

# When Corrupt Talk Comes Out of Your Mouth

It is impossible for me to begin 2014 without giving you a tool for making your year terrific. This is my motto for the year ... again! And I hope it becomes yours also. I did not search my archives before writing, but I am sure that I have written on this before.

“Let no **corrupting talk (unwholesome words)** come out of your mouth ...” You probably can finish the verse. It is found in the book of Ephesians 4:29. It is worth it to read the rest of the verse also.

This is a subtraction and addition equation. What is Paul teaching us about how we communicate with others? Let me put it in first person. Paul is telling me that I must be intentional to remove from my method of communication all words and phrases, sentences and paragraphs that reduce the quantitative value of another person. Whether they are present or not present. This is a discipline that I must take responsibility for.

It is impossible to live in the **power of love** and **speak words** that cause others to feel that something has been taken from them—confidence, motivation, trust. When we speak to others or about others in an unbecoming way, we remove the presence of grace from our attitudes. Without grace in relationships, we become a judge. This elevates our own self-opinion and prevents others from living up to our expectations. Wow! This is a trap. All traps isolate. The result of this kind of living will cause me to isolate myself and believe it is OK.

**Subtract.** It all starts with Subtraction. Subtract **words** that hurt others. Remove them from your vocabulary. If you try to add edifying words on top of hurtful words, it is like trying

to purify polluted water by adding pure water. It doesn't work. However, if you remove all pollution from the water and the vessel, then add pure water, the water remains pure. This is the principle that Paul is teaching.

**Add.** When you remove **hurtful words** that are not helpful to others, your **communication** slate becomes clean. Try this for a few weeks. Then begin adding uplifting words—words that enlarge confidence and build self-esteem. **Words** that are filled with favor that they may not yet deserve—that's what grace is.

This is an equation to release the Holy Spirit in our lives. He will not be grieved (withdrawn) by my unbecoming behavior.

Yes, this is step number one to living your life in love. There is no greater way to live. After all, that's what Christ is all about.

Now that I choose to be intentional with my words, my slip-ups are far and few between. I hope yours will be too. Have a love-filled year as you build up others, making life easier for them.

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth, but such as is good for building up as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4:29-32).

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# Men, Are You Failing Your Wives?

An epidemic afflicts our generation! Many—dare I say most—Christian men live with the burden lurking in their hearts and minds that they are failing to provide spiritual leadership for their wives. This is even true among godly Christian men who are helping others pursue **God**.

We are not initiating regular and intentional spiritual connection with our wives. Sure, we share spiritual life from time to time, but not on a regular and intentional basis. What am I talking about? Simply this: **praying** together.

Be honest. Beyond dinner prayers, bedtime prayers with children or praying at church, in a typical week, how often do you and your wife pray together? Just the two of you, I mean.

A candid answer is likely not a comfortable one. I know that because of the answers from my own life. I have also posed this question, eyeball to eyeball, with a host of Christian brothers. And I know how their answers fare.

I know you don't need any additional guilt today. Nor do I desire to load you further. It is important to recognize how we have failed because the admission can give way to the repentance of mind and heart, which can open us to viable and lasting changes. But mourning the past, or even the present, will not provide lasting motivation and change.

We need to see something ahead. And that something is an opportunity. I tell you: The opportunity is ripe for us to step into our role and see God show up in very real ways.

My hope is to share a model and call you to a challenge that is not only biblical, but also simple to embrace. It will lead you and your wife to a fresh dimension in your spiritual walk together. You will be bolstered in the storms of life. You will be equipped to provide and protect your marriage and family with confidence. It will impact your children and grandchildren. In fact, it will touch every dimension of your life.

God has brought this matter to the forefront of attention in my own life. And I thank Him for doing so. My wife thanks Him for it as well! I want to share my story so that with me, you can welcome your role with hope and resolve.

Vicki and I have been together in life for almost four decades, and sometimes it feels as if I have no idea where all those years have gone. We came to personal faith in Jesus Christ at the same time during our college days. Since then, we have journeyed the Christian life together. We desire and seek to have a Christ-centered marriage. Yet the “under construction” aspect of marriage means it is an ongoing and on-growing relationship in progress.

And so, Vicki and I ran into a bit of rough patch. A number of issues bubbled around, churning up stress and tension. When all of that ripples over into multiple areas of life, things can get pretty confusing.

