

An Evangelism-Discipleship Model



Matt Violassi

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,
[1] baptizing them . . . [2] teaching them to obey all I commanded you."

- Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19-20)

Here is a model that seems to have worked well for me in the marketplace . . .

1. Using the route of non-threatening, minimally confrontive "Friendship Evangelism."

First I get in touch with truly loving a person and caring about them and their world. I try to get to know them. I start asking them questions about their job and family and interests. Do they like their job? Why? Why not? Are they married/single? Where do they live? Where did they grow up? . . . etc.

We all have a need to be known. *It is love* to really find out about people, what they are all about, and what they are going-through. Most people really like and appreciate when someone really cares about them and their world - and asks them about it.

It is then usually easy to then be able to bring "God" up into the conversation and finally ask, "**Do you believe in God?**" Many times this will be a logical next question when someone is talking about themselves.

On some occasions, when I particularly feel the person I am interacting with is a Divine Appointment, and perhaps the time-window available to talk with them is small and limited, I will jump right in and usually ask them, "**Do you believe in God?**" Many times this is not *that* threatening of a question. If it truly Divine Appointment, they are usually not too shocked or offended by the question (because *it is* a big, deep, personal question!).

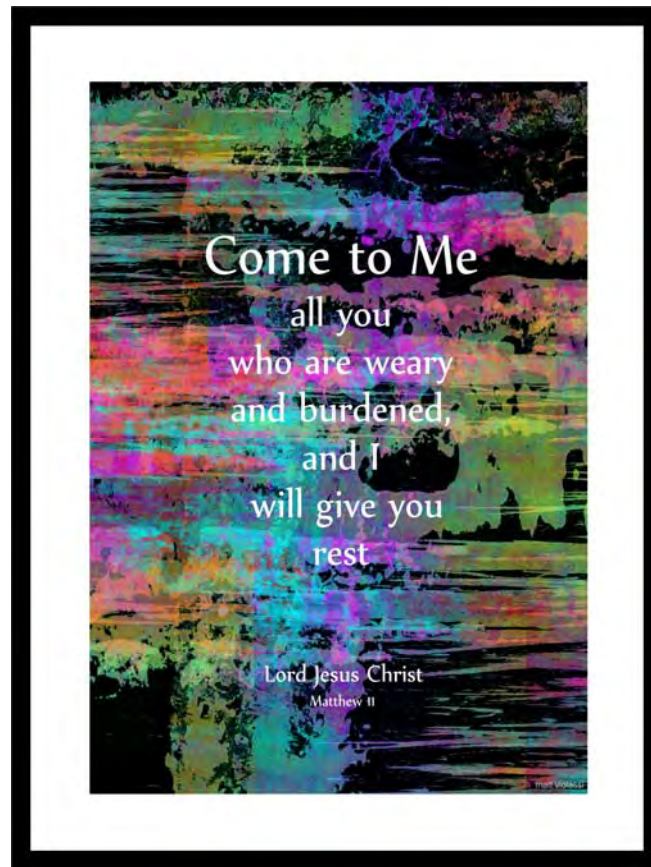
2. Do you believe in God? Yes/No

If they answer "No" - I will then ask them if they have ever heard of Jesus Christ, and then try to share the gospel with them (including not only that God loves them and has a plan for their life, but that they need to repent from all their sins, and live a life of loving and serving God - believing in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord).

I believe that people grow in faith and belief in God through answered prayer. Many people that have heard the gospel begin or continue to ask God for help in life's many trials. He helps. After so much help beyond statistical coincidence, people start trusting this person, God, more and more.

I try to give out this verse/card/or book to help keep reminding them/us - to continually "Come to Him."

This verse is about coming **to a Person** - who promises to give them help. *This is important.* It is NOT about trying to get them to come to my church - it is about getting them people to keep coming **TO A PERSON**. If they - and we - keep coming to this person Jesus Christ. . . and He keeps helping us . . . we will eventually keep growing *in trust and love* for this person Jesus Christ. He keeps proving what a wonderful friend and wonderful person He is . . .



If a person answers "Yes" to the question (do they believe in God), I will do more spiritual assessment . . .

We might be needing to ask which God they believe in! Perhaps we then can present the case of why Christianity is the best religion - the only religion where through the power of the Holy Spirit who now comes to live inside of us - do we have power to resist all sin in our lives! This is Good News! I have asked many people whether or not their religion has given them victory over a bad habit or sin they want to be free from. Asking the Holy Spirit of God to come and live inside of us now gives us this power.

3. Are you Saved / Born Again? Yes/No

Sometimes we then have to educate people on committing their complete life to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Repenting and committing to do the Greatest Commandment - "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.")

A lot of church-going, nominal Christians, who say they believe in God - have never committed or consecrated their lives to God. . . They cannot confess they are "Born Again" . . . or confess they are "Saved" and that *they know* they are going to heaven. They need to be Saved and Born Again.

You must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven - Jesus Christ (John 3:5)

4. Are you Serving Him? Yes/No/Maybe

This is a loaded question because many people have different ideas of what serving God is. Many people equate serving God with going to church 2-3-4 times a week. Many who have had bad experiences with going to church reply, "I don't go to church and/or go to church as much as I should, **but I believe in God.**" Then I try to find-out why the breakdown. Some just quit going to dead church services - they couldn't take it any more. Others were wounded by one of the many types of legitimate bad church relationship experiences we have all had or heard about. I then try to convince them that more important than going to church is us living and guarding our own personal daily relationship with God. This is cultivated by, and grown primarily through regularly scheduled private times to seek God, pray to God, talk to God - and continuing to find, learn, and obey His revealed commandments to us.

I ask them if they own a red-letter Bible. I will give them one if they desire. I then try to instruct them how to use it **wisely** by primarily finding, learning, memorizing, and doing God's commands in the Bible, starting with Jesus's commands found in the red-letters of the 4 Gospels. The Christian world typically disciples people by telling them to just "read your Bible." Then, when it seems dry, dead, and boring, they quit reading it. We need to give them continued purposes and initiative for reading the Bible.

Often I find-out a person deep-down loves God and wants to please Him and wants to go to heaven (although they are not attending a church).

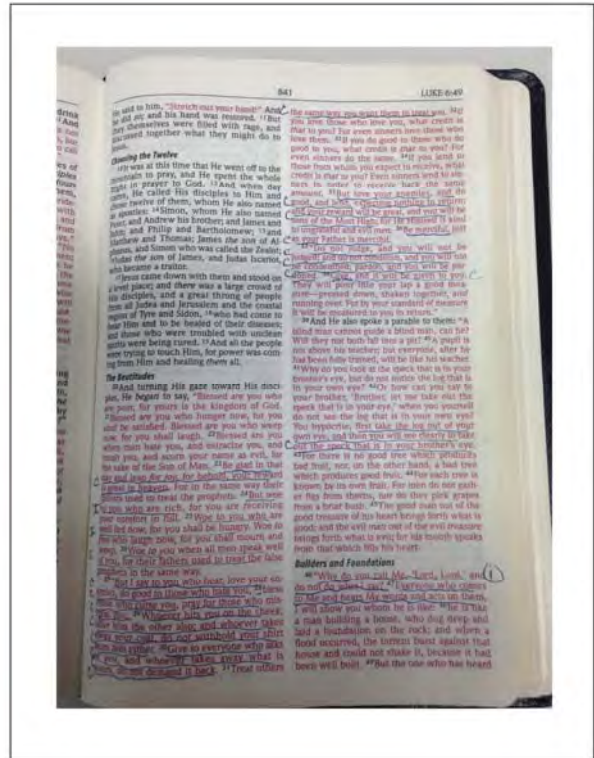
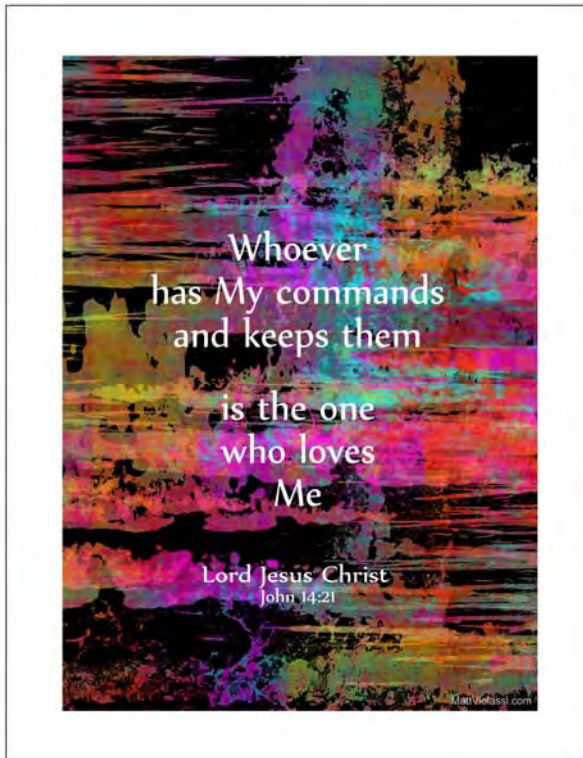
I try to introduce **JESUS'S DEFINITION OF WHO LOVES HIM:**



On judgment day, when He separates the sheep from the goats, Christians want to be in the group of sheep . . . **the group that loved Jesus - by His definition.** So now, the person I am talking with is excited to read the Bible, find & memorize His commands, and do them. Why? Because they want to love Him **by His definition**, and go to heaven. His definition includes nothing about how many times a week we go to church, how much money we give, how much we read the Bible, etc.!

They can love God, serve God, and please God . . . without going to church (at this time)! This is very freeing to people!

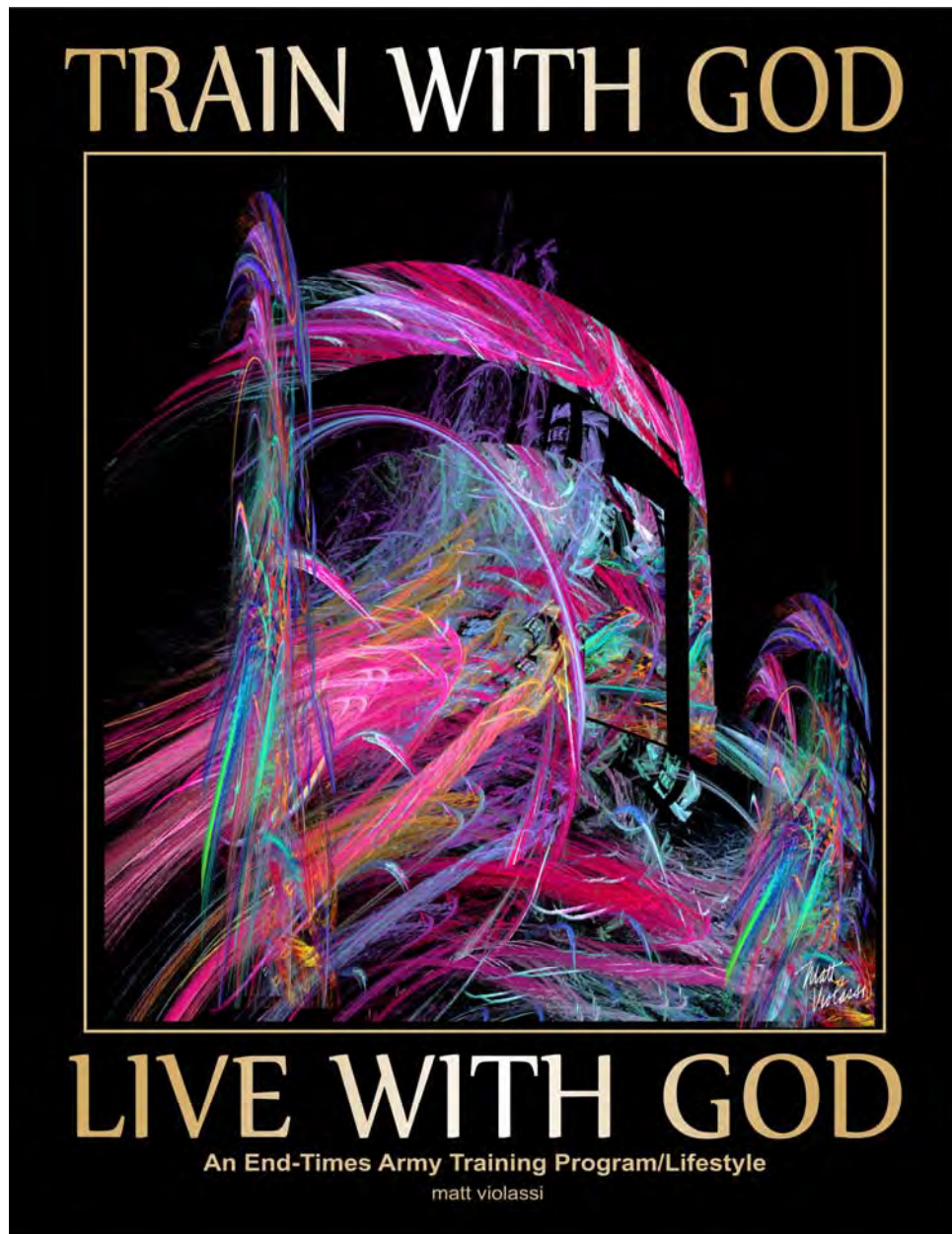
It is obvious that God would rather have 100 Christians who scheduled meaningful personal, private, closed-door times with Him, as top-life priority, and attended church only once a month, **versus**, 100 Christians who went to church all the time but seldom had personal, undistracted, purposed times to seek Him and interact with Him and His Word.



Pictured is front and back of a large book-marker I commonly get printed and stick in a Bible to hand out, so people are reminded **why** they are reading the Bible. I show them how to underline a command and mark a capital "C" next to it for easy review and memorization. This is fulfilling the Great Commission - "teaching them to obey all I commanded you." This makes prayerfully reading the bible more exciting. We are doing it to please God. It is an act of love to God. He likes it and appreciates it.

5. Train For God / Train With God? **Yes/No/Maybe**

If a person is saved/born-again and attends church (seems to be an active Christian), I try to get them to be the best Christian / Christian worker they can be. I leave them with a copy of "Train With God - Live With God" or an earlier or later version. I believe this book can greatly help us "be all we can be" for God, and greatly help keep us from needless personal damage and destruction and pain.



Summary

The biggest thing we can ever do for a person (act of love) is to help them get to heaven. The second biggest thing we can ever do for a person is to help them get to heaven *well*. (A person could be a Christian, but is trashing their life and bringing upon themselves and others needless personal damage and destruction.)

This is why we evangelize. If we truly love people, we are going to try help get them get their ticket to heaven, and then try to help them have a victorious Christian life.

Friendship Evangelism is a relatively easy and non-threatening way to bring people in relationship with God or help bring them further in their relationship with God. First we love and care about a person and begin to ask them questions about their life and about their world. We care about who they are, where they come from, how they live, what they are going through, etc. Through the course of getting to know them in a simple conversation, it is then easy to slip in the question of whether they "believe in God" or not.

Then we can ask other questions to try to assess where they are spiritually in their relationship with God.

If they are a non-Christian / non-believer, we can share with them the Good News. Through believing in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, a person not only procures eternal life in heaven, but the God of the Universe comes to live inside of them! Nothing is impossible through God, now! We now have the power, through God in us, over all sin and bondages! This is Good News! This beats any other religion or self-help program!

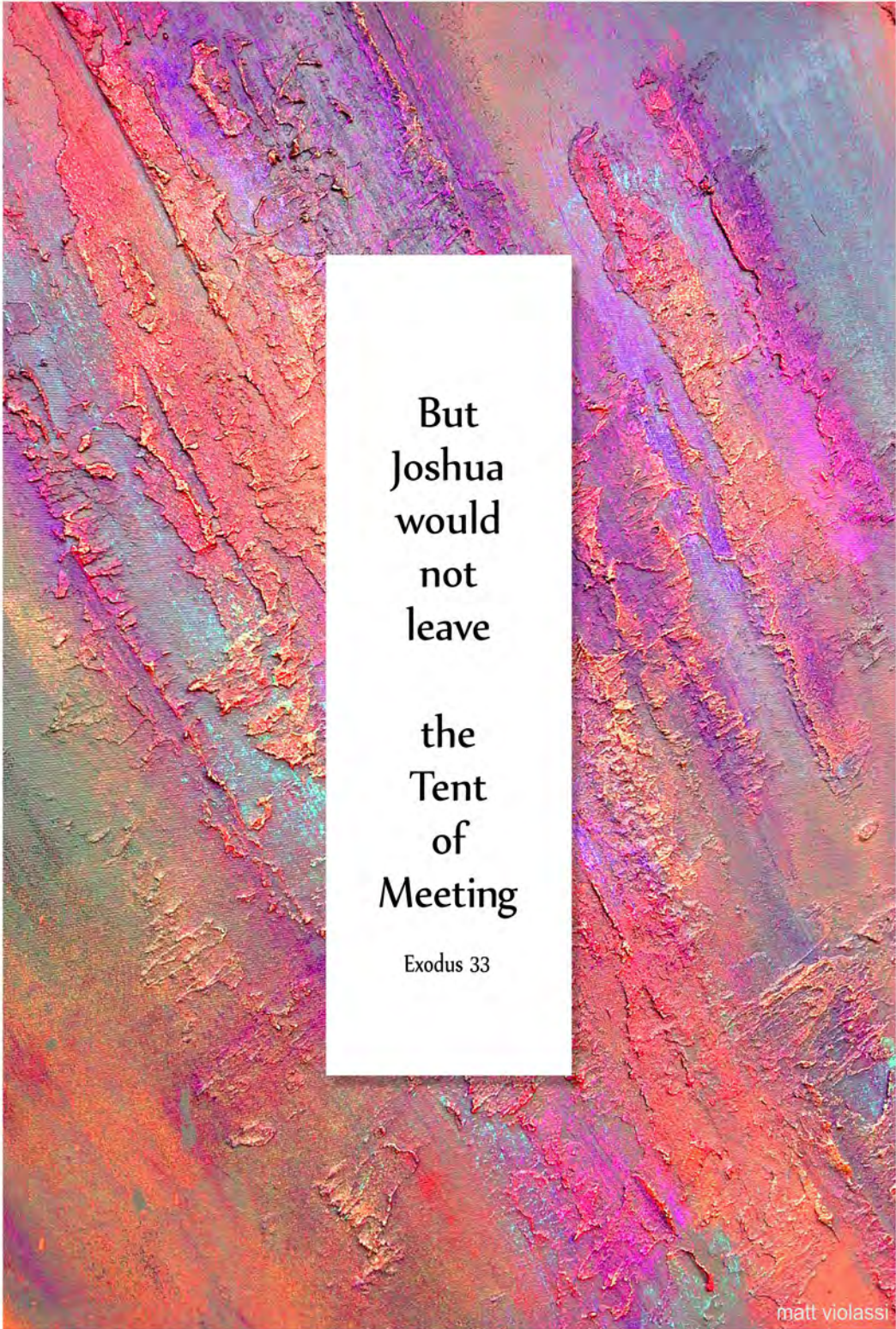
Even if a person is not ready for a salvation commitment, we can encourage them to keep "Coming to Him." We can encourage them to call to God/Jesus for help when they get into life's inevitable hard circumstances and "jams." This is one way He proves He is real . . . how He is trustworthy. . . He will help us when we aren't even loving or serving Him. **"Whoever asks receives."** - Jesus (Matt 7:8)

If a person already believes in Jesus, we then try to keep them connected to Him daily, by admonishing them actively cultivating their personal relationship with God by frequently "Coming to Him" and by scheduling personal private closed-door times to talk to Him and start learning and doing His commands. We try to get them using a red-letter Bible and learning Jesus's commands as top-priority.

If a person already has personal private God-times, we try to have individuals make these God - times more effective and **robust** through the use of different reminder and reference tools provided in "Train with God - Live with God."

Just a model.

matt violassi



But
Joshua
would
not
leave

the
Tent
of
Meeting

Exodus 33

matt violassi

On Church Small Group Meetings



matt violassi

On Church Small Group Meetings

When I first dedicated my life to loving and serving God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit with my whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, I was ushered into a number of churches that seemed to each be in a melt-down or church-split of some sort. Being new in this whole thing, this was very confusing, perplexing, and disheartening to me. I thought these groups would all have the full-gospel truth - and have it all-together. I learned there was somewhat of a Christian civil war going on between those that believed God was truly alive today and communicated to His children personally (and that He still performed miracles and such today) versus those that seemed to believe (basically) that He merely left us with the Bible to try to figure everything out and try to please Him the best we could.

These different churches had their own models of how they thought God liked the way church meetings/assemblies should be done. Religious wars have been started over this issue! (God likes **this**! No, God likes **that**! No, He wants it done **this** way! God likes it done **that** way! We really need to assess our convictions of what God likes and doesn't like, and what kind of services He likes and doesn't like!)

I had been profoundly touched and changed by God through dedicating my life to God, and truly believed He was alive and real. So, I began to ask God to show me ***how He liked our times of gathering and assembling to be done***. I was directed to this verse penned by the Apostle Paul:

"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. " (1 Cor 14:26)

(At the time, it seemed like the common church model was attending 2 Sunday church services (morning and evening, some additionally including a Sunday School meeting) and a midweek evening service - usually on a Wednesday. The 3 main meetings basically consisted of a time of music & singing and then some preaching/teaching.)

The Apostle Paul was giving direction for an assembly of some type where there was room for individual sharing by the participants - of spiritual things - for the building-up, encouragement, and strengthening of the attendees. Church meetings that included this ingredient seemed just as uncommon when I started out, as it seems

today. I began a journey on finding a church that understood and practiced this type of thing. There had to be more. More than people just filing-in and filing-out of services each week - no one seeming to be really touching each other's' lives in meaningful ways. Lives not really being a part of each other's except by a common thread of a particular body of doctrine.

Then, for a whole summer, God had me study and restudy and re-listen to a large cassette tape series on Church Planting by John Wimber. John Wimber was popular and controversial at the time, bringing about at least several large contributions to the Body of Christ/The Church. He taught and exhorted the Church to be more like Jesus in our evangelism (coined "Power Evangelism"), utilizing not only the *preaching* of the gospel, but *demonstrating* the gospel with signs and wonders. This is what Jesus did. This is what was done in the early church. There are glimpses of this in church revivals throughout the ages. John Wimber traveled the United States and the world, teaching and demonstrating models on how to become more proficient at this. He also contributed to the Church a higher level of musical worship to God by exhorting and demonstrating the singing of songs **to God**, rather than merely singing songs **about God**, which was commonly done at the time. (Singing songs directly **to God** puts things on a whole different spiritual plane than merely singing songs about God.) John was also a professional musician a large part of his life. His band, "The Righteous Brothers" was a fairly successful secular band. The Vineyard Churches grew in number and eventually became a full-fledged denomination, with at least 2,000 churches, to my understanding.

John Wimber's **church growth model**, at least formally at one time, was for the creation, growth, and multiplication of small **cell groups** (small groups, life groups, home groups, friendship groups, etc.). **Healthy human cells**, the basic unit and strength of the human body - grow, divide, and replicate. So too, was to be the basic assembly group of the Vineyard churches - the church cell groups were to gather, grow, be healthy, divide, and replicate. This was the model for healthy church growth and multiplication. The Vineyard Churches were to be built on this. **Also, the small cell group meeting was supposed to be the most important meeting of the week for a member!**

The *large church-wide assembly* was to happen once-a-month to gather all the cell groups as a family to (primarily) worship God (and to be the "dessert". The small group meetings were considered the "meat & potatoes"). This is a very important conceptual change. The church culture in America was and currently adheres to the large Sunday service being one's top-priority meeting. John Wimber's call was something very

radically different. (Later, to my dismay, I found out that many, possibly most Vineyard pastors did not know about John's church-life & planting directive published on his church growth tapes!)

There was a lot of wisdom in this type of small group meeting (no more than about 12-14 people max, then divide).

- **Talk about accountability!** It's going to be hard to be involved in pornography or continuing being a sea-haggy to your husband during the week at home, if you are going to be face-to-face with others every week in an intimate Spirit-filled meeting like one of these!

- Here was a time to worship God in song - which usually brings His sweet and refreshing presence. (Making contact with God, and acknowledging God, first thing through primarily music worship!)

- Here is a time and place where people could be known and know others! We all have a God-given need *to be known* by others, and *to get to know others!*

- Here is a place where 1 Cor. 14:26 could take place - where you could share a new song or meaningful verse or testimony about what God had done, or a revelation, prophecy, etc. - **all for the edification of all.** (Here is a place where we can grapple about this tongue/prophecy verse/issue! - It is so easy for us to dismiss verses in the Bible that we don't understand or don't *want* to understand!)

- Here is a place where you probably would be asked by some people who care about you - how your *week* is going - how your *life* is going. How powerful! How often do people at church actually ask you how your week is going? *How your life is going?*

- Here is a place you might get prayer whether you asked for it or not. (I tried to always make sure people had the opportunity to be prayed-over every meeting by the group; a group of people praying over a person seems to be one of the most powerful things that can happen to a person. There seems to always be *great power in group prayer.*)

- Here is a place where a meeting could turn into group intercession for national and international events and for leaders. *This brings about change.* We can be history-makers and history-changers! (BTW - It is not right for *anyone* to bash *any leader* - if they haven't at least prayed for them, as we are commanded to - by God.)

- This is where future leaders of the church can be disciplined and raised-up and truly be "known" by the congregation - versus hiring some pastor or staff through resumes and interviews - and then finding out later who the person really is.
- A great time and place to periodically incorporate having the intimate, powerful, and holy sacrament of the *Communion Table* or the *Lord's Table*!
- This type of small group meeting can also be a time to go-over the Sunday meeting message. Many church leaders work very hard to bring to the congregation an anointed message and teachings from God. It is so easy for us to not really be listening. Going over the message again, and discussing it so people really "get it" can be very wise and helpful, instead of congregants just going to hear the next exciting message the following week.
- Oh, yes. John directed that there could be a time of teaching (in his small group meeting model) - *but only for about 10 minutes at the most*. This is because it is so easy for a teaching gift to dominate a gathering and dominate the whole meeting (which is commonly done) . . . and people are back to the filing-in and filing-out syndrome of a teaching meeting or "Bible Study" - with minimal heart-to-heart human interaction ever taking place!
- John also taught that the host couple/person should always try to provide some kinds of drinks and snacks at the end of the meeting. This is because, after all the spiritual stuff that took place in the meeting - "**many times more happens over the coffee and cookies!**" People tend to then be feeling more comfortable and relaxed after the meeting is formally ended, and are more apt to be truly honest and open about things, while chatting over the Coke and pretzels, or some pizza. This is a profound thing - ***Snack Time having the opportunity of being the most beneficial, live-changing time of a gathering!***

So, my wife Barbara and I got under the authority of some Vineyard pastors who seemed to be trying to do this kind of thing, and began having meetings like these. Friday nights seemed a very wise time - so that people could stay as late as they wanted. No need to rush home after an hour or two to hurriedly get the baby-sitter home because they had to get up early for school the next morning (mid-week meeting time problem). Plus, if we were going to try to incorporate these "avenues of grace" previously talked about - the meeting is going to take a couple of hours, possibly plus. Frequently we provided the pizza.

Everyone who attended my home group meetings got prayed for *every day, privately*; my wife Barbara and I carried the families in prayer throughout the week. The guys got at least one call from me a week - to see how everything was going, to get to know them better, to be a friend to them, to help them with their needs. My wife did the same. We tried to meet with them individually during the week, for coffee and such - if they seemed to want deeper friendship.

Most people, it seems, want to attend truly fun and satisfying parties - a place where everyone likes you and you like everyone . . . complete with music and eating and drinking and merriment. Why not God-parties? – the same but complete with God and His Kingdom coming forth in some good way. (I was the party chairman of my dorm in college.) This is a basic human need and desire and is quite evident in the world today. Should not the Church be hosting what true parties should look like?

As mentioned in a previous book/booklet, I soon began to realize, that unless Christians had some kind of healthy on-going daily relationship with God - these weekly cell group meetings were kind of dead. People had little to share. They were tired and burnt-out. Most were usually kind of bummed-out. Most seemed spiritually dull. They were not excited about God very much. They did not have any grid or understanding or faith to make this the most important meeting of the week. (For the record - I was in the same boat as everyone else. I was a common worker in a demanding job and lone supporter of a wife and 5 children with tons of bills and pressures.)

I saw they needed to make another type of meeting the most important meeting of the week . . . their personal, private God-times. So, my mission and vision to help the church seemed to change and evolve to this over the years . . . **being a voice in exhorting people to attend this meeting as top-priority.**

Nowadays, it seems most young married couples both work. Someone will need to pick up the slack of all the shopping, cooking, house-cleaning, laundry, taking kids to school and pick-up, sports teams (be careful! - a potential life-of-God stealer!), checking/re-teaching homework, paying bills, performing home maintenance and repairs, etc. This two-earner lifestyle can be dangerously busy!

(Many times I see couples now sacrificing "a day of rest" to actually finish all of this normal house work. **This is a recipe for disasters of all types.** I just don't believe God will bless and inhabit any kind of Christian family and lifestyle that does not honor a day of rest (the Bible says it was made *for us*). Ignoring having one day of rest per week, *of doing no work*, will harm us physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or

spiritually). ***We might have to make some serious lifestyle changes to accomplish this!***

Our personal relationship with God is the most important thing there is. He wants us to be dedicated to its cultivation and growth. I believe, after we have been a Christian for a while, the adamant scheduling of our personal, private God-times is the most important thing we can do in life, and the most important meeting we can attend . . . above all others.

I believe one of the best church small group meetings we can have is just inviting someone (or several people) over for dinner. We can cover all the "avenues of grace" that were touched-upon in this article, through this kind of love-initiated, informal meeting. We can do this anytime, anywhere. Although there are many types of church small group gatherings - many on the basis of a common interest (new moms, study a book, a motorcycle group, out-reach group, men's breakfast, Bible study group, discipleship group, soup kitchen group, prayer group, etc.) - **most everyone likes to eat!** Doing this kind of Church Small Group Meeting is easy with this universal common interest!

matt violassi

I have sat in the Lord's Small Group meeting, every morning, for 35 years.

ON CHOOSING A CAREER PATH



matt violassi

On Finding/Choosing A Career Path & Enjoying Our Work

Bottom Line: *If you are a young adult and have made some kind of commitment to God, but yet feel frustrated and stymied in finding your job/career path, make sure you have dedicated your life completely to God. Make sure you have given Him your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. (The First & Greatest Commandment).*

God might be hindering you in your career journey until you have done this. He loves you, and doesn't want to lose you. He did this to me. Otherwise, you might go-off and enjoy yourself, and never talk to Him again! And truly, from heaven's perspective – you would have wasted your life!

Finding my career path was one of the hardest trials of my life. I tried different jobs. I diligently tried to identify any strong God-given skill-sets I might have. I inventoried my weaknesses. I was in-and-out of different college degree programs, at my own expense, seeking a believable job path. I researched different jobs and fields that might be suited to me and have believable employment opportunities. (This was coupled with the false notion that most people intrinsically “knew” what they wanted to be . . . “What do you want to be when you grow up?”) Most don't know what they want to be.

I was above-average in art, and above-average in science. Usually people are just good at one or the other. Medical illustrators needed to be somewhat good at art and somewhat good in science. I attended the University of Michigan with a plan to get into a master's degree program in medical & biological illustration. (Someone had to take all the blood and guts out of a hospital operation and translate this pictorially into medical student textbooks.) There were only 3-4 institutions in North America with such a program – each only training only 3-4 people a year. It was a good plan. The problem was - I hated illustration. I was decent at it, but it was very tedious and depressing.

I tried social work. You know, do something good for humanity. Help disadvantaged kids from bad homes get a life. Make the world a better place. This seemed like such noble work. Then I found out that many of the professionals seemed to have little or no

hope for change in the human heart of these young men and women. The people I dealt with (some had very advanced educational degrees) seemed merely doing their time until retirement or something better came along. One even confided in me that she believed all these kids should just be just killed because they were all incorrigible - having no chance of changing. (This was at a youth government prison for youth whom had done things like shooting their parents, raping sisters, and other similar horrible crimes.) I was done with professional "social work."

Jesus Christ changes hearts in people to **want to do good and be good**, versus trying to just change external human behaviors. Christ removes other sin and sinful behaviors, too, if we comply with Him. **The ultimate social work!** (Now, this is a great career for us all!)

