

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

Volume 6& 7/Number 6& 7

June/July 2006

WHY MEN CRAVE SEX?

By Melvin L. Latimer

When you turn on your TV or pick up a magazine you constantly see ads promoting sex. Hugh Hefner the creative mind behind Playboy magazine has made millions of dollars promoting sex. It seems that everywhere you turn there is something or someone promoting sex. The United States was founded on biblical principles yet we are one of the most immoral countries in the world.

Why is it that men are so obsessed with sex? Women are too but for right now, we are concentrating on the men. According to major studies, 70 percent of men complain that they do not get enough sex. Studies also show that the average American male has his first sexual encounter at age thirteen. Unfortunately most young males have their sexual beliefs and attitudes shaped by pornography and sadly their peers and exposure to sexual behaviors amongst young males starts at about the age of ten. Their peers and pornography distort young males views of women, and give them false expectations regarding sex. All women cannot possibly measure up to the airbrushed, color-enhanced, and glossy photographs that have been forced as the standard of reference for males.

What is it then about sex that causes kings, presidents, CEOs, pastors, and everyday men to throw away their beliefs, morals, and principles. Former President Bill Clinton was willing to lose the most powerful office in the world for a few minutes of pleasure. The Rev. Jessie Jackson, a noted civil rights leader, was willing to throw away all of his achievements for mere moments of pleasure. King David, a man after God's own heart was again willing to lose his place with God and throw away his blessings for moments of pleasure. Men have walked away from their wives and left their children for a few moments of pleasure.

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STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN is published monthly by Men On A Mission Worldwide Ministries, a Bible-based (non-profit organization), Christ-centered ministry dedicated to helping men become Godly influences in their homes, families, communities and the world. P.O. Box 452, Temple Hills, Maryland 20757.

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So, why do men crave sex? The simple solution is found in:

Genesis 1:28- And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

So with all of man's shortcomings, he has two natural instincts: 1) to procreate and 2) to dominate. Since this initial command man's views and priorities have distorted. Men have targeted those two instinctual commands to mean craving for sex, power, and money. Men's cravings toward sex, power, and money are constant longing to gratify their supreme purpose as a man. But the only guarantee of contentment and peace is to crave after the things of God. To crave after God means to crave after His goodness, His righteousness, His endless love, and His Word. Once a man completely grasps God then and only then will he be complete and whole -- ready to fully "subdue the land".

The Women Speak: 10 Things I Wish Men Understood

- Women, are you blaming men for your unmet needs instead of relying upon Christ, the only one who possesses the power to fill you up?
- Men, are you doing everything you possibly can to make her feel like she's cherished?

10 Things I Wish Men Understood

1. **Spiritual Life** – When you put God first, many aspects of your relationship with us fall into place.
2. **Crisis Control** – In the midst of conflict, some courses of action work better than others.
3. **Communication** – We all know this can be a sticking point between us, but there's no doubt that it endears you to us when you're listening to what we say and sharing with us.
4. **Hidden Meanings** – Ideally, there shouldn't be hidden messages behind our words, but in the event that you encounter these scenarios with any of the women in your life, we want to give you the inside track.
5. **Sex** – Here are some ways to increase your returns.
6. **"I love you."** – This is one form of communication that can't be overlooked.
7. **Romance** – Yes, in our minds this is different from sex, and just as important. So the ladies have provided some tips.
8. **Everyday hints** – Here are some practical suggestions that might help you understand a woman's perspective.
9. **Don'ts** – There are some common traps that will only get you into trouble. . .
10. **Fathering** – Your influence upon our children has profound effects upon the whole family.

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Now, for those who are interested in the specifics:

1. Spiritual Life:

“PRAY WITH ME.”

“TRUST” – We cannot trust you if you do not trust yourselves – Put your trust in the LORD!”

“A woman loves for her husband to be a spiritual leader in the home. If you love your wife as Christ loves the church then she will be respectful, submissive and love you as the Bible teaches.”

2. Crisis control

“Sometimes I just want to vent, so please don’t try to fix the problem, just listen, that’s all, just listen.”

