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High

Blood

Pressure

My Blood Pressure and I

From Marianne (of Mark), Slovakia

Being a mother of seven, I've felt concerned for a number of pregnant mommies who have high blood pressure, like I do. Especially as a woman gets over 40 or 50, this condition can lead to a number of serious problems. One of the greatest tests I found was dealing with doctors who get very nervous when your blood pressure is what they call "dangerously high."

Seven years ago, after I had my last child at 41 by Caesarian, I was warned that I had better take medicine to control my condition, or I might not survive. An electrocardiogram showed the problem had been there

for a few years; in other words, there was some heart damage. I had studied medicine for three years before joining the Family and, in spite of all we believe about divine healing, I have to admit I felt a bit nervous too.

The first doctor I met said that I either had to take medicine, or change my lifestyle and cut out all forms of stress, etc. Going much slower in the physical did not seem so feasible, but I found that what I had to change most of all was my attitude. Instead of being hasty and impatient in spirit, I had to develop a calm spirit—which was not

always easy.

The Lord told me repeatedly, "You are trying too hard! Just relax!" But how could I when there was so much to do?—Or so I thought. My very hastiness and criticalness is what had brought on the problem.

About three years ago, at a checkup our doctor friend got a bit upset at me for not being willing to take her medicine. She warned me I would develop tachycardia (an abnormally rapid heartbeat—which I did have a bout of later), but the Lord told me to trust Him, and assured me that He would continue to take care of me and my heart. I read recently that even exercising to help you relax doesn't do you much good if your mind is not relaxed. Oops!

Then the Lord told me: "Don't think and analyze so much; it is a waste of mental energy. Spend more time in prayer." That was a tough one to accept, but by the grace of God I am deter-

Dad speaking: This testimony is an excellent example of someone being spirit led and coming before the Lord to determine what the need and solutions are in their particular situation. You can have two people with the exact same problem, the same symptoms, the same conditions—yet the cause is completely different, and therefore the remedy will be completely different as well. The only way to know for sure is to check in with the Lord, which dear Marianne did—with wonderful results. Praise the Lord! Keep in touch with Him, folks, and you won't go wrong.

*Food sources rich in calcium include milk, green beans, sardines with bones, broccoli, spinach and tofu. Sources of magnesium include legumes and seeds (such as navy beans and sunflower seeds), almonds, hazelnuts, spinach, Swiss chard, tofu, wheat bran and brown rice.

mined to ask the Lord more instead of fretting and

worrying about my or others' problems. Whenever I am bothered by little heart pains, it's like the Lord's love call to spend more time with Him. I used to feel this problem was my thorn in the flesh, but now I realize the Lord uses it to teach me the strength of weakness.

Of course there are things you can and should do to

protect your body, like drinking plenty of water and avoiding animal fats. Using lecithin helps to keep your cholesterol level right, and calcium-magnesium* is helpful too. Getting enough exercise and fresh air helps you to stay fit and also combats insomnia. But the greatest need is resting in the Lord.

Handling Hypertension:

From Keif, WS

My High Blood Pressure Battles and Victories

I was first diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure) when I was a young teen. I'd been having terrible, non-stop headaches, and my mom took me to the doctor to try to find out why. I endured months of blood tests, kidney tests, brain scans, encephalographs and electrocardiograms, and even experimental drugs, which ended up really screwing up my digestive system. As you can imagine, having high blood pressure during those crucial teenage years affected me a lot. The doctors put me on mood-altering drugs, tranquilizers, because they said it was dangerous for me to get upset or nervous about anything. Can you imagine trying to keep a teenager calm? Ha! Anyway, because of the drugs, which I took for about a year, I was one spaced-out teen.

After my mom had taken me to several doctors and specialists to find out what was causing the high blood pressure, and especially the headaches, it appeared there wasn't much that they could do to help me. From what I remember, which isn't much, they said I had some kind of neurological disorder which they didn't know much about, that was causing the headaches. And the high blood pressure was evidently just part of my genetic makeup, which they also couldn't do anything about.

Getting those tests done was my first real experience with doctors, and to find out that all of that had been in vain was very discouraging, to say the least. But it was all part of the Lord's plan in my life, and as my dear Southern Baptist mom told me one Sunday morning

after church, the only thing left to do was to pray. Ha! My poor mom. If she had only come to that conclusion sooner, it would have saved her a lot of grief and probably thousands and thousands of dollars of medical bills. But as they say, "better late than never."

The Lord was really working in my life at the time, and when He answered my mom's desperate prayers and almost instantaneously took away the severe headaches I'd been having for several years, it played a big part in bringing me to the decision of giving my life to Jesus in full-time service.

After that I never really thought much about the high blood pressure. I didn't even know whether it was still high or not, and I felt it didn't really matter anyway. I figured that since God is in

control, I didn't really have to be concerned about such things. For years, I never experienced any negative symptoms as far as I could tell. I had health problems from time to time, but they didn't seem to be related to blood pressure.—So I pretty much just forgot about it.

About five years ago, though, I began having lots of chest pains and numbness in both of my arms—serious warning signals that my health and future usefulness to the Lord were both in danger. It's not that I was worried about it or afraid of dying. But it was obvious that I needed to start going on the attack and doing what I could to stay as strong as possible for as long as possible, in order to be as useful as possible to the Lord and to His Family.

My loved ones and co-workers at the office Home where I was living at the time began praying for my health often. And one of the dear sisters in the Home bought me a couple of health books about high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, with lots of counsel

concerning how to bring these down naturally. Little by little, the Lord helped me to change several things concerning my diet and lifestyle. I started making adjustments here and there, and especially went on the attack to get more vigorous exercise, which I'd never really gotten into since my high school days. I was extremely out of shape, and it was a struggle just to get started. But the Lord helped me to stick with it, and it soon became an important part of my everyday life.

I imagine most Family members have heard or read of various things that can cause high blood pressure and heart disease, and the kinds of foods that one should avoid. There are of course differing opinions about some of these foods, and the information that's released to the public sometimes changes frequently. But some things seemed obvious to me from the start, such as my inordinate use of salt. From one day to the next, I stopped using salt on my food. That was a big step for me because I was quite a salt lover. The Lord made it easy for me, though, and in just a short time I found that my tastes had really changed. I don't miss the salt at all now, and haven't for a long time. On the contrary, I can hardly eat food that has been prepared with a lot of salt. (Of

course, some salt intake is necessary, but nowhere near the amount most of us get in our diet.)

Something that helped a lot along those lines was the discovery that cayenne has been proven to be a successful aid in lowering high blood pressure. I've always liked spicy foods, but after learning of the many positive health benefits of this very common and inexpensive spice—known to be helpful in combating not only high blood pressure and circulatory problems, but a number of other physical ailments, such as hemorrhoids, digestive problems, even ulcers and all kind of things—I happily began flavoring my food with cayenne in place of salt, and loving it! For me, the higher the heat factor, the better.

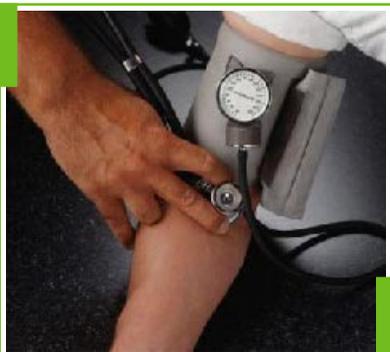
And from what the health experts say, the hotter the cayenne, the more health benefits it has. So that's something I'm very thankful for. (That heat factor only applies to cayenne, by the way, not some other peppers which are also hot and spicy but not at all good for you.)

Besides cutting out salt from my diet, I also stopped using margarine or butter, mayonnaise and most other fatty foods. (Not all oils are unhealthy, though, and I'm really thankful whenever the Lord supplies nice healthy vegetable oils to use on my

Garlic olé!

Since I have started to eat garlic in large quantities every day, my blood pressure has significantly gone down. It's still too high, but I can feel a definite improvement in my health.

Paul (of Charity), Madagascar



food.) Again, I never miss these things which other people feel are almost necessities, so I know the Lord must have somehow miraculously adjusted my appetite to make it easy for me to be good.

Other than the things I've mentioned, I don't follow a very strict diet. I haven't felt led, in my case, to have special foods cooked for me (other than asking the cook to set aside a portion without fatty sauces, etc.) and I try to avoid gravy or mayonnaise when they are served. I don't use soy sauce on rice, or sour cream on baked potatoes when the Home has it on occasion, and I try to avoid most other things that are high in sodium, cholesterol or fat.—Though I do eat desserts, chips, etc., if served for special occasions.

