

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

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WE MUST SAVE MEN

By Melvin L. Latimer

The U.S. Bureau of Prisons just recently reported that there are nearly 2 million (over 1 million are African American men) incarcerated in our federal and state prisons/jails in the U.S. alone. That represents an alarming 2.4% of all men in the U.S. and 6% of all African American males in the U.S.

Most of the damage committed in society is widely contributed to by men.

- 91% of drunk drivers – men
- 90% of parental abuse – men
- 80% of suicide deaths – men
- Boys between the ages 10-18 are 4 to 5 times more likely to commit suicide than girls – future men
- Men are increasingly isolated from their homes due to work or divorce
- Over 60% of high school drop-outs are boys – future men
- 80% serious drug addictions – men
- 80% of America's homeless and 35% of those Vietnam Veterans – men
- Men are 43 times more likely than women to be admitted to psychiatric hospitals and 25 times as likely to end up in prison.
- Nearly 80% of all homicide victims – men
- 50% of domestic homicides committed against – men

Life expectancy for men is 7 years less than the life expectancy for a women.

Consequently, what a man does or does not do in his relationship with his family can affect up to four generations, this being the determining factor in the make-up of ones' family tree. The problem in our society is the state of our men! We spend hundreds of millions of dollars to save our

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water-friendly pals, air-abiding creatures, and our rain forests, but sadly we do very little when it comes to saving the world's greatest commodity – men. Tragically, men are slowly becoming endangered species. If we are going to bring about change in America then we must save men.

In closing, I challenge every religious, federal and state leader to pour all necessary resources to save our men. If we do not save men, America has very little chance of survival in this new millennium.

God help save men!

Made For Success Dare to Dream Again

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.”

Teddy Roosevelt

Do you remember when you were a child and no dream seemed too big? Some of us thought we would walk on the moon; some dreamed of riding with Roy Rogers; others imagined stepping to the plate in a big-league game. Every one of us, when we were young, had a common trait – we were dreamers. The world hadn't gotten to us yet to show us that we couldn't possibly achieve what our hearts longed for. And we were yet still

years from realizing that in some cases we weren't built for achieving our dream (I realized about my junior year of high school that I was too short and too slow to play professional basketball. The dreamer is always the last to know).

Eventually we started to let our dreams die. People began to tell us that we couldn't do the things we wanted. It was impossible. Responsible people don't pursue their dreams. Settle down, get a job, be dependable. Take care of business, live the mundane, be content. Don't believe what people tell you.

It is time to dream again!
Why? Here are just a few reasons:

Avoiding regret. The facts are in, and someday we will all look back through the history of our lives. We will undoubtedly think about what we wished we had done or accomplished. I for one don't want to regret what could have been, what should have been. So I am deciding today to pursue my dreams.

Making the world a better place. All of the great accomplishments that have ever happened began with a person who had a dream. Somebody rebuffed the nay-sayers and said to themselves, “This can be done, and I am the one who will do it.” And in many instances they changed the world for the better. It isn't just the Martin Luther King's and the J.F.K's either. Think of all the people we have never heard of who have started things large and small that help people world-wide every day.

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The world needs people like you to dream of something great and then to pursue it with all your heart. Maybe you belong to a business, school, or organization that started out with good intentions but has settled into the same ol' same ol'. Shake them up and remind them of how they could really help people if only they would dream!

Personal and family fulfillment. One of the things that happens when we stop pursuing our dreams is that a little piece of us dies and we become disheartened, if only in that area of our lives. Stepping up and pursuing your dream rekindles that passion and zeal that everyone has the capacity for and lets us experience fulfillment. Having a purpose puts the zip in our step and the zing in our emotions!

Leaving a legacy. How will your children remember you? As one who sought all that life had to offer, using your gifts and talents to their fullest extent, leading the family with a zest for life, or as an overweight couch potato who could have been? Our children need to see that we dream; that we search for something better. They in turn will do the same!