I enjoy fishing and, like most fishermen, I suppose, have discovered that sometimes a poor cast will “backlash” and create a bird’s nest of tangled fishing line. If that happens, you are through fishing for a while! Untangling the wadded-up mass of line can be a time-consuming chore—and very frustrating. So one afternoon, Vicki and I realized our line had backlashed. We sat in our living room and attempted to work our way through this difficult season. We were trying to figure out just what was going on.

As we talked, something emerged from Vicki's heart, which she realized was a key part of what was unsettling for her. "You know what, Sam?" she told me. "Part of what is going on here is that ... you have failed me."

The words were far from normal for my wife to say! She got my attention. "You have failed me" was the last thing I wanted to hear from the woman I have loved for more than 40 years.

Her words did not arise from long-standing bitterness but from a realization that finally came to light for her. She went on to say that I had failed her when our oldest daughter, Christina, had wandered from the Lord into what the Bible calls the "broad way leading to destruction."

"You did not pray with me to consistently fight for her soul over those years," Vicki said. "I largely felt like I had to do it on my own."

This does not mean we never prayed together for our daughter. But it did mean that I had not provided the spiritual leadership and initiative to consistently pray with Vicki for our wayward daughter. I had neglected to intentionally and regularly lead us together with the weapon of prayer to fight for our daughter's soul. Vicki was dead right!

At the core of the rough patch was the painful reality that our girls were facing a number of serious issues in their lives. Vicki was burdened that, as their parents, she and I needed to be praying together about those matters. Reflecting upon my lack of spiritual leadership in prayer, she continued, "I am emotionally tired and worn out. I just cannot do this alone again."

But even that wasn't all. "Sam," she pleaded, "beyond praying for our daughters, the fact is I need to connect with you spiritually."

I knew immediately she was right. We needed to be sharing

spiritual life together. Sure, to a degree we were. But I would have to describe our spiritual lives as haphazardly “touching together spiritually.” We sort of “bumped along” in occasional spiritual connectedness. We would go to church regularly, pray at meals, talk about a sermon we heard, share spiritual insights and so on. But it definitely lacked intentionality and regular initiative from me. The missing piece was the consistent, intentional connection of praying together.

*This article was adapted from Just Say the Word: A Simple Way to Increase Your Passion for God and Your Wife by **Sam Ingrassia**. For more information about creating spiritual intimacy by praying with your wife, please visit .*

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## **An Open Letter to Emma Thompson, Actress and Boycotter of Israel**

Dear Ms. Thompson,

The Jan. 27 passing of Pete Seeger got me thinking about you. That may seem a little surprising; there’s no obvious connection between a banjo-strumming American folk singer and a British Oscar-winning actress. So let me explain.

The obituaries for Mr. Seeger noted that in the 1930s and 1940s, he had been a supporter of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. But in 1993, Seeger publicly apologized for, as he put it, “following the party line so slavishly, for not seeing that Stalin was a supremely cruel misleader.”

It's a shame that it wasn't until 40 years after Stalin's death that Seeger finally acknowledged the truth about his former idol. I am hoping it won't take you 40 years to acknowledge the terrible mistake you have made in publicly urging a boycott of Israelis.

You publicly called on London's Globe Theater to cancel its invitation to the Israeli theatre company Habima to take part in a Shakespeare Festival. You and your colleagues asserted that "by inviting Habima, the Globe is associating itself with the policies of exclusion practiced by the Israeli state." Allowing Israelis to perform would make the festival "complicit with human rights violations," you claimed.

I know a little something about human rights violations—such as the violation of my daughter Alisa's right to live. In 1995, Palestinian Arab terrorists associated with the Islamic Jihad movement decided to practice their brand of "exclusion" by bombing the bus on which Alisa was riding. Eight innocent people were murdered, more than 50 were injured. The U.S. State Department publicly identified five of the killers. To this day, they live freely in the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

Ms. Thompson, please understand me. I am not saying that actors should refrain from taking stands on political issues. But I am directing your attention to the fact that on so many occasions, actors and other entertainers who have injected themselves into public controversies have ultimately proven to be badly mistaken, as the case of Pete Seeger demonstrates.

Many prominent Hollywood figures took part in the 1950s McCarthyite witch-hunts. They said they were defending American culture against radicals. But they didn't mind slandering innocent people in the process.

