

Chaim Goldberg: Sirens and Bad Guys

Writing a weekly blog isn't always that easy for me. I'm not the kind of writer who can usually just sit down and force something out. If I do, you can usually tell in the lack of quality and passion.

On my way to work Thursday morning, I wasn't sure what I was going to write about. Nothing new was really burning in my chest to share with the world.

Then at 10:05 a.m., that all changed.

I was sitting in my office at Maoz Israel Ministries in Tel Aviv, when suddenly I heard "it". The sound that haunts my nightmares, the sound that makes my heart pound with fear like nothing else, the sound that makes my hands shake. I heard "the siren."

What siren, you're asking? The siren, that warns us, in Israel, to take cover from an incoming attack. The siren that rang out for days just two months ago when Israel was repeatedly attacked by Hamas terrorists in Gaza.

That was my first war experience, here in Israel. And boy, was it a doozy. Tel Aviv hadn't been fired on since the first Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein was on the rampage. Jerusalem hadn't been fired on for even longer. But here we were being fired upon day after day. And each time a rocket was incoming, the sirens would wail.

When the sirens go off, you have only seconds to take shelter. "Seconds" is not enough time to even form a clear thought, let alone take action to save one's own life. But seconds is all we have.

Depending on what you're doing at the time of the siren, you have to gather yourself enough to run out of your home or office and in to the nearest bomb shelter. Heaven help you if you're in the shower or the bathroom. But even if you're just sitting on the couch watching TV, when that siren goes off, your brain isn't sure what to do first.

Stand up. Do I put on my shoes? Do I grab my phone or my wallet? Do I grab a water bottle in case we're stuck in the shelter for a long time?

No, just go, just run. Take cover. This is no video game. This is no movie with fake special effects. Someone is actually trying to kill you!

When that siren goes off, your entire world goes into a panic. And it takes hours, or sometimes days or weeks, to fully recover. Or so I thought.

I thought I had recovered. That is until 10:05 Thursday morning, when the sirens went off again, suddenly and without warning.

What was this, I wondered? Is this an attack?

I stepped out into the hallway at Maoz, and no one was in a panic. It wasn't like it was two months ago when we all ran to the stairwell.

"Is this real?" I shouted to our receptionist? "No," she assured me. "This is a regular test they had planned."

Her words were of little comfort. As relieved as I was that this was not the start of a new war, still that wailing sound instantly took me back to those terrifying days from late 2012. All the old emotions came back. Not just the panic and fear, but the confusion.

Who are these people, and why are they trying to kill me? What did I do to them? Do they even know my name?

My idea of murder, I suppose, is a personalized version—a deranged gunman with a vendetta. He has a specific mission in mind. He's looking for his target, purposely. He's not just shooting bullets into the sky, hoping they'll strike someone, anyone.

But here in Israel, murder is very impersonal. Jihadists don't target individuals. They don't want to kill just one. They go for mass casualties. They blow up buses and buildings and trains and airplanes; cafes and restaurants full of innocent people. That's their modus operandi.

Thursday, I had the slightest tinge of what PTSD must be like. I say slight, because I have never fought in an armed conflict like our heroes doing battle in Afghanistan, or like those who served in Iraq, Vietnam, Korea, or the world wars. Or, like the Israeli soldiers who have fought so valiantly every day since 1948 to protect our tiny nation.

I could never compare my situation to theirs. But as the sirens wailed today, and the memories came flooding back, I had new empathy for the horror they must suffer after returning from war.

Most days I feel like we're already in World War III. For me, that war began on September 11, 2001. That was the day Muslim Jihadists declared war on the world. They attacked New York and Washington. Since then, they've attacked the U.K., Spain, India, Bulgaria, and, of course, Israel too many times to mention here.

If that's not a world war, than what is?

So many of our leaders seem lulled into a perpetual state of apathy. We can't even get the European Union to label Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. A non-state actor with 60,000 rockets in southern Lebanon aimed at Israel, and they're not a terror group? They've just been found liable for blowing up a bus full of Israeli tourists in Bulgaria, in July

of 2012. If they're not terrorists, then who is?