I eat as many fruits and vegetables as are available, and when the Lord supplies it, I use soy milk instead of cow's milk in my breakfast muesli of mixed grains and

seeds. Like I said, I eat a substantial amount of cayenne, and even take some lecithin when I can. I try to only eat brown rice, whole wheat bread and other healthy, low-in-fat and high-in-fiber foods. I usually get plenty of vitamin C and other antioxidants from the foods I eat.

I also try my best to get lots of good vigorous exercise—and I mean vigorous! I've had a lifelong struggle maintaining a good weight, but with the Lord's help and in answer to prayer, I've lost about forty pounds over the last five years.

All of these things normally should have made a big difference, and in many ways, they did. I feel a lot healthier and stronger now than I have in years, and I have lots fewer digestive and other health problems that used to plague me. But alas, in spite of all of my attempts to bring down my blood pressure, although it's probably much lower than it would be if I hadn't done those things, it continued to only get worse, until it reached the point of being dangerously high.

When I first came to the Folks' Home and began struggling with so much dizziness, the Lord said through prophecy that I should go to the doctor. I really didn't like that idea, because I knew that if I went that route, they would of

course want to put me on blood pressure medicine. But the Lord confirmed that it was His will, through the mouth of several channels, including my own personal messages from Him. So I obeyed, and, sure enough, they did put me on medication, and ... well ... that didn't work either—not completely.

After a few weeks, the doctor put me on another kind of medication, to see if it would work any better than the first one. My body didn't react at all well to the second medication, and I had lots of weird side effects; it was a very freaky experience. I had to go back to the doctor, and he changed the medication back to the first one.

I was very surprised when the Lord told me that it was His will for me to follow the doctor's advice and take blood pressure medicine. That was the last thing in the world I would have expected, especially right after coming to the Folks' Home. But even though I resisted it quite a bit, the Lord confirmed that it was His will. He said that each morning when I took my blood pressure medicine, it would remind me of how weak I was, and how nothing I was without Him. He said that with each pill, if I remembered to acknowledge Him and think about Him, He would send His ministering spirits to keep me

through that day. He did tell me, though, that I should come back to Him periodically to get His counsel concerning my health.

I took that particular drug for about two years, and though my blood pressure remained relatively high, the medicine seemed to at least keep it to a more acceptable level most of the time. I'm very thankful to say that during that time, the Lord kept me miraculously free from the multitude of negative side effects that blood pressure medicine can sometimes cause.

“I know that only Jesus can take care of me and keep me going. Whether He ever heals my high blood pressure or not, it's comforting to know that He's in control, and that He will take care of me one way or another.”

I'm not taking any medication at the moment, and am presently praying about whether I should go back to the doctor, or what other course of action I should take in the future. When I decided to stop taking the drugs temporarily, I knew it was risky. It can be very dangerous to stop taking blood pressure medicine—even more dangerous to stop taking it

than it is to not start taking it in the first place. But the Lord promised that He would keep me and protect me through the time of transition, and that I wouldn't suffer any harm.

So I shared what I was doing with the Home, and asked for united prayer for the Lord's protection. TTL, He didn't fail! After the first initial jump and a few uncomfortable side effects, my blood pressure has now pretty much stabilized back to where it was for the last few years—still high, but miraculously lower than it has sometimes been in recent years—even lower than it sometimes was when I was taking the medication. TYJ!

All that to say, I've done a lot of different things to try to lower my blood pressure, and I'm very thankful that I have, because it's hard to have faith that the Lord is either going to heal you or take care of you when you know you haven't done your part—by keeping His health rules, by faithfully asking for prayer, as well as asking the Lord what to do, and obeying what He says. I feel that I'm at least obeying and doing my part, and so I can have confidence that whatever happens is in the Lord's hands and is all part of His plan for my life. And even though my blood pressure is still high, I've had lots of other health

benefits as a result of the changes I've made in my lifestyle.

For years, I suffered almost unbearable continuous heartburn, and often couldn't even sleep because it was so bad. I had no end of digestive troubles, bleeding hemorrhoids, as well as many other problems due to being overweight. Now, I have very little digestive trouble, only occasional heartburn, and I feel better overall than I have in years. In the end, I know that only Jesus can take care of me and keep me going. Whether He ever heals my high blood pressure or not, it's comforting to know that He's in control, and that He will take care of me one way or another.

As you can see, the main part of my testimony is that the Lord has kept me all these years in spite of everything.—In spite of having high blood pressure, and in spite of the blood pressure medicines. Ha! That's actually quite a testimony in itself, just not the kind of testimony that we usually think of as being miraculous. But it has been miraculous just the same. The Lord said that the Enemy has been trying to afflict me and snuff out my life since my youth, and that I would have been dead long ago if it weren't for His miraculous love and care. So every day has been a complete miracle. TYJ!

Top 10 Facts About High Blood Pressure

By Candace Paul, Coach in Natural Healing

And the Natural Healing Process

Do you suffer from high blood pressure? Also termed hypertension, many people are not even aware of its presence and dangers. Here are ten things you may want to know.

One

High blood pressure is not a disease!

It is the body's defensive and corrective measure, initiated to cope with pathological conditions in various functions of the body, such as general toxemia, impaired kidney function, glandular disturbances, defective calcium metabolism, degenerative changes in arteries (arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis), overweight, emotionally-caused dysfunction in vasomotor* mechanism, etc. When the arteries become obstructed with plaque and cholesterol, they harden and constrict with arteriosclero-

sis, and the circulation of blood through the vessels becomes difficult, forcing the blood through narrower passageways. As a result, blood pressure becomes elevated.

(*vasomotor: Relating to, causing, or regulating constriction or dilation of blood vessels.)

Two

Hypertension is precipitated by a number of factors.

In addition to arteriosclerosis, hypertension is often precipitated by cigarette smoking, stress, obesity, excessive use of stimulants such as coffee or tea, drug abuse, high sodium intake, and the use of contraceptives.

Three

A normal blood pressure reads 120 over 80 (120/80).

Normal blood pressure readings can vary from 100/

70 to 140/90. While readings of 140/90 to 160/90 or 160/95 indicate borderline hypertension, any reading over 180/115 is severely elevated.

Four

People with a family history of hypertension may be more likely to suffer from high blood pressure.

Five

Hypertension is often asymptomatic.

Advanced warning signs can include headaches, sweating, a rapid pulse, shortness of breath, dizziness, and vision disturbances. Because hypertension often shows no signs, having your blood pressure checked regularly is important, especially for those individuals in high risk categories.

Six

It is important to eliminate the reason for elevated blood pressure and not just treat the symptoms.

The objective of the biologically-oriented doctor (one who treats disease through the natural healing process) is not to lower blood pressure with drugs or even with specific foods or vitamins, but to eliminate the reason for the elevation—

Question:

How important is it for Family members to check their blood pressure? Here it says that it's important to have it checked regularly, even if there are no symptoms. In general, we in the Family don't go to doctors all that much unless there's an actual reason—we wouldn't want everybody panicking and thinking they need to start going out to doctors all the time. What is the balance or criterion on this? When would it be good to get something like that checked, how often or in what situations? *(Please see answer from Dr. Koger on page 8.)*

Answer:

(*Dr. Koger speaking:*) If you're in the high-risk category for high blood pressure, which most people aren't, it's probably a good idea to get your blood pressure checked on a regular basis—but how often is according to your faith and what the Lord shows you. For some people once a year might be enough, or even less often, but others might prefer to have it checked more often than that. It also depends on the situation you're in. If you're able to get your blood pressure checked for free by either the government or a friend or contact, then it might be worth it. But if it costs money to go for the checkups, you may not want to do so very often—unless the Lord shows you that you need to, of course.

As with all health matters, it comes down to you and your faith. The Lord is able to keep you if you're doing your part by eating right and living right (which includes following whatever particular instructions He's given you). If the Lord is leading you to have your blood pressure checked regularly—and I'm not saying it's a bad thing, because everyone has different needs—then you shouldn't be condemned about it. But you have to realize that if you are visiting the doctor often on account of high blood pressure, you can be sure that he's probably going to want you to take medication, so you have to be prepared for that. (And taking blood pressure medication isn't something you should take without hearing from the Lord about it first, since there are numerous side effects.)