So where do we start? Here are some ideas:

Reconnect with your dream. Set aside some time to let yourself dream. What have you placed on the backburner in order to live the status quo? Settle on one or two dreams that you can and will pursue. Don't come up with too many. That will only deter you further.

Decide that you will do it. This may seem elementary but many people never decide and commit fully to their dream. They simply keep "thinking" about it.

Tell others that you are going to do it. This puts you on the record as to what you are dreaming about. It makes you accountable. It will help you do it if for no other reason than to avoid embarrassment!

Develop a step-by-step plan. This is absolutely essential. You must sit down and write out a few things:

1. A timeline. How long will it take to the end?
2. Action steps. Point-by-point what you will do and when you will do them.
3. Resources you will need to draw from. What will it take? Who will need to be involved for help or advice?
4. An evaluation tool. You need to evaluate from time to time whether you are progressing or not.
5. A celebration. Yep, when you are done you should already have planned what you will do to celebrate.

I have found that there is no better time than now. So, set aside some time today to get started on your dream. Follow the action plan and set your sights for the top of the mountain! You will be glad you did!

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His Needs, Her Needs – Understanding Your Difference

Men are not all that complex in their needs, but those needs are very intense. A man has a need for:

- Faithfulness; knowledge that the women he loves will never sell him out.
- Support and submission: assurance that his wife will follow his lead without questioning every decision he makes, especially in crises.
- Encouragement: sympathy, faith support, and understanding – in good times, but even more in bad times.
- Importance: status and value in giving advice in making plans.
- Respect: feeling that he is held in high esteem, privately and publicly.
- A completer: someone to give him input for his decisions, quiet admonishment about his flesh patterns, and spiritual and moral support.
- A partner: someone with whom to share all his life, for life.

Women are more complex. Their needs and desires are numerous, but fluctuate. A woman has a need for:

- Better listening from her husband: interactive, empathetic communication.
- Having her “petty” problems taken seriously: for discussion of (and sometimes help in solving) difficulties.
- More regular and more open communication: obvious attentiveness and interest, both on facts and feelings levels.

- Attention besides when he wants sex: feeling that she’s a love partner, not just a love object or tool.
- Appreciation: thanks and gratitude for all she does.
- A real (or apparent) interest in her life: curiosity about her day, beliefs, dreams.
- Demonstrated affection and courtesy in front of others: enjoyment of and pride in being seen with her.
- Being a part of her husband’s life: by sharing goals and values with her, talking over business, etc.
- Little remembrances; notes, gifts, or special plans that say, “I love you.”
- Quality time away from the kids: whether a weekend away or a drive around the block.
- Inclusion in things he does: companionship in events or wanting her involvement when he’s away.
- Her husband’s involvement in things she enjoys: willingness to indulge, if not share, her favorite pleasures.
- Understanding: trying to comprehend using intuition and logic.
- Closeness: holding her in his arms, for protecting her.
- Tenderness: use of kind words and sensitive tones.
- Help with the children: in discipline, in training, in presenting a united front.
- Verbal expressions of caring: compliments, praise, affirmation.
- Acceptance of who she is as she is: permission to be imperfect, affirmation of her appearance, character, achievements.
- More family time: everyday attention, regular outings, and vacations.

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- Desirability: feeling like a special and feminine woman.

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Don't Gamble with Your Life

Gambling has become as pervasive in our society as weeds that have overtaken a garden. No longer confined to casinos in Las Vegas or Atlantic City, gambling has sprouted up on the Internet, in convenience stores, and even at social events sponsored by companies, schools and civic organizations.

Most people would probably agree that gambling becomes a problem when people use their grocery money to feed slot machines instead of themselves or wager against their savings accounts at blackjack tables. But what about occasionally buying a lottery ticket or betting on the outcome of a football game? Those seemingly innocent forays into gambling can also bring you pain.