And just this week in his state of the union address, President Obama again called for negotiations with Iran. Negotiations? The day after, Iran announced it has begun upgrading their uranium centrifuges. That means they're moving faster towards having a nuclear bomb. The day before Obama's speech, North Korea conducted a third nuclear test. Many think they did so in concert with Iran.

And yet so many in the world insist that sanctions are still the way to go. Sanctions? North Korea has been under sanctions for decades. No problem, they say. We are happy to starve our own people and use all our resources to continue building nuclear weapons. Iran is now doing the exact same thing. Sanctions clearly have no impact whatsoever.

Syria is under sanctions. This week, the number of dead in their civil war was upped to 70,000!

Where is the outrage? Where is the plan of action? Where are the Churchills and Roosevelts of our day? When will the free world wake up to realize that the war has already begun? When will we fight back in a resounding way?

Why are we so afraid to say that there are "good guys" and "bad guys" in this world? Right now, the bad guys are winning. The bad guys are winning because they know their objective and they have no fear. All the while, the good guys are afraid even to offend people with words of truth.

Consider God's Word:

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the

innocent of his right!" (Is. 5:20-23)

Chaim Goldberg is the director of media of Maoz Israel.

10 Ways to Curb Sibling Rivalry

1. **All are Created Equal.** Jealousy is a prime factor in sibling arguments. That monster can create upheaval in your home. Your kids are vying for your attention and affection. Let them know you have more than enough love to give and always be fair and balanced in the time and attention you give each of them.

2. **Build Teamwork.** Try to plan regular activities that require your children to work as a team. This will promote cooperation, trust and bonding. There are several websites with game ideas such as .

3. **Set a Privilege Timetable.** "You are giving her a cell phone? She is only 10. I had to wait until I was 13!" Siblings remember every detail of what was given to whom and when. Set a timetable for these landmarks and stick to it. If the timetable must be broken, make sure you give a clear and reasonable explanation as to why.

4. **Step Aside.** Sometimes you just need to butt out. A parent can't resolve every issue. Sometimes when siblings are fighting, you just need to walk away. In fact, tell them to take their argument outside. They need to learn to resolve their own conflicts. Just make sure nobody takes a golf club to the head.

5. **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.** Parents should think outside the box. One parent suggested snapping a quick photo when your children are taunting or arguing with each other. They will see how silly or ugly the scene was and it usually ends in laughter and apologies. Creative parenting!

6. **Family Roles.** “Dad, how come you let him get away with that, but not me?” The answer to that question is usually “because you are the oldest and know better.” Every person in the family has a role. Point these out on a regular basis.

7. **Understanding.** It is important to understand the talents and flaws of your kids. One son might be a great athlete and the other might have a gift for music. Never apply a “one size fits all” technique with them. Just because your oldest son loves playing football, does not mean your other son will. Discover the unique traits of each of your children and nurture them.

8. **Special Circumstances.** If you have a special-needs child, they will require a great deal of your attention. This can be difficult for your other children. One thing that can help is allowing them to be involved in the caretaking process. This also applies when children are sick or have injuries. Offset the extra attention by including the whole family in the treatment.

9. **Safe Zone.** Sometimes kids need time and space to be alone. For instance, your older daughter is in her room talking on the phone with her friends. Her younger sister keeps intruding on her. This will surely cause conflict. Create a safe zone for each child and make sure it's respected.

10. **One-on-One Time.** Make a point to spend time alone with each of your kids on a regular basis. Read a book to your youngest daughter. Shoot hoops with your son. Go for a bike ride with your teenage daughter. Your attention will mean the world to them.

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**.

The Cantor Comment: Did the Jews Really Reject Jesus?

Many assume that the Jewish rejection of Yeshua was universal. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The first congregation was exclusively Jewish, as it was birthed in Jewish Jerusalem. The first heralds of the message of salvation by faith in Yeshua were all Jewish. And when Shaul (Paul) returns to Jerusalem he finds, nearly 30 years since the Shavuot (Pentecost) outpouring, the revival is still roaring.