Most people in the Family are pretty healthy. You've lived healthy lives and have been taught how to live right through the MO Letters. You are way healthier than most people in the System and have way fewer problems with diseases and afflictions, high and low blood pressure included. So I don't suggest that it become the new rage to be so concerned about your blood pressure—going to doctors, getting it checked, etc. If you want to from time to time, that's fine. But if you've been living a healthy life—which most of you have—then you don't really have much to worry about. And even if you do have a problem with your blood pressure, you don't have to worry or be overly concerned. You have the Lord on your side, Who will help

to keep it from reaching extremely dangerous levels, as you look to Him, do what you can, and follow His personalized advice and counsel.



i.e., to remove the causes of the condition. When these are removed, the blood pressure will go down by itself.

Seven

High blood pressure can be of emotional origin.

It can be caused by stress, worries, fear, pressures, competitive life, or prolonged nervous stress. These underlying causes of emotional origins must be removed before any nutritional or biological treatments can be successful.

Eight

A salt-free diet is essential for lowering blood pressure.

Lowering your salt intake alone is not enough. You must eliminate all salt from your diet! You can do this by carefully reading all labels from processed foods and avoiding those that have the words, "soda," "sodium," or the symbol, "Na" on the label. These indicate that the product contains salt.

Some foods and food additives that should be avoided on a low-salt diet include: Accent flavor-enhancer (monosodium glutamate); baking soda; canned vegetables; commercially prepared foods; certain dentifrices and over-the-counter medicines that contain ibuprofen, such as Advil and Nuprin; diet soft drinks; food with mold inhibitors, preservatives, and

Question:

It seems there are several schools of thought on this—some experts say to just reduce salt; this source says to eliminate it all. It would seem that to eliminate every single iota of salt from your diet would be very difficult in our communal lifestyles. How should Family members with high blood pressure apply this counsel? Is it necessary to completely eliminate salt from your diet, or is a substantial reduction sufficient?

Answer:

(Dr. Koger speaking:) If you have high blood pressure it's a good idea to significantly reduce the amount of salt you take in. That's not to say that you can never eat anything with salt in it, but the less you can eat the better. Trying to avoid heavily processed or preserved foods will help you tremendously, as well as avoiding adding extra salt or salty condiments (such as soy sauce) to your meals. It might take a little while to get used to not eating so much salt, especially if you really like your food flavored with it, but it won't be long before you get used to it and might actually enjoy it. There are other things that you can flavor your food with as a substitute for salt—herbs, spices, cayenne pepper, etc.

most sugar substitutes; meat tenderizers; softened water; and soy sauces. These products can cause cells to swell and interfere with the effectiveness of diuretics used in the treatment of hypertension. *(See Q&A above.)*

Nine

A high fiber diet is recommended.

A high fiber diet and supplemental fiber including seeded foods like brown rice, buckwheat, millet and oats are recommended along with plenty of raw fresh fruits and vegetables, such as apples, asparagus, bananas, broccoli, cabbage, raisins, squash, and sweet potatoes. Eat small meals and do not overeat. Remember, obesity is one of the main causes of high blood pressure and heart disease.

Ten

Avoid foods that are high in fat and cholesterol.

Foods such as aged meats and cheeses, anchovies, chicken liver, chocolate, fava beans, pickled herring, sour cream, bacon, corned beef, pork sausage, smoked or processed meats, gravies and bouillons. Eat only white fish and skinless turkey or chicken.

High Blood Pressure Helpers

In researching this topic for Caleb, we discovered quite a few foods (through a WND study, and confirmed by other research we did) that actually lower blood pressure. These foods are bananas, celery, cayenne pepper, garlic and oatmeal. He also cut out salt and switched to a diet high in vegetables, whole grains and fruits, with less protein, red meat, etc., and using olive oil for salads, cooking, etc. He has also been taking 400 i.u. of natural source Vitamin E, and 500-1000 mg. of Vitamin C daily.—And his blood pressure has been back to normal! (He also lost about 30 pounds of excess weight!) This might help others who are in this risk category.

From Sonnet (of Caleb), Canada

Sodium and Salt

Web reprint

Are found mainly in processed and prepared foods

Sodium and sodium chloride—known commonly as salt—occur naturally in foods, usually in small amounts. Salt and other sodium-containing ingredients are often used in food processing. Some people add salt and salty sauces, such as soy sauce, to their food at the table, but most dietary sodium or salt comes from foods to which salt has already been added during processing or preparation. Although many

people add salt to enhance the taste of foods, their preference may weaken with eating less salt.

In the body, sodium plays an essential role in regulation of fluids and blood pressure. Many studies in diverse populations have shown that a high sodium intake is associated with higher blood pressure. Evidence suggests that many people at risk for high blood pressure reduce their chances of developing this

condition by consuming less salt or sodium.

This is because sodium causes vasoconstriction, the narrowing of blood vessels. Therefore, the amount of space blood has to travel through decreases. This decrease creates an increase in the resistance the blood has to overcome. This increased resistance makes it more difficult for the arteries to expand with each beat of the heart, causing the internal pressure to rise.

The Role of Diet in High Blood Pressure

By Lynn Grieger, RD, CDE (Web reprint)

What we eat plays a large role in preventing and treating high blood pressure. According to the National High Blood Pressure Education Program (NHBPEP), the following dietary changes have been proven to help reduce your risk:

◆ *Maintain a healthy weight.* People who are overweight are two to six times more likely to develop high blood pressure than people who are not. The five-year Primary Prevention of High Blood Pressure Trial showed that a loss of even six pounds was enough to significantly decrease blood pressure. Start reducing

those calories, avoiding sweets and fats, and, if you are overweight, make losing five to 10 pounds over the next six months a primary goal.

◆ *Reduce your salt intake.* Even a modest reduction in salt consumption may prove beneficial in lowering your blood pressure. Most of the salt in the average American diet does not come from the salt shaker; look to processed and fast foods as the primary culprits. Use more fresh and whole foods, and avoid foods in boxes and cans and fast food as much as you can to lower salt intake.

◆ *Limit alcohol consumption.* Having three drinks a day is linked to an increase in blood pressure. The NHBPEP estimates that up to 11% of all high blood pressure cases may be directly linked to alcohol consumption.

Possible Dietary Strategies:

A host of dietary strategies may be proven to lower blood pressure. Try the above suggestions first, then consider these additional strategies. None will cause harm, and they just might work. (*Eve: Of course, don't forget to confirm your intentions with*

Exercise and Weight Loss Cut High Blood Pressure

(*Reuters Health:*) A diet-and-exercise program can cut high blood pressure, research suggests. Overweight people with mild to moderate hypertension can drop their blood pressure and cut their heart disease risk by becoming active and cutting calories and fat from their menus. Moreover, researchers found, this blood pressure dip holds up in times of stress. In a study of 99 men and women with elevated blood pressure, investigators found that a diet-and-exercise regimen bested exercise alone in improving their condition. For some, it worked as well as medication would be expected to.

the Lord first—only He really knows!)

◆ *Increase potassium intake.* Most fruits and vegetables are high in potassium. A few studies have shown that people with a low potassium intake have a higher risk of high blood pressure. Fruits and vegetables are important sources of a variety of nutrients and phytochemicals as well, so what have you got to lose?

(Good dietary sources of potassium include bananas, potatoes, avocados, tomato juice, grapefruit juice, and acorn squash.)

◆ *Drink more milk.* It appears that increasing calcium intake may help lower blood pressure, especially for people who rarely consume milk. Calcium supplements do not appear to reduce risk, so add a glass of milk to your meals and your bones and blood

vessels may both thank you.

◆ *Look to the ocean.* The omega-three fatty acids found in saltwater fish appear to have a role in lowering blood pressure. Choose seafood for meals two times each week to help keep blood pressure under control.

◆ Center meals around carbohydrates such as whole-grained pasta, rice, legumes and vegetables.

◆ Use meat as part of a meal, not the primary focus.

◆ Enjoy fruit for snacks and desserts.

The Bottom Line:

What we eat has been proven to lower blood pressure levels, and most likely will also help prevent the onset of high blood pressure. Start a trend for yourself and your children today.

Stress Plus Caffeine

Reuters

People who have high blood pressure should take it easy on the caffeine when they face stressful situations. A study published in the *American Journal of Hypertension* suggests caffeine can push blood pressure to unhealthy levels when taken in stressful situations.

On average, caffeine alone raised blood pressure by 5 to 15 millimeters—which, for

example, would push a blood pressure reading of 120/60 up to 135/75. Anything over 140/90 is considered unhealthy. This rise took many of the high-risk students, whose average blood pressure was about 130/73, above desirable levels. Adding the stress of exam days took it even higher.