Harry Belafonte is a wonderful entertainer. But his support for Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez

was reprehensible. And his racially charged attacks on African-American Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice were vile.

Sean Penn is a talented actor. But his embrace of Saddam Hussein was disgraceful. Whatever one thinks of the Iraq war in retrospect, who can deny that the world is better off without Saddam?

When we look at the brutal dictatorship that rules Vietnam today, when we think about the countless innocents slaughtered by that regime, it is impossible not to resent Jane Fonda's support for the Vietcong. At least the folksinger Joan Baez, who once vocally supported the North Vietnamese, eventually had the decency to repudiate them—but, once again, only after it was much too late.

That, Ms. Thompson, is what I fear will happen to you if you throw in your lot with the haters and boycotters of Israel. The radical chic that is so appealing to you today will be revealed as a horrible mistake soon enough. You will, eventually, recognize the true nature of the tyrants and terrorists of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. But how much must Israel suffer until you, like Pete Seeger and Joan Baez, finally stop romanticizing dictators?

Yes, there are evil regimes that deserve to be boycotted. The apartheid regime of South Africa deserved it. So do the terrorists who rule Gaza. But democratic, peaceful, egalitarian Israel does not.

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For the original article, visit .

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# 5 Ways to Turn Up the Heat in Your Marriage

It is bad enough that the temperatures are below freezing outside, but when your marriage is cold, you have a much bigger problem. Don't let your marriage grow cold; turn up the heat and bring back the romance.

Below are five ways to make your marriage hot:

- 1. Check the thermostat.** Recognize the temperature of your marriage, but don't focus only on the bad parts. Think about the good things in your marriage, and make that your focus.
- 2. Slow down.** During the cold seasons, things seem to slow down. Do the same thing with your marriage. Slow down and look for ways to spend more time together.
- 3. Light a fire.** There is nothing that changes the dynamic of your relationship like prayer. When prayer is absent, you don't love as well. When prayer is present, you love one another well. Light a fire with the power of prayer in your marriage. If you don't know what to pray, here are "10 Things to Pray for Your Marriage."
- 4. Speak your wife's (love) language.** Communication is important in your marriage. But sometimes you are communicating in different languages. Find out what your wife's love language is, and speak it regularly.
- 5. Cozy up with one another.** Once you start speaking love to her in the form of her love language, it is time to heat it up. Get as close to one another as you possibly can. Spend quiet and intimate time together, without the kids.

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

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# What to Do When People Reject Your Prophetic Gift

There are two sides to **prophecy**: the one who delivers the word and the one who receives it. Last week we talked about receiving personal prophecies that just don't make any sense at all to the natural mind—or even necessarily bear witness with your spirit. Indeed, some **prophetic** promises are so exceedingly, abundantly above all you could ask or think that it's tempting to dismiss them without even **praying** it through.

Now, let's flip things around. Have you ever delivered a **prophecy** that someone flat-out refused to receive even though you were convinced it was from God? The **prophecy** was pure. It didn't breed fear, seek to control or violate Scripture. The **prophecy** exalted Jesus and was delivered in a spirit of **humility**. Nevertheless, it wasn't received—and maybe you were even harshly criticized or labeled a **false prophet** for delivering it.

I'll repeat what I said last week: I believe in **judging prophecy** before receiving it as Holy Spirit-inspired truth, but as I explain in my book *Did the Spirit of God Say That?* **judging prophecy** isn't always an exact science. That means you could be delivering a perfectly accurate **prophetic word** that's perfectly passed over as false. What's a **prophet** to do?

## **Don't Get a Rejection Complex**

Don't take the rejection personally. If you are delivering a true word from the Lord, the people aren't rejecting you. They

are rejecting the word of the Lord. That was the case with Samuel. Consider Samuel's **prophetic** reputation: "So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam. 3:19-20).

Nevertheless, Saul did not receive Samuel's **prophetic word**. Samuel told Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey'" (1 Sam. 15:1-3).

Again, Saul did not receive Samuel's **prophetic word**. Not because it was false. Not because it bred fear. Not because it was seeking to control. But because Saul was self-willed. Saul fulfilled part of the **prophecy**. He waged war against the Amalekites, but he did not utterly destroy everything. Saul "spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed" (v. 9).