Tens of Thousands of Messianic Jews

Shaul returns to Jerusalem in 57 or 58 CE to meet the Jewish apostles. The gospel has gone all over the known world. He meets with Jacob (the artist mistakenly know as James), the brother of Yeshua and the main leader of the Jerusalem community. Jacob and the elders give Shaul a great report concerning the work of the Gospel in Jerusalem.

Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the

law.” (Acts 21:20, NIV)

There are two eye-openers here and a mistranslation. First, they report to Shaul that the revival is continuing in power and bearing much fruit. However, it is even better than what you are reading because the Greek word translated *thousands* is *myriads*. The English translation of this word is *myriads*. One *myriad* is *ten thousand*. *Myriads*, plural, are *tens of thousands*.

Dr. Stern’s translation of this verse is more accurate:

“They also said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many tens of thousands of believers there are among the Judeans, and they are all zealots for the Torah.’” (Acts 20:21, JNT)

Zealots for the Torah

Not only does Dr. Stern’s translation bring out the fact that tens of thousands of Jews or Judeans (Jews who lived in the areas surrounding Jerusalem) had embraced Yeshua, but it suggests something that would have sent shockwaves throughout the Middle Ages during the Crusades and Inquisitions! “They (the tens of thousands of Jewish believers) are *zealots for the Torah!*”

For those who believe that Yeshua came to start a new religion apart from Judaism, this is dumbfounding. Jacob is not reporting this to Shaul as a problem, but as something good. In Yeshua, the Law had meaning. Paul himself says of the Torah in Romans:

“So then, the Torah is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good ...We know that the Torah is spiritual...” (Rom. 7:12 and 14, NIV)

These were Jewish believers on fire for God and zealous for the Torah. Now keep in mind, when people today think of the Torah, they often conjure up images of black hats, long black coats and endless, tedious ritual. Most of modern-day Judaism

is not following the Torah but traditions built upon the Torah and a supposedly secret Oral Law that Moses was also given on Sinai.

Forsaking Jewish Calling Equaled False Teaching

To further illustrate this point, take a look at what Jacob and the other leaders were concerned about:

“(The Jewish believers) have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.” (Acts 21:21-24)

The Jewish believers were concerned that Shaul was *teaching a heresy*, that Jews who embrace Yeshua are no longer called to live in accordance with the Torah. Furthermore it confirms that Shaul himself was “living in obedience to the law.”

Amazingly the very idea that caused deep concern among the apostles (that a Jewish believer would forsake his Jewish calling) eventually became Church policy in the Middle Ages. At that time, not only were Jews who came to faith *not* encouraged to continue to live as Jews, they were *forbidden* to do so! Acts records that Shaul, Jacob and the other apostles affirmed that it is wrong to teach Jewish believers to forsake Jewish life and calling, but the Church of the Middle Ages made it doctrine!

Calling, Not Justification

To be clear, they continued to live as Jews as a matter of *calling* (see Rom. 11:29), not in order to gain salvation:

“Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because ‘the righteous will live by faith.’” (Gal. 3:11)

Here in Acts 21 they gave Paul a plan in order that it would be clear to everyone that “you yourself are living in obedience to the Torah.” Paul, nobody’s pushover, went along with the plan to prove what is true, that he, while not under the condemnation of the Law, desired to live according to God’s pattern for Israel.

The point is this: Not only was there a massive revival in Jerusalem with signs, wonders and miracles, but these Jews continued to live as Jews. If you had walked up to John, Jacob, Peter, or any other of the leaders of the Jerusalem revival and said, “Praise God. How does it feel to be free of the Torah and Judaism and to be a Christian?”—they would not have known what you were talking about. All they understood was that they had found the Jewish Messiah. What could be more Jewish than that? Then they may have asked, “What is a Christian?” as they referred to themselves as *believers*.

May revival return to Israel until “...all Israel is saved” (see Rom. 11:26).

The Oral Law, or Oral Tradition, is believed to have accompanied the written Torah that Moses received on Sinai. The Oral Law was supposedly given in order to know how to live out the written Torah. It is believed that Moses passed this down to Joshua and so forth and so on. However, there couldn’t have been an Oral Law because in the time of King Josiah, they had lost the written Law and didn’t even know what Passover was, much less an Oral Tradition. When the Book of the Law was recovered, they had to start from scratch. If there ever had been an Oral Tradition, it had long been gone.

