey, Junior, I love You.”** Love—and we’ve talked about this before—is one of those qualities that’s never subject to inflation. “I love you” doesn’t lose its effectiveness when it’s said on a regular basis. Tell your kids you love them. Say it every day. Say it several times a day.

**“So, Buddy, what are your plans for the day?”** This is not just about knowing, but about interest. It means a lot to kids that their dad cares what they’re up to and takes the time to compare notes. “Here’s my business planner,” you could say. “I’ve got three big meetings. What do you have scheduled for the day?”

**“I am so grateful to be your dad.”** Our children need to know how we feel about being their dad. So much is lost when communication breaks down and kids stop relating to their dad or mom as whole, feeling, sentient beings. We’re not talking about manipulation drama here. We’re talking about communicating some of the passion and joy we feel in response to the ongoing privilege of parenting.

**“Have a great day at school, and don’t forget who you are.”** Your child is growing into his identity—his sense of self—each and every day. The most important attribute is his identity as a child of God. Your family name may be Smith or Wagner or Hernandez, but your child’s identity always has been and always will be “Made in the Image of God.” Remind him of that every day.

**Words of Affirmation.** The idea here is encouragement, “out loud” belief and a “heads up” positive direction into the day. It’s about repeated, ingrained affirmation delivered with the firm conviction of loving your children and believing in them. Do this every day. Deliver your lines with sincerity, and make them count.

**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**.

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## **People, Networks May Sway Parents’ Vaccine Choices**

The people and information sources parents surround themselves with may influence their choice to vaccinate their children or not, according to a survey from one county in Washington state.

Of almost 200 parents who took the survey, almost all said they had groups of people offering advice on vaccination, but those who chose not to fully vaccinate their children were more likely to have larger social groups and to turn to other sources, such as books, pamphlets and the Internet, for guidance.

“The take-home message from this is that the social networks for the majority of parents are extremely important in affecting vaccination decisions,” said Emily Brunson, the study’s author from Texas State University in San Marcos.

“Especially the people in the parents’ networks suggesting nonconformity is greater than anything else—including the parents’ own beliefs on vaccination,” she added.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends young children under the age of six years old get a series of shots that protect against 14 preventable diseases, including chickenpox, measles and whooping cough.

The latest report on vaccination rates from the CDC shows 95 percent of kindergarten-aged children receive their vaccinations, but many children still receive their shots late (see Reuters story of August 23, 2012 [here](#): and Reuters Health story of January 21, 2013 [here](#): ).

The fear is that parents who don’t vaccinate or who delay vaccinating their children put their own kids as well as others at risk for developing preventable disease, such as whooping cough.

Last year the U.S. experienced one of the largest whooping cough outbreaks in half a century, which health officials attributed both to vaccines wearing off and to parents simply skipping the pertussis vaccinations for their children (see Reuters story of July 20, 2012 [here](#): ).

For the new study, Brunson surveyed parents to see what impact

a person's social group and information sources had on their decision to vaccinate their children.

The people who took the survey were recruited from around King County, Washington, which includes the city of Seattle, and were , first-time parents with children younger than 18 months old.

Overall, 126 "conformers" – people who vaccinated their children according to the recommended schedule, and 70 "nonconformers"—people who didn't stick to the schedule – took the survey between March and July 2010.

Of those 70 "nonconformers," 28 were getting their children all the recommended shots, but not on time. Another 37 were only partially vaccinating their children and five were not vaccinating their children at all.

About 95 percent of all parents reported having a group of people offering advice on vaccination, but "nonconformers" tended to have larger groups of people to tap for information than "conformers."

"Nonconformers" typically reported about seven people who gave them advice, compared to about five people in "conformer's" social groups.

The people included in those groups were similar among the two types of parents. Spouses and partners were usually the most important advisers, followed by doctors, family and then friends.

Typically, "nonconformers'" groups included about 72 percent of people who recommended against vaccination in some way. That compared to 13 percent among "conformers."

"Nonconformers" were also more likely to seek outside sources, such as books, news programs and the Internet. Compared to 80 percent of "conformers" who said they used those outside

sources, all “nonconformers” said they did.

Brunson writes in the journal *Pediatrics* that her findings show healthcare providers are only a part of parents’ social networks.

She adds that it’s essential for programs trying to increase vaccination rates to also focus on “communities more broadly so that the other people parents are likely to consult ... are also included.”

Dr. Joseph Anthony Bocchini, Jr., chairman of *Pediatrics Medicine* at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, said the new study adds additional information by using a social network approach for the first time to understand parents’ decisions about vaccinating their children.

“I think that what needs to be done is that everybody needs to understand the importance of vaccines. And they’re not only important for the people who receive them but they’re also important for the community,” said Bocchini, who was not involved in the new research.

He said that in addition to doctors, the American Academy of *Pediatrics* and the CDC have valuable information on their websites about vaccinations for children.

# Meager Beginnings Can Give Birth to Great Things

Most men have great dreams but fail to achieve them because of one simple oversight. They despise small beginnings. You will never consistently attract increase in your life until you realize that it is in the small details of life where victory is won.

David was chosen to become the king of Israel after the Holy Spirit rejected King Saul and each of David's brothers. The Bible says that from the day that Samuel anointed David to be king, the Holy Spirit came upon David in power (see I Sam. 16:13).

Yet, what did David do after being anointed with the oil from Samuel's flask? He returned to the pastures to care for his father's sheep.

One day, David arrived at the battle line of the Israelites and the Philistines with supplies for his brothers. He found the camp paralyzed by fear and in crisis. He overheard the threats of Goliath, the champion fighter from the Philistine camp. He also heard the promise King Saul offered for the man who would take out the champion—the promise of great wealth, complete tax exemption, and the king's daughter in marriage.

Disguised in this crisis was an opportunity.

Many times our greatest opportunities are found in crisis. The late President John F. Kennedy once said, "When written in Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters—one represents danger—the other represents opportunity."

You see, even though David had received the anointing to be the next king of Israel, he was not in the natural lineage for the throne. He was not Saul's natural son. But by killing the

giant, David would step into his kingdom destiny. Marrying the king's daughter gave David a place in the natural lineage of royalty.

David's brother Eliab, who had been rejected by the Prophet Samuel, accused David of failing to care for "those few sheep," and then slandered him by calling David arrogant when he said he could kill the giant.

David was not being arrogant, he simply was confident of victory. He had already proven himself faithful in the small things. David had protected his "few sheep" from a lion and a bear. The giant was just his next step.

"... 'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you'" (1 Sam. 17:37).

When you prove yourself faithful in small things, God promotes you to greater things—greater relationships, greater positions, greater rewards. God has confidence in you.

Here's another principle you can learn: As long as you despise where you are now, you will never leave there.

Understand that the place where you are now is a temporary place. You are a nomad in the journey of ability. You don't want to settle down and set up camp in one place. You must master your current position in order to go further in life.

For the original article, visit [Fivestarmen.com](#). *Fivestarmen was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. He has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*