### **Rejecting the Word of the Lord**

Not only that, Saul actually set up a monument for himself before declaring he had performed the commandment of the Lord. Samuel rebuked him, noting, "You have rejected the **word of the Lord**, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel" (v. 26).

Now, let's be clear. I'm not giving you license to rebuke people who don't receive the **prophetic words** you deliver. I am demonstrating that it wasn't the **prophet** Samuel that Saul

rejected—it was the **word of the Lord**. And there's always a price to pay for rejecting the word of the Lord, when you know that you know that you know that God has give you a **prophetic word** for someone—and you know, too, that He wants you to actually deliver it, speak it forth boldly with humility, not fearing the consequences, not fearing rejection.

And if the person rejects the word—or rejects you—don't respond in kind. Instead, go into **intercession** for them. This is the spirit of a true **prophet**: “Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul” (v. 34-35). True prophets have a mercy gift and are intercessors. When folks reject the **prophetic word** you deliver, remember Samuel. Amen.

**You can download a sample chapter of Jennifer's new book, *The Making of a Prophet*, by clicking here.**

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## **6 Attributes of Living by Faith**

Would you characterize your life as one lived by faith? I believe there are six attributes of a person who lives by faith.

**Attribute #1: Live by the Word**

Do you believe perception is reality? Perception is not always reality. You might perceive that a product you buy will do what it says it claims to do, only to discover it falls short. Sometimes we perceive things about God based on our experience versus what the Bible really says. The apostle Paul exhorts us to live by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Hebrews 11:1 tells us, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (NKJV).

God told Joshua to walk around the city seven times by faith, not by his logic or reasoning. He had to live by the word from God, not his perception of how illogical the command might have been for him and his troops. The Bible talks about obedience being better than sacrifice. So, live in the Word and obey His Word, no matter what the perception is that says it might not be logical.

### **Attribute #2: Count Things as Though They Have Already Happened**

The Bible tells us that faith is living as though the goal has already been achieved:

"As it is written, 'I have made you a father of many nations' in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom. 4:17).

We believe in the covenant promises of God in the Spirit dimension—awaiting the manifestation in the physical. We must claim His promises for our situations. Once we know it is God's will, we pray in the authority He has given each believer in Jesus Christ. We don't have faith in faith; we have faith in God and His promises.

### **Attribute #3: Obey God in the Small Things**

God always entrusts you with a small thing before He entrusts you with a larger thing. Abraham was told simply to go without

knowing where he was going. He had to trust God with the outcome of that decision:

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Heb 11:8).

I was once invited to speak to less than 10 people in Barbados. I wrestled with God over the logic of that invitation and the meeting. Once I obeyed, God opened many new and greater opportunities as a result of that obedience.

#### **Attribute #4: Think Right**

Sometimes we suffer from bad thinking. We mix the world's value system in with God's. “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). Negative thinking produces negative outcomes.

Fear can drive us to negative outcomes in life. It is a form of negative faith: “For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes” (Job 3:25-26).

If you are trying to kick a bad habit, don't try to avoid the bad habit. Think on what kind of behavior you want to have that will replace the bad habit. Think about filling the cup up; don't focus on what is not in the cup:

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

#### **Attribute #5: There Is Power in the Tongue**

God created the world by speaking it into existence. Gen 1:1-9 says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. *And God said*, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. *And God called* the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. *And God said*, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. *And God made* the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. *And God called* the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. *And God said*, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so" (KJV, emphasis added).

We learn in Hebrews 11:3 that "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (NKJV).

Can you see that God spoke things into existence—that there is power in our words?

Proverbs 18:21 tell us, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Your audible words do carry power. God spoke the world into existence. Jesus spoke to the fig tree.

Jesus tells us to speak to the mountain: "So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them'" (Mark 11:22-24).

One time God spoke to me on a Saturday morning a few months after I published a book. We had very limited sales. The words that came to me as I woke were, "Speak to your mountain of books!"

I went downstairs and laid my hands on my mountain of books and said, "In the name of Jesus, get out of my basement! Go be a blessing to someone who needs to read these books." That Saturday afternoon a ministry in Dallas, Texas, called me and ordered 300 books! I had no prior relationship with the group and it was a Saturday!