After several other career sojourns, I landed in Landscape Architecture. Paint with God's plants. Make the world a more beautiful place. Design and install plants, trees, and flowers that would bloom and color in different seasons.

After my partner and I just finished tearing-out an almost perfectly maintenance-free landscape around a wealthy couple's house, and replacing it with a very expensive and intensely maintenance-*dependent* landscape (complete with boulder walls, flowering bushes & trees, concrete pathways, plants that bloomed at different times and seasons, and weed-loving peat beds), I had a profound experience.

Standing back to enjoy my work, I felt I had just finished adorning a rich man's idol – his house. I knew at that moment I did not want to be part of this kind of work – at least on a residential level. It was back-breaking, hard work, too.

Looking up to heaven, I asked God why my job/career has never worked-out like everyone else's seemed to. Instantly and clearly, God communicated to me almost audibly, "**Because you never gave your life to me.**"

For the next several seconds a bunch of small movie clips went through my mind of all the Born-Againers who had tried to convince me to obey the First Commandment, to love God with one's whole heart, soul, mind, and strength - and give my life to Him.

I grew up Catholic, and looked down upon the rest of the denominations. We were brainwashed that Catholicism was the FIRST and BEST religion – and all the other denominations chose second best. What blind heresy. (It can take God years to remove our various religious brainwashing.) My Catholic church taught us subtly, that all you had to do was go to church once a week (most services were usually only an hour; this one priest was known to have you out of there in 35 minutes!), put a \$5 or \$10 bill in the offering basket, and be nice to people (the second of the 2 Greatest Commandments – "**Love your neighbor as yourself.**") - **to go/get to heaven.** *What a*

great and easy way to go to heaven! Too bad it's not true! No wonder the Catholic Church seems to hate Born-Againers - we're wrecking a good deal!

I then realized that I had been actually running from God for a long time – and did not realize it! I figured, this is a tough lifestyle – this resisting God . . . / **SURRENDERED!** Fighting and resisting God is stupid! I dedicated my life to God right there - Him and I - on that job site! I mean, I HAD BELIEVED in God. I would pray to Him. ***I Believed in Him.*** I experienced His help so many, many times in life - beyond statistical coincidence - that you could never convince me that God was not real and alive and that He didn't answer prayer. ***I would even try to get others to believe in God when it came up in a discussion! And I had not even yet dedicated my life to Him fully!*** This is why I try to convince many people of different denominations that being "Saved" and going to heaven is not synonymous with the spiritual stage of fully serving God. You can be saved, and not yet obeying the Greatest Command! I would have gone to heaven if I had died in any of those previous years!

But when I was about 8-10 years old, I remember hearing in that Catholic service when the gospel was being read aloud, ***"If any man come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me."*** I clearly understood, even as a little boy, if we were going to follow Jesus - it meant you had to follow him with that cross on your back and head up Hill Calvary . . . and you would probably be tortured and martyred - just like Him. I thought, *I mean, who in their logical right mind would volunteer to follow a leader or person to be one day tortured and then crucified or martyred horribly?* I believe this is where the running began . . .

Somehow, years later, by God's work in our lives – dying for Him is not a big deal. This process took a number of years (from believing in Christ – to seeing the cost – to then agreeing to follow Him anyway.)

I have great grace for people who are now in this interim stage. *Again, who in their normal, logical, right mind would voluntarily sign up for a life of sacrifice, rejection, loneliness, and then probably get tortured and killed?* We just weren't made for this! We were made for love . . . and having fun! But as the years go by and we find out how much God loves us, suffers for us, is so nice to us, and what a nice and great person He is . . . and how short this life is and how long heaven is . . . following Him . . . even if unto death . . . is not that big of a deal. I am still going to ask and trust Him that I might not have to drink from the cup of a tortuous death. I suspect a lot of youth who were raised in full-gospel churches are in this stage I was then.

Within a relatively short time after my profound God dedication event, I was on a job and career path that has lasted to the present day – doing it for around 38 years as a pinstripe installer to auto dealers. And I still really like it! I did not even know a job or trade or business like this even existed! It was a God-deal. I never could have found it on my own! And I still plan on doing it until I die! (Retirement is over-rated. I believe we are made to work and produce and try to make the world a better place through bringing God’s Kingdom from heaven to earth as best we can, and bringing glory to him.) (I have met many retired people who gave their whole life to saving money for retirement so they could do whatever they want and not have to work anymore – only to realize they can only golf and spend time on themselves for so long before they feel the emptiness, the depressions, and the death that comes from not serving God. Here, at the end of their lives, they are faced with the same old issue of needing to get-up and serve God every day. They have never done it. They have been living for something else. “Saving for retirement” can be a very dangerous potential trap that can pull us away from serving God every day!

I have also come to realize several things. Most jobs are mundane. Most, however, are meeting some kind of really meaningful need in society. We can find joy in this fact that **they are important**. Being on a city truck picking up people’s trash every day is very needed and honorable work. Don’t think so? If I paid you \$1,000 a day to do it, you would probably LOVE this job and be quite passionate about it . . . **it might even be your new dream job!** Your friends might even think you are some kind of celebrity! Money can really make a lowly job or a job that is looked-down-upon suddenly quit great! Our perspective is quite warped it seems. (What we really need – *is enough money.*)

Most jobs are mundane in comparison to becoming the next great Rock Star, Inventor that Cured Cancer, Great World Leader, Ground-Breaking Scientist, Training for the Olympics, or First Person on Mars. Most normal jobs usually fulfill some very good basic societal need. We can be content in this knowledge when we work one of these jobs, if we want to.

A good friend of mine, in his mid-fifties, has enjoyed good success in his corporate sales career. Recently, he has had a job “that was the most fun he has ever had in his life.” He was also making huge money. He was traveling the country, involved in the sales and education of ground-breaking technologies and working with some very important people. Then, he got a new boss. She was so mean, ignorant, rude, hostile, incompetent, and crazy – it forced him to quit that job. How sad. Even a great job that we love - that pays great – can turn to hell-on-earth in a moment, depending on the

people we have to work with or work for. It can all go away. It's about learning to be content.

But if we are getting up every day and serving God – it doesn't matter. All that matters is that we are *where we are supposed to be every day and doing what we are supposed to be doing every day.* The type of job doesn't really matter.

Ultimately, our Father in heaven wants all of His children to grow up and be spiritually mature, and help Him in His work of getting others in relationship with Him and them going to heaven, and going to heaven well. This is the most profound work and calling we could ever do – help someone get to heaven. It is 99.999% of life. What good is a person's life if they don't get their ticket or passport to heaven? Everything else would be vain and useless. We commonly ooh and ahh and herald and adore celebrities and the world's rich and famous. We should be wondering . . . are they really that great? ***Do they even have their ticket to heaven?*** If not, this is very sad. Why would I think they are so great? (Jesus said we have our passage into heaven if we repent of all our sins, and believe in Him and His payment *for* our sins by His atoning sacrifice for all sins through His death on the cross. He is then to be both our Savior and Lord)

We are called to help our Father in His work. This work can take place on any job we have – lowly or not. This is the most important work anyone could ever be involved in. We should be doing this work every day on any job we have- as best we can.

Many young Christians, however, first need to learn **and do** a lot of the work basics while being employed: show up for work *on-time*, be thankful we have a job, be content with the wages we agreed upon being paid, work hard with our whole heart (like it was our own business), do whatever the boss wants with a joyful, positive attitude, honor the boss and other authorities and never speak against them behind their back, come to work smiling, joyful and pleasant, **work with the attitude we are working for God Himself**, don't steal in any way, never be lazy, treat other employees with all honor and respect, help the other employees, don't cause any unnecessary drama or spread any unnecessary drama, don't cause unnecessary problems . . . **Be the Model Employee** . . . **Try to win heaven's "Employee of the Year" Award - every year** . . . (while rejoicing if/when someone else wins it)

Working this way probably does a ton more for God's Kingdom and His Reputation than most things we might say!

matt violassi 2019

ON CHOOSING A MARRIAGE PARTNER



**3rd Biggest
Decision
of Our Lives**

The cost is too great - the pain can be so enormous - the damage forever - for us not to be extremely careful and as wise as we can about this major-major decision . . . Probably the 3rd biggest decision we will ever make in our lifetime . . . carrying with it some of the most profound effects on our lives and upon the lives of others . . .

“Till death do us part.”

Our marriage choice is probably the 3rd most important - **and dangerous** - decision we can make in our lifetime. Making a bad marriage decision can be one of the most painful and costliest decisions we can ever make - even in Christian circles.

Bad marital relationships and decisions (especially those that end in divorce) frequently cause tons of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and monetary - pain, anguish, trauma, broken people, broken hearts, and damaged & wounded lives. This can greatly be avoided.

Doing this one simple strategy can greatly help us ensure a healthy, fulfilling, and sustainable marriage:

Marry someone who has regularly scheduled – personal, private, God-times in their life. . . Prioritized times to seek God and interact with Him and His holy words, found in the Bible - Attending Church is Not Enough!

This is my greatest advice to young Christians that want to someday marry.

Of course, people can and do change courses in their lifetimes – even in Christian circles. For whatever reasons, even some that started out so strong, so dedicated, and so righteous – quit, and decide to live for themselves, and forsake trying to do what is right.

This is not a guaranteed cure-all . . . but it sure can have great results for many!

As a new Christian, I wanted to get married. In potential female candidates, I secretly looked for insight into their private (current and past) personal history and relationship with God. I tried to find out if they had regular and/or scheduled private God-times. This was my top-priority in finding the best wife. **No compromise on this one.**

I knew if they were regularly seeking and listening to God - *and I was doing the same* - we could overcome and “get-through” any problem that was going to come or that we ever faced!

If we are seeking God's perspective on an issue, and our spouse is seeking God's perspective on the issue, then our marital problems can be solved a lot more easily. (*Many times, both positions are right!*)

Wisdom can be defined as merely God's perspective on something - the way God sees it or views it. God promises to give us Wisdom if we ask Him, and ask in faith,

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." (James 1)

So obviously, if two people, as a lifestyle, are *desiring*, seeking, and finding Wisdom on a regular basis (people that want to continually see God's perspective on things), their marriage is most likely going to be a lot easier and happier and fulfilling.

There are many books on marriage and marriage counseling. Another small, simple, easy exercise in weighing a marital prospect, is to actually write down on a piece of paper several columns of lists. One column would be “**What We Would Like**” for a spouse. Another would be a list of “**Non - Negotiable**” of things we **have to have** in a spouse. If a potential spouse falls short on this list – they are “out.” Period. Another list would be the Pros and Cons of a current prospect.

This seems so simple, but many people I have talked with have never done this or were never intending to do this. This kind of thing – writing down your **preferences** in a spouse, your “**no compromise**” **needs** in a spouse, and **list-assessing** an actual potential spouse - hits you right in your face with factual accountability, and can help us to see more clearly - and help us keep emotion and hormones from blinding us.

Beware! Pre-marital sex does not just kill our personal relationship with God – it is a sin that has caused many-a-woman to marry a man out of guilt and condemnation! A lifestyle of premarital sex clouds our judgement and sullies us spiritually. It is not good to make a marriage choice or commitment while in this state!

It has been said . . .BEFORE YOU GET MARRIED

Discuss: Bills, Parenting Styles, Credit, Debt, Religion, How to Deal with Family, Children, What Beliefs will be instilled in your Children, Childhood Traumas, Sexual Expectations, Partner Expectations, Financial Expectations, Family Health History, Mental Health History, Bucket Lists, Dream Home, Careers & Education Political Views, and Whatever Else Comes to Mind. . . . "Love" is not enough.

It is no small miracle for 2 different people “becoming one.” The Bible talks about marriage being a **mystery**. There are going to be problems and differences whenever two people, *just being of the opposite sex alone* (very different creations), coming from totaling different homes and backgrounds – in becoming “one” . . . and getting along well in a deep friendship. Then there are going to be a multitude of problems and crises *from life itself*, in addition to this huge hurdle.

The #1 Biggest Decision of Our Lives is repenting from all our sins, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, (and thus deciding to become a Christian), and entering into true Eternal Life.

I believe the #2 Biggest Decision of Our Lives, after becoming a Christian, can be deciding to dedicate the first and best of our time, preferably on a daily basis, to seek God and interact with Him and His Scriptures **privately** - as a top-life priority. There is an absolute astronomical, mind-bending difference in a person's life between choosing to make this decision - or not.

Choosing a marriage partner is probably the #3 Biggest Decision of our Lives. Let us be very careful in our choice.

matt violassi

A Practical Model for Interpersonal Conflict Resolution



matt violassi

Introduction

Following is a basic model for interpersonal conflict resolution that maybe helpful for both Christian and non-Christian families, to help enjoy more peace and joy in our marriages, homes, work, marketplace, and neighborhoods. It is taken from the Bible.

In particular, many parents complain of continual sibling squabbling and fighting in the home, as they yearn for a more happy and peaceful home atmosphere.

Scenario 1: Parents increasingly frustrated by sibling bickering, arguing, yelling, and various levels of physical fighting.

Scenario 2: Parents increasingly frustrated by siblings continually coming to them to "tell-on", tattle, or complain about what another sibling has done to them.

Scenario 3: Marital, Work, Church, or Neighborhood relationship/relational hurts.

I was a parent of five sons and middle school teacher - and had good success with the following Biblical model. I have also seen it work in other family, church, work, neighborhood, and marital relationships.

matt violassi

I taught and enforced 2 Major House / Classroom Rules that I used in my home and classrooms that made for great peace. I try to get parents and teachers to adopt and use them. I believe these are great life rules. Simple and easy to remember and do.

Rule 1: No destructive speech of any kind to or about other people allowed.

Rule 2: Keep your hands, arms, legs, body, and objects to yourself!

My sons and students knew they were not allowed to say mean and unkind words to each other (or *about* each other) . . . destructive name-calling, casual cut-downs, gossip, slandering, etc. These offenses were going to be confronted and appropriate disciplines administered. There were no free elbowing contests in the backseat of cars, no free pokes, physical teasing, hitting with objects, or destructive and purposeful insults allowed. Physical altercations were only allowed in the case of self-defense.

As a teacher, at the beginning of every school year, I committed to parents (*and the students*) that as best I could, I would be guarding each and every one of them from being wounded, picked-on, teased, or physically hurt by other students.

Numerous times over the years, people came up to my wife and I in restaurants to tell us how they were amazed at what nice children we had, and how well-behaved they were. We were able to tell them how God gives us wisdom how to raise them properly. This can be a great Christian witness. **This model teaches our children how to be true, real friends. It allows for true and safe friendships to grow. It helps teach them how we should truly treat one another, and help resolve our inevitable problems and offenses with each other.**

Interpersonal conflicts can begin from all kinds of perceived or imagined "hurts". **Teaching and enforcing interpersonal conflict skills before these hurts escalate into actions that break House Rules 1 and 2 can reduce a lot of pain and conflict for everyone!**

Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Model

Step 1. If a sibling is hurt or offended by words or actions of another, the offended person is to clearly communicate to the offender privately, exactly what the grievance is, and how it hurt them. **God puts the responsibility on the offended person to first go the offender, and make their case.** (If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private." - Matt 18) We commonly do *everything but* this!



Young people don't know how to properly handle hurts and offenses. They tend to administer justice by themselves (especially when parents and authorities are disconnected) by expressing their hurts destructively in both **verbal** and **physical** assaults. These are the inappropriate prohibited actions in House Rules 1 and 2. Young people need to know that they can get appropriate **justice** (listening to the issue, judging it, and bringing appropriate disciplines/consequences) from authorities if proper rules of conflict resolution have been followed by them.

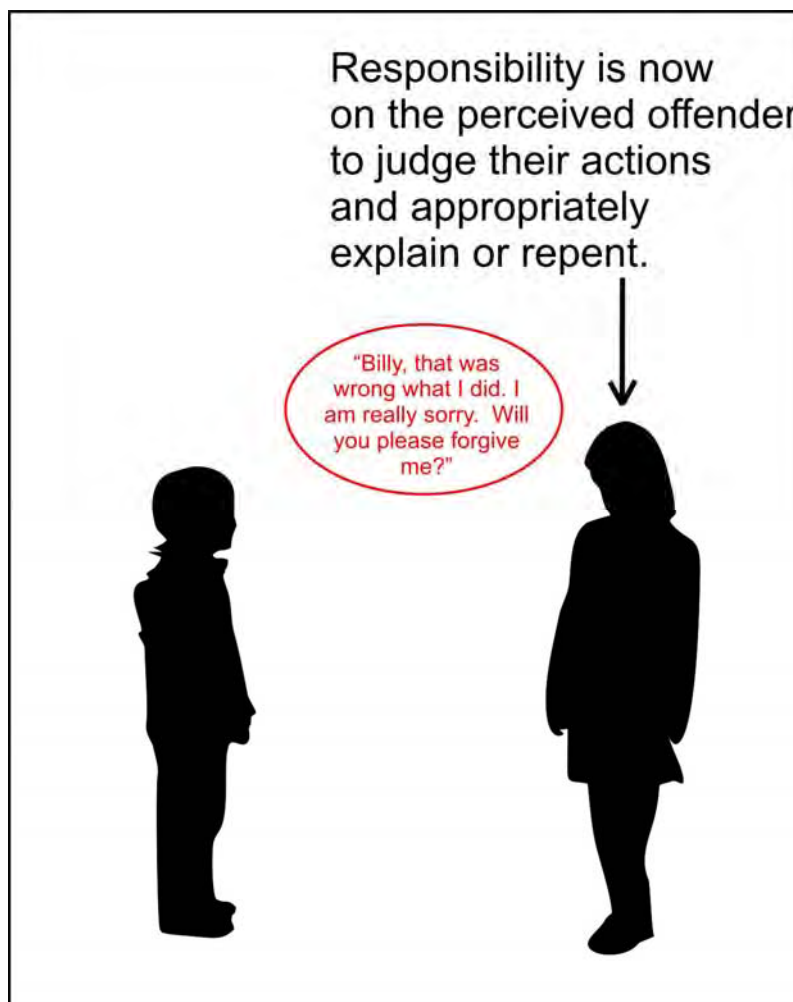
Bringing appropriate justice is a parent, teacher, boss, etc. responsibility.

Educating young people in the proper rules of conflict resolution is also parent and teacher responsibility.

Step 2. The offender then is required to "judge" their own actions, to determine themselves what was right or wrong, and make the appropriate response. If the offender realized what they said or did was selfish and wrong, they are to:

A. Verbally communicate they are sorry - in a heartfelt way. We can make ourselves sorrowful for what we did. We are all God-given human conscience, which can be molded and/or changed for better or for worse. We are all responsible for keeping our own conscience pure or polluted. A casual, non-caring and sarcastic "Sar-ree" is not being truly sorrowful and is not allowed. The offender needs to truly **be** sorry in a heartfelt way, and **say** they are sorry in a heartfelt way!

B. "Get" forgiveness. Just like a casual "sorry" to God many times does not bring His forgiveness (true repentance / "completely turning-around" does), we need to "get" forgiveness by asking the offended, **"Will you please forgive me?"** This verbal response from the offender breaks the hurt and anger in the offended **person's** heart, and begins to allow forgiveness to flow.



If at this point the offender will not judge their own actions and repent and make restitution, the offended is then to go to a parent or teacher for justice and the parent/teacher have "court."

If the perceived offender's action were found to be wrong and sinful, they are to be appropriately disciplined - for not only the offense - but also if they were being stubborn and hard-hearted for not judging their own actions when they easily could have.

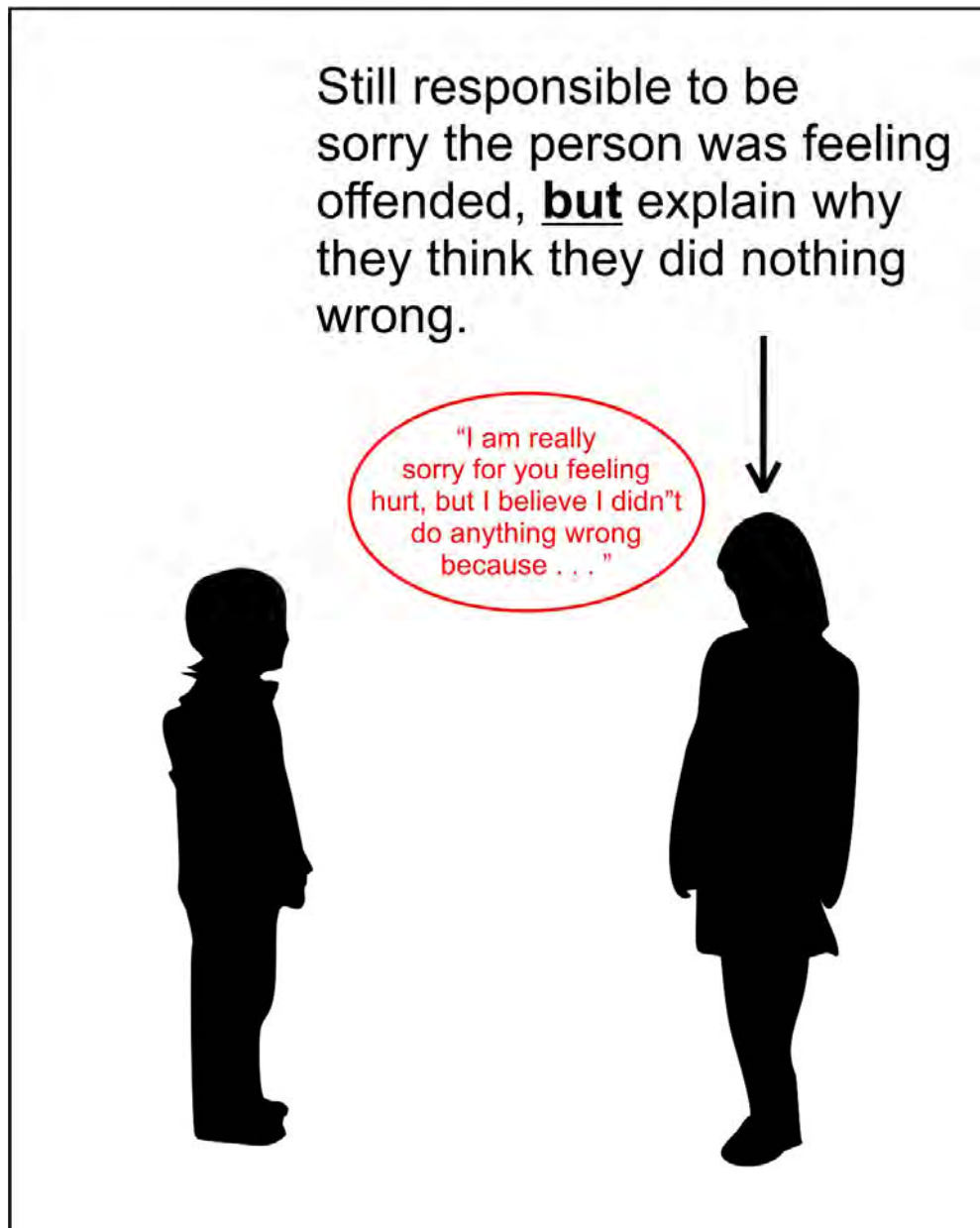
This scenario teaches children to judge themselves more quickly, and be better listening to others when being corrected by them.

Step 3. The offended is to heartfully forgive the offender and verbally extend forgiveness with "I forgive you." The verbal speaking of "I forgive you" is required because it helps break possible unforgiveness that may still be residing in the offended. *"Saying it" helps us better "Own it."*

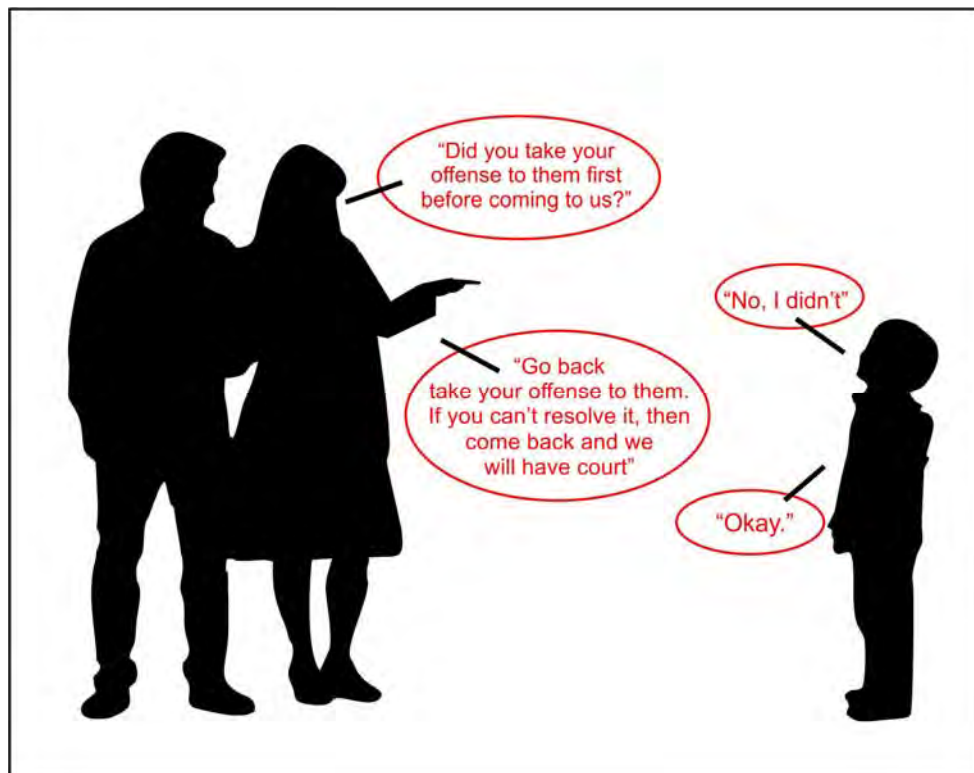
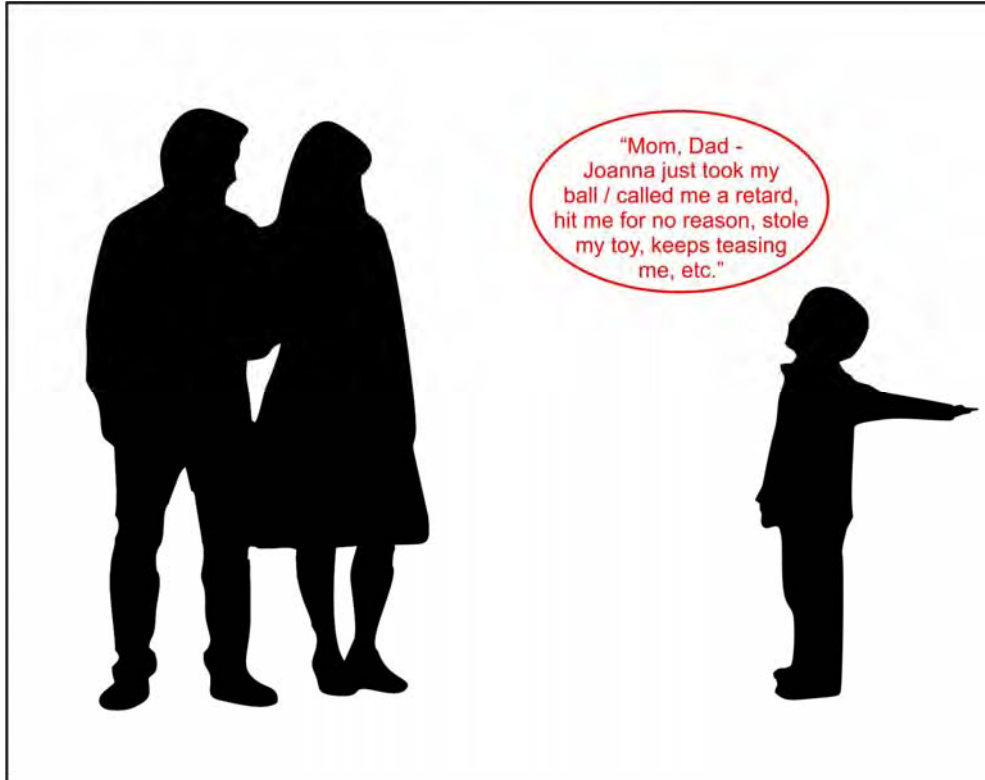


Most conflicts can / are resolved at this point.

Step 4. If the perceived offender does not think they committed a legitimate wrongdoing, they are still required to 1) Verbally express the they are sorry the offended is hurt, and 2) Best explain why they think their behavior was appropriate/legitimate/okay.



How to get this model going . . .



Pretty soon kids will learn not to waste the time going to parents or teachers without having gone to the offending person first !

If "court" is called, the **offender** knows he or she better have a good self-defense case, because they are now going to get possible **extra** punishment for not only the original selfish action, but for not judging their own heart and behavior when someone comes to them with a complaint.

This model, when employed correctly, minimizes parents and teacher frustration and burnout from handling hundreds of "cases" that could have been easily handled by the young people themselves. This makes for more happy lives for everyone. God's justice can better rule on the earth - even if at least in our little spheres.

These same rules of interpersonal conflict resolution need to be followed by us adults, too!

We need to remember - when we need justice - God Himself promises to speedily bring us justice, if we ask for it *His way*, "**now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly.**" (Lord Jesus Christ - Luke 18:7)



ON THE ACADEMIC EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN



Foreword

I believe - having children - and raising them correctly - is one of the most costly, time & energy-consuming, ***and painful things someone can do.***

Just trying to keep them alive from conception on - is mind-boggling . . . All the sicknesses, diseases, and medical conditions that they can have (that we will have to war and fight against) can be incredibly shocking. The dangerous fevers that won't come down (these can bring permanent damage), the agonizing ear aches (that can bring permanent hearing loss or even death), the teething, the cholic, the flus, the viruses, the inexplicable reactions or allergies, the broken stuff, the nightmares . . . all the mysterious health stuff . . . Incredible.

I remember several times the horror of having to save toddlers and youths from choking to death - not knowing if I could dislodge the item or get the piece of food out . . . Baby-proofing the house so they won't accidentally drink something poisonous, or stab or cut themselves with something sharp or jam something into their ear (or someone else's), or having to pad sharp wall corners or a coffee table so they won't crack their heads open (seen it) when they fall, or fall down some stairs or drown in a bucket of water or toilet, or having something bite them or eat them . . . The list goes on . . .

Disaster and trauma is always so close, really. . . for all of us.

Providing for them: Food. Clothes. The Roof. Larger Car Needed. Medical Costs. Schooling. Fun Activities . . .

Protection: From themselves. From others. From Evil Spiritual Forces. From Life's many Dangers.

Education: Life Skills Teaching & Training (everything they need to know for life). Academic Teaching & Training.

An absolutely incredible and daunting task.

Then the real possibility - that they probably will decide at different times in their lives - or forever - to reject your values and priorities and teachings . . . ***They reject you, really.*** One of the most heart-aching and heart-wounding experiences there can be . . . That they don't become the "Good Friend" of yours that you hoped they would be. They just don't understand what you did for them . . . the pain, the toil, the sacrifices.

I believe, raising children correctly - will take absolute commitment, grit, determination, diligence, time, energy, money, patience. . . and love. . .

