

Spiritual Tip

How to Live with Uncommon Courage

By Rick Warren

“Stand up for me against world opinion and I’ll stand up for you before my Father in heaven. If you turn tail and run, do you think I’ll cover for you?” (Matthew 10:32 MSG)

To live with uncommon courage and stand up for Christ, you have to learn how to clarify your worldview — what you base your beliefs on. You also have to understand the non-Christian worldviews that compete for your devotion every day. Here are the four most popular anti-Christian worldviews:

Materialism: What matters most is money. Materialists measure their success by wealth, but you didn’t bring anything into the world, and you won’t take anything out of it. You were made for more than things. Luke 12:15 says, *“Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions”*(NIV). The greatest things in life aren’t things.

Hedonism: Whatever feels good is good. For hedonists, pleasure is their god. Their goal in life is to be comfortable and have fun. But happiness is not the goal in life; happiness is a by-product of living out your purpose. Holiness creates happiness. *“Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit”* (Galatians 6:8 NLT).

Individualism: What I want comes first. America was built on rugged individualism, and today that has evolved into a culture of narcissism. But God didn’t create you to live for you. If you want to follow Jesus, you have to put aside your selfish ambition. Romans 2:8 says, *“For those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger”* (NIV). God opposes self-centeredness because God is love, and love is never selfish.

Socialism: Government should control everything. God is not an anarchist; everything should be done in order. I’ve spoken at most of the major, secular elite conferences, and I’ve discovered this: Politics is the religion of people who don’t know God. There is nothing wrong with politics, but it shouldn’t be your savior. *“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 3:20). I’m to be a responsible citizen, but I do not owe government my life. My greater loyalty is to God and not to government.

What is the result of these worldviews? The crumbling of our culture, crisis in our schools, corruption in our businesses, chaos in our government, carnality in our churches, confusion in our families, and conflicts in our personal lives. Any time we don’t go by the owner’s manual, we’re the ones who get hurt. You see, we don’t really break God’s laws — they break us.

To counter these prevalent worldviews, God is calling Christians to stand up for his truth “against world opinion.” You can only do that when you have a solid foundation in God’s Word and the uncommon courage that comes from a relationship with him.

Parenting Tip

7 Parenting Behaviors That Keep Children From Growing Into Leaders – Part 3

By Kathy Caprino

(Continued from Part 2 last week)

This information is from leadership expert Dr. Tim Elmore who explains how we as parents are failing our children today — coddling and crippling them — and keeping them from becoming the leaders they are destined to be.

6. We mistake intelligence, giftedness and influence for maturity

Intelligence is often used as a measurement of a child’s maturity, and as a result parents assume an intelligent child is ready for the world. That’s not the case. Some professional athletes and Hollywood starlets, for example, possess unimaginable talent, but still get caught in a public scandal. Just because giftedness is present in one aspect of a child’s life, don’t assume it pervades all areas. There is no magic “age of responsibility” or a proven guide as to when a child should be given specific freedoms, but a good rule of thumb is to observe other children the same age as yours. If you notice that they are doing more themselves than your child does, you may be delaying your child’s independence.

7. We don’t practice what we preach

As parents, it is our responsibility to model the life we want our children to live. To help them, lead a life of character and become dependable and accountable for your words and actions. As the leaders of our homes, we can start by only speaking honest words — white lies will surface and slowly erode character. Watch yourself in the little ethical choices that others might notice, because your kids will notice too. If you don’t cut corners, for example, they will know it’s not acceptable for them to either. Show your kids what it means to give selflessly and joyfully by volunteering for a service project or with a community group. Leave people and places better than you found them, and your kids will take note and do the same.

(Continued next week. What to do instead.)

Marriage Tip

Differences in Hormones Between Men and Women

By Walt Larimore, MD & Barb Larimore from their book, [His Brain, Her Brain](#).

Testosterone on the Brain

So what do we know about the processes in the womb that pre-wire girls to be girls and boys to be boys? During the past couple of decades, we've learned more than you would ever imagine, and it all begins with the male hormone, testosterone.

What female hormones do to women is minor compared to what the male hormone, testosterone, does to an unborn boy's brain and body in the womb!