“When I am worried and upset about something, I usually want you to take me in your arms and assure me of your love and encourage me to trust in God.”

“Do not allow a conflict between you to last long, keep peace, forgive her and resolve conflicts quickly.”

3. Communication

“Please LISTEN when we talk even (especially) if it’s a topic of non-interest to you. Nothing is more annoying than to have to repeat something we just said 5 minutes, 5 hours, or 5 days ago.”

“Share and exchange emotions, passions, thoughts, and fears. The

Bible talks about this when it talks about men being compassionate toward their wives.”

“If we make a suggestion out of love on something we would like you to improve on, don’t take it as an “attack,” don’t simply reply “I’m doing the best I can,” and don’t say we’re “nagging.” This indicates denial that you are human and could improve in some areas. It also shuts out the women in your life by creating a fear of ever expressing a need or concern.”

4. Hidden Meanings:

“The following phrases ‘it’s nothing’, ‘Whatever’, and ‘Forget about it’ all mean that we really want you to question us to get the truer meaning behind the statement.

“If I’m upset and I leave the room it DOESN’T mean that I want to be left alone...it means chase me and find out what’s bothering me.”

“If I ask ‘Do I look fat?’ or ‘Do you like (fill in the appropriate appearance factor)’ what I really mean is ‘Compliment me!’

5. Sex

“If you’re ‘in the mood’, give me a little romance please! I don’t mind initiating once in awhile, but God built women to be responders, and with just a little attention from you, I can give you 100% of what you’re looking for!” “Amen”

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“Women like sex more than you think...just not as often as you do maybe!! Just understand that with her it is a purely emotional attraction (as long as you are already staying clean and combed and shaven!! ha.). Satisfy her emotional tank and she will be attracted to you sexually later.”

“even if she isn’t interested in it that night, be patient and love on her anyway, and trust me, it won’t be long.”

6. “I love you.”

“Tell her ‘I love you’ everyday.”

“She wants to be your best friend, she wants your marriage to be all that it can be, BUT not out of some misplaced idea that it is a chore or duty – it should be with Joy in your heart.”

“Tell her how you feel about her out of the blue (I know you think about why you love her, and you realize it...but say it).”

7. Romance

“I would say stop listening to what everybody says “WOMEN” like. Take the time and effort to find out what the woman in your life likes and dislikes. Let yourself be led by God to be the man He has called you to be and learn about the woman He has sent to you.”

“Make a simple phone call in the middle of the day. I appreciate

hearing from him when he is away – whether he is at work, traveling, or even out on the golf course. Regardless of the length of the call, it says I am in his heart, mind and soul and not the familiar adage “out of sight, out of mind.” After all, I am understanding when he thinks about work at home, so why not show he thinks about me at work?”

“Be romantic, leave a love note or do something unexpected, this melts a woman’s heart.

“Be romantic without being told to be romantic. Bring home a single red rose. Pack a Saturday picnic and go to the park. Put on a CD with a great song and just hold your wife during it. Be spontaneous about sex...and don’t just think the bedroom and nighttime is when it’s wanted. Run your wife a bath, buy her some aromatic body wash or foot scrub and massage her back and feet...she’ll thank you for it big time.

8. Everyday hints

“We both live in the house, we both contribute to the mess, and we both work outside the home. So why is it considered solely my responsibility to clean it?”

“We do appreciate what you do to help out, but do wish you wouldn’t treat it like you’re doing us a favor.”

“Give our homelife 100% like you do your job or your favorite hobby. Don’t bring us home a doggy bag.”

“Treat my job as if it were just as important as your job...especially if I’m a stay-at-home mom. We don’t

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make money like you do, but what we do is important enough to be included in God's Word (see Proverbs 31) It would cost a lot of money, to hire somebody to do what we do all day long for free."

9. Don'ts

Please do not compare us with other females in your past/present, we're not them, we're unique unto ourselves, and we're not replacements for Mom, Ex, or Deceased."