The researchers noted that other studies show that

people turn to caffeine when they are stressed—and this might be precisely the wrong thing to do.



Spotlight On Saturated Fats

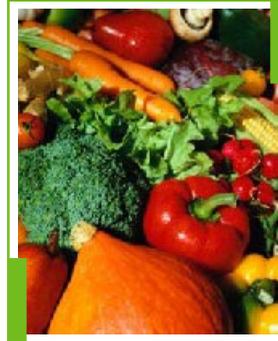
From Columbia University's Health Education Program web site

Saturated fat increases the level of low density lipoproteins (LDL), which tend to stick to the sides of the arterial wall. This deposit of fat is known as atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis begins with the accumulation of fatty streaks on the inner arterial walls. When this fatty buildup enlarges and becomes hardened with minerals, such as calcium, it forms plaque. Plaque stiffens the arteries and narrows the passages through them. Thus, blood pressure rises. This rise in blood pressure is due to the arteries' lack of elasticity.

According to a Harvard research study, the DASH Diet could be another possible way to decrease blood pressure. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The DASH trials began with 459 adults with systolic pressure of less than 160 and diastolic pressure between 80 and 95. The DASH study randomly assigned people to one of

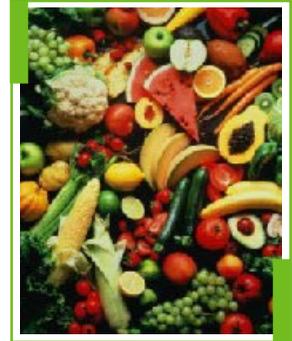
three diets for eight weeks.

The first diet was the Control Diet. This diet had levels of fat and cholesterol that matched the average American's diet. It had lower than average levels of potassium, magnesium, and calcium. The other two groups were divided into a "Fruit and Vegetable Diet" and a "Combination Diet."



The Fruit and Vegetable group matched the control group in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and protein. However, the difference was that this diet had more potassium and magnesium.

The fruit and vegetable diet reduced systolic blood pressure 2.8 mm Hg more than the control diet. It also reduced diastolic blood pressure 1.1 mm Hg more than the control. The Combination Diet had less total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol than the fruit and



vegetable and control diets. The combination diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, also had more potassium, magnesium, calcium, fiber, and protein. This combination diet reduced systolic blood pressure 5.5 mm Hg more than the control diet. It also reduced diastolic blood pressure 3.0 mm Hg more than the control diet.

To adapt the DASH Diet into your lifestyle, follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Make gradual changes in your eating habits.
- ◆ Center your meal around carbohydrates, such as whole-grained pastas, whole-grained rice, beans, or vegetables.
- ◆ Increase fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Treat meat as one part of the whole meal.
- ◆ Decrease use of fat.

Readers

Do you have any tips, lessons, experiences or testimonies to share on dealing with, handling, or overcoming high blood pressure? Please write in today and share them with us all!

So, You Want To Spot Reduce? Here's How...

[B]esides launching millions of sit-ups, leg lifts and torso twists, the desire for a toned and taut physique has sold a long line of exercise devices of dubious worth. Countless inventions, such as vibrating belts and “gut-busting” contraptions, have claimed to miraculously tighten and tone our trouble spots. But the miracles we were expecting never materialized, and our “spots” remained “unreduced.”

What's wrong with spot reduction? Where did we go wrong? In our efforts to tone our bodies we neglected the most important factor: fat. Exercises such as crunches or leg lifts improve the tone and endurance of the muscles, but they don't burn fat. When we do exercises that elevate the heart rate, such as bicycling, walking or aerobic dance, the body will draw upon its fat stores for energy.

Alternative solutions: Eating a low-fat diet and following an exercise program that combines aerobic activity and strength training is the key to changing the shape of your body. In addition to burning calories through aerobic activity, strength training will increase the amount of muscle, which burns even

more calories. But many people shun the idea of intensive exercise, scared off by the idea of five-mile runs, barbells or aerobic classes.

Thankfully, any aerobic activity that elevates your heart rate can help you burn fat and take off unwanted pounds. Many experts recommend doing at least three sessions of 20 minutes of aerobic activity per week. Ideally, for long-term weight control, you should engage in at least four sessions per week, for 45 minutes each time.

For instance, these enjoyable alternatives to traditional aerobic exercise are effective fat burners:

- ✦ Mountain biking
- ✦ In-line skating (rollerblading)
- ✦ Brisk walking
- ✦ Dancing
- ✦ Hiking
- ✦ Skiing
- ✦ Water sports

In addition to these activities, which can be done solo or with friends and family, take advantage of the wide variety of fitness tapes currently on the market. Choose an activity because it interests you, not because it is touted as a great workout.

A few things to keep in

mind when starting any new activity:

1. Don't start out too hard or too fast, or you may injure yourself or quit before enjoying any benefit.

2. Always concentrate on enjoying yourself, rather than on what a particular exercise might do for you.

3. Keep your exercise comfortable and only increase intensity after your body becomes accustomed to new activity levels.

And always check with your doctor (*Eve! And the Lord!*) before beginning any exercise program, especially if you're over 40, or have cardiovascular risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or a family history of heart disease.

A final word about toning exercises: Just because exercises like leg lifts and crunches won't budge the fat does not mean they are not beneficial. Unlike some aerobic activities, these exercises can strengthen and tone specific muscles of the body. The best way to shape up is to incorporate strength and toning exercises with aerobic exercises. Before you know it, you'll be on your way to looking and feeling better.

▶ HOW TO GET OVER FOOT-IN-MOUTH DISEASE

From Let Her Know You Love Her by Bill Farrel

Have you ever said something that you *really* wished you hadn't?—Even as the words tumbled out of your mouth you regretted them, wished you could take them back and become invisible? The problem is that there is nothing that could possibly make up for what you said.

This is embarrassing when it happens with strangers, but even more devastating when it happens with your spouse. You forget a birthday, overlook

How to mend a bad situation you created:

▶ *Check your attitude.*

The mistakes you make often are a result of a bad attitude you have allowed to fester. Unresolved issues, misinterpreted glances, or a lack of desire to understand the way your spouse operates leave you feeling frustrated, angry or hurt. Ask yourself, “Am I willing to let him/her back into my heart? Is this really that big of an offense? Is it going to be worth the loneliness and tension to hold on to this conflict?”

▶ *Seize the opportunities.*

You have to recognize the opportunities your spouse gives you to re-establish your relationship. Your spouse may not outwardly say, “Look, you big louse, I forgive you for the stupid thing you did, and now I’m ready to give you a second chance.” Look for the clues: notice his/her needs and respond in a gentle and strategic fashion.

If you respond to the clues, you will see your love grow. Don’t retaliate, become self-righteous in your error, or draw into yourself. Remember that

you got yourself into this situation. With every opportunity you overlook or ignore, you jeopardize a small misunderstanding escalating into a larger one.

▶ *Say, “I’m sorry.”*

These two little words can bridge most problems. Just make sure that it is genuine. Apologize for what you—and you alone—did. Don’t complicate it by adding that you were provoked or justified. Be willing to be vulnerable in your regret of your mistake.

▶ *Make the apology as big as the faux pas.*

When you mess up small, a small apology will do fine. But when you have taken a major fall, you need to take grand measures to rekindle the love between the two of you.

▶ *Learn from your mistake.*

Every problem situation gives you another opportunity to learn a lesson in caring. Assess why you offended or hurt your spouse in the first place. Look for ways that you won’t have to repeat the same kind of offense.

HOW TO TURN HER ON...

Tell her you love her every chance you get. A call to her while out, even if it’s just a voice mail message, will be like champagne on a rough day. If she lives on e-mail, send her a daily on-line love letter. Leave a note on her side of the bed.

an anniversary, make a comment at a party and in the joviality of the moment say something too personal. When you hurt a spouse you jeopardize the love relationship and distance yourself from the person you love the most.

KEEPING PASSION IN MARRIAGE

By John Gray, for Redbook magazine

There are few sweeter or more enviable sights than a long-married man and woman who still gaze ardently at each other. That look of love after many years together is what we all want in a marriage. But passion with staying power can seem like a contradiction in terms.

It is easy to achieve when you're first dating. You can't keep your thoughts or your hands off each other, and there isn't much that could—or does—keep you apart. After you've lived together for several years, it's easy to take for granted all those things that got you together in the first place. You may start to feel you've got "marital tenure," so you can just coast straight through till your golden anniversary. (Sign that you need an attitude adjustment: One of you says, "Well, sure we love each other. We're married, aren't we?")