Here are some ways you can break gambling's destructive power:

- Consider the many ways gambling harms people – not just by wasting their money, but also by alienating them from friends and family, exhausting them emotionally and distorting their perspectives on reality. Gambling can also lead to compulsions that fuel a host of other problems, such as drinking, smoking, sexual promiscuity and crime.
- Think about what needs and desires you may be attempting to meet through gambling. No matter what you're seeking, gambling won't deliver for you – only God will. If you're seeking thrills, try worshipping God. There's no greater thrill than encountering Him through the Holy Spirit. If you're looking for security, ask God to provide, trust Him, and experience His blessings. God – the ultimate source of everything you need – is truly reliable (unlike gambling). If you're seeking affirmation, you'll find it not by trying to compete against others, but by serving others and enjoying their fellowship, as you can through joining a church family.
- Realize that all forms of gambling encourage you to seek control through money rather than seeking God's guidance and power for your life. Even if you gamble just once in a while, you're not fully trusting God, and you're blocking some of His blessings.
- Evaluate how and why you're gambling. Confess your gambling and ask the Holy Spirit to renew your spirit so you'll have the grace you need to stop. Ask God to give you a vision of how your life would improve if you stopped gambling.
- Join a group of people who are also trying to stop gambling. They can provide vital support, accountability, encouragement and prayers.
- If gambling has devastated your finances, seek counseling from a financial advisor, such as a volunteer from your local branch of the

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Consumer Credit Counseling Service. You may even want to temporarily transfer control of your money to someone you trust to be responsible with it until you feel confident enough to regain control of it.

- Keep track of how much time you spend thinking about gambling, and record your thoughts. Spend at least as much time thinking about God, and pray specifically about each thought related to gambling.
- Stay focused on the hope that God offers you – real, living hope that will help you through each part of the process of breaking gambling’s power in your life. Relinquish control of your life to God bit by bit, as you can. Be patient and courageous as you anticipate and experience God’s transforming power in your life.

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Making Your Wife Feel Important

By Dr. Gary Smalley

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up to her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word...” Ephesians 5:25, 26

Sandy was so sexually responsive to her husband, Rick, one afternoon that he was stunned and surprised by her

excitement. How did Rick motivate her? With one very simple statement. He was getting ready for work that morning, running a little late, when he heard Sandy complaining of a growing neckache.

“Let me rub your neck,” he offered.

“No, you don’t have time,” she replied. “You’ve got to get to work.”

His usual response would have been, “Yeah, you’re right. I don’t want to be late. But I hope you feel better. Take an aspirin.”

On this particular morning, he said, “I tell you what. I’d rather be with you any day. Let me rub your neck.” As he gently massaged her tender muscles, he continued, “Work can wait. . . You’re more important to me.” She was so thrilled with his attitude and so encouraged by his sensitivity and gentleness that she could hardly resist giving herself to him in every way.

We men are not aware of the effect we have on our wives by being gentle and tender, showing our unshakable devotion.

Do you want a more enjoyable marriage? It’s possible, and it all starts by loving your wife more than any other person or activity.

Here are a few questions you can ask your wife to open up a discussion concerning her real feelings about the place she shares in your life:

1. Do you feel you are the most important person in my life?

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2. Are there any activities in my life you feel are more important to me than you are?
3. Are there any special ways you believe I could better communicate how important you are to me?

The more you do to build a valuable, healthy relationship, the better you'll feel about your marriage. If you change any of your activities because you want to enrich your relationship, at first you may feel you're giving up your favorite pastime. But in the long run, you'll not only gain a better marriage, but a greater freedom to enjoy other areas of life. Today, I wouldn't trade my deep friendship with Norma for anything on this earth. I am finding that the more important a man's wife is to him, the more she encourages him to enjoy life.

Use failures as opportunities to grow

Failure hurts. Whether it's something as big as losing a relationship or a job because of your mistakes or simply saying something embarrassing in a conversation, failure can easily leave you feeling hopeless.