"Please don't show your sexual amorousness in front of the kids!!! (In other words, don't try to pinch her all sorts of places, follow her around with goo goo eyes....)"

"I wish that men understood that if a man wants to be 'just friends,' then he shouldn't treat a woman like she's more than that to him. I have been hurt many times by men who were very romantic while in the 'getting to know you' dating phase, then decided that he wanted to be "just friends" at just the point when I was beginning to think, 'Gee, he really seems to like me – maybe this is somebody I could get serious about.'"

10. Fathering

"Know that you are the biggest influence on your children. I may be with them all day and night but they will take after you. Yes, even the girls. Your actions in your life are teaching the children and (guess what) ME. We all learn from you. Even if you have a Phlegmatic temperament you choose your actions. We (your family) are looking to you for guidance and need to see a good example."

"I find you very attractive when you are tender, playful, and reading to our children. A father who is actively demonstrating his love for his children is very sexy to the mother who bore them."

"Assist me with the children, they need you just as much as they need me. Besides, nothing can beat a bedtime story that is read by 'Daddy!'"

The bottom Line

Basically, we acknowledge the differences between us and recognize that bridging them requires effort from both men and woman. Hopefully, this list will be helpful to you as you forge a frontier that presents great challenges and even greater rewards.

10 Things I Wish Women Understood about Men.

Men: Here are the 10 Things you wish women understood about you and your needs:

1. To be lifted up – respect and admiration go a long way.
2. A different style of communication – men and women are different in this area and the better we understand that, the more we'll understand each other.

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3. Some space – time alone or with other men.
4. A Teammate – woman who is loyal to the marriage team provides her man with the confidence that she's got his back no matter what.
5. A structure of gender roles – fuzzy definitions of roles cause confusion.
6. Sex – you need it, you like it, you wish we would initiate it and show some interest once in a while.
7. To be free of stereotypes – Give you, our Christian brothers, more credit than Homer Simpson.
8. Unspoken truths – some messages need to be understood without words.
9. Freedom from criticism – it does not inspire you to greater love.
10. Men have a deep desire to follow Christ – your intentions are pure.

So men, that's what you had to tell us. Now for those of you who are curious about the specific quotes from the forum, read on. (You're safe with us, we won't tell anyone that you opted to read the ladies version.)

Ladies: We've got a lot of good stuff to chew on here. The following are the men's responses, and I think we can all learn from what they've said. By the way, I'll call you later so we can talk about it a little more...

1. To be lifted up

- “We need to feel like a man, a protectorate.”
- “Your man needs you to lift him up at all times, (not just to be told continually how he is falling short of your expectations for him and your relationship).”
- “The number one thing I wish my wife would understand about me is how important it is that she build me up in my leadership role as husband and a father.”
- “Men just wish for respect, to know that their wives are proud of who they are and will proudly say, or at least think, “That's MY man.”
- “Your man needs you to believe in him, (especially if he's struggling with believing in himself).”
- “Woman should do what they can to BUILD UP their husbands by letting men know that they are good breadwinners, fathers, husbands, and friends.
- “Men need reassurance that they are loved.”

2. A different style of communication

- “Men like to hear not how special they are, but what they mean to you.”
- “Men expect a direct answer to their questions. My girlfriend has this problem with not giving me answers right then and she makes me go around the long way to get an answer. That just steams me.”

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- “Men can not read minds.”
- “Men inherently do not like talking as much as women.”
- “Men sometimes are more direct and blunt when they communicate. It doesn’t mean disrespect or dislike or a lack of love.”
- “Short responses to your long inquiries does not mean we “didn’t hear you.”
- “Men do not like to analyze everything to death then just to resurrect it and start over.
- “When I get upset or concerned and open up to my wife, I’m doing this because I’m truly at a loss for solutions, or I am extremely unsure of what I should do about something. When I bring this to my wife, I don’t want to hear that ‘everything’s gonna be okay,’ I want her advice, I want answers. That’s what makes me feel better.”
- “No we can’t read your mind, PERIOD.”

3. Some space (by the way ladies, given the number of women posting messages in this Forum, we may need to heed this one in particular...)