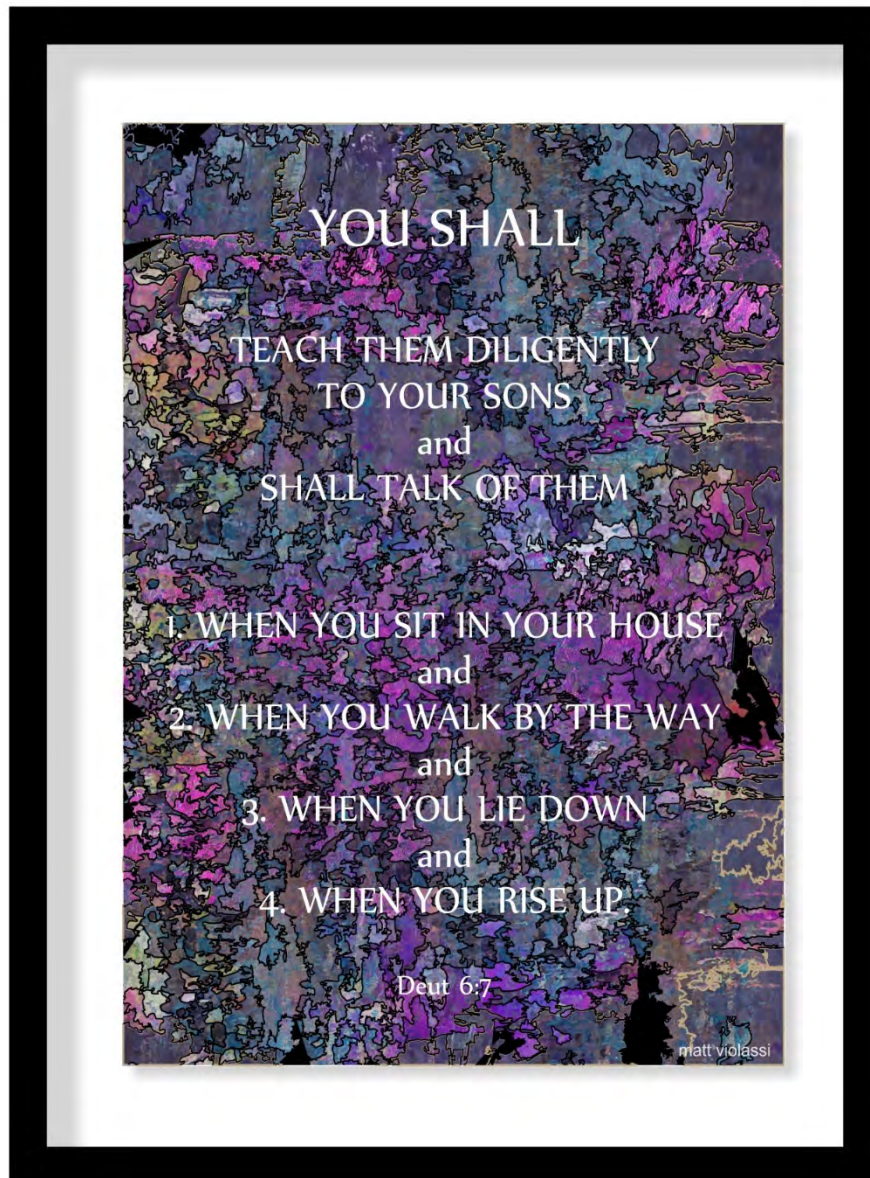
More than we ever dreamed.

On the Academic Education of our Children

The buck stops with the parents – ultimately *THE DAD*. The fathers are the heads of the households, and for the most part, God holds the man responsible for everything that goes on in the family household – including the educating of his children. Men, please don't try to put this task and responsibility on the wife. If things go bad, please don't blame the wife – like Adam did in the Garden of Eden. If you are sending your children to a public or private school – please don't blame the school, the teachers, or the government. It is the father's ultimate responsibility. The buck stops with the man. The man of the house, for the most part, needs to answer for the rearing of his children – including the *academic* education.

Once parents – especially the Dad, understand and grasp the huge responsibility of raising a child *well* (and he decides to accept the responsibility of it), his life will probably change dramatically. Just alone - in the educating of children *spiritually*, God directs,

“You shall teach them [His commands] diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.” - Duet: 6:7



When I first read this, I thought, *"This is teaching them all the time!"* . . . Sitting at meals, sitting on the couch, while driving in the car, walking in the park, walking anywhere, teaching them when they rise up, teaching them at night when they go to bed, etc.! How is this done? And also, how is it done so it is real and LIFE and not some weird dry, dead, religious thing? God will teach us and lead us in this. An overall excellent additional attitude is – be teaching them everything – all the time – in everything they need for life (appropriately for the time, obviously).

Operating in this excellent motivation (of preparing a child for life) - not only excites the parent – but excites children and youth. A child or youth can just *feel and sense* how their parents or teachers love and care about them - and for their present and future success in life - when the parent or teacher keeps reinforcing that everything they are teaching them – is to help them in life! . . . From how be a good Christian – to how to work and *how* to work a job, how to do basic cooking, how to wash and fold their own clothes, make a bed, clean a room, personal hygiene, how to study, how to shop, how to do finances, helping with home chores, how to treat other people, courting & dating skills, how to do basic home repairs, etc.

The *academic* part of child-rearing-education is just one aspect of their education. **The parent ultimately needs to perceive *what their child needs for life*, and educate them in it (not the government), or find the right people to do it if they can't.**

I was somewhat thrust into homeschooling out of necessity of daily making sure my 5 sons were mastering their daily schoolwork – and not getting behind or lost. I later was God-drafted into a brief 5-year tour of professional teaching (albeit middle school) after first being the co-educator of these sons while at home - helping my wife for several hours before going to work every day and when I came home at night.

Many if not most teachers generally seem to be very remiss in returning graded work and tests back to the parent in timely ways – if at all. How are parents supposed to truly monitor and intervene? I found myself needing to “re-teach” my sons the workload and volume that they might not be grasping. Academic subject matter builds upon itself – day upon day. Any of the corrected papers *I did receive* were usually from multiple days prior – not that timely if I was going to try to intervene and help them catch-up. I could already be behind 2-5 days in a learning gap as the curriculum marched on day by day. I was always trying to fill the holes and trying to get them “caught up” for the next day’s work.

Like in most textbooks and educational curriculums, it was hard to figure out exactly what the teacher’s actual method of instruction is/was (new ways of doing math for example, or what a grammatical phrase is now called) before I could re-teach it. No wonder parents get discouraged trying to help and intervene with their child who is struggling academically – we just don’t know *what is going on academically*. I am not even talking yet about classroom and playground rules, order, and sanity. After too many nights of frustration, hard feelings – and sometimes tears – I decided the next year it was just smarter (and cheaper) to teach them ourselves. After all, that is what I was having to do every night! So, we began to explore homeschooling.

(By the way, I am not a home-schooling fanatic or sole advocate. I think parents should pray, consider, think, and then decide what to do year-by-year for each child. A classroom situation with excellent teachers, administrators, and educational materials - is probably the way it was overall meant-to-be, but there seems to be so much break-down that has been going-on nowadays.) I have seen many Christian parents send their children to pretty good private academic schools – but having to compromise with different denominational bad doctrine. No wonder our kids can be confused about being a Christian – They don't know which one to be! How sad!

In later years, after becoming a certified teacher, I had **ALL** daily work papers and tests *graded and sent home EVERY NIGHT* for the parents - to not only be able to monitor their child's *daily* progress – but for the parents to be able to intervene. (I believe I worked as hard as any \$250,000 /year corporate executive to accomplish this!) I worked every minute of spare classroom time, time between classes, and lunch times to accomplish this. This "Daily Update" also included what we did that day (so the teacher did not have to compile this for a sick or missing student), what exactly what was being sent home that day (so a student could not throw-out a failed test or D+ something), and pertinent Parent Reminders & News. This was all stapled to the students' corrected worksheets and tests. It had to be signed and returned to me the next morning. (One student's paid job was to gather these in the morning and make sure no one's was missing. Also, to check for parent signatures.)

There was never a reason or excuse for wondering why their son or daughter was failing or falling behind in any subject. Their signature testified they knew what was going on every day.

We tried to make parents understand that the child's education ultimately was the parents' responsibility. We were there to help the parent. Parents could now successfully intervene if they needed to or wanted to - every night with a nightly report of their child's progress.

Many people overall don't really understand how education and academic subjects "build upon" themselves progressively. A child who never really learned Math basics, like the multiplication tables by heart – will always be hindered in further math. Each day and each day's lesson, is absolutely important in a sense, because they build-upon previous lessons.

At the school I worked at – I always pushed for textbooks and curriculums that were written for the parents, too – for them to be able to learn the lesson – and teach the lesson themselves - if need be. Each lesson in Saxon Math, for example (at the time), taught and explained the

lesson for the teacher, the parent, or even the sharp student - to be able to read & comprehend each day's lesson, and do the exercises.

The parents were armed for intervention. We were there to help and serve parents in the education of their children. It is not the government's responsibility, it is not the school board's responsibility, it is not the teachers' responsibility – it is the parents' ultimate responsibility to love, train, and educate their children.

Not saying this going to be easy – but it will be worth it. Before teaching school professionally, I stayed at home 2 hours every morning to help my wife Barb with the homeschooling and/or them attending public & private schools. Every night after a hard day's work at a regular normal job, I made sure I played with them, spent quality time with each one of them, and went over each one's work/homework to ensure they were not getting lost or behind.

With all the subjects and classes and workload and grading and paperwork – taking on the weight of the responsibility of teaching our children – can feel overwhelming . . .

Comforting Note! I remember after going back to college to get my teacher certification, we students were searching (in an impassioned classroom discussion), on the best way to teach youth (especially in this new age of computers, go-at-your-own-pace academic software & curriculums, current classrooms flooded with children of different academic levels (for many reasons). Our professor said two profound things:

1. Teaching will always need some of the human element of one-on-one, personal impartation of ideas, facts, thinking, etc. This started from way-back, when two people were sitting together on a log interacting. (Can't and shouldn't depend on some machine or software to teach them.)
2. If you teach a person to read, and the person has a good heart – they can do almost anything and be almost anyone!

Case in point: Abraham Lincoln. President of the United States. He was rumored to practice math with a piece of charcoal on the back of a metal shovel.

“Abraham Lincoln was educated, as he said in his inimitable fashion, “by littles.” All his formal **schooling**—a week here, a month there--did not amount to one year, and mostly he educated himself by borrowing books and newspapers.”

Some parents send their children to Christian schools and private schools for “good” educations. Many of these schools strive for educational excellence with the goal of producing “A” students. **My goal was to produce students with Pure Hearts AND were A+ students academically.** What good and true value is producing A+ students with dirty hearts? What a waste! I have no interest in this. Society and Culture teach academic excellence is everything. It is not. Striving to produce Pure-Hearted students that Love & Serve God – *and* that get A’s – **now, that is worth fighting for!**

matt violassi

Appendix A – Religious Education/God-Stuff

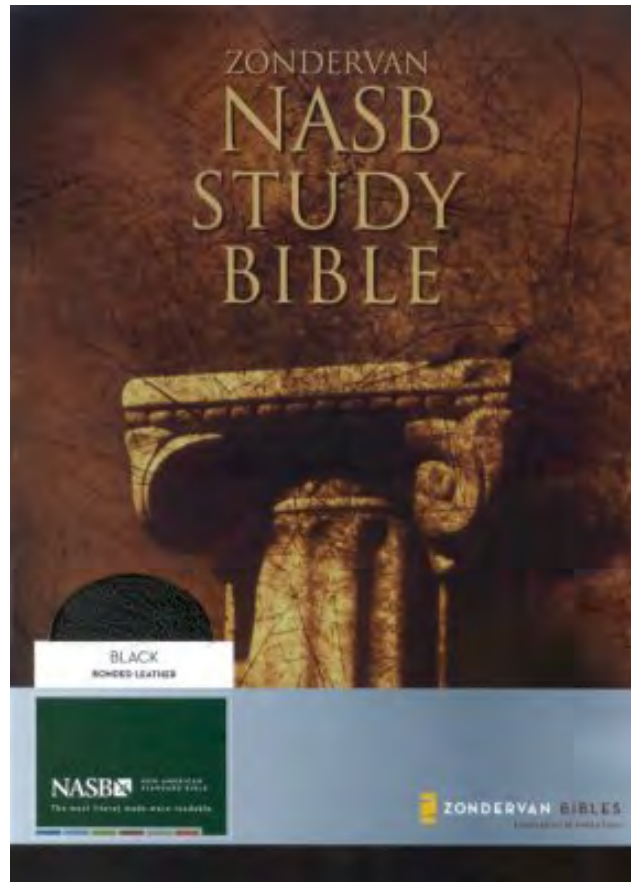
God First. Even as a homeschooling dad, our first academic class/subject was religious/spiritual – God-stuff. Sure, there was the learning of the different books of the Bible and their content – but our overriding goal is that each Child/Youth/Student had a real and personal relationship with God. This was the same for my years as a middle school teacher. God should be the priority and was the priority. Knowing God, Loving God, and Serving God - should all be our top priority as adults. It should be reflected in our day and our time - and reflected in our children's' school time and curriculums, in my opinion. (Different years we might send a son(s) to a Christian or a Public School. We believed this should be a year-by-year decision.)

I believe God likes it when we teach God-stuff as the first lesson of each school day. It speaks loud and clear - to God – and to the student - what our daily priorities are – and what theirs should be. Most importantly, it honors God.

Of course, we would usually start each day with group prayer, addressing Him firsthand. It is difficult to pass-on a real personal relationship with God, if we first don't have one ourselves.

Over the years, I did 3 basic items in this class time.

1. **Walk-through, read-through, the New Testament and Old Testament.** A little each day. It is been said that one of the best overall Bibles with a running commentary (on each page) is The Study Bible by Zondervan publishers. (Be sure to get it with Jesus's words in red ink). This Bible contains almost everything a parent or teacher could want or need to learn, in the Bible. The on-page commentary can answer many questions the reader might ask. It is great for teacher prep. In later years, when a student is reading the Bible on their own - good questions will erupt in them, and rather than dismissing a great question because no one is there to answer it – many questions can be answered right then and there using this Bible. I always tried to get parents to consider this Bible as a great Birthday or Christmas gift. Priceless, really! I recommend either the NASB or ESV or NKJ versions - said to be *the most accurate while maintaining readability.*



2. Time of teaching, understanding, and memorizing of some basic verses pertinent to the student, and their age, and verses they need for life. It is one thing to have “heard” a verse and be familiar with it. It is another thing to know what a verse means. A third step is to know it by heart – to be able to carry it inside of us for life. This is done primarily by rote memorization (I am not good at this, but I am getting better). The ultimate is to know the verse by heart, and be doing it. We can’t make a person believe a verse and do a verse or command found in the Bible – but we should at least bring them to the basic understanding, application, and memorization of Life Verses. The rest is up to them.

An example of a good “life” verse: Jesus said 2 verses basically make up the whole Bible. If all we knew were these 2 commands - and did them – we would be very successful in life in God’s eyes. I believe our kids, our youth, and our students - should know them by heart.



LOVE THE LORD
YOUR GOD

WITH ALL YOUR HEART
WITH ALL YOUR SOUL
WITH ALL YOUR MIND
WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH

The First and the Greatest Command

matt violassi



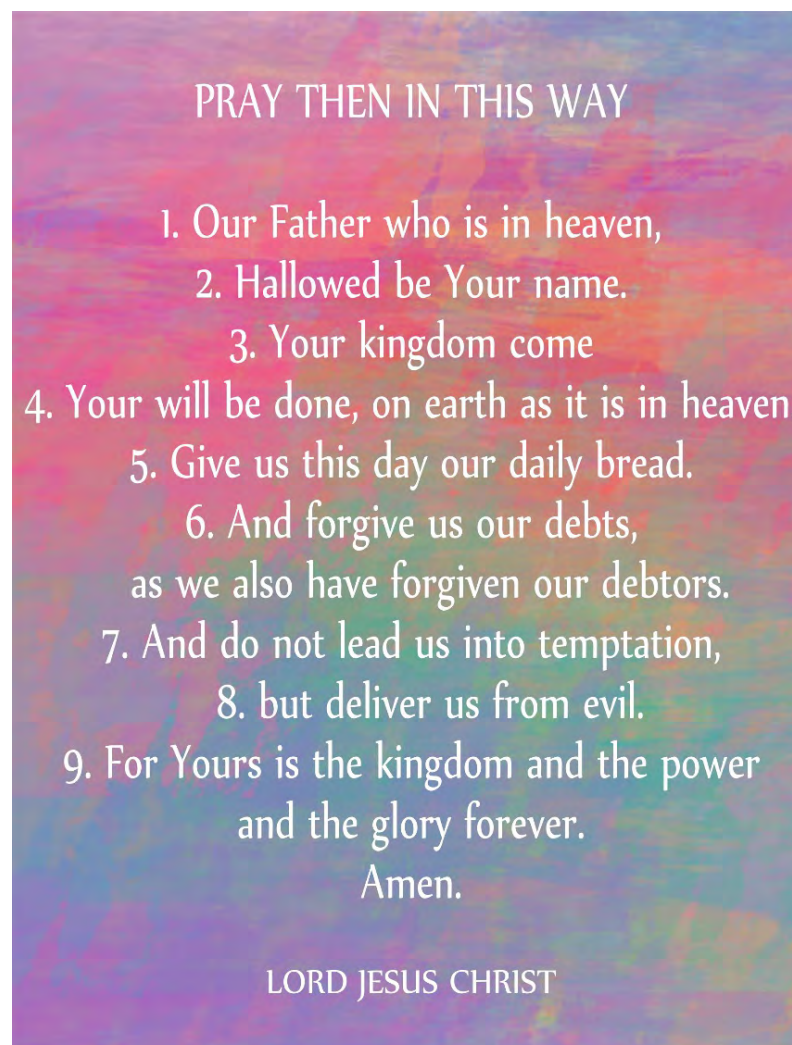
LOVE
YOUR
NEIGHBOR
AS
YOURSELF

The Second
Greatest Command

matt violassi

In the classroom, we would usually “work” one verse per week – and be tested (usually written) at the end of the week. (Think about this – this is handling and knowing about 40 verses per school year.) I usually (additionally) asked the student on the test to tell me, in their own words, what the verse meant to them and how it applies to their life. Being able to speak the verse can be a step above just being able to write it down. During the week I would have the students practice the verse verbally to each other in pairs of friends (more comfortable and less intimidating doing this drill with someone they more trusted). It would be terrorizing for many students to have each one of them individually get-up in front of the class and recite the verse; I would never do that. Reciting verbally and in written form is a great goal.

Another example verse: They asked Jesus how to pray. The Lord’s Prayer was his answer. A skeleton of 8-9 topics that God would like us to get better-at dialoging to Him and with Him about. I believe it is so wise and good to make sure students know this verse by heart:



One fundamental verse, for example, that I put into my students and would remind over the years was the all-important verse commanding us to obey and honor our parents (with a promise!),

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ SO THAT IT MAY TURN OUT WELL FOR YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.” Ephes. 6:1

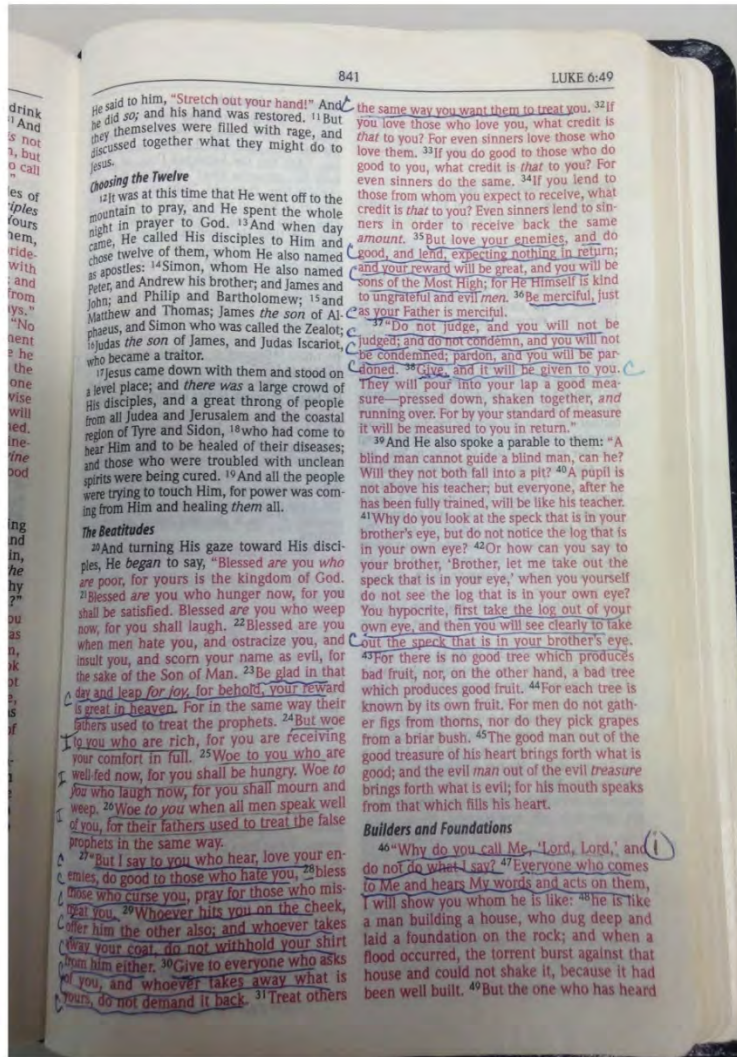
The point is that we should carefully choose different verses that are not only needed for life, but pertain to each student for *that time* in life. I remember a pastor who seemed pretty proud of all the verses he had his little son memorize and be able to recite, but I could tell the boy had no understanding of most of them or how they applied to his life.

In one school classroom situation, we were having a problem with students lying to each other and to me. I really had to stop and work on teaching them how detestable this sin is to God and to each other. The command to not lie shows-up basically in the 10 Commandments – and all the way to Jesus defining lying as being one of Satan’s biggest character traits – Satan is the “*father* of all lies.” That was a very important and pertinent verse for the moment for the students - and for the rest of their lives. With God’s help, making them see the despicableness of this sin . . . a sin pretty easy to do and get away with.

Another example of a *life verse* and a *present-pertinent verse*: This verse can excite every Christian from student to adult – to encourage and motivate us to keep cracking-open that Bible. We all inevitably find ourselves going to read the Bible (because we are taught good Christians should often read the Bible) and asking the question “*Why am I doing this?*” - especially after the several bouts of Bible roulette seeming to be dry, dead, and boring - and maybe a waste of time. **Jesus says memorizing His Commands - understanding them - knowing them by heart - and doing them – tells Him loud and clear, “I LOVE YOU!” His definition of who loves Him.** We will be judged by this, in part, on Judgement Day. Did we love Him *by His definition*? We can please Him better every day and we will be better prepared to stand before His throne with confidence if we have lived a life of loving God – ***according to His definition:***



Jesus defines who loves Him

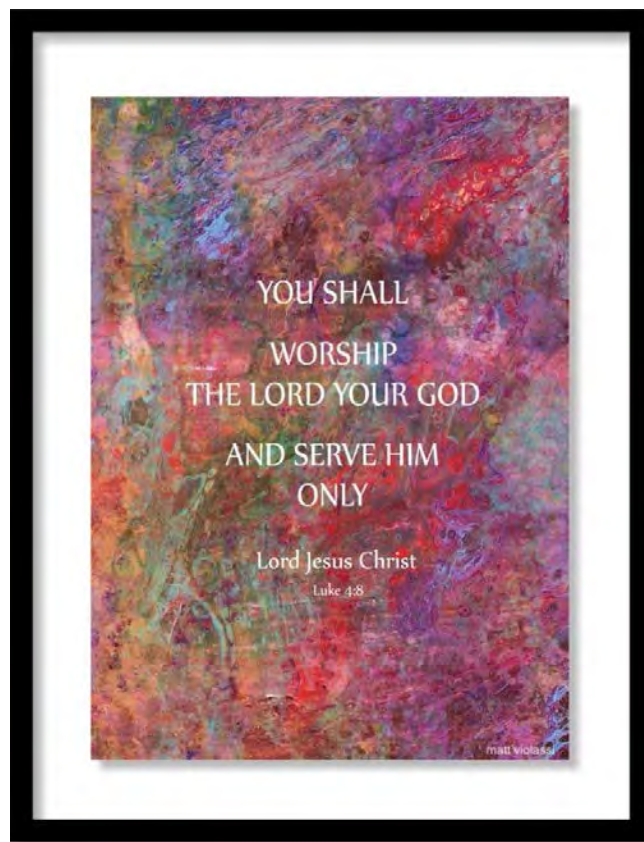


Easier to find His commands
 in a red-letter Bible
 Underline and mark "C" for Command
 Underline and mark "I" for implied Command

So, we can excite ourselves and our children, youth, and students about reading the Bible – by reminding ourselves it pleases God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – to be finding, understanding, memorizing, and doing Jesus’s Commands. This tells Them clearly **“I LOVE YOU!”** We impart this concept to children and students – and they now have a life-long motivation and joy for reading the Bible. *This concept can also dispel the fear of dead*

and dry times of reading and studying the Bible. It also makes for a better Resurrection Day - and Judgement Day – which we should be warning others about and preparing others for!

Here is another great verse that can really cut-to our hearts – and separate us from being some a type of Christian we don't want to be (We can be “saved”, have given our life to God, have confessed and committed to making Him Lord and Savior of our life, be a church-goer, have “met” the Lord . . . and still find ourselves in a somewhat powerless and lifeless daily life.) I have found this verse can cut-through this and keep us better alive in God:



I think it is important to ask ourselves and our students, “Are we Serving God” today, and each day? I have found most Christians cannot confess that they are getting-up every day and “Serving God” - that each and every one of their days is mainly about “Serving God.” Students can understand this concept and easily commit to it and do it. We are only responsible for

what we know what is right to do. It is not too deep for even children, in my opinion. This verse cuts through to deep things in the heart – to our true motivations and heart actions. I believe this is an important verse to cover with our children, youth, and school students.

3. Teaching and Practicing having real, personal, private, God-times. . . . From everything from learning how to “Find” God – to reading and studying the Bible – to praying for others – to “Loving-on-God. I know this might be shocking to many – but I taught – and we practiced (especially in the formal school classroom environment) everything in the book “Train with God – Live with God”! Even 5th and 6th graders comprehended this and could do the things described in it!

One section of our daily Bible period was about this all-important activity. We learned about and practiced all the 7 tools and such on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Thursday’s class (Friday was school-wide chapel) was a 20-30 minute period where students **practiced their own personal, private, God-time**. I would dim the lights and put on some relaxing background acoustic music. Children/Youth/Students then practiced having their own private God-time. This was not graded. This was just between them and God, and if they wanted to cultivate their relationship with Him - they could. I just pushed back the gates of hell – carved-out a time for them to do it. Most people – even adults – are too weak to push back life for themselves to do this. The students could pray, read their Bible, work a verse, etc. – whatever they wanted relating to this subject - by themselves - at their own desk. They were given all the tools to do different spiritual things. (See for instance, Tool #1 “Good Things to Do in Our Private God-Times.”)

My wife and I did this while homeschooling our kids and when they attended private or public schools. The house rule and practice was they were to give the first of their *DISPOSABLE TIME* each day (about 20 min) to privately go to a room with only a Bible and a notebook – and have a personal, private God-time. I never checked what they did in this time (I would inquire if they had any questions concerning it, but it was basically none of my business, for the most part), but I armed them with everything *they could do* – if they wanted to. We pushed-back the gates of hell so that this time was available to them. Otherwise, it probably would not happen.

I know this could be construed as some religious, man-made rule (which it was) – but I believe I trained them in the most important thing in life . . . **God is alive – He loves us – He desires relationship with us – WE CAN FIND HIM / MAKE CONTACT WITH HIM! – AND**

WE CAN GET HELP FROM HIM! (“Whoever Asks Receives”) . . . WHAT? How could we not be teaching and modeling this to our Children/Youth/Students?

I have a very easy-to-read and free downloadable flip-book for youths covering this subject, available at TrainForGod.com . . . “10-10 System”. So easy to spend just 10 minutes Praying to God, and 10 minutes Reading/Studying the Bible behind a closed-door – **especially red-letter commands of Jesus**. So easy for almost any Child/Youth/Student!

I know that anyone who would give Him even 20 minutes of the first of their time each - *absolutely thrills Him*. Why not train our kids in this?

Appendix B – Classroom/Home Law & Order

Teaching academics at home, especially several students at the same time, can be very difficult. A school environment at home tends to magnify existing family flaws, bad thinking, bad character, and bad behaviors – in the students AND the parents. An all-important aspect of any home environment is Law and Order. While teaching at a formal school and watching different schools, I have witnessed a number of teachers (some even quit in 1 or 2 years) who were unaware of the VITAL need of controlling their students' behavior and **ruling their classroom**. I suspect many fine teachers hate the profession because they are either ignorant of maintaining **full classroom control** (from interruptions: students talking, joking, interrupting, blurting things out whenever they wanted, passing notes, not paying attention, teasing, poking, throwing things, etc.) or their administrators will not provide them the necessary instructions to do so - and backing them up to be able enforce classroom control (allowing the classroom to truly be a fun and safe environment for learning). Here are 2 really good rules that allowed for Law and Order (and peace and joy) in our home and homeschool environment – and my classroom environments. These were posted on the walls in the classroom and strictly enforced.

Many times over the years people would approach my wife and I at restaurants and compliment us on how nice our 5 boys were and how well-behaved they were . . . This was because of God's help and God's wisdom. These 2 Main Rules *really helped* – actually, they were vital:

Rule 1: No Destructive Speech of any kind to or about other people allowed.

(No name-calling, no cutting-down, no making fun of others, no casual insults, teasing, bullying, slandering, unnecessary complaining, etc. allowed.)

Just say good things to others and about others.

Rule 2: Keep your hands, arms, legs, body, and objects to yourself!

(No *PHYSICALLY* Offending or Hurting Others. No hitting, punching, elbowing, poking, teasing, throwing objects, tripping, etc. others)

Just do good things to others.

These are great rules for the home. We had a ton of fun – **with Law and Order** at our home with our 5 boys. These 2 rules were vigorously enforced in our home. This made for a peaceful and fun home. Really, these are rules on how to be good and true friends and true family.

The teaching of these rules is one thing. Getting youths to understand them is another thing. **Enforcement of these rules for home & school classroom Law and Order is monumental!** I am talking about this because it is wrong for parents and teachers to allow themselves to be pushed to a point of blowing-up with anger on a youth because of their mounting frustration of having to give repeated verbal corrections for wrong and bad behaviors to students all day long. It is best to deal with the infractions - well before this point of volcano eruption - which frequently can be accompanied with damaging anger and possible destructive words and possibly unnecessary and wrong physical retribution. Being diligent to address every infraction can also save the parent and teacher from the accusation of being partial and unfair and unjust, "Why are you picking on me? - You let so-and-so and others do it all day, and you didn't say or do anything!"

Imagine a parent having to correct and recorrect one or several of their children for the same known infractions. Trying to reason using logic with anyone's sinful nature many times simply will not work. Assuming they will feel guilty and feel bad about doing something wrong - is many times just a fantasy! (Remember the teacher that quit after 1 or 2 years. **They thought children were angels, or children before The Fall of Man – not understanding they are sinners - that we are all born with sin natures.**)

Appealing to a person's conscience, many times, simply does not work
in changing people's behavior.

We need to have pre-determined CONSEQUENCES for the students - for each type and frequency of classroom rule infractions – and have the courage, will, and discipline to enforce these consequences – every time and at any time.

Children, Kids, Youths, and Students for the most part will follow authorities that are worthy of their trust. **But they usually are going to test us to see if we are worthy.** Truly loving and caring for them, not having an ounce of hypocrisy in our lives, being teachable ourselves - especially by them, have reasonable and fair and just rules, etc. will really help win their trust.

But, if we are carrying ourselves as righteously as we know how – we also need to have a firm inner vow that we will meet them on the battlefield on any day, at any time, no matter how inconvenient (if they decide they want to be in authority and run things) and we will win. We will meet them on the battlefield on any day and at any time they decide they want to change the rules – and our rules will stand. Our rules will be enforced.

My dear wife Barbara knew that if things ever got crazy or were spinning out of her control at home with our 5 sons, I was a phone call away. I would take off work and come home to handle the situation if I got the call. The boys/youths knew this would not be good. All she had to do is threaten, "That's it - I'm calling Dad." The pleas would begin. The mutiny would be halted!

Imagine a teacher that is going to give each student one verbal correction with every infraction. (Now many teachers won't ever stop the class to make that verbal correction – they just choose to ignore stuff, and chaos starts to build.) Now, the teacher has to give every student One Free Pass – one free verbal correction per rule – to every one of the 20-30 students in the classroom. (If you give one student a free correction, you have to give everyone else a free pass correction, otherwise you would be guilty of being partial and unfair and unjust). That is a lot of classroom interruptions per day 25 students X 10 classes = 250 free classroom disruptions/interruptions.

Now double that with a teacher who allows **Two Free Passes** on rule enforcement without consequences. That is having to stop class and correct kids possibly hundreds of times a day. Feel the anger and frustration building. Now imagine them giving *3 Free Passes* to students. A classroom like this can easily turn into a circus! We are not even talking about the injustice being done (with all the interruptions) to the students who are really trying to learn and do their best! Not allowing any "Free Passes" helps teachers to not "Blow-Up" in anger on one student after they can't take it anymore. Now they can be accused of being biased, unfair, and unjust.