Passion can start to seem

a lot like the weather: People are talking about it, but no one is doing a thing.

Revert to courting: It may sound simplistic, but the best way to keep passion alive for the long haul is to date your spouse. The very act of courting brings out the best in us. We focus our energy on making the other person feel special. We work hard to showcase our most attractive features, whether it's our wit, our empathy, or our eyes; to tell our best stories; to be our most charming.

One woman I know who wasn't an enthusiastic cook learned to make lasagna, her fiancé's favorite dish. The first night she fixed it, he showed up with champagne and two crystal champagne flutes in his jeans pockets.

The point is to make the effort. No man who is seriously wooing a woman—and no woman who is seriously interested in a man—would ever show up late for a special night out. Don't let yourself off the hook now that you're married.

Rediscover the power of touch: When you were first dating, exploring each other's skin gave you both a delicious charge. An affectionate hand on the

HOW TO TURN HER ON...

Little things do count. Women want frequent reminders that they are loved—the love note, the backrub ... these little things say: "The very thought of you..."

shoulder, a light kiss on the cheek, the very act of hand-holding says, "You are loved, you are adored, you are special to me."

As for sex: Though we shouldn't have to say it, you can't have a passionate relationship without it. One of the dangers of marital routine is that partners feel they can reject each other's advances. You're not always going to be in the mood at the same time. But when you're not, try not to say plain old "no." Instead, say, "A part of me wants to make love, but with all that's happened today, I think I'd enjoy it even more if we waited." Keeping the door open is crucial because if a man hears only "no," it's a blow to his sexual self-confidence. Just as many women need love to open up to sex, most men need sex to open up to love.

Turning a marriage from blah to ahh! doesn't happen overnight. It will take time and effort and patience. But can there be any doubt that your relationship deserves it?

HOW TO TURN HER ON...

Use flower power. Give her roses (the centuries-old symbol of passion) or a single flower in her favorite color. When the bouquet droops, take the petals and scatter them on her pillow.

The following article...

...contains some tried-and-proven natural, herbal remedies which some women have used with good success in combating some of the symptoms of menopause. However, we wanted to stress again that using these herbs is not the new standard or “must” for every situation. If you are in a place where these are accessible and affordable, the Lord may lead you to try some of them out. On the other hand, when you check in with Him He might lead you otherwise, knowing that these herbs would *not* bring about the best results for your body. So don’t forget to always check in with Him first—and know that whether or not you have these items available, as we do what we can, He will do what we can’t. We love you!

Herbal relief

From June, USA

I’ve found that regularly taking a couple of herbs has helped me tremendously with my menopausal symptoms. Taking Ginseng and Dong Quai on a daily basis seems to pretty much eliminate the hot flashes, and also helps to steady my temperament. I also seem to sleep better.

I found out how much they helped when I stopped taking them recently for awhile due to a move and schedule disruption. Within about a week and a half I started getting serious hot flashes again, not only at night as I was before, but also during the day. Within a week of taking these herbs again, the flashes stopped. So I guess it helps! Another sister also experienced Dong Quai helping her with the



hot flashes.

Here is some more information on various herbs which can be a blessing for those going through menopause.

St. John’s Wort

Benefits: Anti-depressant, relieves anxiety, treats insomnia. May be helpful in treating menstrual difficulties, including cramping.

Cautions: May cause sun sensitivity, and rashes in severe cases. (Should not be taken by pregnant women, or those taking heart medication.)

Signs of toxicity: None known

Recommended dosage: I have taken 500 mg a day and found it helpful. Scientific research on St. John’s Wort recommends 900 mg a day (with food).

St. John’s Wort is a bushy perennial with numerous yellow flowers speckled with tiny black dots that, when rubbed, release a red pigment containing the active ingredient *hypericum*. It grows in dry gravelly soil and is native to many parts of the world, including Europe and the United States. St. John’s Wort has been called the most well-researched herb in the world and has a 2,400-year history of safe and effective use in many folk and herbal recipes. In Germany, more than 50% of depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders are treated with this herb. More and more therapists are recommending St. John’s Wort to treat mild depression.

The natural ingredients in St. John’s Wort support the natural brain function by helping the brain maintain healthy levels of certain aminos that act as neurotransmitters within the brain and cause you to have a better feeling of well-being. St. John’s Wort also helps support levels of serotonin, a brain chemical involved in brain function which helps maintain a “happy feeling.”

Dong Quai (*Angelica sinensis*)

Dong quai is an aromatic herb that grows in China, Korea, and Japan. It is considered the ultimate, all-purpose woman's tonic herb. It is used for almost every gynecological complaint from regulating the menstrual cycle to treating menopausal symptoms caused by hormonal changes.

Dong quai is frequently used by the Chinese as a strengthening treatment for the heart, spleen, liver and kidneys. Both men and women use the herb as a general blood tonic.

Dong quai contains vitamins E, A and B-12. Researchers have isolated at least six coumarin derivatives that exert antispasmodic and vasodilatory effects. Antispasmodics are a remedy for menstrual cramps. The essential oil in dong quai contains Ligustilide, butylphthalide and numerous other minor components. Ferulic acid and various polysaccharides are also found in Dong quai's root. These elements can prevent spasms, reduce blood clotting and relax peripheral blood vessels. Research has shown that dong quai produces a balancing effect on estrogen activity.

Modern treatments prescribe the herb to combat PMS and to help women resume normal menstruation after using birth control pills.

The herb has been found useful in balancing and treating many female systems and cycles. Dong quai's constituents can act to stimulate the central nervous system which can remedy weakness and headaches associated with menstrual disorders. It strengthens internal reproductive organs, helps with endometriosis and internal bleeding or bruising. It relieves menopausal conditions such as vaginal dryness and hot flashes.

The herb has also been used as a blood purifier, to promote blood circulation and nourish the blood in both sexes. It is high in iron content and may help to prevent iron deficiency and anemia. Studies show that it can aid in regulating blood sugar and in lowering blood pressure.

Dong quai has a mild sedative effect which can relieve stress and calms the nerves. It has also been used to stimulate the uterus during childbirth, treat insomnia, alleviate constipation and for migraine headaches.

Parts Used: Whole root. Found in tea, herbal preparations, capsules, extract and recipes.

Common Use: The root has earned a reputation as the "ultimate herb" for women. It is used to restore balance to a woman's hormones and cycles and is helpful in restoring menstrual regularity and for conditions of the reproductive system. It is not recommended during pregnancy, for women with excessive menstrual flow or for people taking blood thinning agents.

Dong Quai

(Also known as *Angelica Root*.)

Contains phytoestrogens, or plant estrogens.

Phytoestrogens have been shown to be helpful in relieving hot flashes.

Benefits: Menstrual regulator, the Chinese say it "purifies the blood" and "regulates the hormone balance and flow." Good in PMS [pre-menstrual syndrome]. Reduces hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and depression. Works well in a formula that also has both ginseng and vitamin B6.

Cautions: Chinese texts also advise against using this herb when you have an acute infection such as a cold or flu. Like St. John's Wort, this plant can sensitize skin to UV light, and is not recommended during pregnancy or times of excessive menstrual flow.

Suggested dosage: Others and I have taken 500 mg a day and found it helpful in relieving hot flashes. However, recently my hot flashes have greatly increased to where that amount doesn't work any more, and I'm now taking more. On the bottle I have it recommends using three 500 mg capsules a day—which means up to 1500 mg.

It has been recommended that you stop taking Dong Quai for one week out of every month, around your period time.

Ginseng

Part of herb used: Roots

Benefits: Stimulates blood vessels, increases blood supply to the brain, decreases blood sugar, increases stress resistance, aids in relieving the fatigue and depression commonly reported during menopause, aids in the production of estrogen.

Cautions: Consult your doctor if you have high blood pressure.

Signs of toxicity: Nausea, vomiting.

Suggested dosage: I have been taking 400 mg a day. However, on the bottle it



recommends up to 800 mg three times daily (preferably after a meal). Stop taking it for one week out of each month.

◆ Once your periods stop you can switch from using **Dong Quai** to **Black Cohosh**, which also helps to regulate hormone levels.

Licorice:

Stimulates estrogen production. (Women with high blood pressure [hypertension] should not take any herbal preparation containing licorice.)