But from God's perspective, there's always hope after failure. Even when you fail by the world's standards, you can be a success in God's eyes. He can powerfully transform your life no matter what has happened, and sometimes failures are especially good times for God to work in your life. Here are some ways you can use failures as opportunities to grow:

- Live to please God, not other people. God's opinion is the only one that ultimately matters.
- Realize that if you're faithfully doing what God wants you to do – even if you're not accomplishing much right now – He considers you as success because you're faithful.
- Don't let failure shock you; no one is immune to it. Failure is a normal part of life when you take risks in order to grow. Admit your failures, and accept them.
- Rather than dwelling on feelings of guilt and shame, confess your mistakes to God and ask Him to forgive you. Accept the unconditional love that God always offers you, as well as the grace He gives you to grow.
- Never give up! Don't ever let failure keep you from trying new things.
- Understand that God may or may not choose to let you know why an effort of yours has failed. But rather than focusing on what you see as unfair circumstances, focus on God's character. Know that He will always act in your best interests, and trust Him to lead you through each day in love.
- Before undertaking a new endeavor, pray about God's will. Do you have a sense of peace that God is genuinely leading you to pursue it? Have you actively listened to the Holy Spirit's voice?
- Assess your motives when you consider pursuing a new endeavor. Honestly determine whether you're motivated to pursue it out of love for God, or because you expect or hope to receive some type of personal gain. If your effort doesn't result in personal gain, would you consider that effort a failure? Strive to be a servant; if you do, every effort you invest in will be successful in God's eyes.
- Think about how a particular failure can help you understand yourself

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better than before, and push you closer to Christ than you had been before failing. Ask God what He wants you to learn from the failure.

- Don't isolate yourself from others after you've failed. Embrace comfort and encouragement from people who care about you.
- When failure has left you feeling gloomy, remember some recent times when you celebrated God's work in your life. Realize that failure is only temporary. Know that because of Christ's resurrection, you have a living hope from which you can draw your strength in the future.

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Are You A Man of Prayer?

By: Jim Clayton

"The sheep are never so safe from the wolf as when they are near the shepherd." – Charles Spurgeon

Fast Facts: Although 90% of Americans say they pray (60% say they pray every day), the ways they pray vary significantly, according to pollster George Barna. Two out of three unchurched Americans (63%) pray regularly, but only one out of three (34%) is sure that praying makes any difference. In contrast, nearly 70% of the "born-again" respondents think God personally responds to their prayers.

Among those who pray:

- 95% express gratitude to God
- 75% ask God to forgive particular sins

- 61% make specific requests of God
- 12% pray in tongues

- National & International Religion Report

How is your prayer life? If you are like most of us, it has seasons, and sometimes lacks consistency. I cannot think of anything more important than intimacy with our Heavenly Father. "It is good to be near God." (Psalm 73:28) Nearly fourteen hundred verses in the Bible talk about prayer. A rich and fulfilling prayer life is essential to our spiritual growth.

This is not a "how to" on prayer. These are simply some ideas that have benefitted me in my time with God. I encourage you to give them a try to see which ones work for you.

1. Find Your Ideal Time. Are you a morning person or a night person? When you are most alert? *"Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray."* (1 Peter 4:7) Identify your "optimal prayer time." How many times have you fallen asleep while praying? For me, morning works out best. It is a great way to start the day. I get up earlier now than I ever imagined, and I am not even a morning person! **Make it a regular part of your schedule – and stick with it!** *"Be faithful in prayer."* (Romans 12:12) Pencil it in your planner if you must. Why is it when we get busy our time with God is often the first thing to go? **Make it a priority!** Even a few minutes each day. **If you are not a consistent pray-er, here is an experiment:** For thirty days, set aside a few minutes each day for a regular time with God. Give it a try and see what happens. It will make a difference!