Classroom control is absolutely vital for parent/teacher sanity and for a safe, fun, educational environment - it is probably the biggest classroom hurdle and obstacle there is - and probably the most important parent/teacher skill there is!

Please don't think I was some hard-nosed, marine sergeant tyrant – or advocating that. I strove to make my classroom experience as fun as *it would be in heaven*. “**Your Kingdom come – on earth as it is in heaven.**” - as is seen in that Lord's Prayer. I tried to run our formal classroom school (and homeschool) as fun as I could imagine it would be done in heaven. I was known as the “recess king!” Besides an unusual morning recess break AND a lunch recess, if we finished our daily workload well and on time – we had a 3rd recess! I played with them and taught them all kinds of great outdoor games and how to be a true “sport” – always to try to congratulate an opposing team mate for a great play or great score – just like they would in heaven! Sometimes we would play and not keeping score – *just for the fun of the game* – just like they would in heaven! We had a blast!

During the school day, I had a 5-minute social break after every subject (about 10 subjects) for kids to talk and mingle and go to the rest room if need be. That is a lot of talk-time! (10 subjects X 5 minutes = 50 minutes!) That's a lot of social time! Kids are social beings and need that time. If we provide that time for them, they will be less urged to try to get it during class time. So, during class, there was absolutely no talking and screwing-around.

We worked hard, just as we should on an adult normal job! **Our adult jobs *should* be fun and a joy, though.** That's what they were meant to be. We students and I - treated our school day just like a real job. The kids got a real sense of this – they were practicing for real jobs and careers! We even had a money system with our own currency. They got a paycheck that could buy snacks, food, and stuff that they could eat at their desks, during the “work day” . . . even buy other students' unwanted toys on “Auction Day.” They learned how the real marketplace worked! They learned the results of diligence and hard work! They could had additional jobs if they wanted to earn bonus money. They were also paid bonus money for higher grades and productivity – just like on a real job! Students could also save and contribute money (classroom currency dollar bills) for extra field trips. And our school was near Worlds of Fun Theme Park! But they had to earn and pay for the extras! We had a blast!

By the way, I am a firm advocate of No Homework. What adult, after spending a hard day at work, wants to come home and do Home Work? No one. Why then, would we put

homework on a student? They just finished a hard day at the office, and you're going to make them go home and work some more? No way (unless they asked for it - by being lax during their school workday). In my class, almost every student could escape homework if they reasonably applied themselves during the school day. . . It was up to them. School should be fun. Going home should be fun.

Note on rigid classroom Law & Order: I ran my classroom with certain disciplines for certain bad behaviors. General infractions brought general disciplines (The Big 2 Rules and Classroom Disruption Rules). We had a couple of "practice days" or "dry runs" the first days of school.

If you misbehaved - you had to sit-out in recess and write (numerous times) why your infraction was wrong and how you would not do it again. This impacted their brains and their behavior. I think the student also forfeited their daily "Pay" for that day (Classroom currency/money system). If you tried blurting out a joke or a remark during class time without raising your hand - or threw something, or talked to someone, or passed a note - you got "written-up" with a Conduct Referral. The student was issued this "ticket." (If you caught yourself saying something to the class or to another student *and stopped mid-action* - no problem. There was mercy and grace.) Otherwise, the class came to a DEAD STOP. **Very Dramatic.** I had to stop teaching, sit down at my desk and write out a Conduct Referral with the date, explanation of why the student was receiving it, and have them sign it. The student could not enter class the next day without the Conduct Referral signed by the parent. I kept a copy to check them.

This city-wide Christian school where I worked, represented students from around 30 different local churches. It was racially mixed. It was doctrinally mixed. It was economically mixed. Sometimes there were cases of parents believing I was being mean, unfair, and/or impartial to their child when it came down to Conduct Referrals and disciplines. I needed some sort of proof against this.

Another classroom student's (paid) job was to daily document the Date, Student Name, and Type of Infraction of the "Conduct Referral" **in a binder**. This all took time. It was a classroom event that was uncomfortable for everyone.

If I had to "Go to Court" in the Principal's Office (to explain to him and an angry parent(s) as to why I was not picking on his child or being mean or unfair or biased), I merely opened the binder and showed them how every child has their own page, and how every infraction is always recorded and given a Conduct Referral. I also had a stack of every parent-signed Conduct Referral for the month, further proving the contents of what is in the binder. This

usually ended the meeting. The parent had to now deal with their child's behavior instead of trying to excuse it.

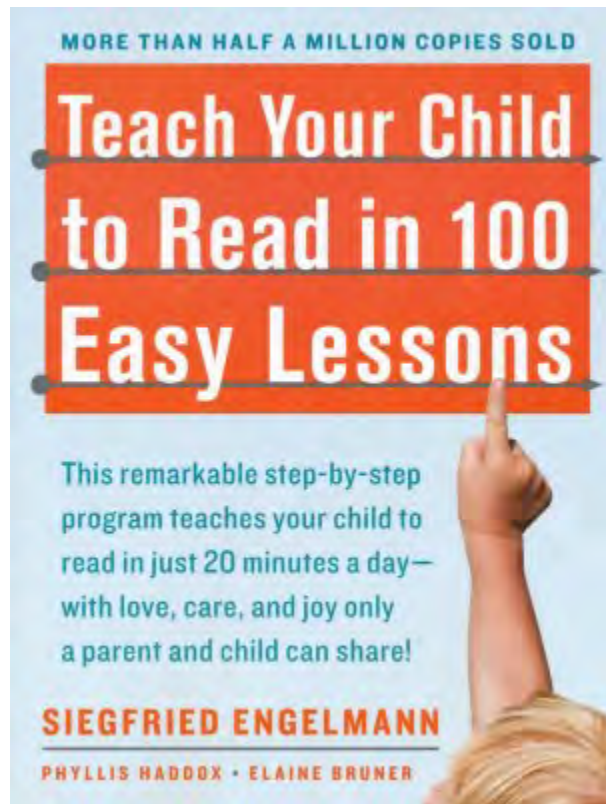
If a child had multiple conduct referrals in one week, they received a **Saturday** detention at the school (further discipline escalation). This really got the parents' attention - and usually *results*. Now a student's bad behavior resulted in helping wreck their parents' weekend! They weren't very happy about this (One of the teachers had to be there, though. Hassle for everybody.)

Every morning as the students came into the classroom, they had to put any previous day's Conduct Referrals (with parent signature) into a bin. Another student's paid job was to check if the pile in the bin matched my duplicate stack. They were to report to me if someone's signed Conduct Referral is missing. I had to deal with this right then, and possibly call the parent before that student could be in class. This rarely happened. I had to always go through the "signed" stack at the end of the day, looking for forgery (a student trying to sign their parents name). This happened. Not good.

This was extra work and hassle, but it helped insure we all could have safe, fun, and enjoyable school days!

Appendix C – Learning to Read

1. Reading. I personally taught all my sons at an early age to read using an earlier version of this book. (Over 1 million copies sold.) It makes learning to read easier and quicker by removing the confusion to the child of introducing the NAME of each alphabet letter at the same time as the SOUND each letter it is meant to represent. (Teaching both at the same time was commonly done.) This book teaches SOUND FIRST – with the child then slowly blending the sound of each letter as their finger moves from letter to letter. (The reading skill of *decoding*.) Learning the name of the letter is taught later.



After we learn to decode words, and words become familiar *visually* – we begin remembering the shape of words. This is reading "by sight." Sight-Reading takes-over as we become more experienced readers. Most reading in adults is done by sight-reading and decoding words (sounding them out) is done when we come-across unfamiliar words.

Some people/parents/teachers get tempted to discard the **hassle** of teaching the skill of decoding, and just teach students Sight-Reading – have them memorize every word individually. The problem is that we all are going to run into thousands of words we never memorized, or words with variations that we never learned! I believe this is a mistake to teach sole sight-reading. I know of an entire school system that experimented by solely teaching sight-reading, and it was a disaster!!

Appendix D – Quality Curriculums

With Parents in Mind

There are tons of Christian Educational resources and curriculums out nowadays:
<https://cathyduffyreviews.com/homeschool-reviews-core-curricula>

I have used the following with great results; these have been excellent and respected over the years:

1. **Christian Spiritual:** Zondervan's Study Bible
2. **Math:** SAXON MATH - Grades 1-12
(Abeka Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division **2-sided flashcards**)
3. **Spelling:** Grades 1-6 ACSC SPELLING / Grades 7-12 ABEKA SPELLING
4. **Grammar / Language Arts:** EASY GRAMMAR, Wanda Phillips
5. **Vocabulary** – WORLDLY WISE, EPS Literacy and Intervention
6. **Writing** – EASY WRITING, Wanda Phillips



ONCE-A-DAY

One way of trying to
EAT RIGHT



matt violassi

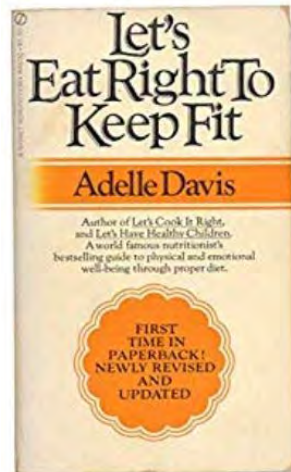
ON EATING RIGHT

Bottom Line 1 : Try to make at least 1 meal a day - "A Perfect Meal" - meaning, having it contain abundant "LIVE" foods of multi-colored fruits, multi-colored vegetables, dark green leaves/salad types, and COMPLETE protein.

Bottom Line 2 : No matter how responsibly we try to eat, we should ultimately ask and trust God to bless whatever we have to eat. Without His blessing, our polluted earth and soils and genetically modified seeds, pesticide-laden foods, etc. won't be what we need them to be. God's blessing can make any meal "A Perfect Meal." (The Bible teaches to pray over our food.)

- Most people understand the vital importance of "eat righting" to keep our human *machine* "running right" for years and years - to be able to enjoy as few painful and expensive and inconvenient break-downs and problems as possible. Just like a car. *Many people do not understand this.*

- In college I read a book (and several others) by a popular nutritionist (at the time), Adelle Davis. ("Let's Eat Right To Keep Fit"). One of her main points is that the human body is continuously building new cells and repairing damaged ones. If the body is trying to rebuild or repair a muscle cell, organ cell, blood defense cell, etc - and can't complete the job because it is missing an essential vitamin, mineral, or protein - why bother eating?



- **ONE MEAL THAT WOULD HAVE IT ALL.** Ever since then, I tried to daily prepare one meal **that would have it all.** This ended up being, for the most part, a salad containing spinach and/or kale, and loads of vegetables: carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, beans, celery, onion, etc. I would then add a hard-boiled egg, chopped meat of some type, and/or cheese. **DAIRY FOODS AND MEAT ARE COMPLETE PROTEINS.** I would also bring a washed piece of fruit of some type. I would try to vary this, but "an apple a day, keeps the doctors away." Raw

apples are a proven great "go-to" fruit. (Apple sauce is processed.) **Remember: LIVE FOODS.** Adelle Davis taught that every kind of heat, freezing, cooking, boiling, processing, canning, degrades food on various levels. Many times, eating our boiled and canned vegetables is essentially worthless - the vitamins and minerals have been boiled-away and/or destroyed molecularly.

- **EATING RIGHT IS JUST A CHOICE.** So, for decades I would prepare one of these "complete salad meals" to take to work. This required it to be climate-controlled. This meant a cooler with freeze-packs. Also required was salad dressing to help me "choke-down" the "bale of dry hay." I don't like salads. I don't like vegetables. I don't like eating fruit. **EATING RIGHT IS JUST A CHOICE.** Just like doing anything. **For the ONE meal, I advise - don't care how it tastes - it is not about taste . . .** It is about feeding what your body needs for at least one time every day. (On non-fast days. Fasting for spiritual reasons is an excellent life-discipline)

- **The human body needs 20 Amino Acids to function.** These combine to be "proteins." The human body can manufacture all but 9 ESSENTIAL AMINO ACIDS. (Muscles, ligaments, organs, hair, nails, etc. are made up of proteins.) Without eating these 9 essential amino acids - the body cannot make what it needs to. That is why vegetarian diets can be dangerous if meals are not mixed to include these 9 essential amino acids, because plants generally only contain *some* of the 9 essential amino acids. You can be slowly dying on a careless diet. The chemical building processes in the human body many times needs a certain vitamin or mineral to complete the process. Imagine your body going to build a defense cell that specifically targets and kills cancers or disables "free radicals" that cause mutations. Your body says, "I need one of these, and two of that and one of. . . . I don't see any of these?. . .What?" Guess what. Those cells probably doesn't get built! How terrible!

You can be eating a meal containing "complete proteins" but missing a certain vitamin or mineral that is needed in the manufacturing process. Proper vitamins and minerals are important, too! You can't have just one or the other and think you are doing a good job, though! You need vitamins & minerals *AND* complete proteins. I have seen many people loading up on all sorts of vitamins and supplements, but neglecting complete proteins in the mix. Again, perhaps another waste of time.

- **Not eating right can effect your whole life.** It is no fun to not be able to think clearly on the job or while "doing life" - feeling sick, tired, slow, sluggish, head-aches, etc. - because your diet is bad. It is not fun being sick all the time because your body couldn't keep your defense system working correctly. It is not fun to live with all kinds of needless ailments or conditions - or even diseases - because of not purposely eating right.

- **Eating right is not easy.** Live foods are more expensive than other stuff. If you are like me, vegetables and fruits they are not fun to eat. Live foods tend to spoil quickly. Preparing and eating live foods take longer. Fruits and vegetables should be properly cleaned and trimmed and then chopped. Hassle. Fresh live fruits and vegetables cost more time and money. **Eating right is a hassle.** But we need to do it. How can we ask God to heal and

help with different diet-related consequences, when we won't do our part? I don't think He is that interested in helping in this situation very much.

- **Emulsifying Blender** About 6 years ago, I was watching an infomercial with a guy on TV making "smoothies" in an emulsifier blender. Emulsifiers are heavy-duty blenders with bigger motors and bigger grinding teeth that can literally grind about any food (including rock-hard frozen foods and ice) into a liquid. I thought viola! (wah-la!) I could pour all my raw spinach, greens, carrots, celery, vegetables, fruits, protein powder or yogurt or powdered eggs into this emulsifying blender - grind it up - AND DRINK IT DOWN! No more need to bring and refrigerate salad dressing to help choke down a salad. No more slow, laborious work of chewing-up the actual salad. Grind it up, drink it right down, and its done!
Please note: I used to call the finished shake "green pond swamp water", because that is what it can look like. Each day it tastes a little different, depending on what vegetables, fruit, and frozen fruit we put in, but, overall - it tastes bad. **Again, we are not doing this for the taste of it.** If I could give you a large glass of something and tell you it has everything perfect and complete what your body needs today (please add God's blessing on it) - should you really care what it tastes like? No! **Just drink it down, and get it over with!** Also, good and/or great emotional feelings of well-being seem to always follow when we are trying to do something - or anything - "right."

- **It is possible to add a larger variety of fruits with this drink-meal.** As nutritionists commonly teach, it is best to eat and include a large as possible variety of fruits and vegetables - of all types AND COLORS. It was hard to bring to work - and keep refrigerated - a bunch of different fruits.

This is now possible through this liquid-meal. Quick-frozen fruit is said to be *almost as good* as fresh fruit.



Some foods are just nasty in this meal shake. I tried adding fish once as the complete protein. Had to dump it. Almost puked. By the way, you can almost not even taste spinach in one of these shakes! My son blew my mind once adding it to his *ice cream shake*. You couldn't taste it! Also, you can add ice cubes and milk to this meal shake - get the protein from the milk - AND it tastes more like a regular milkshake! We always add a little lemon or lemon juice to our

shakes. Lemons contain some serious - almost mystical - health properties. Lemons are anti-bacterial, anti-septic, and a natural bleach cleaning agent, among many other beneficial things. Complete protein can also be added with yogurt or quality (complete) protein powders - available on the market today. Inexpensive and quality cheese "sticks" can be consumed (not in the drink) to include your "complete" protein. All-inclusive vitamin & minerals supplement in powder or liquid form - can be added to the mixture. **It has been said by many that because of today's over-farming and generationally-depleted soils - fruits and vegetables today do not contain the vitamins and minerals they once did.**

- **"Juicing."** Fruit and vegetable "juicers" are small appliance machines that basically squeeze all the liquid out of fruits and vegetables. The pulp is usually then discarded. I think this can be very expensive. You have to buy a lot more material to get a glass of something. Nutritionists also say a lot a good vitamins and minerals are still in the pulp, and it is wasted because it is thrown-out. Also, the pulp is good "roughage" which is good for the intestinal track and digestion and good health. I think emulsifying blenders are a better solution since they save all the pulp and the juice - grinding everything down to a liquid.

- **Sugar is not our friend.** Sugary foods are fun! I like them! Ice cream, chocolate, pies, donuts, candies, etc. My grandfather was a candy-maker from Italy. It's in my genes! But, you usually feel drained and tired, and even irritable after too much sugar. Sugar-dumping your bloodstream with a soft drink and other sugar-foods makes your pancreas pump insulin into the bloodstream to try to lower the sugar level. **High blood sugar levels destroy so many different parts of the human body that it is scary.** It is believed the because of so many episodes of sugar dumping in the human body, the pancreas actually quits or surrenders - and we end up with rampant diabetes on our hands, in our society (People then have to take their own insulin). It is not wise to be in the habit of pounding-down large sugary monster drinks and such. They can literally be killing us. Careful moderation of sugar is wise.

- **Try to daily hydrate with water.** Enough cannot be said about this. Many ailments are actually caused by dehydration or mild dehydration. I used to only drink water if I felt very thirsty. I would work for years in burning heat, sweat like crazy, and not bother to purposefully hydrate. One day in my 50's, after a hard days work in heat, I went home, and my visual world began spinning from left to right, and then start over again left to right. I could not stop it. I though I was having some kind of stroke or heart attack. Fortunately, my family and I prayed hard about it, and felt water would be the cure. I immediately drank several glasses of water. It worked! Saved me a trip to emergency. I started purposefully hydrating from then-on for the rest of my life. It was never an issue again. An old friend of ours had painful, debilitating headaches for years. Sometimes she would have to take day(s) off of work, and just lay in bed all day in misery. I inquired about her water intake. **She said she never drank water.** She took our advice, started purposely hydrating daily, and to my knowledge, never had the problem again! It has been said that when you are actually experiencing the feelings of being thirsty - your body is already in a state of dehydration. Consciously hydrating through the day before the body's communication of low water levels is smart. People who consume a lot of

coffee, teas, sodas, alcohol, and other diuretic drinks (diuretics cause the body to excrete water) should also perhaps over-compensate with conscious daily hydration.

- **Without God's help**, we can make our body - our god. This is commonly seen today in our preoccupation with ourselves, our health, our beauty, our physiques, etc. ***We can also make our diet and nutrition - a god.*** I think it is wise to keep this whole arena as simple as possible - but one we can sustain as a lifestyle, without it being disruptive and stealing an inordinate amount of our time and energy. One simple and common-sense good meal a day, as proposed - can accomplish this.

matt violassi



PURCHASING PRODUCTS

One way of trying to purchase products responsibly



matt violassi

ON BUYING HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Matt Violassi

Many times after purchasing necessary household appliances, car tires, tools, and other household products with our hard-earned cash, we find out later we could have made better decisions that could have saved us a lot of money, time, and grief.

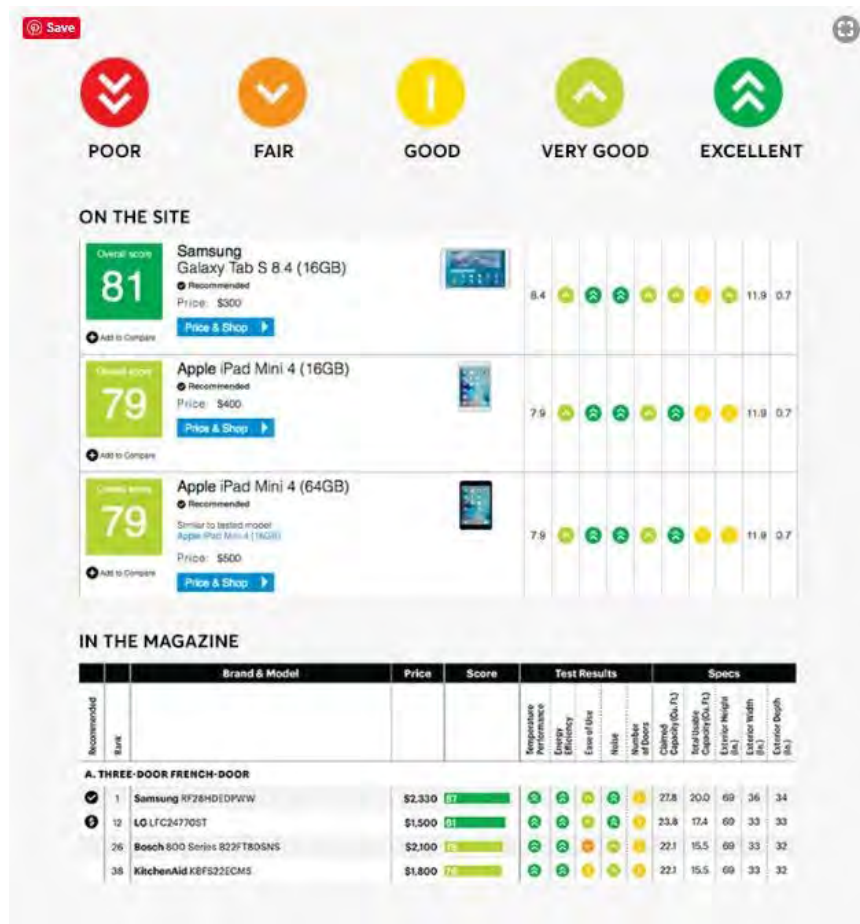
Here is a simple strategy to help.

Not only can our own personal experience and those of our family and friends be valid when trying to choose and purchase quality products, but using tools available through Consumer Reports Online magazine and such, can save us a lot of money and grief. I have consulted and referenced Consumer Reports magazines, articles, and scientific studies in particular for decades when buying products.

Many times certain products and manufacturers have gained a reputation for being high quality, when in fact, the company(s) have been sold to other corporations who have lower quality and reliability standards - and their products are not longer what they once were. (This seems to be a phenomenon seen in the last several decades in the United States - companies often being bought and sold) Additionally, it can be difficult to find other little-known manufacturers that have entered the market with a much-better product than we were aware of! **Many times I have seen people's buying choices based-upon old family opinions and "hearsay" that has been passed-down to them while growing up...buying opinions based on past cultural mindsets - *not on fact.***



Consumer Reports has always been a non-profit company, striving to side on the consumers' interests and well-being. Many consumer product companies do not share these values. Most appear to receive money to do product studies, or receive money for advertising. Money seems to always taint objectivity. *Consumer Reports takes no money for advertising or anything else from manufacturers.* This tends to free them from biasing in studies.



Consumer Reports online magazine is very inexpensive (presently around \$20/year) in comparison to the thousands it can save us in money and time and grief over years. You are going to get for the most part - in-depth, unbiased, scientific studies and reports done on a far range of products from Consumer Reports, *AND* they report actual consumer data from meticulous questionnaires.

Simply before buying a product - go online and check to see what are the current top-ranked manufacturers for the item.

Then, (THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT) research the individual MODEL of the product. In the old days, most, if not all the models of a top-ranked manufacturer used to great. Not so now! It seems that presently, there are more companies with good reputations for quality products carrying some really bad models.

Tires

Overview **Ratings** Recommended Buying Guide

All season tires Performance all season tires Recommended only Clear All



FIND TIRES THAT FIT MY VEHICLE

Select Vehicle

or Choose Tire Size

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

Product Type

- All tires
- All season tires
- Performance all season tires
- Ultra high performance all season tires
- Ultra high performance summer tires

CR Recommends

- Recommended only

Brand

- All tires
- Atlas
- BFGoodrich
- Bridgestone
- Continental
- Cooper
- Dunlop

Ratings

Features & Specs

4 of 168 Models Shown

Sort by: Brand & Model

		Ratings & Test Results									
Overall score	Brand, Model & Price	Dry Braking	Wet Braking	Handling	Hydroplaning	Snow traction	Ice braking	Ride comfort	Noise	Rolling resistance	Tested tread life (Miles)
All season tires											
OVERALL SCORE	RECOMMENDED										
67	Michelin Defender T+H										
	Price: \$115										
	Shop										
	Add to compare										
OVERALL SCORE	RECOMMENDED										
70	General Altimax RT43 (T)										
	Price: \$86										
	Shop										
	Add to compare										

Case in point: Several years ago I needed to buy a new room air conditioner. I went to CR online magazine, found the current top-ranked manufacturer in quality and reliability, and went-off to Lowe's Home Improvement to buy it, where it was on-sale. I felt a strong impulse to go back and research that manufacturer's **individual models**. The one I was going to buy was a problematic loser!

Air Conditioners

Overview

Ratings & Reliability

Recommended

Buying Guide

Product Type

Window Air Conditioner

Portable Air Conditioner

Category

All

1000 to 1200 Btu/h
Cooling Capacity (BTU)

1200 to 1500 Btu/h
Cooling Capacity (BTU)

1500 to 2000 Btu/h
Cooling Capacity (BTU)

CR Recommends

Recommended Only

Brand

All

Amana

Electrolux Quiet Cool

Electrolux

Kenmore

LG

Whirlpool

RATINGS FEATURES & SPECS RELIABILITY & SATISFACTION

Results in the following chart are gathered from Consumer Reports' 2018 Summer Survey of 5,249 window air conditioners, owned by members who purchased a new unit between 2008 and 2018.













Our predicted brand reliability ratings are based on a statistical model that estimates problem rates within the first 4 years of ownership, for window air conditioners that are not covered by an extended warranty or service contract. We also adjust for the median number of months of use per year. The median in our survey was 4 months per year. Higher ratings are indicative of better reliability. Brands receiving a red or orange rating cannot be recommended by CR at this time.

Our owner satisfaction ratings are based on the proportion of members who are extremely likely to recommend their window air conditioner brand to friends and family.

Predicted Reliability

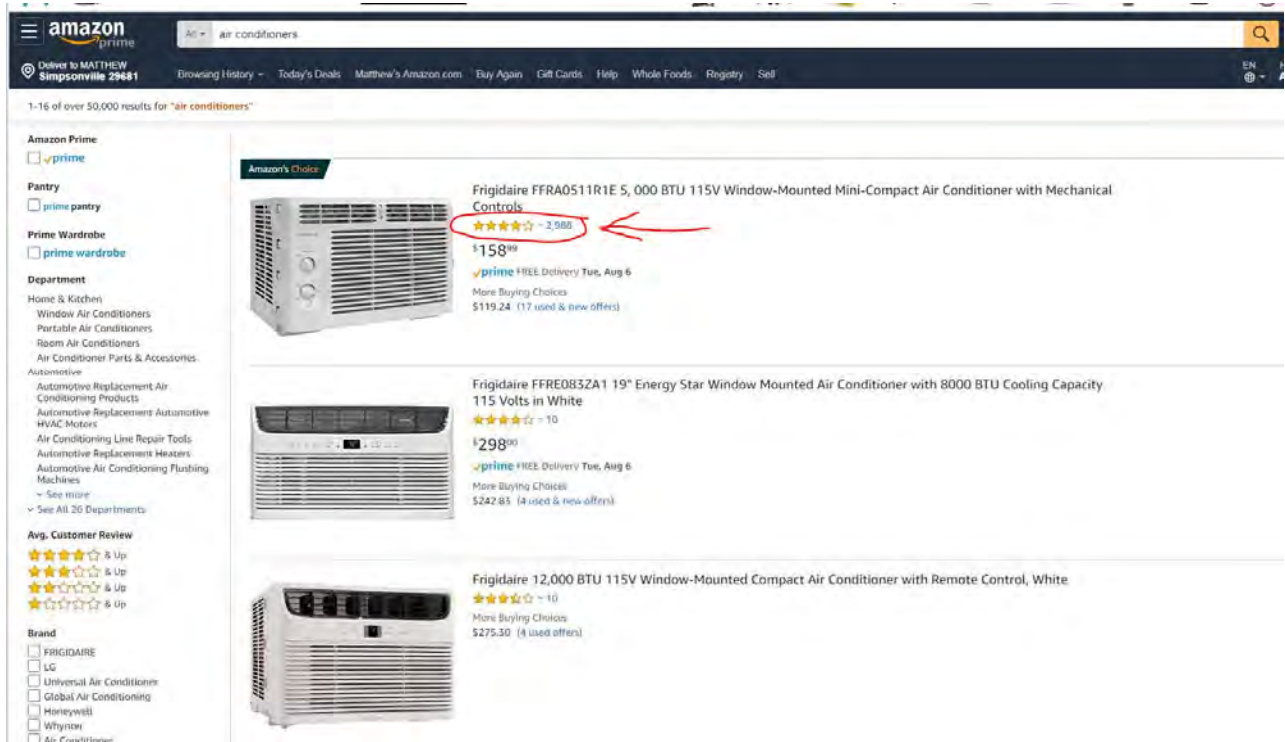


This page shows how most of the current window air conditioner manufacturers are producing reliable machines.

<p>+ Add to Compare</p> <p>OVERALL SCORE</p> <p>68</p> <p>Friedrich CP06G10B¹ Price: \$320</p> <p>Shop</p>		
<p>+ Add to Compare</p> <p>OVERALL SCORE</p> <p>64</p> <p>GE AEW06LY (Walmart) Price: \$178</p> <p>Shop</p>		
<p>+ Add to Compare</p> <p>OVERALL SCORE</p> <p>61</p> <p>Frigidaire FFRE0533U1 Price: \$200</p> <p>Shop</p>		
<p>+ Add to Compare</p> <p>OVERALL SCORE</p> <p>60</p> <p>Frigidaire Gallery FGRC0644U1 Price: \$280</p> <p>Shop</p>		
<p>+ Add to Compare</p> <p>OVERALL SCORE</p> <p>60</p> <p>Whirlpool WHAW050BW Price: \$150</p> <p>Shop</p>		
<p>+ Add to Compare</p> <p>OVERALL SCORE</p> <p>51</p> <p>GE AEW05LY (Walmart) Price: \$156</p> <p>Shop</p>		
<p>7,000 to 8,500 Btu/hr. (Cools 250-400 sq. ft.)</p>		

This page shows how there are some models with low scores that are to be avoided.

More and more people are also currently using the customer feedback sections of Amazon.com of the product and model they are interested in their research. I try to go here also and wade through all peoples' comments. This can be very helpful!




The screenshot shows the Amazon website search results for "air conditioners". The top navigation bar includes the Amazon logo, a search bar with "air conditioners" entered, and a delivery location of "Simpsonville 29681". Below the navigation bar, there are filters for Amazon Prime, Pantry, Prime Wardrobe, and Department. The main content area displays three product listings:

- Product 1:** Frigidaire FFRA0511R1E 5,000 BTU 115V Window-Mounted Mini-Compact Air Conditioner with Mechanical Controls. It has a 4.5-star rating with 2,985 reviews (indicated by a red circle and arrow) and a price of \$158.00. It is marked as an Amazon's Choice product.
- Product 2:** Frigidaire FFRE0832A1 19" Energy Star Window Mounted Air Conditioner with 8000 BTU Cooling Capacity 115 Volts in White. It has a 4.5-star rating with 10 reviews and a price of \$298.00.
- Product 3:** Frigidaire 12,000 BTU 115V Window-Mounted Compact Air Conditioner with Remote Control, White. It has a 4.5-star rating with 10 reviews and a price of \$275.30.



The screenshot shows the Amazon product page for a Danby refrigerator. The product title is "Danby DAR026A1BDD-3 Compact Refrigerator, 115 V, 15 A, 1 Door, 2.6 cu-ft, Black". The product is by Danby and has a 4.5-star rating with 1,567 customer reviews and 759 answered questions (both circled in red). It is marked as an Amazon's Choice product for "refrigerators". The price is \$142.95 (prime), down from a list price of \$179.00, saving \$36.05 (20%). Financing options are available: "Pay \$23.83/month for 6 months, interest-free with your Amazon Prime Rewards Visa Card". The product is in stock and available for free delivery. The quantity is set to 1.