Dad speaking

Praise the Lord for His natural health boosters, and His Own tips and tricks of the trade that can help make things in our bodies run a little more smoothly sometimes. Remember to always seek Him first before trying anything new, as He knows what's best for your body. There's no doubt these have been a great help to some, but make sure it's the best for you too! And if you are in some place where these things just aren't available, remember—the Lord is not limited. He's the same yesterday, today and forever, and when He wants to heal and help He doesn't need anything to begin on. So go to Him in full faith and claim what you need—He's there for you and He never fails.

More tips which may eliminate the need for the above herbs:

◆ *Eat a well balanced diet:*

As with all herbal healing, diet is just as important as the herbs being ingested. This is all the more true when dealing with menopause. Nutritional support can go far to aid us in dealing with the affects of menopause on our bodies.

We can base our diet on whole grains and legumes and supplement with sea vegetables and greens daily, while carefully limiting or eliminating rich protein foods such as beef, chicken, eggs, and dairy products. Avoid soft drinks and caffeine, processed and refined foods, and sugar.

Include low-fat, high-fiber foods rich in

phytoestrogens and calcium. Phytoestrogens are naturally occurring compounds found in plants that are similar to the female hormone estrogen. Foods rich in phytoestrogens (eg. soy, soy products and linseed) may assist in relieving some menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes. Avoid dairy products; limit consumption to small amounts of yogurt or buttermilk. Dairy products, sugar, and meat are thought to cause hot flashes.

Diet should consist of 50% raw foods and protein supplements (for low blood sugar). Avoid animal products except for white

fish, and eliminate caffeine from the diet. Add blackstrap molasses, broccoli, dandelion greens, kelp, salmon with bones, sardines, and low-fat yogurt to the diet.

♦ *Exercise regularly:*

Three times a week for twenty minutes or more is best. Choose an exercise that stresses the long bones of the body because this sets up a mini-electrical current in the bone, helping to draw

the calcium in. Swimming, for example, does not have this beneficial effect on calcium absorption, even though it offers good aerobic exercise.

Regular weight-bearing exercise (exercise which is done on the feet such as walking, jogging, dancing) in moderation can help slow bone loss. Aerobic exercise (exercise which increases the heart rate) is required for cardiovascular health and strength, and flexibility

exercises are useful in maintaining muscle tone and keeping the body's joints, ligaments, muscles and tendons mobile. Exercise also maintains balance and provides people with a sense of well-being. Enjoy regular, moderate exposure to sunlight.

♦ *Avoid stress and practice stress management techniques.*

Twinkles

By Gina Bridgeman, Guideposts

One day when my daughter Maria and I were playing on the bed, she suddenly pointed to the fine lines beside my eyes.

"What are these?" she asked.

"Wrinkles," I said. I thought, *Oh, great—now my two-year-old has to remind me I'm not getting any younger.*

"Twinkles," she said, pleased with herself.

"No, wrin—" I stopped in mid-correction. "You know, that makes them sound like something good, Maria. Twinkles they are."

That night as I looked in the mirror, I realized that my twinkles do come from smiling and laughing, forming a kind of road map of the

great joy with which God has blessed my life. From parents who filled our house with laughter and taught us not to take ourselves too seriously, and brothers who are still two of the funniest people I know, I learned the value of a laugh a day. If there's one gift God has given me in abundance, it's joy, and I have the twinkles to prove it.

I'm turning forty, and while I haven't been particularly excited about it,

or about those subtle lines or my one pesky gray hair that returns each time I snip it off, I'm ready to look at it all in a new way. Mark Twain wrote, "Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been." So rejoice in the twinkles! They're a sign to the world that God has given me a lot to smile and laugh about.

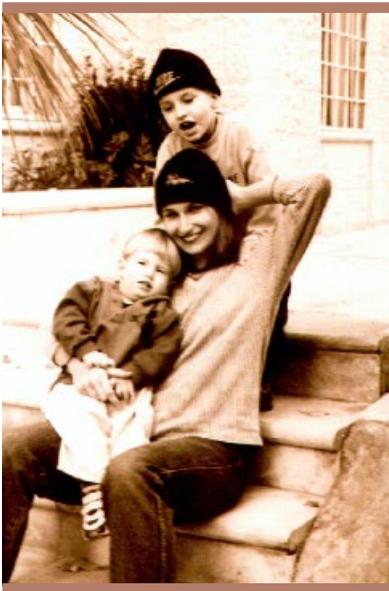
Joyful Creator, in Your grace continue to fill my life with laughter, joy and an abundance of twinkles.



FROM HEAVEN'S DOORS

“WHEN THOU PASSEST THROUGH THE WATERS...”

—My delivery through affliction



From Sara P. (25), Middle East

Pic: Sara P. (of Shad) and their children Salem (4½) and Kayden (2)

I would have never thought my story was one worth telling, as it is not one of these glorious victories over affliction, or a big heavy miracle outcome. But I have still felt I should write this, maybe to encourage to those of you who have had complications or not such easy deliveries.

Background

When I had my first child in Thailand, I had a C-section after a 23-hour labor—that is from the start of the contractions until the birth. The labor had progressed slowly but normally, though from the beginning the doctor said that the head remained very high, and I didn't lose my mucous plug until very far along. I got to 9½ centimeters dilated, and did not progress past there.

After trying a number of different things, the doctor finally said I was going to have to have a C-section. At that point I was ready for anything and just wanted it

all to be over. Having the baby in my arms after all that was the greatest feeling. It didn't matter what it took—that kid was worth it all the way. My recovery wasn't the easiest, but I had a lot of help. God bless Sarah I., who was there with Aaron (my husband) and I. They took care of the baby for a good part of the first week to 10 days.

I learned a lot from that first birth. Most of all, it really humbled me and broke down my nice plan of being totally in control of my labor and delivery, ha! I stayed pretty “in control” until the last six hours. By then I was so tired and it just seemed to go on forever, getting heavier and heavier, and I just lost control. Thank God Sarah I. was there. She was with me through thick and thin. Anyway, it was a victory—I had a cute boy. The doctor said the complications came because the baby's head was in the wrong position, and therefore couldn't come

down the birth canal. He felt it was a chance complication and would not affect future deliveries.

The Second Delivery

The doctor had told me I shouldn't get pregnant for at least a year, due to having had a C-section. We prayed and committed it to the Lord, asking Him to help me not to get pregnant for at least a year. I didn't get pregnant until almost two years later. We moved fields and were in a new situation, but the Lord is faithful, and supplied a top doctor and hospital.

Our doctor here [in the Middle East] is a very sophisticated, modern guy. When he heard my case history, he thought it was more than just the wrong positioning of the baby's head. We have a pretty good working relationship with him; he respects our beliefs and we respect his. He said he would give me a few hours in labor, and if things weren't progressing he would do a C-section, as he also didn't want the former scar under stress. He was quite concerned that as my due date came very close, the baby remained quite high. He prescribed an hour to an hour and a half walk daily to try to bring the baby down.

We had prayer and prophecy at home for my delivery and the Lord gave comforting promises. In a

way, though, I think the Lord was preparing me for the fact that I might not have a natural delivery. The time was getting closer and each passing day needed heavy grace and endurance.

Finally I went into mild labor in the night—light, infrequent contractions. They were light enough that I slept the night through. Little did I know what was ahead of me! The next day passed with manageable contractions, at about five-to 10-minute intervals. If you have ever had a baby, though, you know how even long periods of light contractions can wear you out. I went to the hospital around midnight, as the contractions were getting more regular and a little harder. I was four centimeters dilated.

They gave us an incredible private room and we went there that night. Things seemed to be picking up a little in the night, but when the doctor came at 10 AM and I was still only 4 cm., the baby still very high and my contractions slowing down, he didn't have much hope.

He said he didn't think that I was going to make it the natural route and he was ready to do a C-section right then. But if I wanted to wait and keep trying for natural, he said he was open to that and would wait. As my labor had sort of stopped, though the contractions were still

coming lightly, he suggested we just go home and come back at six the next morning.

He wanted a decision pretty much right away, and we didn't have time to pray about it. I was quite tired, as I had been in labor for two nights and a day. Sensing that I may be having the same problem as last time, I wasn't opposed to the idea of going for a C-section then and there. But since we weren't able to pray it through right then, we decided to wait on it. Then at least we wouldn't feel we had rushed into something like that without being convinced in our hearts that it was His will. I didn't want to have a C-section just because it seemed to be the way to go, without really having a peace about doing it, and maybe then having to wonder for the rest of my life if I made the right choice.

I did wonder later if I should have just gone ahead with the operation right then, despite the busy labor room and the pressure of giving the doctor an answer right away. So I asked the Lord if I had made the right decision in waiting, and the answer He gave me was very comforting.