At about six weeks' gestation, an unborn boy's male hormones (called *androgens*) begin their work. One particular androgen, testosterone, becomes the key messenger to the unborn boy's brain and body. "There's a peak of testosterone in males... that's very important for future sexual behavior," writes Dr. Sophie Messager of Paradigm Therapeutics in Cambridge, England. "If you block that, the male rats behave like females for the rest of their life."

Testosterone tells all the potentially female equipment to go into hibernation while it spurs the male equipment (like the boy's genitalia) to grow like crazy. In addition, testosterone has an incredible effect on the little boy's skeletal muscles-causing them to almost continuously twitch, poke, and punch.

Barb: *Those of us who have given birth to and then raised little boys can tell*

you that they are always moving, both in and out of the womb! Much of the activity is due to testosterone, which also thickens the boy's developing bones - even his skull. So when we mothers think little boys and the men they grow up to become seem a bit "hardheaded," we're exactly right.

Not only are a boy's genitalia, muscles, and bones dramatically exposed to the testosterone bath that occurs in the womb, but it actually changes his inborn female brain into a uniquely male brain. The developing female brain, not exposed to testosterone, undergoes very little fundamental change in structure or function, but the rush of testosterone is for him literally a mind-altering process!

For example, the corpus callosum is the largest structure connecting the right and left sides of the brain. This pipeline of more than 300 million fibers functions like a powerful, lightning-fast monster cable that enables both sides of the brain to communicate with and process for each other; The gush of testosterone actually causes sections of the corpus callosum to decrease in size by dissolving portions of the connection or by decreasing the growth of the nerves.

In unborn females, the opposite happens. Exposure to the female hormone, estrogen, actually prompts the nerve cells to grow more connections between the left and right brain. So not only is a girl's corpus callosum larger than a boy's before birth, it continues to be larger in childhood and adulthood.

Testosterone also causes other areas of the male brain to be forever changed by preserving the nerve cells that think, while retarding the development of the fibers that connect the processing centers. The result? Your wife not only has a more developed corpus callosum,

but she also has much greater subconscious processing power than you do.

It's More Than Hormones

There are structural and genetic differences as well.

Since a man's brain is, on average, about 10 percent larger than a woman's, you'd expect him to be more intelligent. However, this is not the case. In general, men and women consistently score equally on intelligence tests. For neuroscientists, this has long been a paradox. However, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center have found an explanation. Raquel E. Gur, MD, PhD, professor of psychiatry and neurology, writes, "Women's brains appear to be more efficient than men's in the sense that an equal increase in volume produces a larger increase in processing capacity in women than in men."

While male brains contain about 6.5 times more gray matter - the "thinking matter" - female brains have more than 9.5 times as much white matter - the "processing matter." One example is seen in the corpus callosum. Not only do women have a relatively larger connection between the hemispheres, but theirs is composed almost completely of white matter. "The implication of women having more white matter connecting between the hemispheres of the brain is that they would have better communication between the different modes of perceiving and relating to the world," says Dr. Gur. "On the other hand, men," who have a relatively smaller corpus callosum that is made up of less white matter, "would demonstrate a stronger concentration on working within anyone of those modes."

Barb: *Understanding this can be critical in understanding our husbands - their stick-to-itiveness, steadfastness, determination, and single-mindedness. It also can assist their understanding and appreciation of us - our intuition and the way we can read people!*

On the genetic side, Eric Vilain, PhD, who conducts research on the genetics of human sexual development at UCLA, compared the production of genes in male and female brains in embryonic mice - long before the animals developed sex organs. To their surprise, the researchers found at least fifty-four genes that are produced in different amounts in male and female mouse brains *prior to* any male hormonal influence. Eighteen of these genes were found at higher levels in the male brains, while thirty-six were found at higher levels in the female brains.

Although this study was in mice, these researchers believe it's highly likely to be true in people as well.

"There is more to be known, more detail and qualification perhaps to add - but the nature and cause of brain differences are now known beyond speculation, beyond prejudice, and beyond reasonable doubt." Anne Moir, PhD

(to be continued)

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