- “Men like to have space, to do the things that make them feel good, fishing, hunting. Hobbies just like women do.”
- “Men often don’t mind being totally silent for a while, and just thinking. Not talking doesn’t necessarily mean that the man is angry or trying to give her the ‘silent treatment.’”

- “Men, sometimes, need to rest – hence the TV, remote control, and ignoring their surroundings. (Sometimes we do go overboard on this one).”

4. A Teammate

- “To be able to bare ones soul to one’s spouse about life, faith, family without criticism.”
- “Real men get tired of having to be the tough guy all the time. We sometimes need to bust and feel sad or weak. Don’t think it makes us wimps.”
- “Men want to feel intimately safe, they don’t like having their business shared, with ANYONE else.”
- “I really want to make things as easy as possible on her. It seems at times she thinks I’m not on her side...which kills me! I love her!”
- “Men need to know that their failure will be met with loving arms and encouragement.”
- “When I say something or help out around the house, I am in NO WAY trying to demean her and tell her “You’re not capable of handling things yourself.’ ‘I’m just trying to help!”

5. A structure of gender roles

- “To be appreciated for being the Man of the house and the spiritual leader of the home.”

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- “Men need a clear definition between gender roles.”
- “Men like women who let them open doors for them or pull out a chair for them or help put their coat on, or stand when they come in the room.”
- “Men like woman who act like woman and not men.”
- “To not have to beg for intimacy, but to give one to the other equally without outside influences getting in the way.”
- (For those who are not married) “The thing I wish for most is that my girlfriend will want to hold my hand or just put it in the crook of my elbow without me asking. It is one of the best feelings of affection I know of.”
- “Men wish women understood the sexual needs of a man and its role in our lives.”

7. To be free of stereotypes

- “Real men do not show physical or emotional cruelty, nor do they want a ‘trophy wife’ to show off to their friends. However, we can be driven to kill by someone who tries to harm our loved ones!”
- “I sense a growing frustration and some anger with the role men are being pushed into by the media bone heads. All men are not the same, and it’s a mistake to presume that we all like or dislike the same things.”

- “Contrary to the Homer Simpson, Al Bundy stereotypes the media force-feeds us. Men are not universally stupid, lazy, and dependent on their women to bail them out of yet another stupid mess they’ve gotten themselves into.”
- “Men do eat quiche. My wife makes a whole grain, cheese, ham and cauliflower quiche to die for.”

8. Unspoken truths

- “Men have peace from the love and affection that they get from their spouse that speaks volumes over words.”
- “I recognize when I found my wife I found a good thing.”
- “Just because we (Men) don’t say it (I love you) doesn’t mean we don’t feel it.”

9. Freedom from criticism

- “One thing I wish my wife understood is that constant criticism does NOT inspire me to greater love. How it frustrates me to sincerely want to make her happy and please her, but so often (try to do loving things for her), and I’m met with criticism (you’re not doing it right; my way...)”
- “If you’re breaking down your man’s ego at home, there is another woman out there who is building him up.”
- “Women, hear me out here. STOP saying you’re fat and ugly!!!! Nothing hurts your husband more than doing that. Your husband, at least I speak for myself, thinks you’re HOT! Quit telling us we’re wrong. Embrace the

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compliments.”

10. Men have a deep desire to follow Christ

- “We Christian men want desperately to be like Jesus Christ, no matter how we may stumble.”
- “Deep down we want to love them. Eph. 5:25, ‘Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.’”

PRAYER FOR YOUR WIFE HAS GREAT POWER

When you pray for your wife, God will bless both her and you in your life together. Prayer invites God to unleash His great power, and your marriage is too important for you not to invest in praying for your wife.

Prayer will also bring you and your wife closer. There’s no greater way to express your love for your wife than to pray for her.

Here are some ways you can pray for your wife:

- * Pray that you will be the kind of person God wants you to be so you can be the best husband possible for your wife. Ask God to show you how to fully love your wife, and how to pray for her in all situations.
- * Pray that your wife will walk closely with Christ, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be able to discern God’s will and follow it.
- * Pray that God will give you insight into your wife’s emotions, and that she

would enjoy stability and peace.