Strangely, the Oral Law has now been written down in the Mishna and Talmud. It is probable that the religious Jews in the time of Yeshua did not actually believe that the Oral Law

came from Sinai, as it was merely referred to as 'The Traditions of the Elders.' Yeshua Himself rebuked the Pharisees for putting these traditions above the Word of God. (see Mark 7:9)

Furthermore, concerning the idea of an Oral Law, we find in Exodus 19:8 that "When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, 'Everything the LORD has said we will do.'"

"Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said" (Ex. 24:24). This passage says that God shared all his laws and Moses wrote them down. There was no secret Oral Tradition. The children of Israel were told to obey all that was written. (see Deut. 30:10, 31:9, 24, 26, and Josh. 1:8)

Ron Cantor is the director of Messiah's Mandate International in Israel, a Messianic Ministry dedicated to taking the message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Ron also travels internationally teaching on the Jewish Roots of the New Testament. He serves on the pastoral team of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. His newest book, Identity Theft, will be released on April 16th. Follow him at @RonSCantor on Twitter.

Study: US-Wide Salt Reduction Could Prevent Deaths

The United States could prevent up to half a million deaths over the next decade if Americans cut their salt intake to within national guidelines, according to a new study.

That finding—which comes the week New York City announced

success toward its goals of cutting salt levels by one-quarter by 2014—is based on computer simulations using data from various studies on the effects of extra sodium on blood pressure and heart risks.

The Institute of Medicine recommends most healthy people get 1,500 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day, with an upper limit of 2,300 mg. But the average American eats more like 3,600 mg each day, largely through processed food.

“Reducing sodium intake is important for everyone, not just a small subset of people who are salt sensitive,” said Pamela Coxson, the study’s lead author from the University of California, San Francisco.

Although the health effects of a salt cutback may be small for the average person, she said, the results show they add up when projected across millions of Americans.

Still, one blood pressure researcher not involved in the new study said the models don’t reflect the full picture of health consequences tied to too little or too much salt.

Coxson and her colleagues ran three salt-reduction scenarios through models that predicted how a lower-sodium diet would impact a person’s risk of having high blood pressure or dying of cardiovascular disease.

The most realistic scenario was a gradual decline in Americans’ average sodium intake over ten years to about 2,200 mg per day. That goal would be “optimistic but potentially achievable,” the researchers wrote in the journal *Hypertension*.

Based on their calculations—and taking into account uncertainties about sodium’s direct effect on the heart—Coxson and her colleagues calculated 280,000 to 500,000 fewer Americans would die over the next decade as a result of that reduction.

A more dramatic and immediate decline to 1,500 mg of salt per day across the U.S. population could prevent up to 1.2 million deaths, largely from heart disease or stroke, the researchers calculated. But that isn't very realistic, policy-wise.

"The gradual reduction is something that many countries around the world are working on in various ways," Coxson told Reuters Health.

For example, she said, some countries have worked with bakers to cut back on sodium in bread, and others have focused on meat and canned goods.

"The big majority of our intake of sodium is coming from those types of processed foods," Coxson said.

"The individual at home with their salt shaker only controls maybe 20 to 25 percent of their intake."

Too Little Sodium?

Dr. Michael Alderman from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York, said the researchers' calculations are missing data on how too little sodium can also raise heart risks, through its effect on blood fats and insulin.

"They begin with the hypothesis that lowering sodium intake, because it will lower blood pressure—and nobody debates that—will inevitably translate into a reduction in cardiovascular events," he told Reuters Health.

But in reality, he said, "The net effect of these conflicting consequences of reducing sodium will be the health effect."

Alderman said there's no evidence eating less than 2,000 mg of sodium per day is beneficial for the average person. "Like every other essential nutrient that I know of, too little is not good for you, and too much is not good for you," he said.

For people who do want to cut back on their sodium, Coxson said diet changes are possible despite the influence of the country's salty, processed food environment.