My Gethsemane

Going home for me was hard, facing the thought of the labor still ahead, plus battling with the feeling that maybe I should have just gone for an operation right

then. I received a very strength-giving prophecy when I asked if it was the right decision to wait:

JESUS SPEAKING

You did well to wait, for you showed you were more concerned about how I felt about it, and did not want to rush a decision that you would later regret having made so fast if you felt you didn't really seek Me.

I will honor you honoring Me, and I will not make this more than you can bear. I understand you are in the midst of it all and battle the weariness and lost sleep, and facing yet more work can be less than inviting. So do not feel condemned for your muddled thoughts and feelings.

All I ask is this: Trust, and be not afraid of the outcome. Let Me be with you each and every step of the way—comforting, guiding and reassuring—and pray for My grace for the moment, for it will all soon be over. I ask you not to try to reason it all out now and get it all spiritually correct in your mind and heart, for the Enemy will come in with discouragement and heaviness and a feeling of defeat. Just rest and trust now and go step by step, and we can go over the details afterwards. Okay?

One or two hours after we got home, the contractions picked up again. I sat on a couch chair (the most comfortable position for me) and basically didn't move

from that chair for about 13 hours. All afternoon I had the *When You Need Him Most* tape playing, and my theme song was "He Giveth More Grace," as it was just the way I felt. I didn't have the strength any more.

I think everyone has their Gethsemane nights, their wrestling with the angel all night like Jacob did. I have had a few, but this was to be my most severe Gethsemane. I didn't sleep the whole night, as if I fell asleep the contraction would come on too strong for me to get a handle on if it woke me up. The contractions came every 5-6 minutes.

By the time we got off to the hospital again the next morning, I was at the end of myself. I was only 6 cm. dilated, and it had been 29 hours since my last check.

Victory Over Defeat

I was getting very negative and a bit rebellious that Tina (who came to help me during the night and stayed with me) was trying to get me to see things positively, because I was beyond exhaustion. I had been in labor—not all heavy, but still labor—for three days! Thank the Lord that Tina had the faith to pull me out of it!

The nurses encouraged me to get up and walk, to which I argued that I had not an ounce of strength. But I did, and we claimed the Lord's strength. Actually Tina

claimed the Lord's strength for me, and I had that mustard seed of faith that the Lord would pull me through and give me the strength, and He did. They also gave me an IV to nourish me a bit, as the doctor had asked me not to eat or drink in case I would need an operation.

Then it was almost like I got a second wind. It wasn't all in one big gust of strength, but just enough strength to make it through each minute, each contraction, which were now coming every two to three minutes. Finally the doctor broke the water bag. I dilated to 8 cm., but didn't progress past that point. The contractions were the heavy transitional type, but my body was just not responding.

The doctor finally said that it wouldn't go further. My body was not responding to the labor and there was no other way but do a Caesarian. At that point all I could do was thank the Lord for the blessing of modern technology and that the Lord was going to spare my life again. I can understand why so many women died in childbirth before! But the Lord has blessed us by living at this time, where one of the few benefits of modern medicine would make it possible for me to have the baby and still live.

The most amazing thing to me was the turnaround

that happened that morning. Going from where I could barely keep my body up to coping with the heavy contractions, and I didn't "lose it" like I had the first time. I was inspired about that. The Lord miraculously gave me strength that I very obviously didn't have.

Anyway, when it was all over—I had been in labor for three days, hadn't slept for two nights running, plus undergoing an operation on top of it—needless to say, my body was more than exhausted. It was like heaven just to be able to sleep. The Lord had supplied an incredible, private VIP room in the hospital, a top doctor to perform the operation and tend to me afterwards, plus a very sweet and jolly pediatrician, all for free. For all the above we paid the equivalent of about US\$70 (for the anesthesiologist). The hospital staff was very sweet and took such good care of me. I was able to go home after three days with my little guy, Kaydan Jace, 3.75 kg, and 55 cm. long. (Just a few of the mom details for anyone who is interested, ha!)

This second operation was a little harder to recover from than the first one. It took longer and I faced a few more complications along the way, usually because I would get impatient that it was taking so long and I would overdo it somehow. But on the other hand, I

guess because I knew what to expect from the first one, it was easier. I knew that I would get fully whole again, and what to expect from my body. So for better and for worse, ha!

I would like to share one last prophecy that I got at the hospital after the operation, which really encouraged me.

again.

I think I'm still learning even now some of the reasons the Lord allowed this to be my cross, so to speak. Sometimes I've even been a little hesitant to talk about it, because some of these things are like complex situations that aren't black and white; situations that involve prayer, prophecy,

JESUS SPEAKING

You will never know the full effect of the testimony and sample. You say, "What testimony? What sample? For did I not waver and doubt?" My child, though you wavered and though you were weak, it was a testimony of My strength, that despite your weakness, I was strong and I brought you through. Yea, the testimony of lacking in all forms of strength, yet My strength was made perfect. Did I not care for you with utmost care? For I love you, and even in your greatest hour of desperation and tribulation I gave unto you of the very best and I did not forsake you nor leave you destitute. You owe your life now twice back to Me. I have given you back your life now in double measure, for yea, twice you could have lost your life. But I have given it back to you, so cherish your life and enjoy your life and use it to the full.

It was just a sweet and simple prophecy, but it meant a lot to me when I was wondering what was the victory in the whole thing.

The doctor found out that my pelvic bone is somewhat tilted so it prevents the baby from coming down the birth canal, therefore labor does not proceed past a certain point. What can I say? I am thankful to still be alive,

having faith for miracles, and then accepting and trusting in what the Lord doesn't do.

I had another situation recently that brought to light again these things that I'd sort of tucked away. I had a tubular pregnancy, which by a miracle miscarried on its own. It was quite a long haul, though, and a few times it looked like I'd have to have the operation,

because the natural process was either going too slow or had stopped altogether.

Again, it was a case of getting desperate with the Lord for the miracle, doing my part of getting right with the Lord in different things He'd been trying to get my attention on, and also trusting that whatever happened was in His control, and He would take care of me.

One thing the Lord told me was that He has to put some of us through these

deep experiences to bring out spiritual principles in order for us to learn how to see them, and in the future help others.

I think one of the main things I'm learning at the moment is that the Lord can bring you through anything, and learning to claim His strength for the moment, going step by step. It definitely materialized the verse for me: "My strength is made perfect in weakness," and "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew

their strength."

So like I said, it's not like some heavy spiritual experience happened or anything. I know other women have had even more trying times. But I hope this can encourage someone that the Lord can even come through in ways like just giving you that extra strength you need when you seriously have nothing, and giving you the grace to face whatever happens and still seeing His love and hand in it.

A PROMISE FOR CHILD BIRTH

By Jesus

I am the Lord God Who rules over the hearts of the sons and daughters of men. I know your frame; I remember that you are dust. I have your times in My hand, and I know exactly what is needed for each individual, to bring about the purpose that I desire in their lives.

To you reading this testimony who might be pregnant with your first child, or who are not pregnant yet but will be in the future—please do not be tempted to worry or fear that you might find difficulties in your childbirth that will be more than you can bear. If anything, this account should reassure you that I do know and that I only allow those things to come upon you which you are able to bear.

I allowed these things to come to Sara because I knew that she could take them, and that she would be drawn even closer to Me, and so that I could impart precious jewels to her which could

not have come about as well any other way. Yet I work differently in the lives of each of My precious ones, and even as I have planned the infinitesimal minuteness of the nature of the universe, even so am I planning for you.

Your times are in My hand, so commit your ways unto Me and you shall receive from Me the very best—tailor made just for you, exactly what I know you need and not one iota more than you can take. This is My promise to you.



GOT THE PG BLUES?

Q: I am not a very weak or emotional person by nature, but since being pregnant I have basically been a wreck—emotionally and physically. My blood pressure has gotten very low and since I was born with a heart problem, I usually have little or no energy. It is frustrating for me, because I'm used to going out a lot and being quite active. I'm usually sick most of the day, and during the night as well.

Having been so sick these past three months has taught me compassion for the weak, since before I had a hard time understanding what it was like to be weak and sickly. Sometimes I get so discouraged and depressed that I pray to die just so the pain will stop and people here will have me off of their hands, since I'm such a wreck and feel so useless. I just want some peace and to feel better soon so I can become a productive person again, but I don't even remember what it's like to sleep well at night or enjoy a meal; and with all of this other stuff happening to me on top of it, it's like an emotional overload. I really need help. *—From a 20-year-old woman*

JESUS SPEAKING

Little lamb, My tender, dear girl, if there were enough words in your language to describe My infinite love for you, there wouldn't be enough scribes, pens, or paper to write them all down. My love for you goes beyond measure.