- * Pray that God will enable your wife to be the best mother she can be, that her children will respond well to her, and that if she’s not a mother yet but wants to be, that God will help her.
- * Pray that your wife will feel comfortable communicating with you, no matter what her mood, and that you will be able to help her stay calm and rely on God’s grace when she doesn’t feel right.
- * Pray that God will continually strengthen all aspects of your marriage, protect it from destruction, and grow love between you.
- * Pray that your wife will respect and trust you as a spiritual leader, and that you will be completely submitted to God so you can effectively serve as a spiritual leader.
- * Pray that your wife will enjoy close friendships with other christian women, get along well with family members, and will be able to forgive people who have hurt her.
- * Pray that God will give your wife the wisdom she needs to discern how she should set her priorities, and the grace to spend her time accordingly.
- * Pray that God will give your wife confidence that she is beautiful in His sight and yours, and that He will help her value herself and take care of her body.

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- * Pray that you and your wife will enjoy a mutually fulfilling sexual relationship.
- * Pray that God will enable your wife to overcome fear.
- * Pray that your wife will recognize God's purpose for her life, and be able to live it out as she uses her gifts.
- * Pray that your wife will completely trust God, trust you as her husband, and be trustworthy herself.
- * Pray that God will protect your wife – physically, mentally and spiritually – wherever she goes.
- * Pray that your wife will know which dreams God wants her to pursue, and that you will be able to help her pursue them.
- * Pray that your wife will bring glory to God through her work, that her work will fulfill her, and that others will respond well to it.
- * Pray that God will heal your wife from wounds her past has inflicted on her, and give her the freedom she needs to step into the future as a healthy person.
- * Pray that God will motivate your wife to choose to obey His leading, and give her the grace to do so.
- * Pray that God will bless your wife's future.

Stormie Omartian has authored several previous books on prayer that

have been best-sellers. She travels across the United States to speak on prayer.

*Adapted from *The Power of a Praying Husband*, copyright 2001 by Stormie Omartian. Published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Ore., www.harvesthousepubl.com, 1-888-501-6001.*

YOU CAN HELP YOUR ANGRY CHILD

Anger has great destructive power, and it can be both bewildering and frightening to deal with anger in your own child. If you can discover what's at the root of your child's anger, however, you can begin to deal effectively with it. God will help you as you help your child manage anger in healthy ways.

Here are some ways you can help your child if he or she is struggling with anger:

- * Consider whether your child's anger might be caused by one of these eight common causes of childhood anger; physical or sexual abuse, divorced parents, living in a blended family, parental favoritism, parental abandonment, losses (such as the death of someone close to the child), parental alcoholism or drug use and being overindulged. In prayer, ask God to reveal to you what's behind our child's anger. Also try to talk with your child as openly as possible to try to determine why he or she is angry.
- * Study how your child expresses his or her anger, and what satisfaction he or she might be deriving from expressing that anger.

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- * Help your child evaluate his or her behaviors and shift from negative to positive mindsets. Encourage your child to think and act positively, and consistently assure your child of your love for him or her.
- * If your behavior is contributing to your child's anger, seek help from God and others to change your behavior.
- * Help your child understand the costs associated with explosive anger. Allow your child to experience the natural, negative consequences of wrong decisions. Motivate your child to make better decisions in the future.
- * Reward your child for progress he or she makes in the journey toward handling emotions in healthy ways.
- * Don't allow your child to manipulate you with anger. Assume the authority you should have as a parent, and be willing to lovingly yet firmly discipline your child when needed.
- * Help your child learn how to solve problems. Teach him or her critical thinking skills so that he or she is less likely to become frustrated. Encourage creativity when dealing with all situations in life.
- * Teach your child to pray frequently, and especially when under stress. Encourage him or her to trust God for guidance and strength in any circumstance.
- * Remind your child of his or her unique talents, and encourage him or her to use them whenever possible.
- * Assess your child's feelings in a variety of situations. Help your child gauge how much anger is justified and appropriate.
- * When your child begins to express explosive anger, call a time-out to give him or her an opportunity to cool down.
- * Minimize the attention you devote to your child's angry behavior, because paying too much attention to it can actually reinforce the behavior. Your child wants your attention, even if he or she gets that attention in negative ways. Instead, focus your attention on your child's positive actions.
- * Strive to communicate as clearly as possible to your child, so he or she doesn't have the frustration of having to guess what messages you're sending.
- * Forgive your child, and encourage him or her to seek God's forgiveness. That will give him or her the freedom needed to move into a healthier future.