"The best thing would be if we could all shift our consumption a little more toward fresh fruits and vegetables, and away from processed foods," she said.

Israeli Group Shoots For the Moon

The Space IL organization has set an ambitious goal for itself—to send an Israeli spaceprobe to the moon in 2015. The project received significant backing this week when the Bezeq telecommunications company announced it had signed on.

Bezeq will provide the advanced communications infrastructure needed for the spaceflight and also support Space IL's educational activities.

The vessel will weigh less than 140 kilograms (308 pounds), making it the smallest spacecraft ever to land on the moon.

Space IL hopes the project will demonstrate ground-breaking technological capabilities in the field of building miniature smart spacecraft, which cost about a tenth of typical spacecraft.

Bezeq will be responsible for the probe's transmissions from the moon to a control center in the city of Yehud, in central Israel.

"This remarkable cooperation will enable us to meet the tremendous technological challenge and inspire the young

generation,” Space IL chairman Yanki Margalit said of Bezeq’s support.

Space IL is a non-profit group set up by Israeli space enthusiasts to take part in the international Google Lunar X PRIZE competition. According to the Google Lunar X PRIZE website, a \$30 million prize will be given to the first privately funded team that lands a robot on the moon, has the robot travel 500 meters on the lunar surface and sends back video, images and other data to Earth.

“We are motivated by a mission: to reinvigorate the Israeli start-up nation by undertaking a challenging task that will ignite the imagination of the country’s young generation,” Space IL’s website says. “Driven by a national mission to advance Israel’s scientific and technological fields, Space IL is determined to push ingenuity further than ever before.”

For the original article, visit .

Israel’s Answer to Valentine’s Day: Tu B’Av

Growing up in America, celebrating Valentine’s Day changed during the different stages in my life.

I remember the fun-themed Valentine’s Day cards that I would write in elementary school, hoping to receive a card from my Valentine, who was eight, by the way. What does an 8-year-old know of Valentine’s Day, besides the heart candy saying: *Be My Valentine?*

As I got older, Valentine’s Day took on a whole new meaning.

In high school and in college, if you weren't in a relationship, you wanted this day to come and go as quickly as possible. Eating out in restaurants was a huge mistake, as all the happy couples were expressing their love.

Living in Israel, I was so excited to realize that Israelis don't pay too much attention to Feb. 14 because of its Christian origin.

Ok, restaurants have special (overpriced) menus and flowers are being sold. But it isn't the crazed over-the-top, hit you on the head, "Hallmark holiday" like it is in the United States.

Little did I know that Judaism has a "Day of Love" of its own!

Tu B'Av, the 15th Day of Av, was celebrated in the time of the Second Temple period (before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.) marking the beginning of the grape harvest. It also served as a matchmaking day for unmarried women. The unmarried girls of Jerusalem dressed in white garments and went out to dance in the vineyards.

Today in Israel, it is celebrated as a holiday of love, Hag HaAhava (חג האהבה), similar to Valentine's Day.

Sure, the marketing promotions are visible with shopping malls being decorated with pink and red hearts, bakeries selling heart-shaped cookies and cakes. But thankfully, these love-cliché items only make their appearance just a few days before, as a reminder of the love we cherish if we have it, and the love we long for if we don't.

No matter where you live, you can't escape a holiday for love. So I guess I should just embrace it instead of hiding from it. I don't think I will see many unmarried girls here dance in vineyards this year. But on Valentine's Day and on Tu B'Av, which falls this year on July 22, 2013, I will be sure to raise a glass of wine to my loved one.

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

10 Ways to Make Valentine's Day Wonderful for Your Wife

February 14th is here; there's no way we can avoid it, and if we're not careful, the event may well trip us up again. Therefore, All Pro Dads might as well use the opportunity to do the following:

- Love our wives eloquently
- Set a better standard
- Demonstrate love leadership
- Redefine the celebration
- Make V-Day redemptive
- Wow our wives with thoughtfulness and class, because that's the kind of guys we are

Handle Valentine's Day poorly, men, and the results can be catastrophic—a marriage conflict situation out of nowhere. When we get it right, however—using our thoughtfulness and class—all can be right with the world. So, here are 10 ideas worth their weight in ... chocolate! Try two or three, or do everything on the list.