Amazon is now trying to post from "verified buyers" because of all the fraudulent posts that were being entered to the comment section:


 T. Rooney
★★★★☆ Warehouse Deals - Like New NOT covered under warranty
January 12, 2017
Style: 2.6 cu.ft. White **Verified Purchase**

Please beware that if you buy a like new item from Amazon via warehouse deals, Danby will not cover it under warranty for any period of time. They consider it a secondhand product. Even though Amazon described the item as like new in original packaging with no scratches or dents (not true at all, that's probably why it was returned) and suitable as a gift, the item is not covered under warranty. This is worth noting to people considering the product as I did not see that indicated anywhere on Amazon's website (at least nowhere on the product or Warehouse Deals page). I am fortunate enough that I can simply return the item, but you don't get 12 months or even 1 day of warranty from Danby.

A strong recommendation to Amazon is to add in its description of Like New that it does not include ANY warranty coverage (not even conditional 90 days). I also would take off the "suitable as a gift" unless you don't like the person you are giving the item to very much. Why would I give a gift to someone only to be embarrassed if they have an issue with it? Could you imagine the person hearing: I'm sorry the person who gave you this as a gift bought it used, and we do not cover it under warranty.

36 people found this helpful


Helpful 1 comment Report abuse

 Michael
★★★★☆ Need better customer service from manufacturer
December 15, 2017
Style: 4.4 cu.ft. All Fridge Black **Verified Purchase**

Just took out of the box, looks great, only issue is, it only has 1 adjustable leg and it wobbles like crazy. Called manufacturer and there only suggestion was for me to buy another adjustable leg for the other front side of the refrigerator and see if that would work or stick something under it to help steady it. Not the type of customer service I was expecting, thought they would have at least have offered to send another adjustable leg. So now I have to buy the other leg and hope it works/helps with the server wobble. I won't be buying from Danby again nor recommend them to anyone

4 people found this helpful

Helpful 1 comment Report abuse

 Sly
★★★★☆ the freezer part wasn't freezing ice cubes
January 28, 2019
Style: 5.2 cu.ft. Steel **Verified Purchase**

I bought this item because of its review, but when i got it, i could not use it immediately cz i was in the process of moving. Upon hooking it up, I was very disappointed that i decided to get a separate freezer because DANBY's freezer wasn't freezing my foods. That was a waste of my money considering i was waiting for thanksgiving to get the deals they had for regular size refrigerators. So i ended up with this half-functioning item, a freezer and my new samsung 70 inch french door which i bought from Costco and love very much.

3 people found this helpful

Helpful Comment Report abuse

Here are examples of several other useful Consumer Report product studies that can save us a lot of time, energy, money, and grief:

Mattresses, for example. A bad mattress purchase can seriously degrade a person's quality of life. Chronic nights of poor sleeping can affect our sanity - let alone having to live with routine back pains, stiff joints, neck aches, posture ailments, etc. Some mattresses wear-out much more quickly than others!

CR's Overview section...


Mattresses

[Overview](#) [Ratings](#) [Recommended](#) [Buying Guide](#)

Mattress Ratings

Our mattress tests can help you get a better night's rest. We measure how well a mattress supports sleepers of all sizes and evaluate firmness, durability, and more.

Browse our [mattress buying guide](#) and check our comprehensive [mattress ratings](#)—as well as the top brands and retailers, according to our latest survey of 49,000 CR members—to find a mattress that's right for you.




Mattresses (154)

Our mattresses ratings include test results for the following criteria: petite side sleeper and back sleeper; average side sleeper and back sleeper; large/tall side sleeper and back sleeper; and durability, stabilization, and firmness.

[Recommended Mattresses](#)


[Mattresses Ratings](#)



Mattress Brands (32)

The mattress brands in our ratings were evaluated based on comfort, value, support, and durability.

[Mattress Brands Ratings](#)

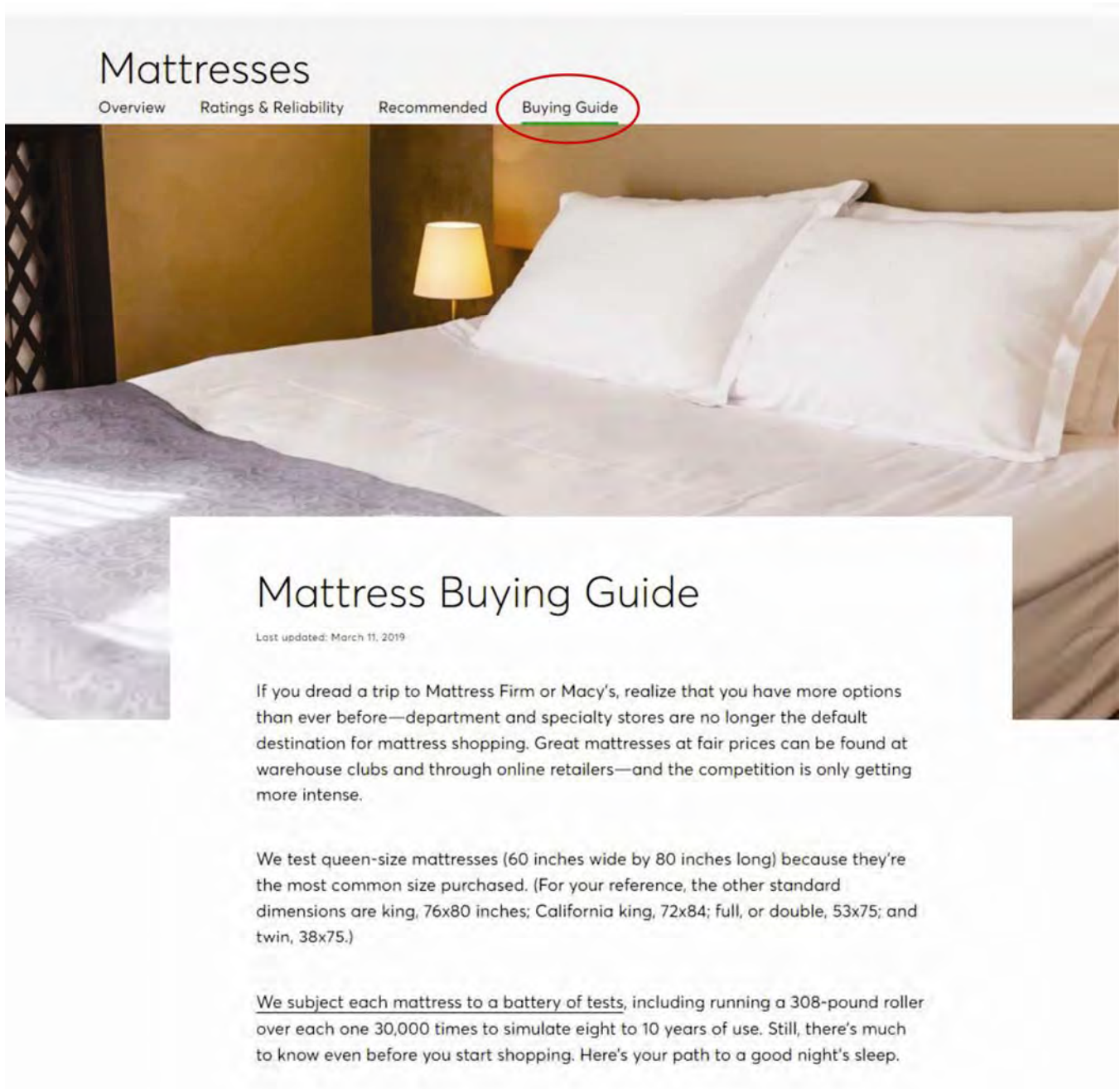


Mattress Stores (33)

The mattress stores in our ratings were evaluated based on price satisfaction, selection, service, customer support, floor model cleanliness, on-time delivery, and the quality of delivery.

[Mattress Stores Ratings](#)

There is a general buying guide...



The image shows a screenshot of a website's navigation menu for 'Mattresses'. The menu items are 'Overview', 'Ratings & Reliability', 'Recommended', and 'Buying Guide'. The 'Buying Guide' link is circled in red and has a green underline. Below the navigation is a large photograph of a bed with white linens and a lamp. A white text box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the title 'Mattress Buying Guide', the date 'Last updated: March 11, 2019', and three paragraphs of text.

Mattresses

Overview Ratings & Reliability Recommended **Buying Guide**

Mattress Buying Guide

Last updated: March 11, 2019

If you dread a trip to Mattress Firm or Macy's, realize that you have more options than ever before—department and specialty stores are no longer the default destination for mattress shopping. Great mattresses at fair prices can be found at warehouse clubs and through online retailers—and the competition is only getting more intense.

We test queen-size mattresses (60 inches wide by 80 inches long) because they're the most common size purchased. (For your reference, the other standard dimensions are king, 76x80 inches; California king, 72x84; full, or double, 53x75; and twin, 38x75.)

We subject each mattress to a battery of tests, including running a 308-pound roller over each one 30,000 times to simulate eight to 10 years of use. Still, there's much to know even before you start shopping. Here's your path to a good night's sleep.

A section teaching you all about the different types!...

Mattress Buying Guide

Last updated: March 11, 2019

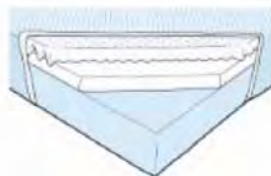
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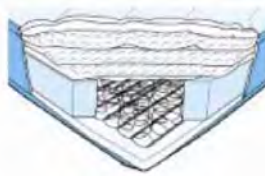
Compare the Types

If you're shopping for a new mattress, you could be overwhelmed by the variety of choices and prices, ranging from too-low-to-believe to astronomical. But there's good news: Our years of testing have shown that, whichever type you choose, you only need to spend around \$1,000 for a comfortable, supportive mattress. Here are the major types you'll see:



Foam

Though many manufacturers use polyurethane to create their foam layers, some might use latex as well and we note which mattresses have latex in our features tab. Some mattresses include both. Foam softens when you lie on it and soon molds to your body. Once you get up, it springs back to its original shape. Some foam mattresses require some effort to change position.



Innerspring

These traditional mattresses are composed of steel coils in various configurations. Variations can include special layers of cushioning, a pillowtop layer, and infused gel. Hybrids have one or more layers of foam on top of the springs. Shifting positions tends to be easy, but on some models, particularly the ones that don't have many foam layers, your sleep partner might feel an annoying bounce when you do so.



Adjustable Air

You can inflate this type of mattress to your desired firmness using an electric pump attached to the bed. These typically include additional layers on top, such as foam. Most also let you inflate individual halves to different firmnesses to suit each sleep partner. But if you want to adjust the bed during the night, know that the pumps can be noisy.

Very useful: Manufacturers Ratings!

Mattresses

Overview Ratings Buying Guide

Product Type

- Mattress
- Mattress brand
- Mattress store

Reader score

MIN: 71 MAX: 87

Show More Filters

1-32 OF 32 SHOWN | PRINT SORT: ↓

		Survey results			
Reader Score	Mattress brands	Comfort	Value	Support	Durability
87	Charles P. Rogers	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
86	Tuft & Needle	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
86	Casper	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
85	Sleep Science	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕

Mattresses

Overview **Rating** Buying Guide

Product Type

- Mattress
- Mattress brand
- Mattress store

Reader score

MIN: 71 MAX: 87

Show More Filters

1-32 of 32 SHOW ALL PRINT

Score:

Reader Score	Mattress brands	Survey results		
		Comfort Value	Support	Durability
87	Charles F. Rogers			
86	Carl Swenke			
86	Casper			
85	Sleep Science			
85	Purple			
84	Novaform (Gastal)			
83	Original Mattress Factory			
82	Sagea			
82	Sleep Number (Saled Comfort)			
82	Loom & Leaf			
81	Sleep Innovator			
81	Tempur-Pedic			
81	Leesa			
80	Bob O'Neil			
79	HEA			
79	Denver Mattress			
79	Schlager			
78	Therapedic			
78	Reposeam			
78	Howl Collection			

Store Rankings !...

Mattresses

Overview **Ratings** Buying Guide

Product Type

- Mattress
- Mattress brand
- Mattress store

Reader score

MIN: 77 MAX: 91

Show More Filters

1-33 OF 33 SHOWN | PRINT SORT: ↓

Reader Score	Mattress stores	Survey results						
		Price satisfaction	Selection	Service	Customer support	Floor model cleanliness	On-time delivery	Quality of delivery
91	Tuft & Needle	↑	↓	↑	↑	-	↑	↑
89	Casper	↑	↓	↑	↑	-	↑	↑
88	Amazon.com	↑	↑	-	↑	-	↑	↑
87	Original Mattress Factory	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
87	Costco	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑

PLEASE NOTE!:

As to recently becoming aware of possible national health safety issue(s) resulting from government mandated use of dangerous flame retardants in mattress construction

for the last 10 years, no one should consider buying a non-organic, chemical-free mattress at this time until this issue is resolved. There has been class action litigation concerning this problem.

People absorbing cancer-causing and other toxic chemicals every night from their mattresses is possibly the next huge product safety issue similar to MSG in food, BPA's in bottles and food containers, etc.!

Please view: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_-NQqDuC4I

Lawn Mowers & Tractors

Overview Ratings Recommended Buying Guide

PRINT

Product Type

- Gas Mower
- Battery Mower
- Riding lawn mower & tractor

Recommended Gas Mowers

Our top picks come from reliable brands (where data are available) and usually mulch, bag, and side-discharge clippings. Before choosing a mower, decide on a type that matches your mowing needs and budget. Then check our recommendations for high-scoring models that blend performance and value.

[See How We Test](#)

Gas Push Mowers

OVERALL SCORE

75

Honda HRR216PKA

Recommended

Price: \$430

Shop

+ Add to Compare



Type: Gas Push Mowers

With this 21-inch push mower from Honda, you get superb mulching from a dual-blade system and Very Good bagging. Plus, the brand is among the least repair-prone for push mowers, according to CR's member survey. There are a couple of drawbacks though: The "side" discharge is actually to the rear, right in the path of your feet, and CR's mowing testers found that the mower can be tough to push and pull.

[See Ratings](#)

OVERALL SCORE

70

Cub Cadet SC100 H

Recommended

Price: \$300

Shop

+ Add to Compare



Type: Gas Push Mowers

As with most other push mowers, you won't find features like electric start or a blade-brake clutch on this 21-inch deck Cub Cadet model. Nonetheless, it's a good option if you're looking for a mower with impressive cutting in mulching and side-discharge modes. It also boasts Excellent handling and a washout port for easier cleaning when you're done mowing your lawn. One negative: It has trouble filling its bag to capacity.

[See Ratings](#)

OVERALL SCORE

69

Troy-Bilt TB160 XP

Recommended

Price: \$280

Shop

+ Add to Compare



Type: Gas Push Mowers

Vacuum Cleaners

[Overview](#) [Ratings](#) [Recommended](#) [Buying Guide](#)

Vacuum cleaner Ratings

Clear through the clutter when choosing the best vacuums. Check out which features really clean up in robotic, upright, and canister models.

View our [ratings and reviews](#), and browse our [buying guide](#) to find the best vacuum cleaner for your household.



Canister Vacuums (13)

Our ratings rank canister vacuums in order of overall performance. Remember that models may vary and that brands can change over the years.

[Recommended Canister Vacuums](#)

[Canister Vacuums Ratings](#)



Upright Vacuums (62)

Almost all full-sized uprights cleaned bare floors quickly and neatly, but carpets remain the toughest challenge for most machines. Top-scoring models deep-cleaned impressively while providing strong airflow through the hose for use with tools.

[Recommended Upright Vacuums](#)

[Upright Vacuums Ratings](#)



Robotic Vacuums (27)

Although you can't count on them for deep-cleaning carpets, recommended robotic vacuums did best at cleaning surface litter off carpets and bare floors. They were also the easiest to set up, program, and clean.

[Recommended Robotic Vacuums](#)

[Robotic Vacuums Ratings](#)



Stick Vacuums (60)

The best small vacuums tend to be



Handheld Vacuums (13)

Consumer Reports vacuum ratings

Washing Machines

[Overview](#) [Ratings](#) [Recommended](#) [Buying Guide](#)

Washing Machine Ratings

Washing machines have big performance differences in water efficiency, noise, and capacity.

View our [ratings and reviews](#) and browse our [buying guide](#) to find the best top-load, front-load, or HE (high-efficiency) washing machine for your family.



Front-Load Washing Machines (53)

The best front-loaders clean better and are gentler than the best HE top-loading washing machines while using less water. Front-loaders take longer than HE top-loaders but spin faster, extracting more water and reducing dryer time.

[Recommended Front-Load Washing Machines](#)

[Front-Load Washing Machines Ratings](#)



Top-Load Agitator Washing Machines (28)

Agitator models cost less and are faster than top-loading washing machines without an agitator, known as HE washing machines.

[Recommended Top-Load Agitator Washing Machines](#)

[Top-Load Agitator Washing Machines Ratings](#)



Top-Load HE Washing Machines (41)

Capacities keep increasing in HE washers, so you can do more laundry at once. HE top-loaders use less water and extract more of it from laundry than agitator top-loaders. This cuts dryer time, saving energy and money.

[Recommended Top-Load HE Washing Machines](#)

[Top-Load HE Washing Machines Ratings](#)



Compact Washing Machines (16)

Smaller spaces demand smaller appliances, and compact washer-and-dryer sets are slowly growing in popularity. In recent years some stackable laundry appliances have become more stylish and have larger door openings for easier access.

[Recommended Compact Washing Machines](#)

[Compact Washing Machines Ratings](#)



Washer/Dryer Pairs

Matching washer and dryer pairs are a widely sold choice, although some don't make a great couple. Their coordinating style makes a statement, but you'll question how a terrific washer and a noisy dryer that's tough on clothes ended up together. Enter the matchmaker. Our tests found pairs that are . . . [MORE](#)

[Washer/Dryer Pairs Ratings](#)

Washing Machines

Overview Ratings & Reliability **Recommended** Buying Guide

PRINT

Product Type

- Front-Load Washer
- Top-Load Agitator Washer
- Top-Load HE Washer
- Compact Washer

Recommended Top-Load Agitator Washers

Great washing isn't a given, so check our wash performance scores, and be sure to note wash times. They're based on a normal wash on heavy-soil setting. Wash times have gotten longer as federal standards require that all washers use less water and energy.

[See How We Test](#)

OVERALL SCORE 70	Maytag MVWB965HC Recommended Price: \$1,280 Shop Add to Compare	
Type: Top-Load Agitator Washers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Overall, this washer was Very Good.Water efficiency is Very Good.Gentleness is just Fair.Noise is Very Good.Vibration is Excellent.Has a cycle time of 80 minutes.Comes with a 1 year warranty. See Ratings		
OVERALL SCORE 64	Maytag MVWB865GW Recommended Price: \$900 Shop Add to Compare	
Type: Top-Load Agitator Washers <p>Sporting a nifty glass lid, this smart-looking Maytag is one of CR's top-rated agitators. It manages to offer a large capacity while being among the few agitator washers CR has tested that is Energy Star certified. It's also among the most water-efficient agitator models tested. However, similar to many other agitator models tested, this Maytag isn't so gentle on fabrics and it's somewhat noisy in operation.</p> See Ratings		
OVERALL SCORE 64	GE GTW465ASNWW Recommended Price: \$655 Shop Add to Compare	
Type: Top-Load Agitator Washers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Overall, this washer was Very Good.Water efficiency is Very Good.Gentleness is just Good.Noise is just Good.Vibration is Excellent.Has a cycle time of 35 minutes.Comes with a 1 year warranty. See Ratings		
OVERALL SCORE 62	GE GTW685BSLWS Recommended Price: \$580 Shop Add to Compare	
Type: Top-Load Agitator Washers <p>This GE top-loader earns a Very Good all-around rating on CR tests, a score bolstered by Excellent water efficiency and Very Good energy efficiency. (Cleaning performance is adequate but not exceptional.) Weaknesses are also evident, however. Like many agitators, it's relatively rough on fabrics and noisy in operation.</p> See Ratings		
OVERALL SCORE 62	Maytag MVWB765FW Recommended Price: \$680	

matt violassi

2019

PURCHASING VEHICLES

One way of trying to buy vehicles wisely



matt violassi

SOME VEHICLE BUYING TIPS

My first car was a small, used-but-shiny, new-looking, orange Datsun 510 Wagon (Nissan) - the seller having had it recently repainted. I saved and saved, working hard as a line cook and mowing lawns and such, to have enough money to buy a car with cash. The miniature wagon was so appealing and yet so practical. It could haul a drum set, camping gear, multiple passengers comfortably, a bicycle, or a washing machine.



My first car purchase turned out to be a nightmare and a money-sink. It immediately started rusting-out with giant rust lesions breaking-out everywhere through the paint. At the time, before galvanized under-coatings and metals were common on cars, Northern cars rusted-out quickly and easily - especially foreign cars with their thin, cheap metal skins. You can think of it as rust acne. Additionally, the car would seldom run correctly. Even the local Nissan dealership could not fix it. All my hard-earned cash went into trying to keep that disaster running. I was poor then (and for a number of years thereafter) having to buy used cars that all seemed to need a lot of costly repairs. It was pure pain and anxiety.

My purpose in writing this article is to try to save young people from similar painful experiences, and from making bad financial car-buying decisions. *Bad vehicle purchases can really harm a person financially, mentally, and emotionally - especially if you are young and just starting out.*

- For many years, I have been able to buy **a new car** for around same price - or less - than a comparable **1-2 year old used car** (sometimes 3), by using [TrueCar.com](https://www.truecar.com)'s price service, [Edmunds.com](https://www.edmunds.com)'s "True Market Value" service, or a similar service through [Consumer Reports](https://www.consumerreports.com). (My business required purchasing a number of delivery vehicles and I helped each of my 5 sons buy their first cars.) ***Purchasing a vehicle older than this is also discussed below.***

Here I ran a search through Edmunds.com car buying service on the best possible price I could get for a 2019 Honda Pilot AWD with trim level EX-L (a trim level offers different features at different prices):

Let's Build and Price Your 2019 Honda Pilot

In 4 simple steps, you can build your car, see the Edmunds True Market Value (TMV®) - the average price paid for this car in your area - and get dealer price quotes and **Price Promise™** special offers on inventory near you.

1 Choose a Style **2 Colors and Options** **3 True Market Value®** **4 Get Dealer Quotes**

EX-L 4dr SUV
(3.5L V6 AWD 6-speed Automatic)

Next Step [Get Dealer Quote](#)

True Market Value®
\$36,303

Invoice \$37,459 MSRP \$40,755

The True Market Value® (TMV®) price is our exclusive method for calculating what others are paying for a 2019 Honda Pilot EX-L in Simpsonville, SC (based on actual sales data from your region).

True Market Value® Pricing

Description	Invoice	MSRP	True Market Value®
Base Price	\$36,249	\$39,660	\$34,313
White Diamond Pearl	\$0	\$0	\$0
Destination Fee	\$1,095	\$1,095	\$1,095
Advertising Fee	\$115*		
Regional Adjustment for Zip Code: 29681			\$951
Color Adjustment			(\$56)
Total Price	\$37,459*	\$40,755	\$36,303*

*Disclaimers

Next Step [Get Dealer Quote](#)

So, according to this, I should expect to pay around \$36,000 - or less - for a new AWD Honda Pilot with trim level EX-L. (It is important you always search for and compare with the exact trim levels you are interested in. What a trim level includes is found on the manufacturers website.)

These car-buying services help you find the **MSRP** (list price), the "**Dealer Invoice**" price (a close approximate to what the dealers pay for the vehicle), and then a **target below-invoice price** you can expect to pay receiving dealer bids through the car-buying service. Participating dealers will give you a no-nonsense, bottom-line price that they will sell you the vehicle for. Dealers will get kicked out of the service if they are fraudulent and this would damage their reputations immensely. The only other "trap" that can add to the purchase price would be additional things they might try to have you additionally purchase, like *accessories, extended warranties, or services*.

If you can buy a vehicle at invoice, you're doing well. Many times however, as the dealers bid for your sale, you can get the vehicle substantially below invoice. **This price can many times be the same or below a similar used vehicle that is 1-2 years old** (sometimes 3).

When buying a 1-2 year old vehicle this way, I don't have to worry about if the used car was hit hard in a bad accident. If it's in an accident, it may have upcoming expensive issues to fix or it never quite runs right or even drives in a straight line. Other concerns are whether it's been in a flood, has water damage, or is **someone else's Lemon**, etc. (*You really don't ever know what you are getting with a used car*). A new car also comes with a full warranty. It is also nicer to drive a new car.

Also, if you buy through the manufacturers finance department (say Honda Finance, GM Financial, Ford Motor Credit, etc.), the loan rates have traditionally been less for a new car than a used car, and financing *specials* are usually a lot cheaper - saving additional money. **This savings should be put into your comparison research!**

Dealers can sell you on using an off-brand **lending bank / agency** (the dealership gets monetary kick-backs), but I shy away from these because these lenders have been known to pull funny stuff. I have financed through a number of the major manufacturer financial departments over the years, and they all have been professional, fair, and upright. You will have to specifically request that you only want to finance through GM, Ford, Toyota, etc.

If I have to finance a vehicle, I always try to pay it off early. This is a great way to save money, if the contract was a simple interest loan (the interest is spread-out evenly over each payment). Sometimes paying off a vehicle early is not possible if the contract is written where the interest is paid in the initial months of the repayment schedule. Every major manufacturer lending arm I have used has always used simple interest loans as standard in their contracts. Still, you need to check to make sure the loan is a simple-interest loan so you can pay the loan off early if you want to. Interest on a car loan can easily reach \$1000-\$2000 or more. The earlier you pay the loan off, the more of this interest you do not have to pay.

To start our comparison, current used car prices of actual local vehicles for sale can be found online at Cars.com, Autotrader.com, at individual used car dealers, and such. (Be sure to include the exact trim level and features you want in all comparisons!):

The screenshot shows the Autotrader website interface. At the top, the Autotrader logo is circled in red. The navigation bar includes links for Used Cars, New Cars, Sell My Car, Value My Car, Car Research & Tools, and Find Local Dealers. The search results are for "Honda Pilot AWD / 4WD Vehicles for Sale in Simpsonville, SC" with 29681 results. The left sidebar contains filters for Condition (New, Used, Certified), Year, Mileage, Make (Honda), Honda Model (Pilot), Pilot Trim (EX-L), Body Style (SUV / Crossover), Drive Type (AWD/4WD), Fuel Type, Fuel Economy, and Transmission. The main content area shows four search results, each with a car image, title, price, and dealer information. The prices are circled in red: \$36,999 for a Certified 2019 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L w/ Navigation & RES; \$36,499 for a Certified 2019 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L; \$32,991 for a Certified 2017 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L w/ Navigation; and \$33,729 for a Used 2018 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L.

Listing	Price	Year	Trim	Body Style	Drive Type	Fuel Type	Fuel Economy	Transmission
Certified 2019 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L w/ Navigation & RES	\$36,999	2019	EX-L	SUV / Crossover	AWD/4WD	Gasoline	24 City / 31 Highway	Automatic
Certified 2019 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L	\$36,499	2019	EX-L	SUV / Crossover	AWD/4WD	Gasoline	24 City / 31 Highway	Automatic
Certified 2017 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L w/ Navigation	\$32,991	2017	EX-L	SUV / Crossover	AWD/4WD	Gasoline	24 City / 31 Highway	Automatic
Used 2018 Honda Pilot 4WD EX-L	\$33,729	2018	EX-L	SUV / Crossover	AWD/4WD	Gasoline	24 City / 31 Highway	Automatic

These prices are usually negotiable. In recent years, however, because of the shortage of good, quality used vehicles, dealers are having to pay crazy whole sale prices for stock to put on their lots. Their profit margins have been becoming smaller and smaller over the years. Negotiating lower used car prices can be harder and harder to do.

I then also look at Used Car Pricing Services like at Edmund's.com or Kelly Blue Book, and Consumer Reports online to find general average prices people paid for that specific vehicle:

You enter a car's year, mileage, trim level, condition, etc., and they generally give you three used car prices: **Private Sale** (buying it directly from someone), **Dealer Trade-In** (what most dealers will buy your car for), and **Retail Price**. These can vary widely geographically and many times these prices do not accurately reflect the true local market value prices. Dealers are quick to bring up this fact and diminish the value of these pricing services. But, these prices are still a good general average of what people are paying across the USA.

The screenshot shows the Edmunds.com website interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the Edmunds logo and a search bar containing the text "Try 'Highlander'". To the right of the search bar are links for "New Car Pricing", "Used Cars for Sale" (which is underlined), "Car Reviews", and "Lease Deals". Below the navigation bar, the page title "Used Cars for Sale" is displayed, followed by the subtitle "Choose your car, find a great deal". A search filter section includes "Search by:" with options for "Make/Model", "Type", and "Price". Under "Make/Model", there is a dropdown menu showing "Any Make". To the right, there is another dropdown menu showing "Any Model" and a location input field with "29681" and a "Go" button. Below the search section, a horizontal menu of "Car buying tools" is shown. The "Car Appraiser" link is circled in red, and a red arrow points from this circle to a red box around the "Car Appraiser" text. Other links in the menu include "Certified Pre-owned Cars", "Affordability Calculator", "Loan Calculator", and "Edmunds Forums".

I entered a believable 1-year old Honda Pilot with All Wheel Drive and trim level EX-L with 12,000 miles, in great condition:

2018 Honda Pilot - What's it worth?

- Location and Style
- Colors and Options
- Condition and Mileage
- 4 Appraisal Report

2018 Honda Pilot SUV Pilot SUV
EX-L 4dr SUV AWD (3.5L 6cyl 6A)

Mileage: 12,000
Condition: Outstanding
Exterior: White Diamond Pearl

Your appraisal As of 08/08/2019

Email report

	Trade-In	Private Party	Dealer Retail
National Base Price	\$29,937	\$31,812	\$33,226
Color Adjustment	\$39	\$41	\$43
Regional Adjustment	(\$36)	(\$38)	(\$40)
Mileage Adjustment	\$760	\$760	\$760
Condition Adjustment	\$1,239	\$1,257	\$1,345
Value	\$31,939	\$33,832	\$35,334

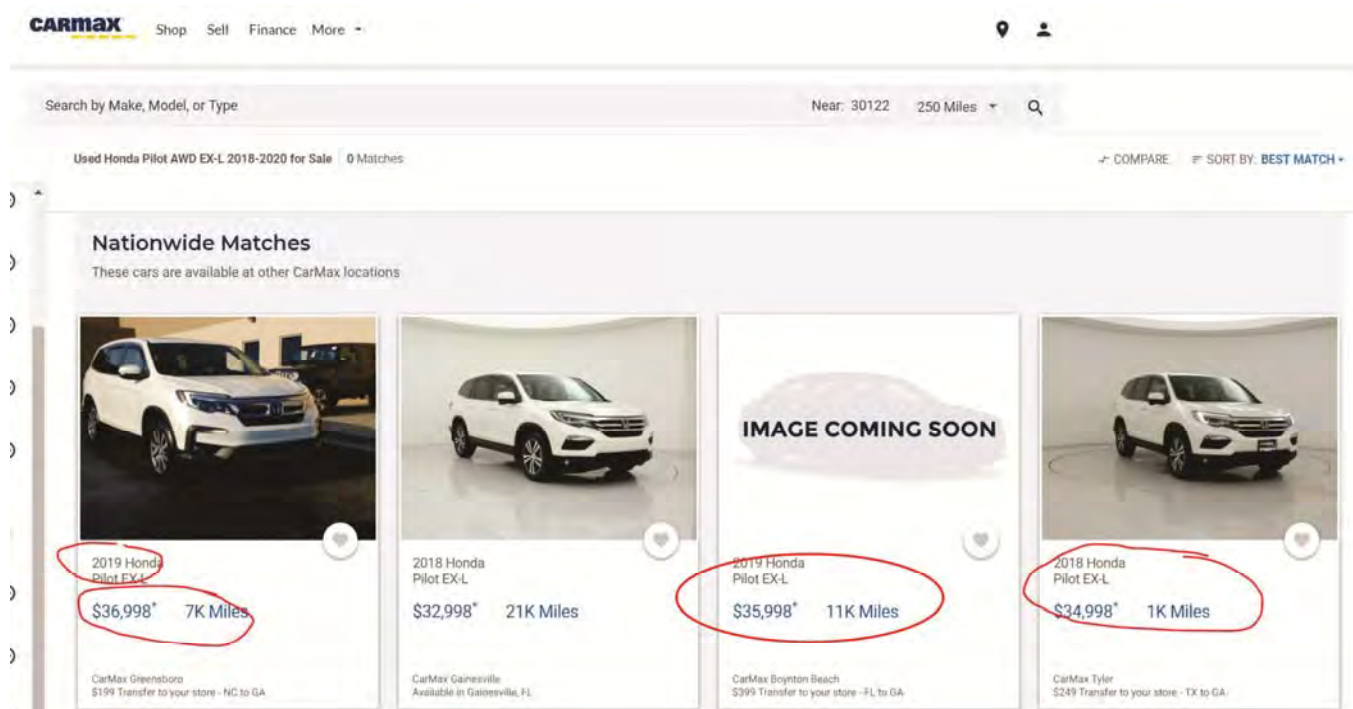
So, if using Edmund's appraisal data, I can expect to pay around \$35,300 for a 1 year old used Honda Pilot with All Wheel Drive and EX-L trim level - that has 12,000 miles on it - from a dealer. (typical mileage for a 1-year old vehicle) A good vehicle you want or need can be hard to find and verify through a Private-Party sale.