--By Whitney Hopler, Live It

Dr. Richard L. Berry has worked with many youths and their parents to help them live healthier lives.

HOW DOES A MAN BALANCE WORK AND FAMILY?

By Linda S. Mintle, Ph.D.
Psychotherapist

Work is important in men's lives, but

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trouble erupts when work overshadows family life.

Men often struggle to find balance between the demands of work and home. Wives complain that husbands are more married to the office than to them. Men feel they are doing what they are supposed to do as men – provide for their families. The dilemma for many men is how to balance the needs of family life with career. Not attending to family needs has obvious consequences, but not attending to the job means not being a serious contender for promotion.

Charles' wife, Janet, resented his undying dedication to his job. At home with three small children, Janet wanted Charles to spend more time with the family. Tension between Janet and Charles was building. The couple needed help.

Charles and Janet, represent many couples struggling to find balance between the demands of work and home. Wives complain that husbands are more married to the office than to them. Husbands feel they are doing what they are supposed to do as men – provide for their families. The dilemma for many men is how to balance the needs of family life with career. Not attending to family needs has obvious consequences, but not attending to the job means that you aren't a serious contender for promotion.

Women who stay home sometimes envy the love affair men have with their work. Work can be exhilarating, exciting and even a frightening part of a man's life. Work often defines a man and plays an important role in promoting his sense of self-worth.

Career success often means – “I'm somebody” to a great many men (and women). Men are taught that power, status and earning capacity are markers of masculinity. Value is measured by economic and occupational success.

Consequently, men have fears and anxieties about failure and measuring up. Are they good enough? Can they compete? Will they win? The pressure to perform can be intense and even self-imposed.

At home, performance is rated through relationship – a world of unclear rules and every-changing demands. Women at home seem to have the edge when it comes to family rules and details about children and households. Control over outcome is not the same as at work.

Men like Charles aren't up on the current issues of home. At times, Janet treats him like “a dummy” which makes the office more appealing. At work Charles feels competent – and in control.

Men like Charles need balance but don't always know how to achieve it. Balance is a biblical concept dating back to the Garden of Eden. Man worked and then rested. Work should be challenging and fulfilling but not the sole focus of being a man. If you are a man out of balance with work and family, try these steps:

- * Learn to set limits on the job.
- * Address fears of failure or not measuring up to preconceived standards or unrealistic expectations.
- * Check out what the Bible has to say about your worth apart from what you do for a living.

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- * Define yourself through your relationship with God. He gives unconditional love and approval of who you are.
- * Pray for wisdom and sensitivity to balance the needs of family and career.
- * Re-evaluate your current position. Is what you do worth the sacrifice you are making in other areas of your life? If not, ask God to direct your path to a new opportunity or negotiate more balance.

Dr. Mintle – author, professor, Approved Supervisor and Clinical Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy – is a speaker and media personality, as well as a licensed clinical social worker with 20 years in psychotherapy practice.

EMBRACE LIFE MORE FULLY BY LIVING IN THE PRESENT

The past is gone and will never return. The future will be unpredictable if it comes at all. The only sure time you have to fully experience is now, so God wants you to live in the present.

Here are some benefits of focusing on each present moment:

- * It frees you to hear God's voice as He speaks to your spirit about how He wants you to live. You can discern His will more easily than when you're distracted by thoughts of the past or anxieties about the future, because, in the present, you can just listen.
- * It helps you notice and appreciate all the blessings – both large and small –

that God has brought into your life.