1. **Actually plan ahead.** Anything you do, either just for your wife or involving the whole family, needs careful thought and preparation. Plan Valentine's Day together, or surprise her. Either way, it really is the thought that counts.

2. **Make Valentine's Day a family event.** Here's an alternative. Write cards to your children, encourage them to make gifts for their mother, and then schedule a family "Love Feast" where

cards are read and family love stories are shared.

3. Do something awesome a few days before V-Day. Bonus! Show your true colors by planning something extra loving and sincere before the day. Demonstrate your independent spirit. But, don't forget Feb. 14. Even if she says, "I don't want you to bother," it's really not true ... she does!

4. Take a "thoughtful pill." Why spend money you don't have on expensive flowers and chocolates, when you're well-equipped to apply serial kindness and cumulative thoughtfulness, above and beyond, relentlessly, all day long?

5. Write her a letter from your heart. Place the letter inside a romantic (but NOT sappy) card that demonstrates your consummate good taste. Here are 8 tips for writing your wife a love note to get you started.

6. Cook dinner at home. Cooking is not that difficult if you're willing to (*gasp*) follow directions. Here's the order of the evening:

- Make sure the children are at Grandma's (unless you've opted for the family Love Feast).
- Plan your menu carefully.
- Make a flashy-looking menu.
- Flowers on the table (nothing expensive).
- Plan for the entire evening.
- No TV, unless it's a movie you have thoughtfully planned.
- Under no circumstances does she do the dishes.
- Dessert and coffee, later.

7. If possible, get away from work and meet her either for lunch or coffee during the day. This may take some creativity on your part. Here's a clue: such creative efforts mean more to your wife than expensive stuff. Hands down.

Work and Family: The Ongoing Tug of War

8. **Have your wedding photograph on the dresser, along with an “I love you” token, when she wakes up in the morning.** Just a little effort here, a token gesture that demonstrates you’re speaking “love” today. It all adds up.

9. **Imagine you’re asking her to marry you, think about what you would say today, and then say it.** Write it down. You can present it to her after you’ve finished re-proposing.

10. **Leave a love note in her purse, or taped to the bathroom mirror, or on the dashboard of her car, or on her desk at her work.** Or all of the above. Saturation with thoughtful “little things.”

Try throwing in one of our All Pro Dad Marriage Coupons as one of your notes!

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**.

A Man’s Guide to Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day Secret: Guys, “Last minute” says “not that important.” She will probably never say that—maybe never even think it exactly that way. But “last minute” says, “I didn’t

care enough to give any forethought.”

Classic Issue

Legend says that a Christian named Valentine (or Valentinus) was imprisoned, where he fell in love with the jailer's daughter. Just before his execution he wrote her a love letter and signed it, “From your Valentine.”

The English popularized Valentine's Day in the 1700s. Americans picked up on this and began exchanging handmade valentines. Printed valentines first appeared in America around 1840. Valentine's Day is the second largest day for greeting cards (after Christmas), and women purchase 85 percent of all valentine cards (, retrieved December 10, 2003).

Valentine's Day is a day for lovers. My mom and dad were married on Valentine's Day. My wife and I were married on the Saturday closest to Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day presents a perfect opportunity to invest in your marriage. Here's a plan to make Valentine's Day special for you and your wife. First, though, let's review some reasons why it's worth investing the effort ...

A Different Way to Think About Marriage

Family systems thinker Edwin Friedman wrote how successful a marriage can be. He said, “In reality, no human marriage gets a rating of more than 70 percent” (Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, 1985, p. 69).

In other words, even the most successful marriage will only be symptom-free about 70 percent of the time. Patsy, my wife, and I both think we have a great marriage. We talked this 70 percent thing over, and it makes sense to us. You could think, *Is that as good as it gets?* But a better thought would be, *Wow, maybe my marriage is better than I thought!* If you will dwell on this 70 percent number, I think in time you will be encouraged by it.