### **Attribute #6: Claim Covenant Promises—Use the Keys You Have Been Given**

"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

There are 7,500 covenant promises in the Bible that represent the currency of your faith. A covenant promise reveals what you know is God's will, but you must pray it into existence. God's covenant promises are His currency for manifesting His will upon the earth. God has given us the power of attorney spiritually on the earth to bring heaven on earth in the area of our calling.

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# Woman Who Lost 250 Pounds Shares Why Diets Don't Work

"Meet a woman who lost 250 pounds by giving up all the **diets**," read the promo for my first television interview centered around my memoir, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying To Earn God's Favor*.

It's true. I don't consider what I do as dieting. **Diets** never work. The way we use the term diet in our culture means it is a short-term, highly restricted way of eating. It's not something we intend to continue for the rest of our lives.

It'll just be until we lose 20 or 40 or 100 pounds and then we will go back to the way we've always been eating.

I know this all too well. I once weighed 430 pounds, but I was a really successful dieter. I lost 100s of pounds through the years going on every diet imaginable. And they all worked until I started eating foods containing processed sugar and flour again. Then I'd gain the weight back plus more.

I had an idea of what I needed to do to lose weight. When I'd pray about it and ask God to help me with this "mountain of flesh," He'd always give me the same plan. Stop eating sugar. Eat more lean meat, fruits and vegetables and eat less bread.

I never thought I could do the first step and stop eating bread so I'd search for the latest weight loss pill or supplement or go on another diet. I'd vow this time to make it work. However, they were just words.

A goal was always motivational for me because the reward after losing 100 pounds was to go back to eating whatever I wanted. It took no time at all to regain the weight plus more.

After being told I would die in five years if I didn't lose

weight, I eventually had a gastric bypass. I lost weight but I was angry that I couldn't eat what I wanted. After a little over a year I found I could eat sugar again and so I started gaining weight again. Once again I found myself in morbid obesity headed back towards my highest weight.

This was more distressing now. I'm greatly altered my body. I'd tried the last magic known to man. I did not want to live this way and yet I couldn't seem to stop eating.

The aha moment came when it hit me after hearing a 25-year sober alcoholic talk about how to get free of alcohol he had to stop drinking alcohol. "Alcohol is essentially liquid sugar," he said. This may seem like a duh moment to you, but for me it was monumental.

I never drank alcohol and never wanted to be an alcoholic. Now if what I was hearing was true, I was the same as an alcoholic only I was a sugar-holic. Since the meeting was a harmful life patterns group, open to those with all addictions, I asked the question, "Could a person be addicted to sugar."

The presenter said he wasn't sure of the mechanics of it, but a person could be addicted to anything they feel they can't live without. I always said, "I could never live without sugar." I knew in my heart I was addicted to sugar.

I began the journey by stopping my trigger food, which was candy, and then making the switch to giving up processed sugar. I substituted fruit in it's place. Yet fruit has fructose, but it is much healthier than processed sugar because of the water and fiber content.

After giving up processed sugar, I learned how items made with processed wheat flour turn into sugar in the body. I gave up white and then wheat flour and finally all items with gluten.

It's been a journey for sure. Altogether I've lost over 250 pounds from my highest weight.

Giving up what you crave sounds difficult at first, but when you set your mind to do what's right for your life for the rest of your life, you will find God's power is available to help you through. He won't do it for you, but He will provide power to propel you forward.

The difference about the way I eat now is I've switched the way I look at food. I will continue to eat this way for the rest of my life. I am eating for my health, not just for weight loss. If I never lose another pound I will continue to eat this way. I feel better than I ever have.

I'm hearing more about the addictive qualities of processed sugar and flour these days. I'm glad.

However, I hate to hear supposed weight loss experts tell people they can eat whatever they want and lose weight. This may be true of people who have small amounts of weight to lose.

After being morbidly obese most of my life and knowing many who have not been able to kick this problem, even with gastric bypass surgery, I'm sure the majority of the obesity issue has to do with processed sugar.

Making that lifestyle change and sticking to it will make a major difference in anyone's health.

How to make a lifestyle change.

1. Know Your Why: Why do you want to be healthy? Why do you want to live? It has to be more important than eating your favorite dessert.