- * It enables you to focus on the details in every situation, so you can more effectively shine the light of God's love into all you do. Even mundane tasks can take on new meaning for you when you seek to bring glory to God through performing them.
- * It helps you get through each day much more smoothly than if you were caught up in the past or the future, because, as Jesus said, each day has enough trouble of its own.
- * It helps you rebound for the future by beginning again, with the help of God's mercies that renew every morning.
- * It helps you seize opportunities as time rushes on. Time will never wait for you, so use it as well as you can.

Chiara Lubich has authored more than 30 books, and has been awarded the Templeton Prize for the Progress of Religion and the UNESCO Peace Prize. She lives in Italy.

BUILD CLOSE, LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

Since God has designed us to relate to others, everyone needs friends to share their lives. The best kinds of friendships are those that are close and lasting. Those intimate friendships require significant investments of time and energy, but it's definitely worth it to develop them.

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Here are some ways you can establish and maintain good friendships:

- Make time for people. Be available to them during all seasons of their lives, helping them get through suffering and celebrating with them during good times. Be willing to cry or laugh with them, and to openly share your thoughts and feelings with them as they share theirs with you.
- Help people become the people God wants them to be. Encourage them; help them discover their gifts and how to use them to influence the world in ways God intends. Pray for them and give them godly advice when they ask for it. Rejoice in their successes and help them learn and rebound from failures without judging them.
- Have courage when you see a need to confront friends about choices they're making that are interfering with their relationships to God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you discernment about how you should handle specific situations, so you can hold your friends accountable. Always love your friends unconditionally, but never compromise truth.
- Trust your friends enough to be vulnerable with them, and stick with them if they experience rejection from others. If your friends are going through trials that make you uncomfortable (such as experiencing a serious illness that scares you), don't shy away from them. Instead, pray for the strength to support them in whatever ways your friends tell you they need help.

- Lavish as much love as you can on your friends. Let humility and generosity motivate you, rather than obligation or a desire to look good.
- Don't be jealous of others with whom your friends maintain friendships. Encourage your friends to spread their love around to multiply their positive influence on others.

Carol Kent is a writer, speaker, and president of the christian speakers' bureau Speak Up Services. Karen Lee-Thorp is the senior editor of bible studies and small group resources at NavPress.

YOU CAN LEARN TO QUIT PROCRASTINATING

Perhaps you, like millions of others, made a list of New Year's resolutions, fully intending to make some needed changes in your life. But now you find yourself a couple of months away and you haven't gotten around to starting them. Don't despair. You can learn to stop procrastinating.

It may be postponing learning a sport, tackling a new project, learning more about yourself, or even cleaning out the basement. You don't have to wait any longer.

Steps to overcoming procrastination:

- **Recall and record.** List all the activities you thought would be a good idea to pursue. Put it on paper. Writing something down gives clarity and helps you see the pattern of your thought. (E.g. Learn French. Stop working past 6 p.m. Read the entire Bible. Improve golf game. Design and plant a garden. Clean the basement.)

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

- **List barriers to accomplishment.** For each activity you have listed, recall and record the reasons that inhibited you from pursuing it. What factors actually cause the postponement? (E.g. Take golf lessons: I sprained my shoulder the week I was supposed to sign up for the class. I didn't want to get up at 7 on Saturday mornings. I was afraid I would embarrass myself in front of others.)
- **List satisfaction indicators.** What need(s) would have been fulfilled if you had proceeded to implement the activity? Write them next to each activity. (E.g. I could have participated in the company golf tournament last August, because I would get exercise; I could have met some interesting people; I would have accomplished something.)
- **Re-assess.** Cross off those items on your list of needs that are no longer important to you. (E.g. Cross off the tournament. Now our company goes bowling instead.)
- **Sieve and extract.** Transfer to a new list those activities for which you have needs you still wish to have satisfied – i.e., those not crossed off the list. (E.g. I would get exercise. I could have met some interesting people. I would have a sense of accomplishment.)
- **Prioritize what really matters.** Assign a rating of importance to each activity. Number each in priority order. Assign "1" to the most important activity in relation to the needs of its pursuit. Reflect on them over the next two days. Return to

your list and consider whether they remain your selection of personal goals that you have the motivation to pursue, that will not waste your time, and that you will feel better about no longer postponing.