I also go to Carmax.com to find a fair, local market used-car price for the vehicle I am interested in, to compare it to the best new car price I could find. Carmax is a quality national used car chain - they also have a good reputation. I really like Carmax. They sell every vehicle for the advertised price. There is no negotiation! This is super important!



CarMax has to really be accurate in their pricing. They can't price a car too high (lose sales from not being competitive and fair) - nor too low (not make profit, and go out of business). They have to price each car at "the right price." I believe CarMax can give a buyer a good car for a fair market price. They will also let you return the car within 5 days for a full refund!

Thus, one can somewhat trust CarMax's prices for comparing a good used car cost to new car price.



The non-negotiable price of these used 1-2 year old AWD Honda EX-L Pilots is close to the price that you could pay for a new Honda Pilot with same equipment. (One 2018 Pilot shown is cheaper, but has 21,000 miles on it - high mileage for a one year old vehicle).

Negotiating on a used car is not only nerve-wracking (because no one wants to have that terrible feeling of having paid too much), but can be hard because every vehicle is different and hard to compare. It is hard to determine the true value of a used car and compare it to another you are considering. Even a used car with low miles and appearing "clean" or "like new" could easily be a nightmare in disguise (I have been working on used and new car lots with my business for 37+ years). Many times the mileages are different or the trim levels are a little different (different features), or one vehicle has been in an accident, or one is touted as being a "One-Owner car, one car is from a Northern climate and tends to have had a life of winter road salt, etc.).

By the way... I *a/ways* take copies of the used car price services and Carmax to the New Car Dealer if negotiating my used car trade-in. Carmax will many times buy your trade outright, even if you are not buying something from them and they seem to always give good and fair price for trades. So, I can use this price also at the new car dealer when putting a purchase / deal together. If the dealer won't give me what Carmax will (or another independent dealer), I will just march to Carmax (or other dealer) and sell the car.

IF YOU ARE HAVING TO BUY AN OLDER USED CAR

Traditionally, Honda, Toyota, and Nissan have been overall BY BRAND the most reliable (non-luxury) vehicles. Everyone knew this in the past. This is now changing. Just like in choosing what general products to buy (see my other article on Buying Products), you have to watch it and be careful with these manufacturers. You should ***research models by individual years.***

Most successful used car dealers know these specific bad models and years from experience, and some won't even buy them or sell them because they know they are costly, problematic, and ruin their reputation.

I am going to, again, recommend using Consumer Reports online magazine if you are having to buy an older vehicle. You might be interested in a vehicle that overall has a great reputation, but looking closer, you can find it had some bad years, or that a certain model year was having transmission trouble, or major engine troubles (all very costly repairs). Also, Consumer Reports tries to alert you of all manufacturer recalls.

If you have to buy an older vehicle, this Consumer Reports Car Buying Guide is even more important because **Brand and Model Reliability** is more crucial - the individual parts throughout the whole vehicle are aging and coming to the end of their life-cycles. Vehicles whose manufacturers did not use long-lasting quality parts are going to be breaking-down a lot more often, and **costing you a lot more money, time, and grief.**

Check out this **2019 Consumer Reports Report Card** on Manufacturer Reliability. [How does your favorite brand rank?](#) Many are shocking!

Also notice the **colored numbers** on the far-left of the page. This shows if the brand has improved / gotten worse since the previous year. **Honda, for instance, is in 13th place and it has fallen 4 places since last year!** Another example is Jeep - despite having a cult following, they continue to be ranked near the bottom in these Reliability studies year after year! (By the way, I own mostly Hondas and Toyotas, plus I think Jeeps look cool). **In one year, Toyota has fallen from #1 to #9 !**

Rank	Brand	Overall Score	Predicted Reliability	Owner Satisfaction	Road-Test Score	Models Tested/Recommended
↑ 6 1	Subaru	81	↑	↑	85	8/7
↓ 1 2	Genesis	80		↑	84	3/2
↑ 2 3	Porsche	79		↑	90	4/3
↓ 2 4	Audi	77	↑	↑	84	6/5
↓ 1 5	Lexus	76	↑		74	8/5
↑ 7 6	Mazda	76	↑	↑	77	5/4
↓ 4 7	BMW	76		↑	87	8/4
↑ 9 8	Lincoln	73		↑	78	5/2
↑ 1 9	Toyota	73	↑	↑	68	17/13
↑ 2 10	Hyundai	73	↑		75	10/7
↑ 5 11	Volkswagen	71		↑	80	8/4
↓ 6 12	Kia	70		↑	75	10/6
↓ 4 13	Honda	70		↑	76	10/8
14	Infiniti	70		↓	78	6/2
↑ 10 15	Mini	69			76	3/2
↑ 6 16	Acura	68		↓	74	5/0
↓ 2 17	Mercedes-Benz	67			80	6/1
↑ 1 18	Buick	67			75	6/2
↓ 11 19	Tesla	66	↓	↑	85	3/0
20	Ford	65		↑	72	12/4
21	Nissan	64		↓	69	15/7
↓ 11 22	Chrysler	64	↓	↑	85	2/0
↓ 5 23	Volvo	63	↓	↑	77	4/0
↓ 1 24	Chevrolet	61	↓	↑	73	17/4
↑ 2 25	Dodge	58	↓		74	5/0
↓ 2 26	Cadillac	57	↓		79	5/0
↑ 1 27	GMC	56	↓	↑	67	7/0
↑ 3 28	Alfa Romeo	53	↓	↑	72	2/0
↑ 4 29	Jeep	50	↓		60	5/0
30	Mitsubishi	49		↓	48	3/0
↑ 1 31	Land Rover	48	↓	↓	71	5/0
↓ 3 32	Jaguar	44	↓		75	5/0
↑ 1 33	Fiat	44	↓	↓	61	4/0

Now, let's look at a couple of companies that are highly ranked in reliability or have been, and some models / years that we might be wise to avoid or be careful with.

Subaru is ranked #1 this year. Let's pretend we are interested in purchasing a used Outback - one of Subaru's most popular models:

OVERALL SCORE **81** RECOMMENDED 2019 **Subaru Outback** [Change Vehicle](#) [ADD TO COMPARE](#)

BASE MSRP RANGE **\$26,345 - \$38,995**
[View Pricing Information >](#)

CR MPG
Overall 24 / City 16 / Hwy 34 mpg

ALWAYS
There is 1 recall on this vehicle. [Learn More](#)

Overview Ratings & Safety Road Test Reliability Owner Satisfaction Photos & Video View Pricing Information

Overall Score
#2 of 8 [All-Wheel Drive Wagons](#)

81

ROAD TEST **82 / 100** [See All](#)

PREDICTED RELIABILITY **4 / 5** [See All](#)

PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION **4 / 5** [See All](#)

SAFETY FEATURES

Forward Collision Warning	Standard
Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB)	Standard
Automatic emergency braking (highway)	Standard

[See All](#)

Road Test Results

Performance

Acceleration	3 / 5
0 to 60 mph	10.5 sec
Transmission	5 / 5
Fuel Economy	2 / 5
CR's Overall Mileage	24 mpg
CR's City Mileage	16 mpg
CR's Highway Mileage	34 mpg
Annual Fuel Cost	\$1,195
Braking	4 / 5
Emergency Handling	2 / 5

Owner Reports

Reliability History

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

Reliability Trouble Spots

This car is new and detailed reliability trouble spots will be available at a later date.

Engine Major	NA
Engine Minor	NA
Engine Cooling	NA

[View all Reliability](#)

Owner Satisfaction

This car is new and detailed owner satisfaction will be available at a later date.

We are not only given some information about the current year Outback, but we can go back in previous years to see their Reliability in specific areas:

OVERALL SCORE

81

RECOMMENDED

2019

Subaru Outback [Change Vehicle](#)

ADD TO COMPARE



BASE MSRP RANGE
\$26,345 - \$38,995

[View Pricing Information >](#)

CR MPG
Overall 24 / City 16 / Hwy 34 mpg

ALERTS
There is 1 recall on this vehicle. [Learn More.](#)



Overview Ratings & Safety Road Test **Reliability** Owner Satisfaction Photos & Video View Pricing Information

Reliability

Our extensive survey data, combined with our technical knowledge, allows us to expertly predict the reliability of new and redesigned models.

Predicted Reliability



The 2019 Subaru Outback has been recalled 1 time by NHTSA. [View Recalls](#)

Research Years

*Redesign year.



< 09 10* 11 12 13 14 15* 16 17 18 >

Overall Reliability Verdict

POTENTIAL TROUBLE SPOTS

Engine Major

Engine Minor

Engine Cooling

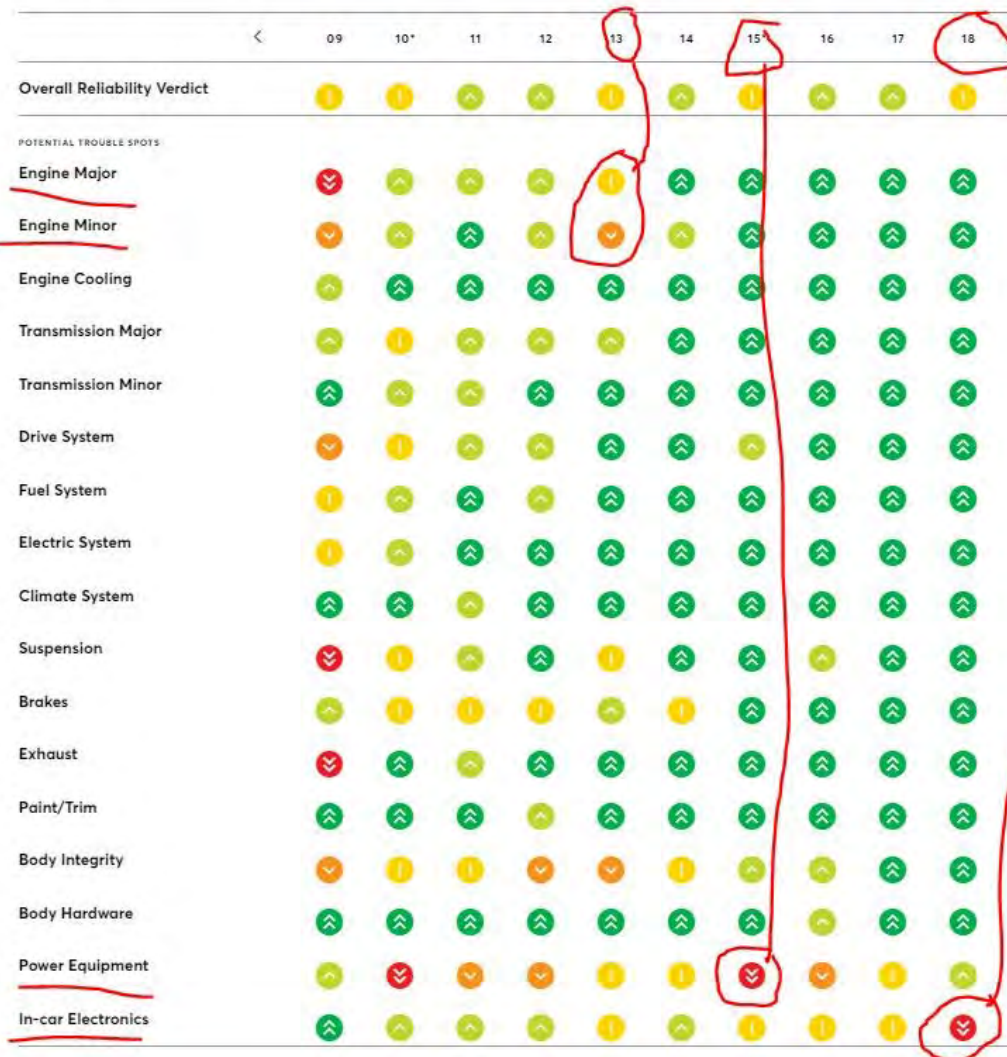


The 2009 Outback had some serious major engine issues!

Research Years

*Redesign year

Worse Better




If you were considering a 2013 Outback, be concerned about some possible or predicted Minor and Major Engine issues.

If you were considering a 2015, be prepared for some power equipment issues. Almost everything can be quite expensive to repair nowadays!

If you considering a 2017-18, everything looks great . . . But be prepared for some serious in-car electronics problems!

A lot of guys love trucks, for example. Let's look at buying an F-150, the top-selling pickup for years:

OVERALL SCORE **67** RECOMMENDED 2019 Ford F-150 [Change Vehicle](#) [ADD TO COMPARE](#)



BASE MSRP RANGE
\$28,155 - \$70,560
[View Pricing Information](#)

CR MPG
Overall 19 / City 13 / Hwy 26 mpg

ACCIDENTS
There are 2 recalls on this vehicle. [Learn More](#)

PLAY VIDEO

Overview Ratings & Safety Road Test Reliability Owner Satisfaction Photos & Video [View Pricing Information](#)

Overall Score

#1 of 28 Full-Size Pickup Trucks

67

RANGE OF SCORES FOR

ROAD TEST 34 / 100 [See All](#)

PREDICTED RELIABILITY 2 / 5 [See All](#)

PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION 4 / 5 [See All](#)

SAFETY FEATURES

Forward Collision Warning	Standard
Automatic Emergency Braking (City)	Standard
Automatic Emergency Braking (Highway)	Standard

[See All](#)

Road Test Results

Performance

Acceleration \bar{x} 4.5

0 to 60 mph \bar{x} 6.8 sec

Transmission \bar{x} 4.5

Fuel Economy \bar{x} 2 / 5

CR's Overall Mileage \bar{x} 19 mpg

Owner Reports

Worse Better

Reliability History

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

Reliability Trouble Spots

This car is not yet eligible for detailed reliability trouble spots. We will be available at a later date.

Research Years

*Redesign year

Worse Better



Show Fewer Trouble Spots

It is wonderful to see the Ford F-150 Pick-up continuing to increase in quality and reliability over the years. When buying an older truck, this can chart can help you be less surprised by various issues you might experience and have to fix. Major Engine and Major Transmissions traditionally have been the most expensive to fix or replace.

One last manufacturer, the beloved Honda.

Let's start with Honda's small car representative - the Civic:

Compact cars											
OVERALL SCORE	2019 Toyota Corolla		79	RECOMMENDED	\$18,700 - \$22,880	See Pricing Info	32 mpg	9.9 sec.	136 ft.	71	71
OVERALL SCORE	2019 Subaru Impreza		76	RECOMMENDED	\$18,595 - \$25,690	See Pricing Info	30 mpg	9.5 sec.	124 ft.	85	85
OVERALL SCORE	2019 Mazda 3		74	RECOMMENDED	\$21,000 - \$28,900	See Pricing Info	30 mpg	7.7 sec.	125 ft.	75	75
OVERALL SCORE	2020 Toyota Corolla		74	RECOMMENDED	\$19,600 - \$25,550	See Pricing Info	33 mpg	10.4 sec.	134 ft.	68	68
OVERALL SCORE	2019 Honda Civic		72	RECOMMENDED	\$19,550 - \$36,300	See Pricing Info	32 mpg	6.7 sec.	129 ft.	76	76
OVERALL SCORE	2019 Chevrolet Cruze		70	RECOMMENDED	\$17,995 - \$26,120	See Pricing Info	30 mpg	8.5 sec.	125 ft.	77	77
OVERALL SCORE	2020 Hyundai Elantra		69	RECOMMENDED	\$18,950 - \$23,800	See Pricing Info	33 mpg	9.9 sec.	133 ft.	64	64
OVERALL SCORE	2019 Volkswagen Jetta		69	RECOMMENDED	\$18,745 - \$27,695	See Pricing Info	34 mpg	9 sec.	135 ft.	78	78

Notice it is ranked #5 in comparison to Toyota's #1 ranked Corolla - 72 vs. 79 score (another Consumer Reports comparison tool).

OVERALL SCORE **RECOMMENDED**



2019

Honda Civic [Change Vehicle](#)

[ADD TO COMPARE](#)



BASE MSRP RANGE
\$19,550 - \$36,300

[View Pricing Information](#)

CR MPG
Overall 32 / City 21 / Hwy 45 mpg



[Overview](#) [Ratings & safety](#) [Road Test](#) [Reliability](#) [Owner Satisfaction](#) [Photos & Video](#) [View Pricing Information](#)

Overall Score

#9 of 21 Compact Cars



30 70
RANGE OF TESTED COMPACT CARS

ROAD TEST

76 / 100

[See All](#)

PREDICTED RELIABILITY

4 / 5

[See All](#)

PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

3 / 5

[See All](#)

SAFETY FEATURES

- Forward Collision Warning Optional
- Automatic Emergency Braking (City) Optional
- Automatic Emergency Braking (Highway) Optional

[See All](#)

Road Test Results

Performance

Acceleration i		3 / 5
0 to 60 mph i	8.7 sec	
Transmission i		4
Fuel Economy i		5 / 5
CR's Overall Mileage i	32 mpg	
CR's City Mileage i	21 mpg	
CR's Highway Mileage i	45 mpg	
Annual Fuel Cost i	\$905	
Braking i		5 / 5

Owner Reports

Work Better

Reliability History [i](#)

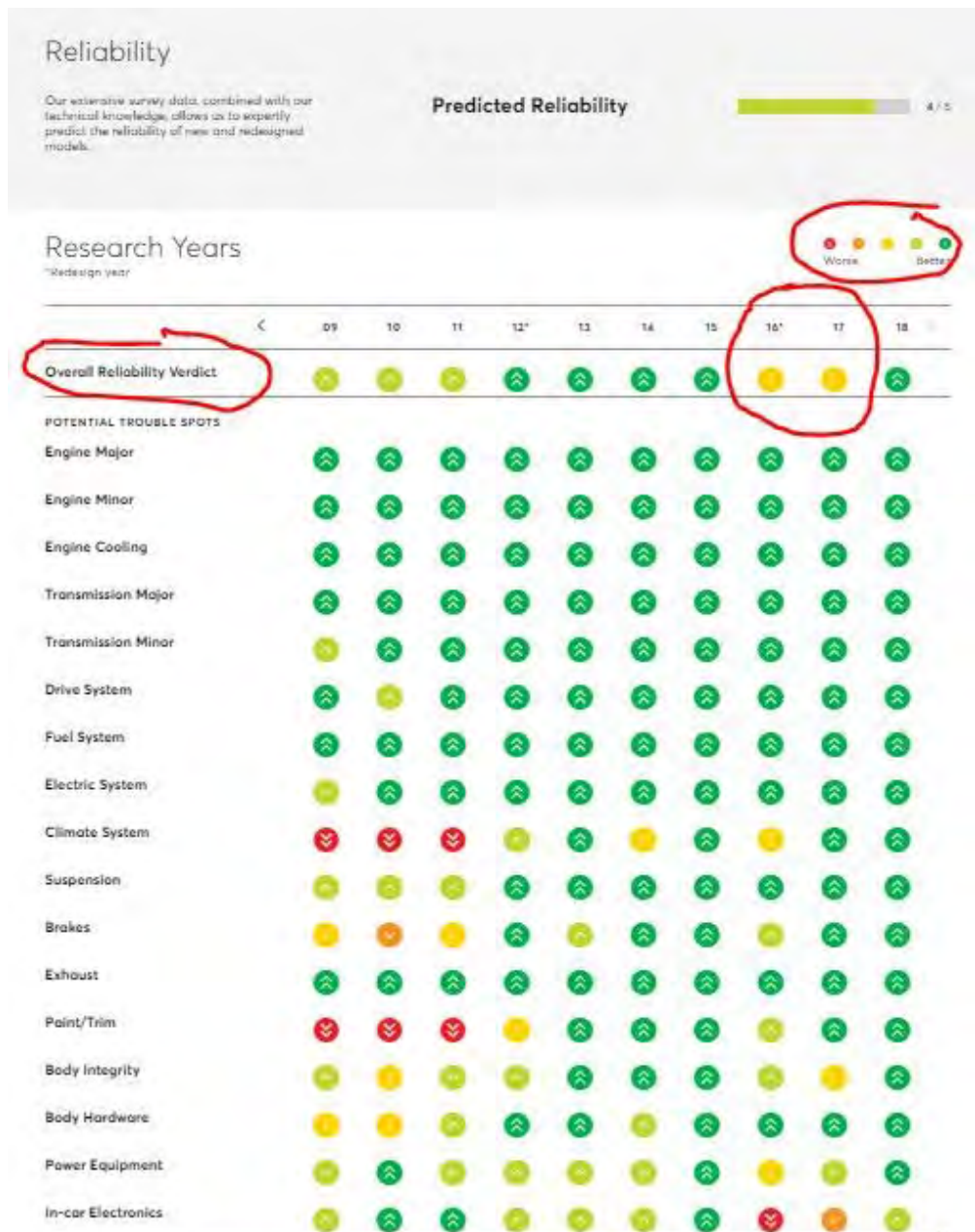


Reliability Trouble Spots

This car's new and detailed reliability trouble spots will be available at a later date.

Engine Major i		NA
Engine Minor i		NA
Engine Cooling i		NA

[View all Reliability](#)



Again, note how this research data can alert us to what issues to be aware of for various years.

Notice how Overall Reliability Verdict had dropped substantially for years 2016 and 2017 for the Honda Civic.

Notice how the 2009-2011 Civic had serious climate system, paint, and trim issues.

If you might be considering a used 2016-17 Civic, brace yourself for some possible electronics repairs.

For those on tight budgets, purchasing a vehicle can have such potentially disastrous consequences. Vehicle repairs today seem costlier than ever, especially with all the new complex computers, sensors, safety devices, complicated hybrid engines and drive systems, and electronics.

An unexpected major repair - or even minor repair - can explode a person's budget and cause them to have to go into debt or not have enough money to pay for other crucial bills. **Buying a good or correct vehicle is *such* an important decision.** Buying a mediocre or bad vehicle can bring much stress, pain, and anxiety into our lives and into our homes.

We need to be doing all the research we can to make good and wise car buying decisions.

The most important thing I would advise, especially for people with tight budgets, is to **pray hard** to God, and ask him for His help and wisdom when purchasing *any* vehicle. *He will* help you. Jesus said, "Whoever asks, receives."

But, He *does* expect us to do *our* part by *getting informed* and *staying informed*.

PURCHASING HOUSES



**SOME HOUSE
PURCHASING PITFALLS**

ON BUYING HOUSES

Buying a house is just dangerous. Buyers should be very careful when buying any house, in my opinion. There are so many potential things that can be wrong with a house - later costing lots of unplanned money and heartache. Here are a few.

Married to a stay-at-home Mom, kind of poor, with 2 children and a third on-the-way, I bought my first house around 1986. With my limited budget and savings, I did not want to buy any of the available, old and junky houses that were for sale at the time. I purchased a new single-wide mobile home with the intention of having it put on a piece of property that I could one day perhaps afford. I sacrificed and paid extra to have it made with a shingle roof (instead of metal), 6" insulated stud walls for energy savings and strength, and vinyl siding (most mobile homes sold at the time had metal siding, too). (Having a single wide trailer with shingles was about *unheard of* at the time.) The theory was sound.



My first house complete with shingled roof, 6" stud walls, and vinyl siding to try to be zoning compliant



Typical mobile homes at the time came with metal roofs & metal sheet siding.

By the time I could afford to buy a piece of property, a lot of counties and jurisdictions seemed to be passing zoning laws prohibiting single wide trailers / mobile homes being installed on private properties. With baby 4 and 5 arriving, I needed to find a larger house.

I learned many hard lessons on my first real houses. Back then, professional home inspectors were not heard of much; they were not very common. **A good home inspector can find about everything wrong with a home - or upcoming potential or probable problems.**

When buying a house, please pay the money for a good, reputable Home Inspection by a quality company. This is priceless.

Septic Fields & Water Wells - A Potentially Costly Home!

After several months of living in our new-used house, I got to learn all about septic tanks, septic fields, and water wells - and how expensive they are to replace - among other things. I began noticing dark green lines on my lawn something like these:



These are typically caused when the septic *tank* has not been routinely cleaned-out regularly, resulting in the septic field pipes and gravel beds becoming clogged with hardened sewage. The waste-water cannot drain/perk down into the ground, because the gravel beds have become clogged up with the waste debris that overflowed from the septic tank. The waste water can now only try to evaporate upwards - thus resulting in nicely-water bands of green showing in your lawn. If your septic field fails and cannot drain, you can have septic waste even back-up into your house!

If you own a home with a septic system, ALWAYS get your tank pumped-out periodically.

If you are considering purchasing a home with a septic system - find out if the previous owners had periodically pumped the tank out, how often, and make sure to check septic system's general condition. I have met a number of home owners with septic fields who never thought to have it periodically pumped-out - or done it at all !

If an owner says they get the septic tank pumped out - ask them how often AND FOR PROOF. The local septic tank cleaning companies keep records on this kind of thing. Make sure your Home Inspector digs up the tank cover, takes the lid off, and inspects the inside of the tank. A large rod or pole can tell them the level of the solids in the tank. If the solids have reach the top exit pipe (and thus have been running out to the field) "walk" away from that house deal or ask for \$6,000-\$20,000 off the price of the house to cover a new septic field - and be prepared for a lot of grief finding a reputable septic field installer, overseeing their work, and having your whole back yard torn up for awhile. (The pipes in these fields have to be

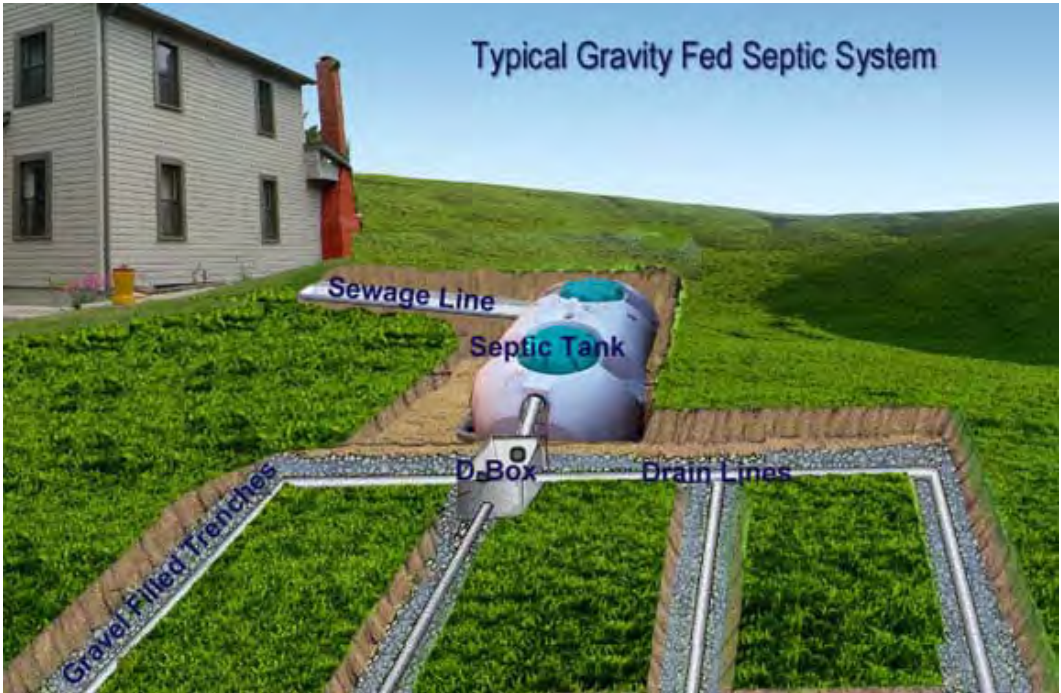
carefully installed so that the water flows downhill - away from the house and septic tank. Gravel beds should be carefully laid and compacted. It seems there is so much "schlock" construction work being done in America today. You are your own advocate. Please just don't "trust" an unfamiliar contractor. After installation, you have to bring a new lawn replanted! More cost and hassle!

Inspect and test carefully to try to determine the state of the septic field and the existing "life" of the septic field.

Clogged septic fields cannot be cleaned - **THEY HAVE TO BE REPLACED. TONS OF MONEY AND TEAR-UP!**

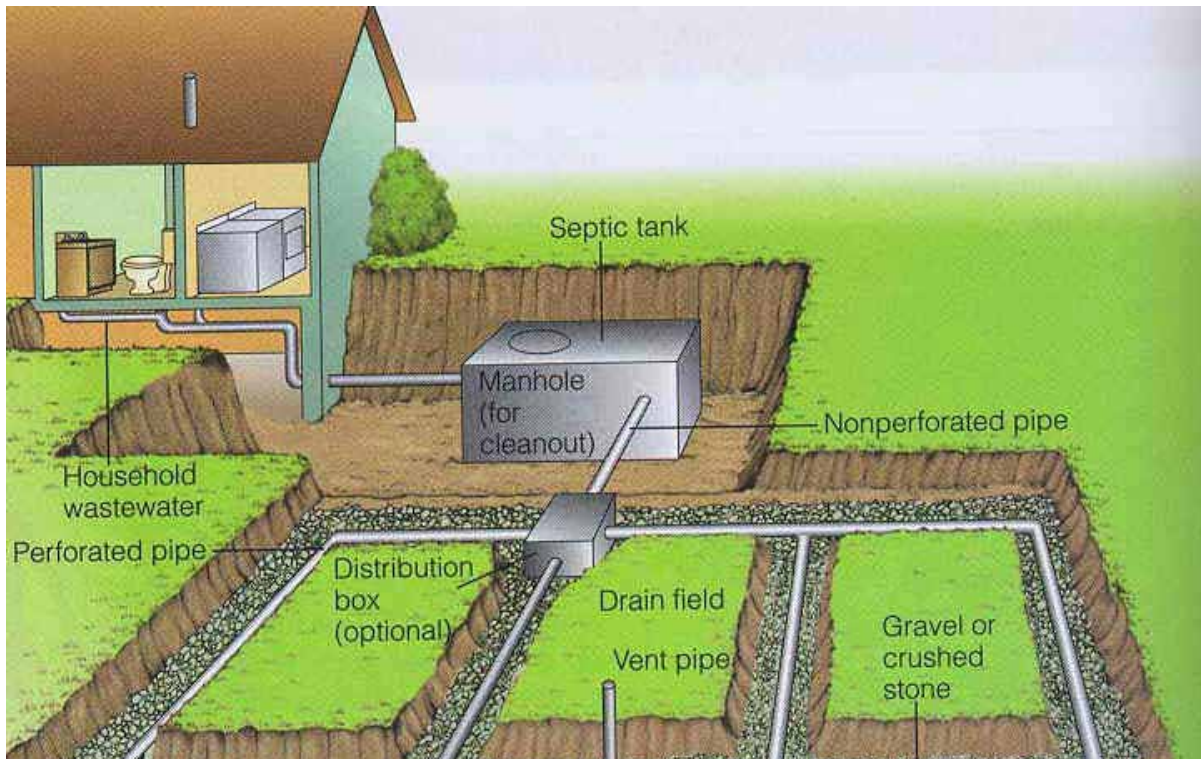


To replace a septic field: It has to be dug-up, the old pipes and gravel have to be hauled-away (and then replaced), new gravel trucked-in, trenches filled, pipes re-laid, and dirt and grass replaced. **QUITE EXPENSIVE FOR THOSE ON A TIGHT BUDGET!** **No wonder so many people try to buy a home that connects to City Water & Sewer!**





Need grass after installation. Hassle.