2. Know Your Dreams: What are the things you dream of doing that you can't do now.

3. Know your trigger foods: What are the things you crave and want constantly. Clean your house of these things and tell yourself what you can eat instead. Drink more water. Many

times you are hungry instead of thirsty. Have some go-to snack foods, fruits, vegetables and protein that are easy to take with you and easy to snack on. Make sure you have plenty of lean protein throughout your day.

4. Know your emotions: When do you eat? Is it when you are happy, sad, bored, lonely, depressed, overwhelmed, tired? Write out solutions to what you can do to address each of these instead of eating.

5. Know your mindset: Your mindset is health. Know what takes you away from health. Know what you need to do to stay on track. Write out solutions to those things. Keep them handy. Refer to them often.

6. Know your temptations: What situations are most tempting? Is it parties at work, holidays, watching TV? Think through each of these. If you mess up, get right back on track.

7. Know your Higher Power: I make no bones about saying my Higher Power is God. Connect with Him. Ask Him to remind you of your goals, to encourage you and support you. Know that He wants you healthy to complete your assignment on the earth today.

That's it in a nutshell. Now go out and change your life.

What part of changing your life do you think will be most difficult?

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# Washington's Topsy-Turvy Rhetoric Escalates the War on Faith

A favorite tactic of this administration is to engage in outrageous behavior and then—with the support of its allies—put its opponents on the defensive by accusing them of engaging in the conduct of which it is, in fact, guilty.

So, for example, the administration takes far-out positions on social issues—then labels as extreme anyone who stands up for mainstream values. The White House promotes monetary policies that destroy jobs—and then attacks the business community for driving income inequality.

The latest example of this jujitsu maneuver involves the Health and Human Services contraceptive mandate under the Affordable Care Act. The mandate tramples on the religious freedom of religiously affiliated organizations like the Little Sisters of the Poor and model employers like Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood by attempting to force them, under the threat of crippling IRS fines, to participate in the provision of potentially life-terminating drugs that violate their deeply held religious beliefs.

Yet several opinion pieces over recent weeks (most notably a jeremiad by Harvard Law professor Noah Feldman) have—incredibly—charged these entities with discriminating against workers on religious grounds based on the legal challenges of the regulation.

Feldman provides absolutely no basis in fact or argument for his bald statement that companies, in particular, are “religious discriminators.” That’s because there is none.

The absurdity of the discrimination accusation is evident. The

Little Sisters devote their lives to provide nursing, assisted living and hospice services to the low-income elderly, accepting all comers with no hint of prejudice. As one of them puts it, the order cares “for the neediest elderly of all faiths and cultures. Not because they are Catholic, but because we are.”

The owners of Hobby Lobby, David and Barbara Green, their children and their grandchildren, are committed—in writing and in their actions—to living out their faith in all aspects of their family business. That commitment includes generous treatment of their nearly 28,000 employees.

The Greens offer pay far above the minimum wage as well as a free health care clinic to employees on their main campus in Oklahoma City, Okla. Hobby Lobby stores also keep shorter hours than most retailers and are closed on Sundays so that employees can have a better work-life balance and more time with their families.

Moreover, of the 20 FDA-approved contraceptives that are part of the mandate, the Greens only object to four with the potential to terminate life—they willingly provide the other 16 as part of a robust health care plan, and employees are free to purchase any drugs or devices they choose to on their own.

If that’s discrimination, it’s the kind millions of lonely and destitute older Americans and unemployed or underpaid workers would love to be subjected to. But those of us who have dealt with true bias know that it is nothing of the sort.

Rather, this harsh rhetoric is part of an escalation of the war on faith waged by this administration. The White House is unleashing not only the full force of government but also an all-out intimidation campaign to drive the free exercise of faith from everyday life and the marketplace of ideas and into the confines of churches, mosques and synagogues for one day a

week.

This attack campaign has included one of the highest officials in the White House going to the blogosphere to call out Hobby Lobby by name for daring, as a for-profit corporation, to assert its First Amendment rights.

The reason? The Washington ruling class understands that the exercise of religion as a living, breathing, 24/7 reality—as opposed to once-a-week worship—is perhaps the most significant threat to the expansion of government and its spreading control over our lives. Government’s intimidation of competing institutions therefore necessitates an assault on their values as well.

Hobby Lobby and the Little Sisters, both represented by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, have recently won important skirmishes in this ongoing war. The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear the company’s case (along with Conestoga Wood), and it also granted the Little Sisters protection against the crushing IRS-imposed fines with the grant of an injunction.