2. **Isolate Yourself Somewhere**

Private, Quiet and without

Distractions. *“But when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father.”* (Matthew 6:6) This will be your “refuge,” your place of retreat. Stay out of the bed! This is not nap time. I have a desk set up specially for this purpose, so I am always ready. I turn off the furnace or air conditioner, and close the door to get it really quite. **How else will you hear that “still, small voice?”** Naturally, you can pray anywhere, such as in the car, at work or around the house. However, true “quite time” is the key to a powerful, effective prayer life.

3. **Be Quiet and Listen.** *“Be still and know that I am God.”* (Psalm 46:10)

Contemplate His presence. Take a moment to realize that Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, is waiting to hear from you! *“God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.”* (Psalm 66:19) Anyone who knows me will tell you I like to talk, especially about God. So you can imagine what it is like when I talk to God. He patiently listens to my prayers, and waits for His chance to speak. Finally, as I wind down my prayer time, He gets ready to share some wisdom or guidance with me (which I just requested). Then I say “Amen,” and I am done. “Jim,” He says to Himself, “I have so much to share with you, if you would only listen.” **Let God speak to you.** While you are praying, pause, be quiet and allow Him to respond. Many times you will not get an answer, but sometimes you will. You must learn to discern His voice. It may be a thought or a feeling, but you will sense His leading. *“Listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God.”* (Exodus 15:26)

4. **Talk with Your Best Friend.** Be yourself. Remember you are relating to a real Person. Do not be formal or ritualistic. A friend once explained how she talks with God in a casual, friendly way, and encouraged me to try it. I had always prayed something like “Thanks Lord, forgive me Lord, I want this and I want that.” It was quick, and always the same, except my wish list at the end. Having a casual conversation with God was foreign to me. It was awkward at first, but it quickly became natural and rewarding. I just realize Jesus is there with me and talk to Him. This has had a tremendous impact on my spiritual growth. It has given me an incredible intimacy with God, and I am much more aware of His presence. He is your best friend. **You can share anything with Him!** Are you angry? Tell Him. If you do not feel close to Him, say so. Laugh, cry or scream if you need to; He is there for you.

5. **Talk with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.** When you pray, to whom are you praying? Speak to all three members of the Trinity. Tell God you want to be His man. Tell Jesus you want to be more like Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with God’s power. Ask Him to open your spiritual eyes to see and your spiritual ears to hear what God is saying.

6. **Pray with A.C.T.S.** – A.C.T.S. is an easy way to remember key elements of prayer. My prayer time has improved dramatically since I started using it. It’s simply prayer in four parts:

Adoration – *“Praise be to God!”* (Psalm 68:35) Tell God how much you appreciate Him. Express your love for Him. Praise His power and majesty. This is a great way to begin your prayer time. Sometimes I watch the sun rise, and praise God for

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the beauty of His creation. You should never run out of praise. *“How awesome are your deeds!”* (Psalm 66:3)

Confession – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9) Tell Him where you have fallen short. Be specific. I thank Him for the forgiveness I have in Christ, and ask for help and strength to turn away from future temptations.

Thanksgiving – Always *“glorify him with thanksgiving”* (Psalm 69:30) You have plenty of reasons to be thankful. Thank God for His love, His faithfulness, His patience and a million other things. Express gratitude for what He’s doing in your life. Thank Jesus for dying on the cross for you. Thank the Holy Spirit for indwelling you, and never leaving. Thank Him for being your conscience, your counselor and that “still small voice.”

Supplication – *“Make your requests known to God.”* (Philippians 4:7) Tell God what you want, no matter how small it seems to you. Do you really think any of your requests are big to God the Creator?

Ideas for a More Fulfilling Prayer Life

1. **Have a “Mini Worship Time.”**

Listen to praise music before you begin your quiet time.

2. **Begin with a Bible Reading or Devotional.** Even a short reading can help get your mind focused on God. I love to read the Psalms and the Gospels.

3. **Use a Prayer Journal.** A prayer journal is simply a list of people and things to pray for. It keeps you focused

and consistent in your time with God. How many times have you forgotten to pray for someone? Once it is in the journal, you will not forget. (Tip: To get it into the journal, jot it down on a piece of paper or in your planner right away.)