Why just 70 percent? It's the flesh. We see each other through the veil of our sinful natures. It takes grace to make a marriage work. No person is ideal. Our wives can be controlling, neglectful, strong-willed, pouters, unexpressive, unappreciative, and on and on. So can we. That's why Valentine's Day can be such a helpful, healing time ... a time to raise the stakes for your marriage and help it become what God has called it to be.

The Big Picture on Marriage

Here are some remarks adapted from the introduction of my book for wives, *Understanding Your Man in the Mirror*:

1. Marriage is a good thing. Marriage blesses. Marriage is that mysterious, spiritual fusion of two lives headed in two directions into one flesh.

2. All relationships are difficult, especially marriage. Florence Littauer has said, "We are attracted to marry each other's strengths, and then go home to live with each other's weaknesses." Two people rubbing against each other are bound to create some friction. Love is the glue that holds us together, and the oil that keeps us from rubbing each other the wrong way.

3. Virtually all men believe that they are, or have been, a difficult husband to live with. Most likely, many regrets haunt your husband. He knows he has been difficult. Yet, he wants to make up the years he robbed from you.

4. Most men have it in their hearts to do the right thing. Based on hundreds of surveys and thousands of interviews, I would say the overwhelming conclusion is this: Most men really do want to do the right thing. Men deeply love their wives. Along the way they have bought into a few ideas that knocked them off balance, but their hearts are good.

Where Are You Today?

Take this self-test about where your marriage stands today:

I believe marriage is a good thing.

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

My marriage is difficult.

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

My marriage is difficult because I have been difficult to live with.

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

I want to do better and make my marriage right.

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

I'm encouraged that "no human marriage gets a rating of more than 70 percent."

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

My marriage needs my immediate attention.

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

I need to be the one to take responsibility for investing in my marriage.

Completely Mostly Somewhat Disagree

The Emotional Bank Account

The most powerful marriage concept I've run across is "The Emotional Bank Account." Every wife has an Emotional Bank Account into which we make deposits and from which we make withdrawals. Basically, every time we interact with our wives, whether verbal or non-verbal, we are either making a deposit or a withdrawal.

For example, you've had a rough day. You come home, slam door, expel loud grunt simulating a large zoo animal, plop down in chair, turn on TV, bury nose in paper ... Is this a deposit or a withdrawal from your wife's Emotional Bank Account? Okay, you get the picture.

Now let's say the following morning you feel terrible for being such a bum the night before, so you take your wife

coffee in bed. That would be a deposit, right? So you see how this works.

One more example. Non-verbal communication counts. Say your child had a spat with another child in the neighborhood. Your wife has been working the situation all afternoon. After dinner she wants to talk. You cross your arms, frown, and stare out the window. See how this works?

Here's the big idea: After a few years, a lot of wives end up empty. Their Emotional Bank Accounts have been depleted. Why? Too many withdrawals, not enough deposits. This is not merely a cute idea, but it is the Continental Divide between those marriages that make it and those that don't. Remember, above I mentioned that wives and husbands can be controlling, neglectful, strong-willed, pouters, unexpressive, or unappreciative. Withdrawals like that, without a plan to make deposits, will eventually destroy a marriage.

Valentine's Day presents an opportunity to a) make a mega-deposit and b) renew yourself to be a "depositer" into her account.

The 7-Step Mega Deposit

Here's a seven-step suggestion to make this Valentine's Day a mega deposit into your wife's Emotional Bank Account:

Step 1: The Ask. At least 10 days before Valentine's Day, ask your wife for a Valentine's date. It's important to ask well in advance so it doesn't seem "last minute" to her. Make it special: write a handwritten note, make a poster, hire a skywriter, get a banner made, a note in a bottle, use your imagination! If you didn't do it this year, please work on it for 2014!

Step 2: The List. At least 7 days before Valentine's Day, start a list of all the things you appreciate about your wife. Be creative!

Step 3: The Note. At least 3 days before the big date, send your wife a handwritten note telling her how much you are looking forward to your special date.

Step 4: The Flowers. On the big day, send her flowers with a mushy note.