Typical septic tank and septic field - used when not on city sewer.



Workers pumping out a home septic tank.

If you own a home with a septic system, KEEP TREES AWAY from the septic field. Consider cutting all nearby trees down, and dig out the roots. Tree roots search for water, and when they find your septic field, they will most likely invade it, destroy and damage it, and clog the pipes. **If you are considering buying a house with a septic field - and it has trees near it or on it - BEWARE!**



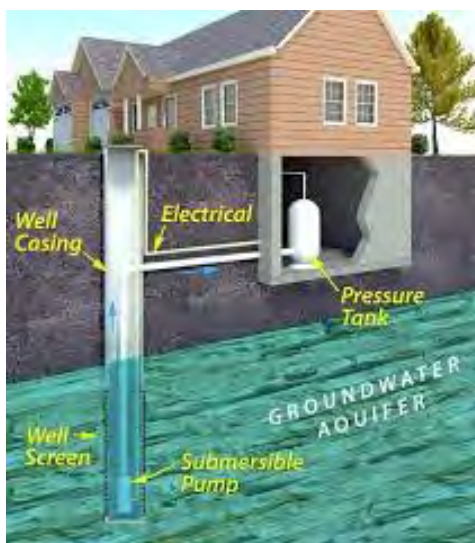
Invading roots can easily invade and destroy pipes.

The water and sewage in the septic tank is typically broken down through bacteria. If sewage is not broken-down, it too can clog our pipes and drainage field. A lot of our heavy-duty home detergents and cleaners that go down our sinks & drains can easily destroy this bacteria. People that tend to use a lot of these are at a higher risk of damaging this process and their septic system. Hassle. There are bacteria additives that can be added manually to the tank to replenish destroyed helpful bacteria, by flushing them down the toilet. Hassle.



You probably should be periodically adding Septic Tank treatment if you own a septic system. Hassle.

Most homes that have **city sewers** seem to also come with **city water**. If a home has a **septic system**, it will probably have a home **water well**. Home water wells are usually powered by electricity, so be ready to have no water if you have no power - if the power goes out during a storm or other cause. This is a hassle, especially if the electricity is out for an extended period. Your home "is not your castle" anymore in this situation, unless you have made preparations for this likely scenario. Hassle.





A typical well-drilling truck rig.

Having a new well replaced or reinstalled can be costly. My experience has been that the well drillers charge by how many feet they have to go drill down to hit good water - so they charge "by the foot." You are now at their mercy, and this can cost hundreds or thousands more if they have to keep drilling. They can't really give you an accurate estimate, because they simply don't know how deep they have to go. Also, most of the actual electric well pumps are located at the bottom of the well - not an exactly easy or convenient do-it-yourself replacement or fix. Are you beginning to feel how I dislike having septic systems and home water wells?

Water is pumped-up from the well automatically and held in a tank that has a rubber bladder in it to keep the water pressurized so it can flow to your faucets. These periodically wear-out and have to be replaced. Expensive for those on tight budgets. And a hassle. Low water pressure or no water can be a sign of bladder failure. Other signs of water tank and well pump failure are: dirty water, loud or odd noises, air "spitting" from the faucet, or unusually high electric bills (**may indicate a pump is having to continually run to maintain water pressure**). Oh-no!



Bladder inside tank



If you are considering buying a home with a water well, be sure to check its age and condition (along with the holding tank). This can be an expensive replacement.

Much of the ground water in the U.S. contains varying degrees of minerals in it like lime, iron, calcium, etc. This is called "hard" water - it is quite common. Hard water coming from your well is disastrous to plumbing pipes, faucets, hot water heaters, CLOTHES, etc. - and even possibly to your health! The steady intake of water with salts in it has been proven to be harmful to many people. These minerals can build up easily in your **water heater** resulting it prematurely aging - or it not even working at all - let alone higher electric bills. The calcification of minerals around the electrodes insulate the electrode from heating the water, and burning-up the electrodes. In gas water heaters, the sediment can still destroy the system in time.



Typical Water Heater



Mineral deposit build-up



Calcification of Electrodes

Hard water can often stain your clothes - permanently.

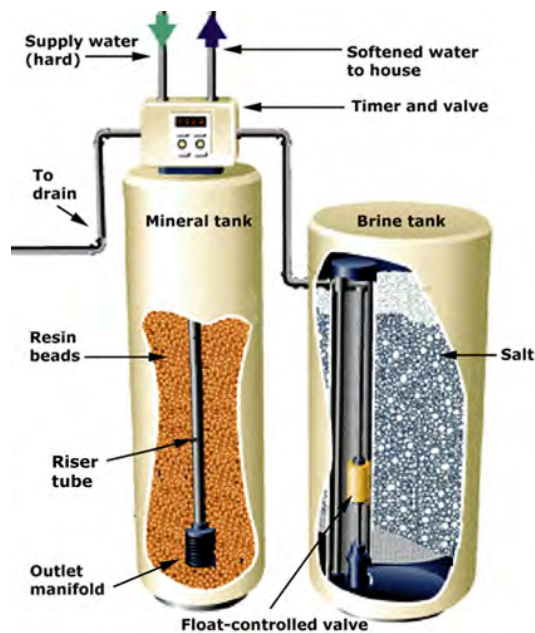


Effect of Hard Water



The common preventative "fix" for these common problems, is to have a water softener installed. These can be expensive for those on tight budgets.

Water softeners traditionally remove minerals from the water by using chemicals/balls that attract the minerals as house water flows through the softener tank. After periodic cycles, salt water is run through the tank and over the balls to clean them and remove the minerals. So, if you own a water softer, you have to keep buying heavy bags of salt and keep refilling the salt tank. Money and hassle.



Typical Water Softener System



Cleaning Salt needs to be periodically added. Hassle.

If you are considering buying a home with a water well, be sure to check if the local water is "hard." Check to see if the home has a functioning water softening system. If the water is hard, be sure to check the state of all the indoor plumbing, including the life-span of the hot water heater. If you are planning on installing a *water softener*, get an estimate for one and add the cost into your budget and possibly into the offer on the house.

Buying a home with a well and septic system entails a lot of extra potential costs, problems and maintenance. Consider a home with city water and sewer.

Roofs, Shingles, and the Importance of DRIP EDGE

Roof systems are a very important part of a home - protecting and shielding occupants from winds, temperatures, rain, snow, hail, falling trees and debris and such. Roof problems can be hard to detect - not only because shingles can hide problems going-on, but also because the roof of a house tends to be out-of-sight and thus out-of-mind. Periodic home roof inspections are critical because roof repairs can be shockingly costly. When buying a house, it is most important to evaluate the state and health of the roof system - shingles, underlayment/decking, flashing, drip edge, waterproofing, potential leaks, water condensation, and such.

RULE: Make sure your home inspector gives you an adequate age and life expectancy of the shingles. Observe if the house has drip edge installed, and be ready to identify any consequences of it not. Have the inspector report on the condition of the roof decking (wood under the shingles). Squishy or soft underlayment can spell costly problems.

Your potential new home might need to be re-shingled soon. Expensive for those on tight budgets - easily costing thousands. Worn, curling, cracked, and broken shingles are usually a signal a need for roof replacement soon.



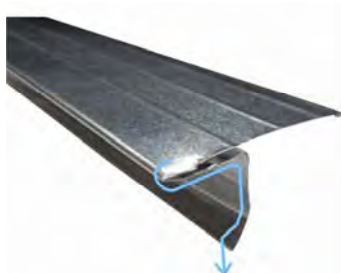


Many times the wood under the shingles can have had water exposure and are rotted or defective. This can only be seen once the shingle come-off. This replacement expense can be shocking if it is extensive.

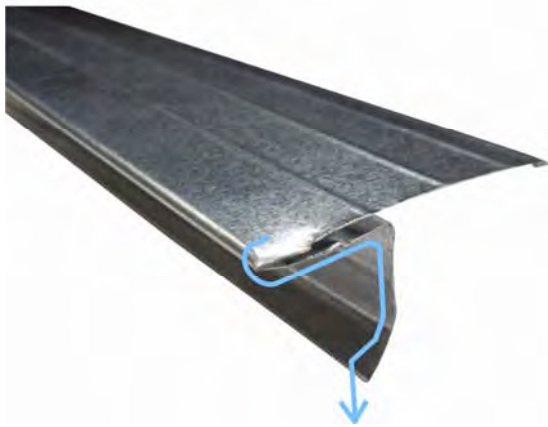


Rotten Roof Edge. Please install Drip Edge on your home. Please don't believe anyone who says you don't need it.

Many times this kind of damage and replacement cost can be easily be avoided through the having Drip Edge moldings installed when shingling.



Some states require drip edge to be installed on new homes. Normally water reaching the end of a shingle will curl back under the shingle, and begin wetting the wood under the shingle, and in time rotting it. Drip edge is a simple piece of bent aluminum that catches the water and makes it flow down and away from the shingle and the roof. Drip edge catches the drips and water flow, and sends it downward to the gutter or fascia. DRIP EDGE CAN SAVE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS in expensive repairs, yet it is inexpensive to buy!



Drip Edge - Inexpensive and easy to install - nails right down.



My first real house had no drip edge, and I began to learn about it the hard way when I noticed some birds building a nest under my shingles - under my roof! It is not uncommon for a roof with a few rotten edge boards to have squirrels and rodents also do this, and take up residence in your attic. They can then do a lot of other damage up there and not to mention causing a lot of upheaval and disturbances!







Good and proper **roof flashing and caulking** is also very important. This should be researched and checked also! (not discussed here)

The Importance of Good Attic Ventilation - Especially in Colder Climates

Modern roofs and attics are designed so there is airflow - especially in the winter - **to drive out any warm air in the attic** - and to keep it *cool*. If the attic is warm because of poor insulation or because of inadequate ventilation, the warm air meets with your cold roof and water condensation forms. This can easily rot your roof, and cause thousands of dollars to repair.



As the wind or breeze blows, air hits the side of the house, flows upward into the soffit vents, flows up into the attic, and exits vents at the top of the roof - continuously carrying away the warm air generated from inside the house - thus keeping the attic and roof *cold* - thus no wet condensation forming on the wood decking boards, which causes them to rot and decay.



Pictured are some typical Soffit Vent

Many times when installers or people install the insulation in their attic, they mistakenly cover-up the soffit vents. This is not good. Inexpensive Rafter Vents installed underneath the decking on the inside of the attic - solve this problem, and keep insulation from blocking crucial air flow.





Cheap Styrofoam rafter vents allow the air to flow straight from the soffit vents to the top of pinnacle of the roof to keep the roof cold in the winter

Land Grade (Slope) & Water Run-Off - Foundations & Water

I found out the hard way the dirt / land (grade) should always flow AWAY from the house. Once again, water can be a disaster, not only coming from the roof and leaky siding - but attacking at the foundation of the home.

Water flowing towards the house obviously enters and causes large and small flooding - destroying valuables on the inside of the house, but it can also destroy the foundation of the house. Foundation repair can be very expensive.

You should also always check to see if the house you are interested in is on a flood plain/plain. (Good chance your house could be under water unexpectedly.) Also, if your house-to-be, is located *even near* a stream or small river - it could be susceptible to an uncommon flood.



This property grade has an extreme slope where water will be rushing towards the house during rain. When there is a layer of frozen snow/ice on the ground - the water flow can be much higher because none of it will be absorbed by the ground.



Water can not only leak and flood - but ruin property.



Water can in time heave and damage walls.... actually BOW foundation basement walls





And yes, in time, water can actually cause the house foundation walls cave-in!







It has been said that it is crazy to fight water - you should always try to DIVERT water.

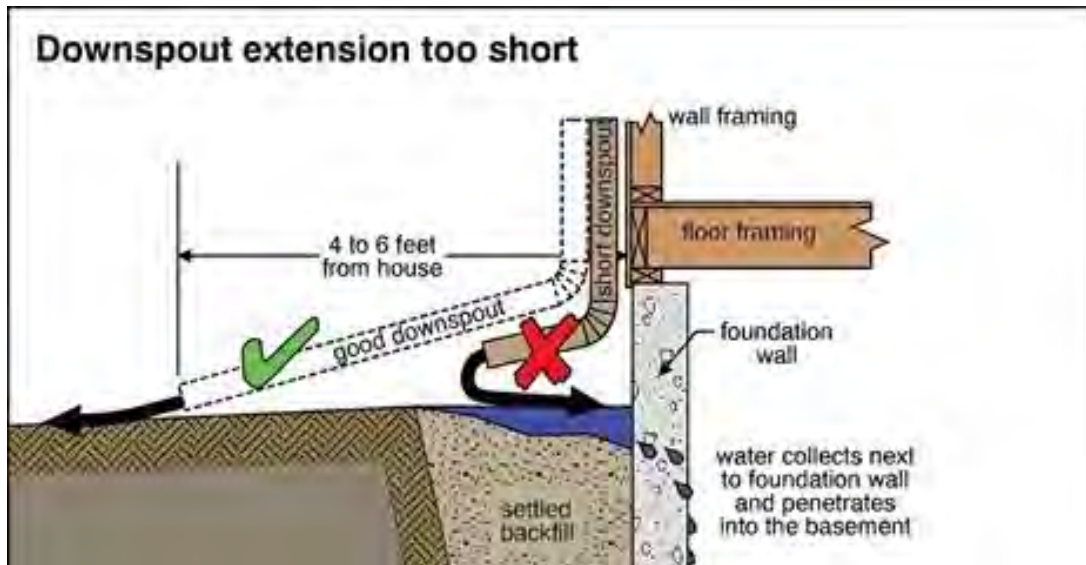


This shows a good grade being installed, diverting water **away** from the house. Notice a window well was installed to protect water from entering the basement window, and allow the grade to be raised above the window.





Downspouts should channel water away from the house. I have seen a disconnected downspout flood a basement. Proper foundation drainage is a whole other subject - and a whole other world. **Foundation drainage is about water *that does get to the foundation and walls*, and how homes are supposed to have healthy foundation drainage systems to gather and drain/discharge this water.**





Many times an easy fix to water problems to a basement / foundation, is adding dirt to raise and angle grade away from the house - to divert water away from the foundation. Notice black downspout extension to make sure rainwater gets *far away* from the foundation walls.

Foundation Drainage

Houses with basements typically have foundation draining systems that contain pipes around the exterior of the bottom of the foundation to catch and inside the basement floors to catch and release any pooling water. This is a very important system - to help ensure the integrity of the house foundation. Many times these pipes are directed to a sump pump & crock - to be pumped up and away from the house.

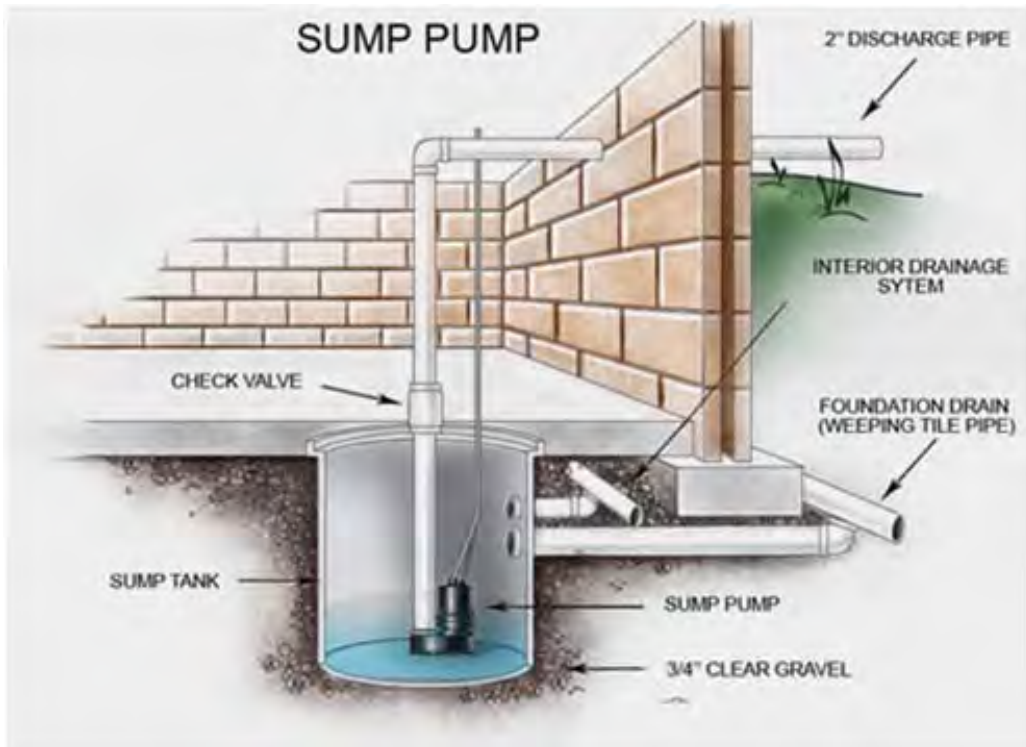
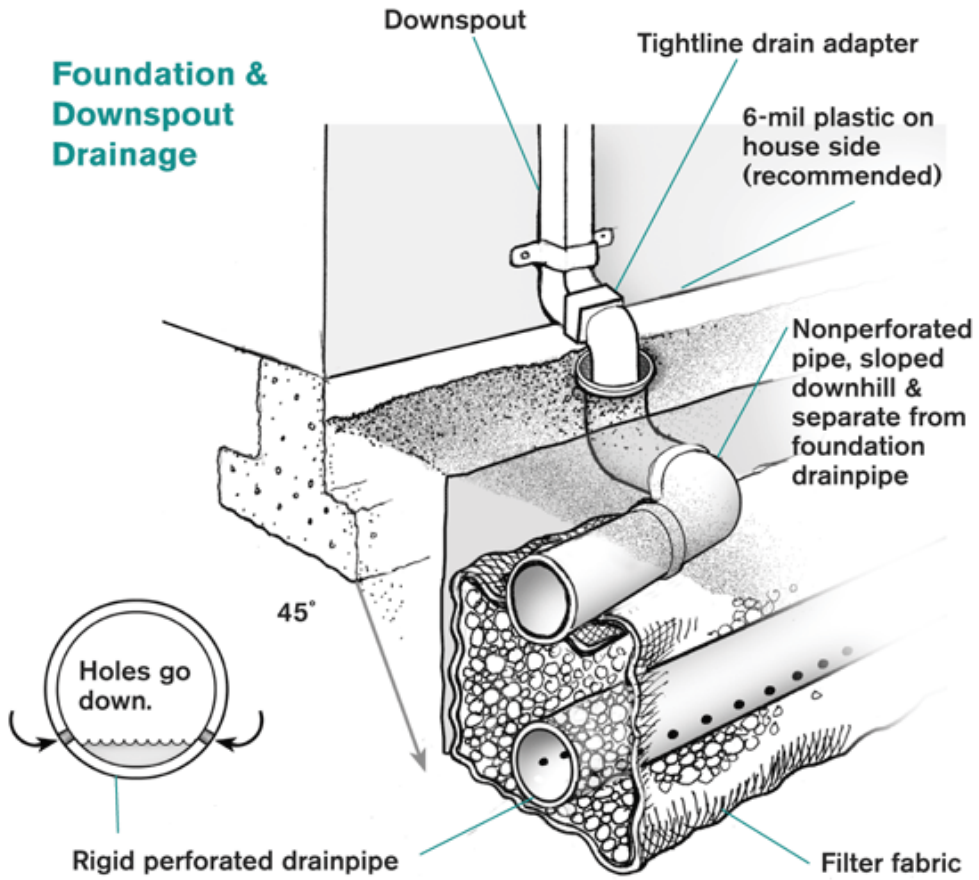
Many times because of poor construction, these drainage systems are not installed correctly (for instance I have seen no or little gravel used in the pipe beds). In time these systems can easily fail, and water pools around the foundation - or even *in* the basement or house.





FIG. 4

Foundation & Downspout Drainage



Houses with Crawl Spaces - Beware!

Because of uneven plots of land and because of ease of construction, many homes are built on crawl spaces. Most homes are built on a single concrete pad or slab, on a basement, or on a small narrow crawl space.



I don't like homes with crawl spaces for a variety of reasons.

Crawl spaces can easily trap damp air and gather moisture. **Improper Ventilation** can cause the **insulation under the floors to get wet**, rot & mildew, and **eventually sag and fall**.





Because of moisture, **MOLD** can easily grow and spread in crawl spaces.



Because most crawl spaces are narrow, it is hard to service **anything** from a crawl space.



Critters of all types can easily enter and live in the crawl spaces of homes. I have talked to a number of installers of electrical, plumbing, heating & air conditioning, phone & cable trades who dread servicing homes with crawl spaces because of the **snakes, rats, biting rodents, venomous spiders and insects** they routinely encounter down there.











These cricket spiders love crawl spaces. They can easily climb through small openings to reach the upstairs. They are large, hard to kill because they are extremely fast, and can freak anyone out when they land on you in the middle of the night.

Trees: They Are Always Going to Come Down - Sometime

I try never to buy a house with large, mature trees around it - or - if I plan on living there for awhile - *its going* to have large mature trees on it. Trees have a lifespan. I was once told the majority of trees have some kind of ailment - invasive bugs, molds, diseases, rot, etc. Most trees are coming down - one way or another. There is a very good chance that a large tree(s) next to a house is going to one-day fall on that house, in my opinion because of age, wind, storms, ice storms, etc.



Dream Home 1



Dream Home 2



Dream Home 3



Dream Home 4



Dream Home 5 & 6





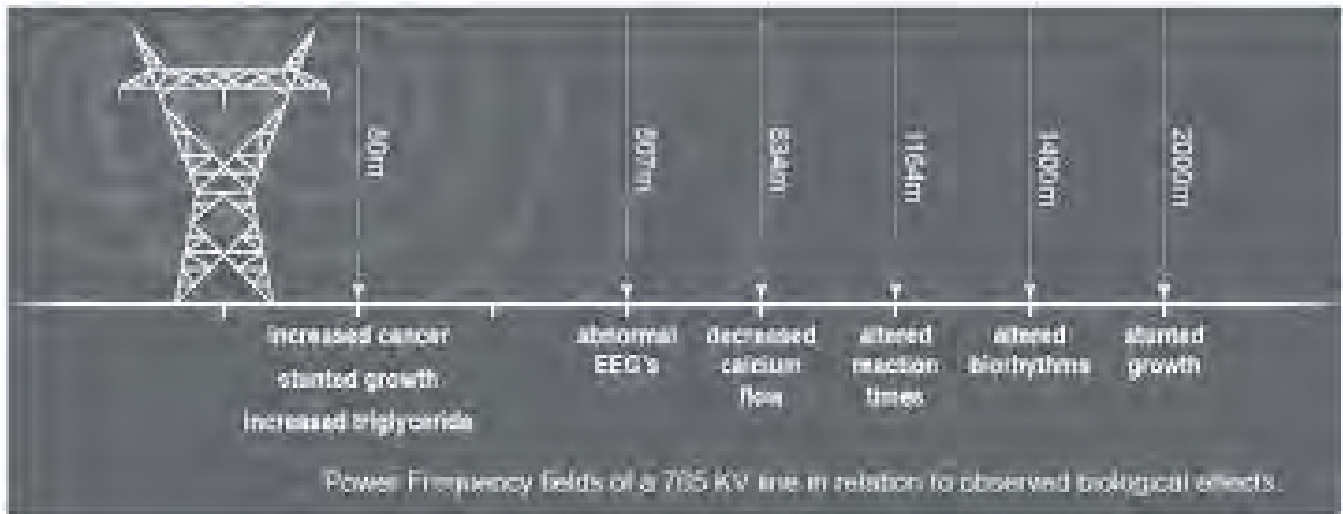
Dream Home 7



People can - and do - easily die when a tree comes through their house.

Power Lines & Potentially Dangerous Electromagnetic Fields - Lots of Data

There is lots of data linking the electromagnetic wave/fields generated by high voltage power lines to cancers and diseases of all types. I recommend never purchasing a house close to these kinds of lines and towers.



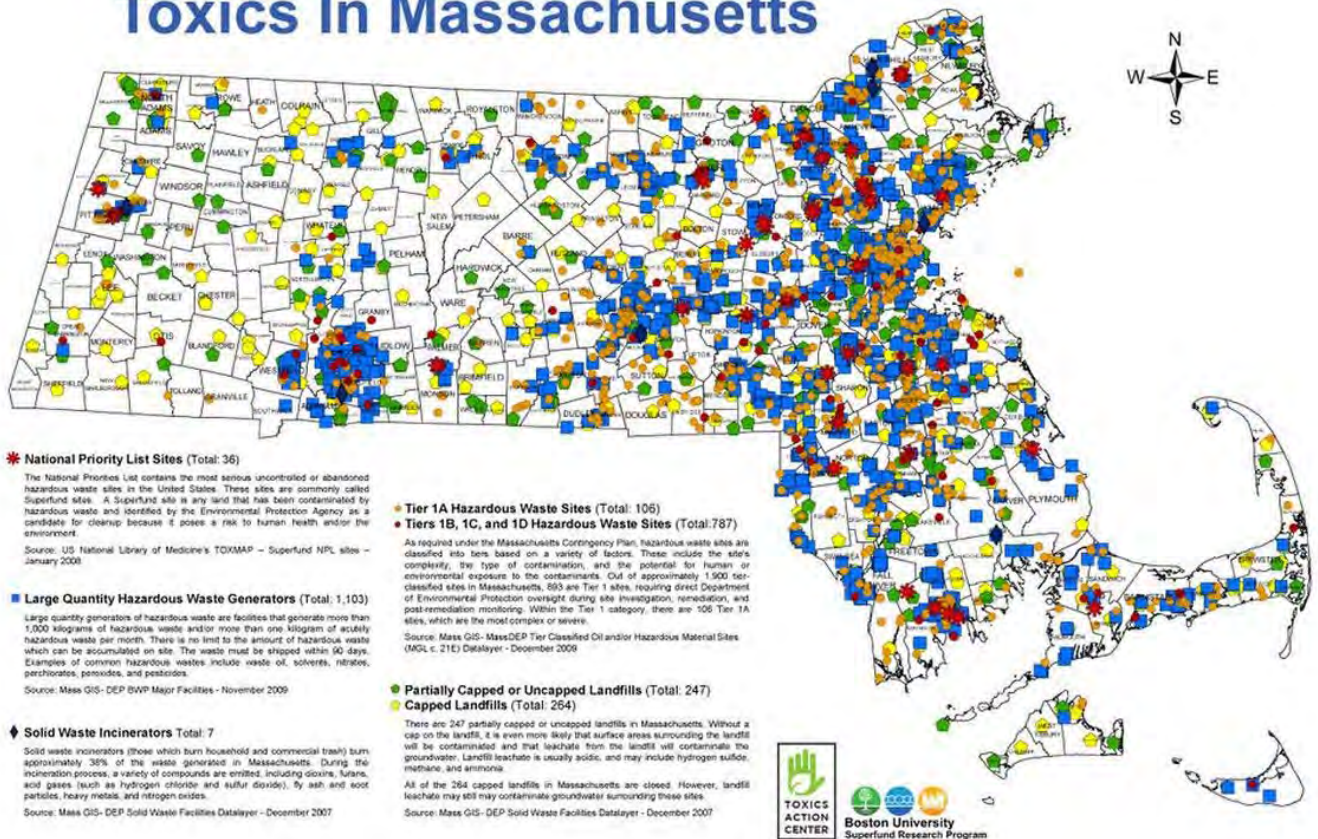


Hazardous Wastes Sites

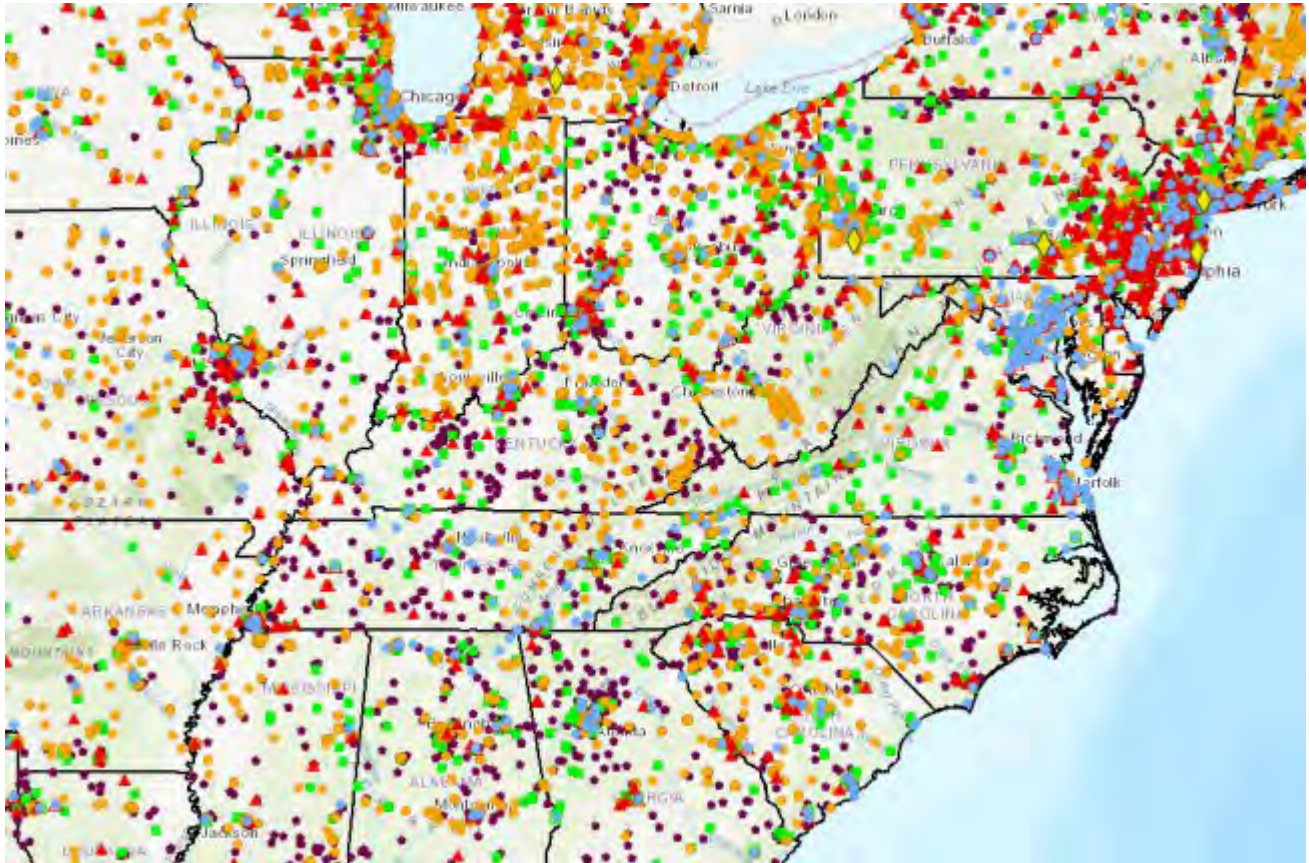
For many years throughout the United States, thousands of metal drums of dangerous chemicals were discarded, dumped, and buried, about anywhere. Many of these were metal barrels left to rust and leak into our precious ground water systems that supply our drinking water. There was little care or government oversight.

Many people think they are drinking nice pure water from their water well. Under the ground, water commonly flows about through rivers, streams, and aquifers. The water at your house might be down-river from water flowing from a hazardous waste dump area. Many of these are mapped by states and the federal government. Many have been cleaned-up. It is worth checking if the house you are interested in buying is near a designated hazardous, toxic, chemical site.

Toxics In Massachusetts







There are many other things that can be considered and investigated when purchasing a house.

Flood plain maps should be investigated in the area you are thinking of purchasing. Some insurance companies are not even offering coverage in some areas of potential flooding and hurricane activity. Or they do – at increasingly exorbitant rates! Now, widespread wildfire and mudslide areas are a relatively new phenomena, and are expected to be increasing. These should be considered.