4. **Get Out of the Rut.** *“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition.”* (Matthew 6:7 NASB) Occasionally, your prayer time may get stale. **Change it!** If you usually sit in a chair, get on your knees, or stand up. Ask God to restore you. Read something. Listen to some music. Sing something. Go to a different place. **Step out in faith and be a Man of Prayer!**

“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray . . .”
(Jude 1:20)

FAST FACTS: Adapted from Current Thoughts & Trends, Dennis Cone, Publisher

All scripture quotations are taken from the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) except as noted.

PROSTATE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS 2001

1. Almost all American males (95%) are aware of prostate cancer.

- Awareness is high among all age groups and ethnic groups. However, Hispanics have somewhat less awareness than Whites and African-Americans.

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2. Surprisingly, although awareness of prostate cancer is high, there is less consensus on who actually possesses a “prostate”.

- Twenty-one percent of males believe both men and women have a prostate. The youngest males (18-35) and African Americans are more likely to believe this falsehood.

3. The majority of adult males (86%) believe prostate cancer can be effectively treated, with only 6% who believe it cannot and another 9% who don't really know.

- The youngest males, Hispanic males, and African American males, are more likely to believe it is an untreatable condition. This is a two fold threat to the African-American males since they are at higher risk to develop the disease but are less likely to believe it can be treated.

4. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men next to skin cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in men after lung cancer. The disease generally develops in men 65 years of age and older but overall, one out of every 10 males will develop the disease.

One out of every three men believe they are likely to develop prostate cancer. Men in high risk groups such as African-American men, men with a family history of prostate cancer, men over 50, or those with 2 or more

symptoms are aware that their chances of developing the disease are increased.

- Six percent of the male population believe they are very likely to develop the disease, and an additional 30% believe they are somewhat likely.
- African-American men have a greater risk of developing prostate cancer and it is reflected in their concern. Thirteen percent of black males, significantly more than white males (5%), believe they are very likely to develop prostate cancer.
- Eight percent of men 55 to 73 years of age believe they are very likely to develop the disease with another 37% who think they are somewhat likely. Surprisingly, the group at highest risk, men 75 and older, believe they are less likely than the 46 to 73 year olds to develop prostate cancer.
- Approximately 1 out of 2 men (53%) with a family history of prostate cancer believe they are likely to develop it, a substantially higher number than those who had no family history of the disease (35%). Still nearly one half of this at risk group may underestimate their risk.
- Forty-eight percent of men who have two or more symptoms of prostate cancer believe they are more likely to develop the disease than men who have less than 2 symptoms (37%). However, even though men with more symptoms realize their increased risk, one half of men with 2 or more symptoms are underestimating their risk.

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5. Forty-nine percent of adult males have discussed the subject of prostate cancer with their doctors.

- Forty-six percent of men who are at less risk because they lead a healthier life by adding fiber, fruit, and vitamin rich food to their diets are more likely to ask their doctor about prostate cancer. Only one in three of those males taking part in riskier behaviors, such as eating a high fat diet, are willing to discuss prostate cancer with their doctors, which means two out of three men in this high risk group are not discussing the issue with their doctor at all.
- Hispanic males, who have the same risk of developing prostate cancer as white males, are less likely to ask their doctor about prostate cancer than white males or African-American males. And although African-American males are somewhat more likely to discuss the disease with their doctors, over half (56%) have never brought up the topic.
- Approximately one third of all men who know they have an increased risk because of their family history do not approach their doctor. Just two thirds (61%) who have a family history of prostate cancer have asked their doctor about their risks of developing the disease. In addition, approximately 50% of all males who had two or more symptoms of the disease did not seek their doctor's advice.
- Appropriately, adult males 46 years old and over who are at increased risk are more likely to initiate a conversation with their doctor about prostate cancer than are their younger counterparts.