- **Start.** Now you can begin the new activity or behavior, knowing that you truly want to pursue it, with the written reminder of why you want to do it.

Paul Stevens, after working 21 years as a personnel manager, created The Centre for Worklife Counseling in Sydney, Australia. He is a counselor, broadcaster, and author of more than 21 publications on worklife and career management issues.

HOW MUCH TV ARE YOU WATCHING?

"Except for school and family, no situation plays a bigger role in shaping the American child than TV," says Richard Zoglin. The average home today has the TV on six hours and 17 minutes a day. The average American child will watch 5,000 hours of TV before first grade.

The negative effects of TV watching:

- **It demands your time.** It is addictive as it draws the viewer in.
- **It determines behavior.** Overwhelming evidence shows more than a "casual link" between children's watching TV violence and the performance of violent acts.

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

- **It distorts the perception of reality.** Children confuse real life with TV life and values. One study discovered 90 percent of boys surveyed would rather watch their favorite TV program than spend time with their fathers.
- **It dulls moral sensitivity.** A steady diet of soap operas, sitcoms, or movies desensitizes –enabling acceptance of what earlier would have been rejected (for example: adultery, premarital sex, murder, violent rage).
- **It destroys meaningful family life.** Time in front of the TV diminishes time for games, reading, music, conversation, and can be lethal to cultivating creativity.
- **The principle of edification.** You have great freedom in Christ – but with it comes immense responsibility. A regular diet of poor TV may actually tear down your faith (1 Cor. 10:23).
- **The principle of God’s glory.** All that you do is for God’s glory. Is watching TV glorifying Him? (1 Cor. 10:31).

What you can do:

What the Bible says about TV is seen in these principles:

- **The principle of stewardship of time.** Time is like any other commodity. This includes the time spent in front of the TV (Eph. 5:15-16).
- **The principle of control.** Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. There is no greater test of this virtue than personal discipline in TV viewing (1 Cor. 6:12; Gal. 5:23).
- **The principle of moral purity.** You must choose whatever is true, ...honorable, ...right, ...pure, ...lovely, ...of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. These virtues form the grid for making wise viewing choices. (Phil. 4:8)
- **Make choices.** Participate actively in entertainment choices. Ask yourself, How is this affecting me? Passivity is unacceptable.
- **Be selective.** The TV or VCR are not the only choices. Consider visiting an art museum, a concert, or historical location. Consider family reading times or playing board games together. Enjoy the silence.
- **Read program descriptions.** Watch TV with your children and discuss the content, themes, and worldview presented in the program. Don’t be hesitant to turn off the TV midshow if it becomes inappropriate for children – or yourself.
- **Periodically log how much you and your family are viewing.** Consider limiting the number of shows your child may watch each week.

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- **Do not stare passively at commercials.** Talk about current events, or discuss the product or persuasive content of the advertisement with one another.

James P. Eckman is president and professor in Theology, Ethics, and History at Grace University, Omaha, Neb. An ordained minister, he hosts a weekly radio program, Issues in Perspective, and lectures on postmodern era implications for the Christian community.

MEN ON A MISSION

WORLDWIDE MINISTRIES

Men On A Mission is a Bible-based, (non-profit organization), Christ-centered ministry dedicated to helping men become Godly influences in their homes, families, communities and the world.

As the founder of *Men On A Mission*, my goal is to reach men through:

- **education empowerment;**
- **financial empowerment;**
- **substance abuse counseling;**
- **alternative lifestyle counseling;**
- **fellowships;**
- **sports enrichment;**
- **fresh start programs;**
- **youth mentoring.**

Men On A Mission requires no dues or other financial obligations. *Men On A Mission* is, rather, supported solely through charitable contributions.

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