Step 5: The Date. Pick a romantic restaurant (be sure to make a reservation in advance). Go up a notch on your normal price range. After dinner pull out your list of things you appreciate and tell her each item, slowly, with embellishment. Give her a Valentine's card you make or purchase.

Step 6: The Gift. Chocolate is a traditional favorite, but keep your antenna up for hints. Maybe your wife would like some Starbucks coffee, a gift certificate to her favorite bookstore, or some warm pajamas.

Step 7: The Follow Up. The day after your date, write your wife another handwritten note telling how much you enjoyed your date and why.

Pat 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*.

Visit for the original article.

Israeli Schools to Stage Rocket Strike Drill

An exercise simulating rocket strikes will take place Thursday in all schools and kindergartens in Israel. The exercise was planned in advance as a part of the 2013 training schedule and will be conducted by the Home Front Command, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Israel Police, Magen David Adom, the Israeli Fire and Rescue Services and local authorities.

The exercise is scheduled for mid-morning with a siren that will be heard across Israel (with the exception of Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip) by Home Front Command alarm systems. In addition, text messages will be sent to mobile phones and a siren will be heard on all regional radio stations.

The exercise will be conducted in all kindergartens and schools in Israel in order to increase the readiness of the Israeli education system for such scenarios and will provide guidance for appropriate conduct during and following these scenarios. For the first time, a strong emphasis will be placed on the rapid movement of children from schools and kindergartens into the nearest secure areas.

Moreover, the exercise will test the cooperation between local authorities and education establishments with the Home Front Command, emergency organizations and volunteers.

Recently, several drills were held in different educational institutions and instructions were given to students by Home Front Command instructors. The Home Front Command, along with the Ministry of Education, will continue to increase readiness of all educational establishments in order to contend with

issues that may arise during emergencies.

This readiness is constantly tested as a part of the routine exercise apparatus. The guidance provided during these exercises can play a critical role in saving lives.

Kenny Luck: God Trains You Through Trauma

Part I

The second way that God teaches us, or instructs us to number our days, is that he *trains us through trauma*. In other words, God teaches us through traumatic events in our lives.

The psalmist in the Bible talks about this in Psalm 119:71-72. It says: *“My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to Your decrees. The Law from Your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.”*

Pain jolts us into turning to God and to turning to His Word. In this Scripture, David needed to seek God’s will through His words, through His laws, and through His decrees. David needed to see God’s priorities, God’s values, God’s commands, God’s perspectives ... but it took trauma, and trauma was good. The trauma clarified. I think a lot of us can identify.

When we get trained through trauma, we wish that we had listened earlier, amen? We just go, “Man, I wish that God didn’t have to do that to me—to wake me up—to help me get my priorities right. I wish I would have just listened. He told me that my life is a mist, it’s a vapor; it’s short; it’s a two-minute drill. (see Is. 40:8) I should order my life based

on certain priorities that reflect the fact that I have a limited number of days, and I have a limited amount of time to live this life. I'm not guaranteed anything."

But life does include trauma, and trauma is used for good, the psalmist teaches us. When suffering enters our life, just as for the psalmist, God is teaching us to number our days. He is teaching us to change our perspective.

That's what happened to me at the Western Medical Center as I served in the cancer ward. That year, God trained me by putting me close to people who were going through the most significant trauma of their lives. I watched poison be injected into their veins and held their hands to comfort them. I watched spouses disappear. I went to funerals.

You know, my mom lived a full life, but when she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer; she was given just 30 days to live. Luckily, she had some notice. God teaches us, encourages us to go back through and use each lesson of affliction and trauma we've had.

For those of you who have yet to be trained through trauma, just be proactive.

Listen to what God says about life—and steward it responsibly.

But for those of you who are going through trauma right now, take the lesson. Let God turn it to be used for good. God has given you notice before your life is done—your one life.

Remember, God *trains us through trauma*.

For the One Life Series, visit [.](#)

Kenny Luck is the founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church. His 20th book— *Sleeping Giant: No Movement of God without Men of God*—is the proven blueprint for men's ministries, and was recently released through B&H Publishing. Watch and read more of Kenny's

teaching here and at . Follow Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everymm,) and YouTube.