In this time of extreme testing and great trial, when you feel unwanted and uncared for, I am there. When you feel the weakest in the flesh, I indeed am beside you. When you feel unable to take one more step and are sure you're going to collapse, I'm with you, holding your heart in My strong hands.

This child that has been given to you is indeed a gift

from My kind and loving hands. It's My love for you in the form of a tender little one.

I see your needs. I see the tears that you cry. I see your lonely nights when you just wish you could be held in the arms of a caring and compassionate mate who would be on standby at all times to help you with all that you need. I see the deep longings of your soul.

Darling, if I could be there in the flesh to make things easier for you and the child within, I would be there. I'd pamper you, fix you all the right kinds of food that you and your young one need, and care for you in your times of pain. But, Sweet-

heart, though this path of difficulty lies before you and you see Me not in person, know that I care just as deeply for you as if I were there physically tending to you, proving to you My loving care.

This path of utter trust, not only in the timing of bearing this little one, but of trusting that all the other varying circumstances will bear good fruit, is teaching you much. Deep within the wells of your heart you're being made rich—rich in compassion, rich in tenderness for the uncared for, rich in your love and faith and trust in My planning. Though you don't feel so full of faith, and your

heart weighs so heavy at times, deep within you're being made ready for a great task that I have in the future for you. Every battle you go through now will fit you and arm you for what I have in store.

Trust Me, My love, and so will I pull you through.

Deep within the wells of your heart you're being made rich—rich in compassion, rich in tenderness for the uncared for, rich in your love and faith and trust in My planning.

Your anchor can hold, for you're holding tightly to My strong right arm. Your ship will not be tossed about aimlessly. It will not be bashed and smashed against the rocks. You'll be safe on the seas of your life. I lead you only to good places. Though storms may come and it may seem I have led you awry, don't worry, sweet girl. You're in My perfect will, for your heart wishes to please Me alone, and I will do with you what I know to be best.

Let Me comfort your heart as you rest safely on My bosom. You're My wife, you know. I love you and will keep you on the road upward, to where the freshest air blows and the greenest pastures are.

LEG CRAMPS

Waking you up at night

Web reprint

Why it happens: Your heart, kidneys, and circulatory system work extra hard to help you function normally during pregnancy, and your muscles—bearing the weight of your increasing girth—feel the strain, too. Don't be surprised then, if your tired leg muscles cramp in protest, especially during your second and third trimester. The pain can wake you from a deep sleep.

Muscle fatigue isn't the only reason you may be suffering from leg cramps. Too much phosphorus (found in processed meat, snack foods, and soda) and too little calcium and potassium circulating in your blood can also cause muscle spasms. Another explanation: As your uterus expands, it can put pressure on the nerves leading from your trunk to your legs.

What you can do about it: Perhaps you need to change your diet or take nutritional supplements to stave off leg cramps. (Tip: Eat a banana or down a glass of milk before bed for a quick potassium boost.) Here are some other tips for keeping muscle spasms at bay:

- Stretch your calf muscles several times before you go to bed.
- Avoid standing or sitting with your legs crossed for long periods of time.
- Rotate your ankles and wiggle your toes when you sit, eat dinner, or watch TV.

If you do get a cramp, immediately stretch: Straighten your leg, heel first, and gently flex your ankles and toes. It might hurt at first, but the pain will gradually go away. You can relax the cramp by massaging the muscle or warming it with a hot-water bottle. Walking around for a few minutes may help, too.

By Dave Barry

Neither man nor rat can properly fold the laundry

HOW TO SCORE: If you answered “b” to both questions, then you are a male. I base this statement on a recent article in *The New York Times* about the way animals, including humans, respond to stress. According to the article, a group of psychology researchers have made the breakthrough discovery that—prepare to be astounded—males and females are different.

The researchers discovered this by studying both humans and rats, which are very similar to humans except that they are not stupid enough to purchase lottery tickets. The studies show that when males are under stress, they respond by either fighting or running away (the so-called “fight or flight” syndrome); whereas females respond by nurturing others and making friends (the so-called “tend and befriend” syndrome).

This finding is big news in the psychology community, which apparently is located on a distant planet. Here on Earth, we have been aware for some time that males and females respond differently to stress. We know that if two males bump into each other, they will respond like this:

FIRST MALE: Hey, watch it!

SECOND MALE: No, YOU watch it!

Are you a male or a female? To find out, take this scientific quiz:

1. Your department is on a tight deadline for developing a big sales proposal, but you’ve hit a snag on a key point. You want to go one way; a co-worker named Bob strongly disagrees. To break the deadlock, you:
 - a. Present your position, listen to the other side, then fashion a workable compromise.
 - b. Punch Bob.

2. Your favorite team is about to win the championship, but at the last second the victory is stolen away by a terrible referee’s call. You:
 - a. Remind yourself that it’s just a game, and that there are far more important things in your life.
 - b. Punch Bob again.

FIRST MALE: Oh yeah?
(They deliberately bump into each other again.)

Two females, in the identical situation, will respond like this:

FIRST FEMALE: I’m sorry!

SECOND FEMALE: No, it’s my fault!

FIRST FEMALE: Say, those are cute shoes!

(They go shopping.)

Here are some other gender-based syndromes that the psychology community might want to look into:

* The “laundry refolding” syndrome: This has been widely noted by both me and a friend of mine named Jeff. What happens is, the male will attempt to fold a piece of laundry, and when he is done, the female, with a look of disapproval, will immediately pick it up and re-fold it so that it is much neater and smaller. “My wife can make an entire bed sheet virtually disappear,” reports Jeff.

* The “inflatable-pool-toy” syndrome: From the dawn of human civilization, the task of inflating the inflatable pool toy has always fallen to the male. It is often the female who comes home with an inflatable pool toy the size of the Hindenburg, causing the youngsters to become very excited. But it is inevitably the male who spends

The Battle of the Sexes

Open Letter from a Reader

Eve is great! By the way, I am stuck between six guys here (all right, I'll admit—two of them are kids), and they have said quite a few times that there are things guys would love to read about too. One suggestion was this: "Tell us what women are thinking about, and how and why. If anyone can teach us about women's logic and how to understand it, that would be a great thing!"

It seems that when it comes to male/female relationships, we girls tend to ask for more than guys (yeah, that "show up naked, bring beer" would *not* work for most females). Not to make a blanket statement, but some guys I've met here could really use a "man-to-man" Q&A section!

Eve:

So, guys and gals—this is your time to shine. As mentioned in an earlier mag, we'd love to dedicate a section of this mag specially to our dear men—but we'll need the input from you to fill it. Here are a few questions for the sexes:

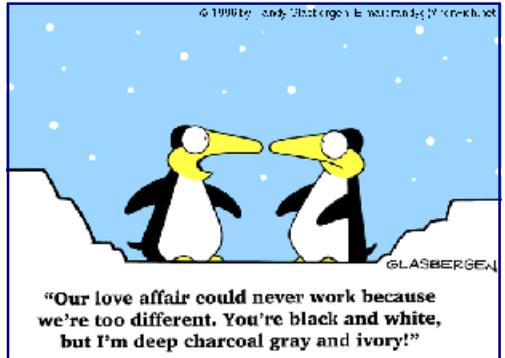
Gals: Any of you care to answer the question above, to contribute any wisdom from your side of the fence? How do women think? How do they differ from men? Any thoughts or insight you'd care to impart to your captivated male readership?

Guys: So what do you want to hear about? Do you have any questions you've always wondered about, that you'd like to hear answered? Write in today!

Continued from page 27:

two hours blowing the toy up, after which he keels over with skin the color of a Smurf, while the kids, who have been helping out by whining impatiently, leap joyfully onto the toy, puncturing it immediately.

I think psychology researchers should find out if these syndromes exist in other species. They could put some rats into a cage with tiny pool toys and miniature pieces of laundry, then watch to see what happens. My guess is that there would be fighting. Among the male researchers, I mean. It's a shame, this male tendency toward aggression, which has caused so many horrible problems, such as war and ice hockey. It frankly makes me ashamed of my gender. I'm going to punch Bob.



Cover photo: Carmen (of Juan), mother of 4, South America
Suggested reading for ages 16 and up.
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