But these victories are far from final. The administration has made it clear that it will use every means at its disposal to prevail over the long haul—including bullying nuns and believing family business owners, both deploying the levers of power housed in the Department of Justice and via its prodigious megaphone.

To preserve our first freedom, people of faith of all stripes must demonstrate their determination to go to the same lengths. And that starts with blowing the whistle on the topsy-turvy rhetoric in Washington.

**Ken Blackwell** *is senior fellow of family empowerment at Family Research Council. This article appeared in The Hill Wednesday.*

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# Was This Gay-Confronting Pastor Purely Hateful or Lovingly Biblical?

It's one thing to take a stand for **righteousness**. It's another thing to publicly shame a homosexual who is seeking God in **church**.

David Slutterback, pastor of Ambassador's Bible Chapel in Pennsylvania, reportedly did the latter when he told the congregation he revoked a young man's membership—because he's gay.

Bobbie Pierce, a 20-year-old gay man who says he attended the church for years and was even baptized there, claims the church condemned him and denied him Communion. He posted a copy of a disciplinary letter on the *York Daily Record's* Facebook page to prove his point.

Of course, there are always two sides to the story. The key is to be on God's side.

According to the paper, Slutterback says he and the other **church** elders want Pierce to repent for practicing the sin of homosexuality and to return to fellowship at the church. The pastor says Pierce is still welcome to attend as long as he does not cause division or speak contrary to Scripture but that he cannot be a member while living in unrepentant sin.

"We're accused of hate, Bobbie has accused us of hate," Slutterback told the paper. "I think Bobbie's action [of talking to the *York Daily Record*] is an action of hate. ... We placed Bobbie under **church** discipline out of love for Bobbie

and regard for his soul.”

Slautterback and Pierce are wielding a two-edged sword against one another—with different interpretations of Scripture. Pierce insists he did not choose to be gay and that the **Bible** does not condemn his lifestyle. “Homosexuality isn’t a sin,” he says. “It isn’t a choice.”

Slautterback fired back with the typical Scriptures condemning homosexuality and argued, “I do not believe that a homosexual person has to be homosexual any more than I believe that a person who is inclined to steal steals.”

So here’s the question: Was this gay-confronting pastor purely hateful or lovingly biblical? What would the apostle Paul do in a situation of **sexual immorality** when one who claims Christ as Lord and Savior refuses to repent? Does the 1 Corinthians 5 guideline apply to homosexuality as well as other instances of sexual immorality? In Paul’s words:

“It is actually reported that there is **sexual immorality** among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:1-5).

Should the church accept gay members who actively embrace and practice a **homosexual** lifestyle? Or are pastors aligning with Scripture by disciplining members who come out as gay or live in any other manifestation of sexual immorality? Should the church accept openly gay members and allow them to serve in

the ministry? Or is that condoning immorality? Again, was this gay-confronting pastor purely hateful or lovingly biblical “out of love for Bobbie and regard for his soul”? What would the apostle Paul have done? What does the Bible really say?

Sound off.

**Jennifer LeClaire** is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including *The Making of a Prophet*. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.

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## **Joe Biden Sees No Reason Not to Run for President**

Vice President Joe Biden said he will decide by the summer of 2015 if he will make a third run for the U.S. presidency.

“There may be reasons I don’t run but there’s no obvious reason for me why I think I should not run,” Biden said in an interview aired on Friday on CNN’s *New Day* program.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is the early front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, with a 61 percentage point lead over Biden in a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll last month. Clinton has not announced if she will run.

Biden, 71, who represented Delaware in the Senate for 36 years before becoming vice president in 2009, first sought the Democratic nomination in 1988 but left the race amid accusations he plagiarized a speech by a British

parliamentarian.

He ran again in 2008 but dropped out in January of that year and took the No. 2 spot on the ticket with eventual winner Barack Obama.

Asked in the CNN interview when he would made a decision on a 2016 campaign, Biden said, "Realistically, a year this summer."

"For me, the decision to run or not run is going to be determined by me as to whether I am the best qualified person to focus on the two things I've spent my whole life on—giving ordinary people a fighting chance to make it and a sound foreign policy that's based on rational interests of the United States," he said.

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*Reporting by Bill Trott; Editing by Sofina Mirza-Reid*

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