Actually, the investigation of a potential the neighborhood and neighbors is wise to do. Try get a feel for it can uncover a boat-load of existing problems – Home Owner Association wars (beware of HOA's!), class-action suits against a builder, problematic residents, even incessant barking dogs (these can really kill your otherwise great, peaceful house!) and other animal problems.

I always try to drive around on several occasions and stop and talk to neighbors who might be outside (of potential neighborhoods). Sometimes I have even knocked on a few doors! A bunch of houses with “For Sale” signs in the front yards can be indicative of a big problem. It can be saying a lot of people are trying to get out of there *for a good reason*.

A loud highway might be being planned to be built right next to your potential neighborhood or house - or a high-power electric tower line, or even a rail line! Airports can be potentially dangerous to live around. I have met some people living in their dream house, only to have an airport expand and become a new hub(s), and bring new, very loud, low-flying passenger jets *right over their house!* Traffic flow and traffic access to-and-from work and school pick-up, and during rush hour should be looked at. Some people can have bumper-to-bumper nightmares that they weren't expecting. How is the level of crime, how far is the police station and hospital? - are great questions to ask. Do the police often patrol the neighborhood? Researching sex offender maps and databases is smart.

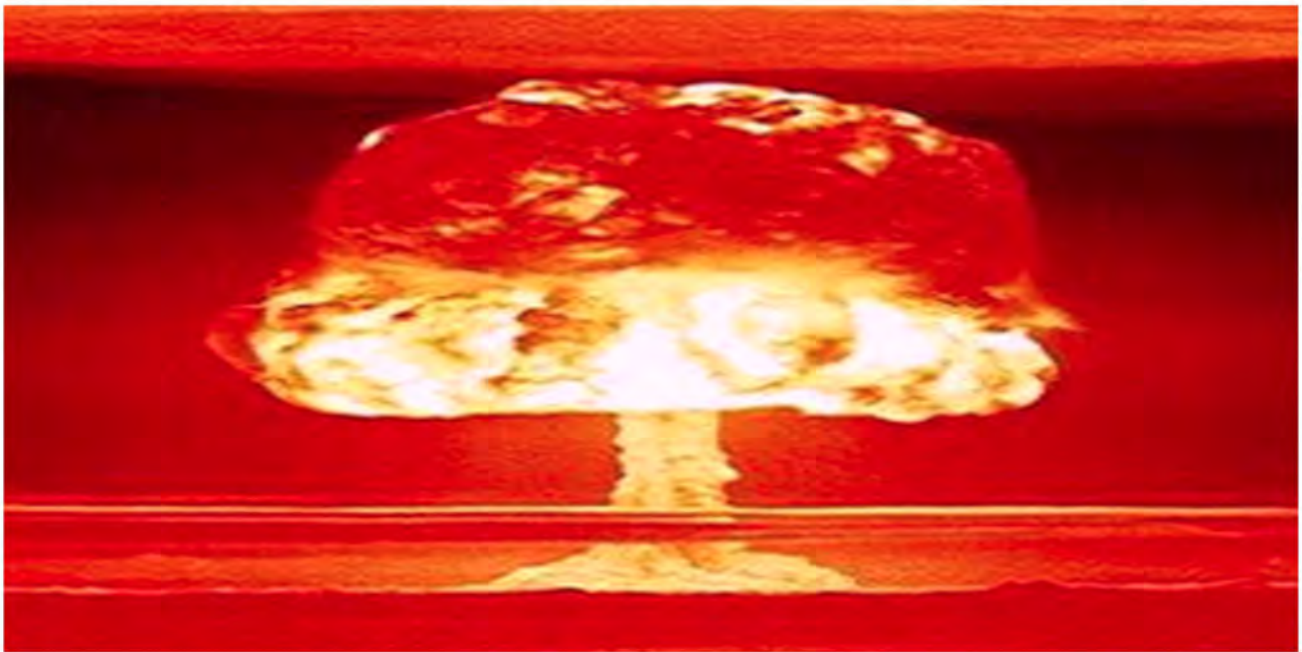
We haven't even touched discussing financing options and pitfalls . . . We haven't even touched about *writing down* on a list of those things WE WANT in a house versus those things WE NEED in a house. (yard, yard size, fencing, privacy, #bedrooms, #baths, children play areas, distance from work, etc.)

There are many other things that can be said about buying a house.

With most people on tight budgets, and with housing costing so much (and potentially costing so much in expensive repairs and maintenance), buying a house can be just downright dangerous - economically, mentally, and emotionally...

My ultimate advice, most importantly, is to pray hard and ask God for help. Asking God where He might want us to live, and/or that He would give us wisdom in each house candidate, and help us to find the best house purchase - is the wisest thing we can do! He does expect us to do our best homework, however!

A SIMPLE SOLUTION



**That Accomplishes
Almost All**

matt violassi

A Simple Daily Lifestyle That Accomplishes Almost All:

What kind of righteous people are we trying to be - and trying to make?

We all know people whom we would love to change!

What is the most effective method for deep heart change?

This easily applies to solving World Problems. People Problems.

1. Get-up everyday and Serve God.

- Tell your own soul, "I am serving God today."
- Tell God, "I am serving You today."

2. Find-out if God has any new things He wants you to do, obey, or believe TODAY.

(Besides the stuff you know you should be doing.)

3. Go Do It All.

Doing the above accomplishes almost all:

Obviously Solving Most People-Problems & World-Problems (If we can convince others to get-up and actively serve God everyday - there will a lot less sin and evil occurring.)

I believe this is the only good and true method for true heart change in a person.

- We will have to get up and re-instill in ourselves our over-riding goal and purpose for the day - Serving God.

If we don't tell ourselves (purposing in our heart) that we are actually serving God, each day – we probably won't be serving God that day. . . Doing His will . . . Obeying Him . . . Finding out what is pleasing to Him.

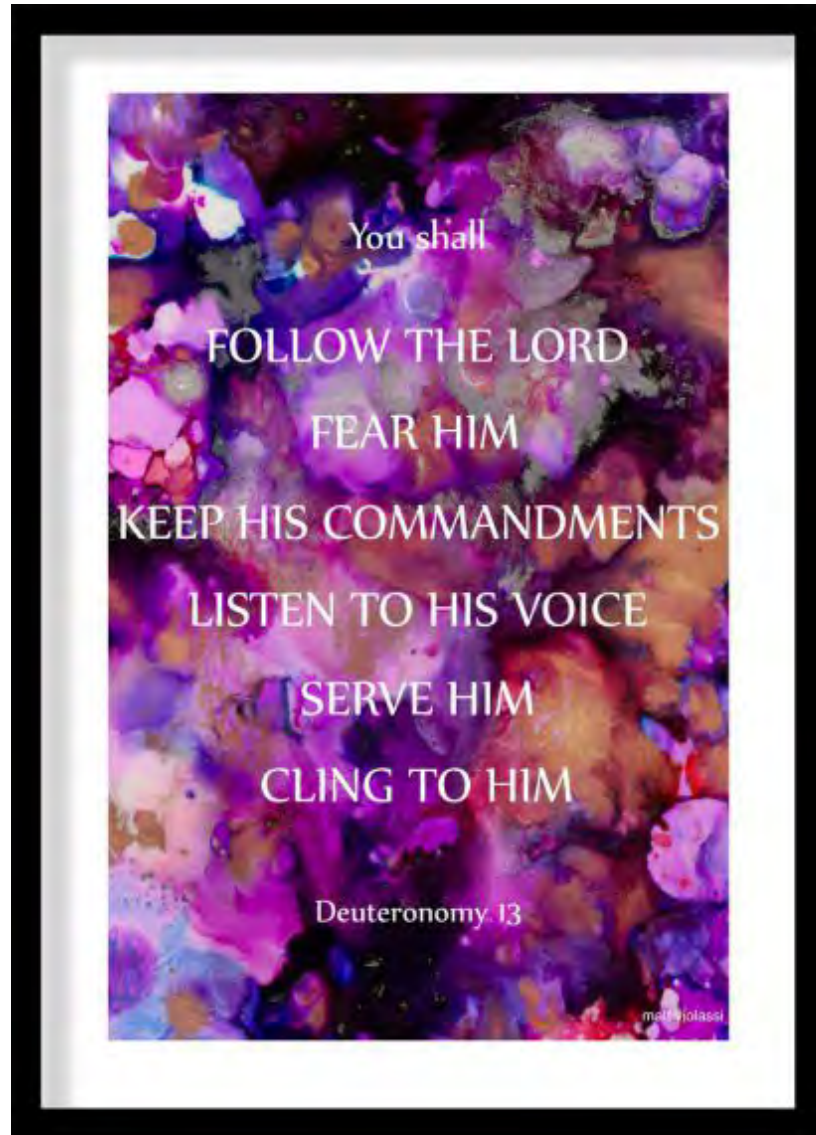
- We will also have to "make connection" with God and *talk to God*, committing to Him what we are doing this day - What we are "all about" each day. There is accountability *to God* established each day that we are serving Him.

- We are going to have to bring to mind all the things He has taught us in the past – all the things we know we should be doing . . . plus anything new. We should document these things for review - and often review them.

- If we **are** going to rise each day and serve God – this "signing-in" with God will have to be done sometime *early* in the day... not *after* the day is spent.

- To have to check-in with God to see if there are any new things we need to be doing this day – we are going to have to Seek Him, Find Him, being open to hear and learn and receive new instruction from Him.

- Most professing Christians I meet cannot confess with their mouth that they get up and Serve God every day. Even in the Old Testament, Serving God was one of 6 things every God-Believer was to be doing and confess they were doing:



Through the grace and power of God, *and through Him only* - we do and obey all these 6 things.

We need to go through these 6 things (preferably daily) - and do business with God concerning them. We need to ask ourselves, "Am I actually doing these?" . . . The conversation with God continues . . .

Our souls need to wrestle . . . perhaps repent . . . ask for help . . . ask for the infilling of His Holy Spirit daily . . .

Jesus said, "**Apart from Me - you can do nothing.**"



YOU SHALL
WORSHIP
THE LORD YOUR GOD
AND SERVE HIM
ONLY

Lord Jesus Christ
Luke 4:8

matt violassi



YOU WILL
FIND ME
WHEN YOU
SEEK ME
WITH ALL
YOUR HEART

Almighty God
Jeremiah 29:13

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Why Would Anyone Want To Love and Serve God Everyday - Anyway?

1. *Because it pleases God.*
2. *Because we will get to go to heaven when we die.*
3. *Because we will be happier in this lifetime - God's peace & joy rest on those that love and serve God. It does not rest upon that don't love and serve God.*

It is just smart to love and serve God.

It is Hard to Love & Serve God - If We Have Never Met Them.

Ask God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit, to reveal Themselves personally to you, if you have never met Them.

What HIGHER CALLING or NOBLE ENDEAVOR or LIFE PURPOSE or HONORABLE ACTIVITY

could we be involved with . . . other than . . . assisting God . . . in helping others . . .

to better KNOW, LOVE, and SERVE GOD?

There isn't.

We just need to make sure we are doing this ourselves every day.

**And we can do this while being involved in any occupation, job, or career!
And having this over-riding purpose can make almost any job or circumstance more enjoyable!**

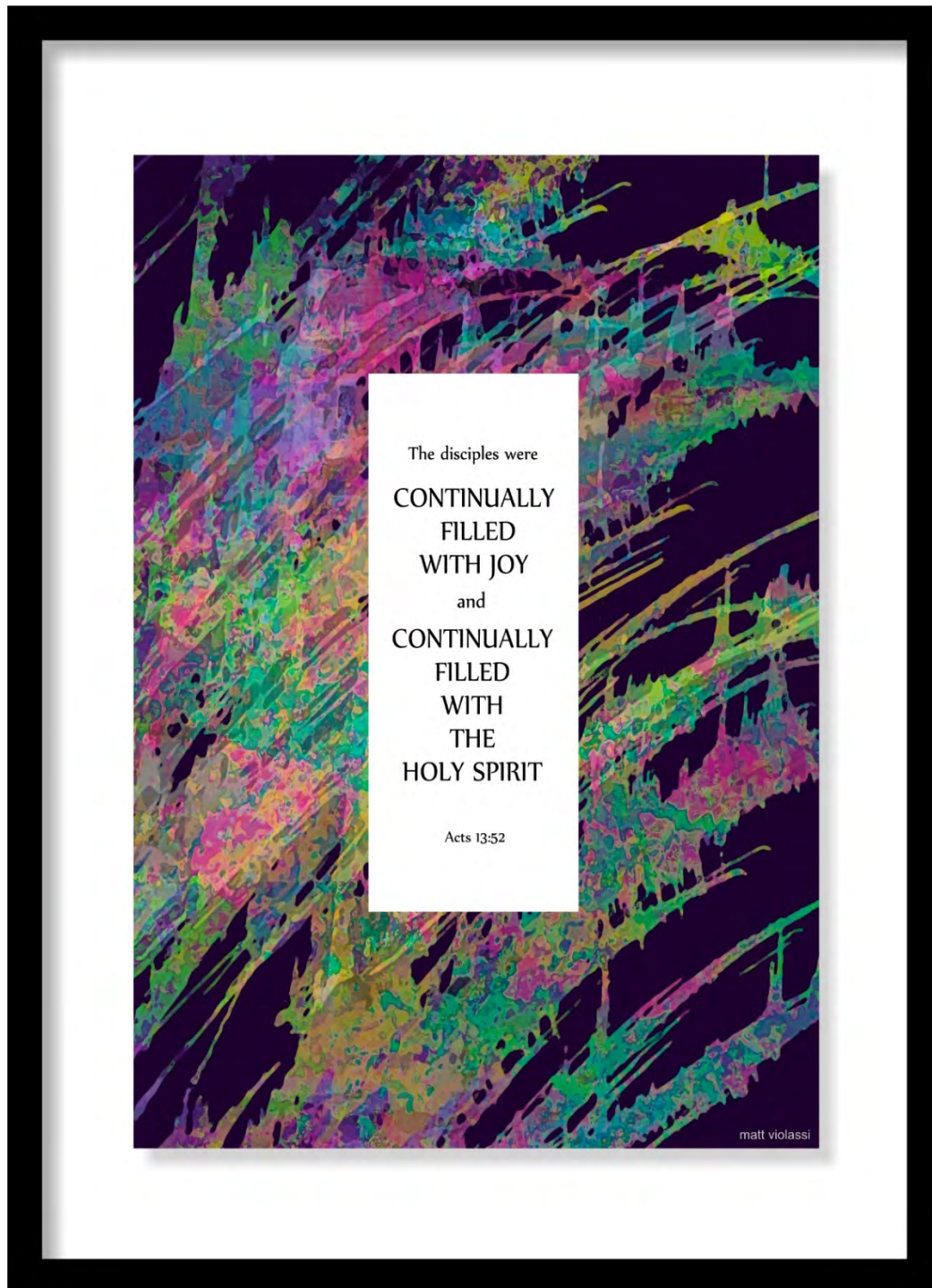


BE
FILLED
WITH
THE
SPIRIT

matt violassi

ON BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible clearly teaches that continually being filled with the Holy Spirit was the New Testament believers' common experience and practice:





The disciples were

CONTINUALLY
FILLED
WITH
THE
HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 13:52

matt violassi



The disciples were

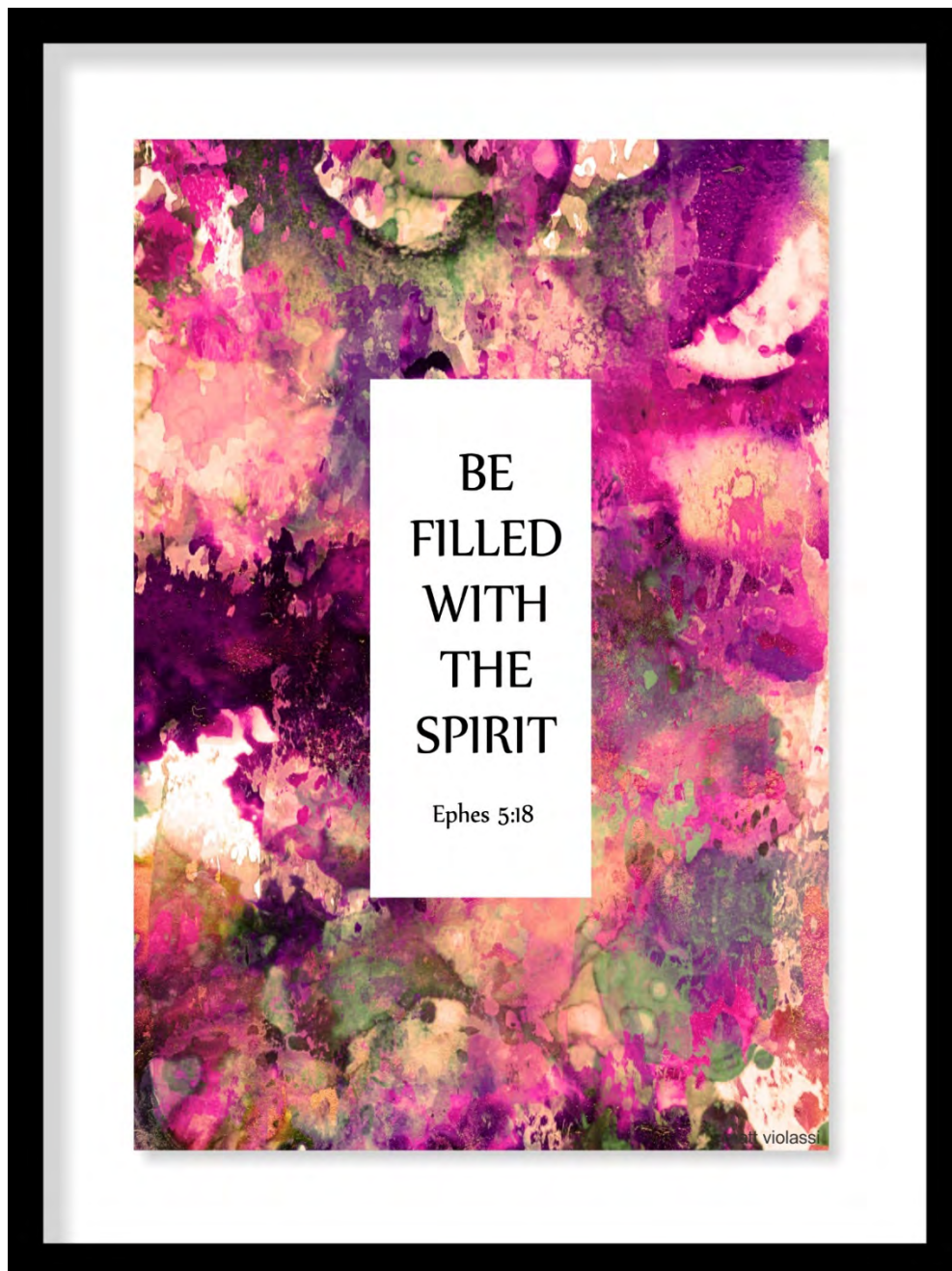
CONTINUALLY
FILLED
WITH
THE
HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 13:52

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The Apostle Paul instructs and exhorts believers to keep getting filled with the Holy Spirit. Some churches believe and teach "one-and-done" - that you are filled at believing in Christ or when you are baptized. I do not believe this is good and accurate doctrine because it can bring only partial lifestyle spiritual fruit in a person. Yes, we receive the Spirit at believing. We might even get filled with the Spirit at one of these times or another. But it is not a one-time experience.

Let's stay Scriptural - even if we don't understand things, or we have not yet experienced certain things.



Why would the New Testament writers highlight certain differences in some Christians (if "one-and-done" was true?) - if there weren't differences?

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to . . . "

"Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit . . . "

". . .who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit . . . "

"But Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit . . . "

"Instead, brothers and sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, **full of the Spirit** and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task . . . "

"Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit . . . looked toward heaven. . . "

This brings us to several questions.

First, might be, "Why would I want to do this?"

If you never have been FILLED with the Holy Spirit, then this concept might be hard to comprehend. (You can honestly ask yourself in your "knower" - "Do I honestly feel filled with God, today?")

Imagine being FILLED WITH GOD. Being FILLED WITH JOY comes along with this. Who would not want to be FILLED WITH JOY, and want to live in this state?

We are told/commanded to "walk as Jesus walked." (1 John 2:6) We are Act like Him. Talk like Him.

Trying to live the "Christian walk" . . . BEING A TRUE CHRISTIAN TODAY. . . daily . . . Is a lot easier and more world-impacting if we are FULL OF GOD versus NOT FULL OF GOD. We have God's mind on things, in a better way, throughout the day - while in this much-heightened spiritual state.

This is why we want to do this.

Being FULL OF JOY, is a nice side consequence or blessing. This is what everybody is searching for and trying to obtain, anyway!

The next question might then be "How do I get filled with the Holy Spirit?" . . .

No one can get filled with the Holy Spirit on their own - *on their own efforts*. . . Their own striving . . . Their own energies . . . It is a gift from God.

I have mentioned this concept to God - how I sure wish there is some kind of button I could push and hold-down, or spring lever handle I could pull and hold-down, until I felt really filled with the Holy Spirit and filled with joy.





But since we can't do this on our own. . .The simple answer is ASK.

ASK HIM. ASK God. "Ask, and you shall receive."

God gives the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11)

I try to get filled with the Spirit every day. Many times I ask and perceive from the Lord, "Be Filled." Many times I find myself asking the Lord, "I feel like have a lot more room in here (in this body) . . . I don't feel "Filled." Then I seem like I get to a place where I feel pretty full & contented.

I believe when we are really full, we might find ourselves knocked-out and incapacitated - as seen in some Holy Spirit meetings where people are laying around all over the floor.

These can be a genuine and real experiences - where people can't even get-up, even if they wanted to.

We cannot depend on a meeting or retreat or conference or concert - in being filled with the Holy Spirit. It might take "waiting on the Lord" privately for an extended period of time, to get filled with the Spirit. I might take "calling out to God" and "Crying out to God" for an extended period of time . . . It might take fastings . . . It might take "giving it all" and following Him once again . . . It might be cleaving and clinging to Him as a lifestyle. . . That is the journey that is left to us.

But He says to keep asking and knocking, in anything . . . And it will happen.

One thing for sure, and no one can much debate it - We need to be filled with God as much as we can every day. All the time, really.

PENNY

About 15 years ago while working on the job, I stopped in at a remote, small town McDonalds for a coffee. When I pulled-up to the drive-up window to pay, a woman about 40ish opened her little window to take my money. She seemed like a poor, single mom. I immediately noticed this beaming glow in her eyes - great peace seemed to be emanating from her. I wanted to stop and talk to her to find out what she had - BECAUSE I WANTED IT. She must be a believer in God, I thought. The line of cars behind me was pressing me, so I couldn't say much.

I purposely went to that drive-through the next week. There she was. I asked her, "I don't mean to make you feel uncomfortable, and I'm not trying to be weird or anything, but, do you believe in God?" She was a little startled and asked, "Yes, but why do you ask?" I said, "Because your eyes and face seemed to glow and emanate God and His peace." She said, "You know, a lot of people say that. . . I don't know why." I commended her. I think I told her, "Whatever you are doing - keep doing it! That phenomena could be a great Christian witness!"

When I first became a Christian, I clearly remember 2 Christians, who seemed to particularly radiate "God" from their faces - like was seen with Moses after He had met with God ("they saw that his face was radiant" - Ex. 34). Moses had to put a veil on his face (perhaps so he would not unnecessarily strike fear in people?) Stephen had this same testimony ("they saw that his face was like the face of an angel." - Acts 6).

I wanted what these guys I saw at church had. ("The eyes are the lamp of the body.")

What a great Christian witness, too, I thought!

In the Spirit, Jesus's face beams like the full sun, "and His face was like the sun shining in its strength." (Rev.1)

Being Full of the Holy Spirit, being Full of God, especially if our faces are radiating "God" - is a hard "witness" to beat.

The word "PENNY" stands alone on a line, on the page of my Prayer List spiral notebook and iPhone.

PENNY

God & I know what it means. . .

Please, God . . .

Today . . .

You win them, through me. You speak through this body of mine. . . in Spirit, *with full power* . . . and with Words - if you need them . . .

YES or NO, GOD? Will you do this today? (Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Emanate like Penny seemed to have been.)

His answer has frequently been,

"Yes, but MOST DON'T WANT ME. . . . Most Christians DON'T WANT ME."

(God commenting on not being be too concerned about witnessing, and striving to save others.)

Whoa. How sobering . . . Seems so true.




Imagine being inside a washing machine, spinning-around violently and being harshly agitated, all soaking wet with suds and bleach, while the machine being on a "wash cycle." . . . How tumultuous, painful, and horrifying!

Several years back, God showed me most Christians in the U.S. are in this state . . . twirling around in great agitation like being in a washing machine while it is running.

There is a better and easier way . . . *This was not His best for us.*

**GETTING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT EVERY DAY - AS A TOP-PRIORITY
ALMOST ACCOMPLISHES ALL!**



ON THE
DEATH
AND
LOSS
OF A
LOVED ONE

matt violassi

1. Heaven is supposed to be a better place.

(It is.) Everyone says and believes heaven is the place of ultimate happiness, joy, freedom, peace, exhilaration, etc., along with the total absence of pain, sorrow, and tears - *forever*. (The Bible teaches this.) Do we really believe this? We *need* to really believe this, and make it our confession. It is a lot easier accepting death in this lifetime if we understand and *believe this*.

This understanding can only be comforting to us, if we know that the loved one we lost is going to heaven. How do we know if we or our loved ones are "Saved" and therefore going to heaven? The Bible is clear on this (John 3:16). Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior gains us eternal life, and our ticket or passport to heaven. Jesus also told us, "**Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**" (Luke 10:20). He is thus demonstrating that we can *know* where we are going when we die.

Therefore, as best we can, we need to be trying to ensure that not only our loved ones, but ourselves - and all men - have their ticket to heaven. I have met a number of people who were carrying the heavy weight of guilt from not having done this for a son or daughter or friend or loved one who had died. Or, perhaps we could/should have protected a loved-one better? Of course, there is always forgiveness available for the worst sins we could ever do. Even Judas did not have to commit suicide - he could have been forgiven and healed for his great sins of betraying his onetime friend Jesus Christ - and setting-up His ambush and murder.

2. We will see our loved one again.

We will see them again! It's not over! . . . We will see them again soon!

3. They are having a great time in heaven!

Heaven is so wonderful and complete; most would probably not choose to come back, even if they had a choice! We would probably do the same! This is just a fact we have to deal with.

"But won't they miss us?" God obviously has to protect them from this kind pain.

4. Our loved-one is God's . . . God "owns" them, not us.

Particularly with the loss of a spouse or a son or daughter, we can have feelings that we were "ripped-off" by God. **We will need to come to terms with the issue of who that loved-one actually belongs to.** The Bible is clear on this. He owns it all. We also have to deal with the humbling fact that God might take our loved-one **without notice** or **without our permission**. Let us make sure we are not mad at God. (Jesus said, "**Blessed is he who is not offended by me.**" Matt 11:6) If we believe God is a good God, and doesn't make any mistakes – then let us believe He is a good God. If we believe He is a Perfect Being - then let us believe He is a Perfect Being.

I believe God takes some people - particularly children - to spare them all the grief, trauma, and pains of this life. I have also seen God "take" a person before they became sullied, or before they take bad paths.

5. The need for us to obtain "Closure."

Another way of saying "Closure" is to say "we have peace" or have "come to peace" with a major debilitating issue or problem . . . and have come to peace that God allowed a certain situation, and it's okay. It is wise to find closure concerning the death and loss of a loved one - the quicker the better. If we don't, we are just prolonging our pain and misery - and perhaps that of others. Wisdom, Truth, and Reality are in one sense, just seeing things from God's perspective. **Obtaining His perspective on all our issues is freeing to us.**

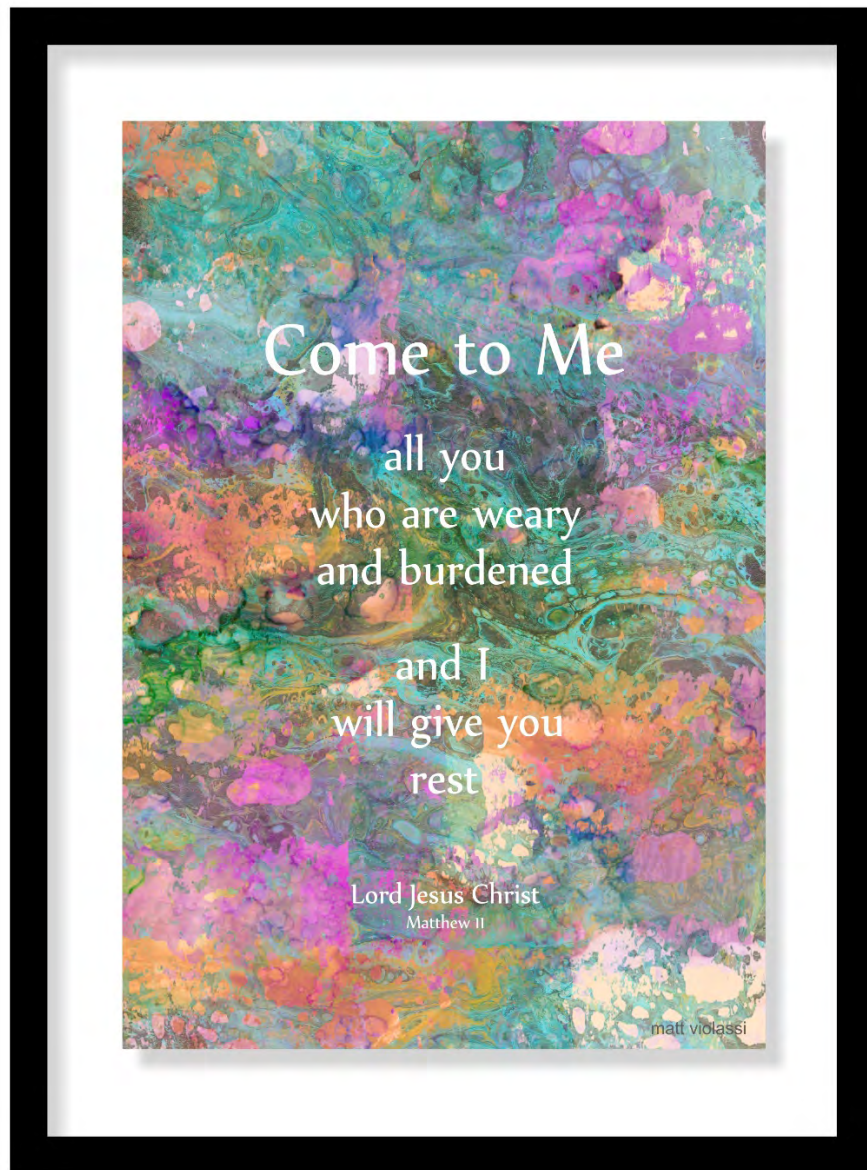
I know of a Christian woman who seemed to not be getting closure on the painful loss of her young son whom she loved so dearly - for years. Without closure, she seemed to be continuing in depressions, sorrow and sadness for years - to the point where it was seriously destroying her marriage, her family, and her life. This is not God's will. We can pray and get Supernatural Closure from God Himself.

I met another woman who had been seriously mourning for her beloved mother. She just could not get over it. It seemed to be affecting everything. She began to really cry-out to God. One night she had a dream, with her Mother appearing in it, telling her everything is all right (*in real time*), and she was doing great up there in heaven. She communicated that she wanted her daughter to *go on* in life. *The daughter also*

realized, in her heart, she would truly see her mother again soon. The daughter was instantly healed and had great joy and peace about her Mom's loss.

The loss of a loved one is painful and traumatic. Through God, we can shorten our times of mourning, pain, and loss through coming into a deeper belief in Heaven's Realities - or obtaining other ways of closure - even Supernatural Closure. Supernatural Closure is better than closure. Here is a simple recipe that can also help.

We might need to do it many times. But whenever we do it, He promises us that He will give us something - peace and rest. I have never seen this not work. Just coming to Him . . . making contact with Him - will bring us His peace and rest:



Also, Jesus has a command (*that we tend to merely treat as a nice option*). Again, every command is a promise in reverse. If He commands us to do anything, it is a given promise *that He will provide the way and strength to fulfill it*. ("Apart from Me, you can do nothing.") Here is the command:



So, following Jesus's command here, we can keep a proper time of mourning, and then find His way of going-on and having peace in our lives - *and, finding peace about anything.*

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