6. Only 23% of men who spoke to their doctors about prostate cancer said their doctors informed them of their increased risk.

- Men who were at higher risk of developing prostate cancer were informed of their increased risk at the same rate by their doctor as men who did not have an increased risk. In other words, men taking part in riskier behaviors, or had a history of the disease, or were African-American were not informed that their chance of developing prostate cancer was higher than those men without these characteristics.
- Sixty-nine percent of men who had prostate cancer in the family, 68% of African-American males, and 73% of men over 50 years of age were not told by their doctors that they had an increased risk of developing the disease.
- Sixty-five percent of men who had 2 or more actual symptoms of prostate cancer were not informed by their doctor of their increased risk.

Summary Report of Findings

Awareness

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men after skin cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in men after lung cancer. One out of every ten men will develop the disease and 3200 men will die annually. Although 95% of American men are aware of prostate cancer, many are not heeding the symptoms of the disease or altering their risky lifestyle behaviors in order to lower

their risk of developing the disease. Upon further investigation, it appears that not enough communication is occurring between doctor and patient about the risk factors and symptoms associated with the disease, and the available tests to diagnose and combat it.

Nation's Males! This Gland is Your Gland....

One unusual fact did surface. While men may chalk one up for their high awareness of prostate cancer, one out of every five males does not know who actually possesses a prostate. Twenty-one percent of American males believe that both men and women have a prostate. The two groups who most likely buy into this falsehood are younger males and African-American males. This misunderstanding is a little unnerving because it may cloud relevant issues and risks surrounding the disease.

Risk of Developing Prostate Cancer

There are several risk factors associated with the development of prostate cancer. Simply growing older increases a man's risk. Seventy-five percent of prostate cancer occurs in men over 65 with only 7% diagnosed in men under 60 years of age. African-American males have the highest incidence of prostate cancer, a third higher than white males, and African-American males are also twice as likely to die from it. Risks of developing prostate cancer have also been linked to diet and testosterone levels. Males possessing higher testosterone levels, or who eat a high fat diet have been shown to have an increased risk of developing prostate cancer.

The National Cancer Institute estimates that one in ten men will develop prostate cancer. Results from this survey of nation's men show that one third (36%) of adult males believe they will actually develop the disease. The good news is that some of the higher risk groups are aware of their increased likelihood to develop the disease. Those males who have more than 2 symptoms of prostate cancer, or have a family history of the disease, or who take part in four or more risky behaviors believe they are more likely to develop prostate cancer. On the other hand, only 36% of African-American males who are at higher risk believe they will develop prostate cancer which is slightly lower than the 38% of white males who believe they are likely to develop the disease. Two out of five men 74+ years of age who are at the highest risk, don't actually believe they will develop the disease.

Age of Concern

Most American males begin to become genuinely concerned about prostate cancer between the ages of 40 and 59. The majority of African American males (68%) are more likely to be concerned at an earlier age, from 30 to 49.

Treatment of Prostate Cancer

The majority of adult males (86%) believe prostate cancer can be treated, which is true. Only six percent believe it is untreatable and nine percent are unsure. At risk groups coincidentally are less likely to believe it's treatable. A higher number of white males (89%) believe it is possible to treat prostate cancer compared to only 72% of African-American males. The youngest of men, 18 to 35 year olds, are significantly less likely to believe it is treatable compared to men over 40 (76%

vs. 92%). Not surprising, the 18 to 35 year old group who are less likely to believe it is treatable are also less likely to talk to their doctor.

Overcome Your Circumstances

By: Judy Hampton

Guest Author

God can give you peace, no matter what

Intellectually, most Christians seems to accept this concept – that God is in control – until circumstances get rocky. At that point, we naturally seek to change our circumstances. It seems like the best way to find true happiness and contentment. I am learning, though, that this isn't the way God works. God wants to change me, and He uses my circumstances to do it. He is the Potter; we are the clay (see Isaiah 64:8).

What were the circumstances that prompted you to give your life to the Savior? What drew you to Him? Was your life a mess? Were you discouraged and anxiety-ridden? I have asked myself those questions. And I honestly wonder if it hadn't been for what I used to call "terrible" circumstances, would I have ever surrendered my life to Him? If life had turned out like I had planned, would I have rejected the gospel?

In my life, troubling circumstances ultimately helped me find contentment in God. For instance, my teenage marriage and misery brought me to the Savior. Moving away from friends forced me to depend on God for satisfaction. Unemployment forced us to depend on God for our every need according to His riches, not ours. We learned firsthand that He is the Great Provider. Much later, our broken hearts led us to surrender our son.

But in God's presence, we found peace before the circumstances changed. This is what Jesus came to give us, peace in the midst of pain, no matter what the circumstances. This is what vertical living is all about. Unfortunately, our tendency is toward horizontal living. We look for peace in people, places and things.

How easy it is to slip into horizontal living. For instance, have you ever brought a brand-new car right off the showroom floor? If so, you'll remember that wonderfully distinctive smell that says, "I'm new and I've never been used, abused, or scratched." Yeah, this is going to do for me.

When I drive that new car, I feel great because the circumstances are ideal – I don't have reason to worry about a thing. For instance, I'm confident that the oil doesn't need to be changed and the fan belts aren't worn. No need to fret about the tires either. It's the greatest feeling. What really bums me out, though, is how short-lived that smell is. I've gone into debt for a smell! Then, within a few weeks, it's gone.

It must bother others as much as it does me, because now many car-wash operations offer an air freshener called "New Car Smell." Spray it inside the car and bingo! You feel good again. That's what horizontal living is – a cheap, temporary substitute for the real thing.

The real thing is vertical living. It's an inside job the Holy Spirit produces in people with surrendered hearts.

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

Recently, a young woman at one of my weekend conferences told me her story of vertical living. Cheryl and her husband had been married only one year when he had a massive stroke, which left him a quadriplegic and unable to speak. He was 31 years old. In one brief moment, the entire course of their lives was changed. Faced with a lifetime of communicating only through eye contact and needing long-term care assistance, they began a new way of living.

They moved in with her parents, and she went to work. Nurses met his needs during the day. She took care of him at night. After one year, this lifestyle overwhelmed Cheryl! So, in a state of utter frustration and discouragement, she left the house to have a good cry. I can't do this, Lord," she sobbed. "I just can't take it. I don't feel like living like this. What about me? What about my dreams? What about my expectations? This is too painful, and I don't want to handle it one more day."

Then, after a few moments, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to her heavy heart. It was unmistakable: "Cheryl, when I told my children to love others, I never told them that they could do it in their own power. I said I would provide My strength and love through them. When you are weak, I am strong. You must let go."

Suddenly, Cheryl saw her life from a different perspective. As she walked home, she finally embraced vertical living. Opening the door of her home, she felt as though a warm liquid were filling the inside of her body. She entered her husband's room and was instantly aware of a new love for him that she had never felt.

That happened 15 years ago. Today she says they have a beautiful marriage—a love that defies explanation. It has nothing to do with their circumstances, because their circumstances never changed. He is still a quadriplegic, although he can move three fingers on his left hand, which allows him to use a computer. He still cannot speak but, according to Cheryl, these have been the sweetest years of her life. Why?

She learned the secret. And what was it? A surrendered heart. A heart surrendered to God and filled with the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (see Galatians 5:22-23). Isn't that what we're all searching for?

Do you want in on that deal?

Begin by building an altar, one at the feet of Jesus. And on that altar, surrender everything ... dreams, idols, entitlements, and expectations. Just let them go. Now you can start living above the circumstances, not under them.

Judy Hampton is a keynote speaker at retreats across the United States. She also has her own business as a manufacturer's representative to the gift industry in southern California. She and her husband, Orvey, live in Brea, Calif.