

MOVING UP HIGHER

with *Joyce Meyer*



If there's one thing I've realized in life, it's that we can never ask God for too much grace. And we all need it—every day, for everything we need to do in life. Because God loves us so much, He gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins so we can receive His grace, both for our salvation and then to help us walk out our life in Christ with His power.

It's so wonderful to realize that God's amazing grace is available to everyone, no matter who you are or what you've done. God has good plans for every person who accepts Christ as their Savior, and He wants us to have the abundant life Jesus died to give us. The key to this great life is living in God's great grace.

Grace is the great equalizer. It's so important for us to understand that God's grace is available to every person on this Earth, in whatever capacity they need it. There is no one who is beyond God's reach or His ability to save and restore their life. I know sometimes we can feel like we've done too much wrong, and we need to earn God's forgiveness and grace, but His grace is a gift—we can't earn or deserve it. And no one is such a "special case" that He cannot help them.

We look at others' lives, and it may look like they have it all together. People want others to know how "good" they are, so many will pretend everything is

okay in order to impress someone. But the outward appearance doesn't always tell the real story. We may see people's outward success but can't see the inner turmoil they're experiencing, or that they have no real peace or joy in life.

I believe this is a common problem for many people and the reason there is so much strife in the world today. Strife in our hearts causes us to compare ourselves with others and compete with them, trying to make ourselves "better" than them. It makes people frustrated and confused, struggling with so many issues in their lives because they are trying to figure everything out and solve their problems on their own.

But John 15:5 says that apart from Jesus, "[cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing" (AMP). All we have to do is humble ourselves before God and ask Him to help us.

We have not because we ask not. James 4:1-3 explains in detail why so many people are frustrated, confused and living in strife. Verses 2-3 say, "You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what

Grace: The great equalizer

will give you pleasure" (NLT). We all have things on our "wish lists," things we want or need or would just like to have. And when we see someone else with something we want, it can stir up some strong emotions. We can become envious and begin to covet that thing.

I remember years ago, I wanted to be like my pastor's wife. She was such a sweet woman of God, so kind and soft-spoken and people really loved her. I, on the other hand, was just so outspoken and sharp with my tongue. I wanted to be quiet and sweet like her, so I tried but it didn't work. At one point, people even started asking what was wrong with me!

I felt a lot like Paul in Romans 7:15, when he said, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (NIV). I just didn't understand why I couldn't change! I wanted to be sweeter and quieter but that never lasted long. And just like Paul found out in verses 24 and 25, I began to realize that I can't change myself—only God can. So I asked Him to change what needed to be changed in me.

If you're struggling to feel good about yourself or be what you think you need to be, I want to encourage you to stop trying and start asking God for grace.

God made you who you are, and He knows what you need and what needs to change in your life. He wants you to enjoy your life while you're in the process of becoming all He created you to be.

God will give you grace for your case. That's why I call Him the Great Equalizer. We never have to settle for less than God's best in our lives when we have access to His grace—His power to do the things we can't do in our own strength—at all times. God's grace has no limit, it won't run out. It is available to any and all who will humble themselves and receive it. Remember, we can never ask Him for too much grace. He always knows exactly what we need. And He is always ready and willing to help us—each and every one.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including Battlefield of the Mind and Living Courageously (Hachette). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joyce-meyer.org.

McCormick makes Navy his career

Patrick Kelly McCormick, formerly of Cottage Grove, has been serving in the U.S. Navy for 14 years. During that time, he served as guard to the pastor as well as to the ministerial assistant and has made three tours overseas. He will continue to serve his country until retirement.

Pat was born to Grace and Jason McCormick in the old Cottage Grove Hospital. He attended Harrison Elementary School for a short time before moving away. Pat's mother, Grace, also served in the U.S. Army for 17 years and retired as a sergeant. She previously lived in Cottage Grove also.



Pat is married to Megan and has four children, Kayla, Kyle, Cameron and Camilla.

BIRTHS

Jan. 25, 2015

To Lindsey and JoReil Medina of Creswell, a daughter.

Jan. 26, 2015

To Lacy and Walter Stowell, Jr. of Drain, a daughter.

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Death Notice

Debra Ellen Thompson, 57, of Cottage Grove, died Jan. 27. Arrangements by Andreason's Cremation & Burial Service in Springfield.

Callie Viola Epperson



Callie Viola Epperson, 86 of Cottage Grove, Oregon, our beloved mother, wife and friend passed away peacefully on January 28, 2015. She was born November 1, 1928, in North Bend, OR to Harvey and Elsie (Rice) Smith. Callie graduated from Myrtle Point High School. Callie married her high school sweetheart, Dean Epperson on December 8, 1946, in Myrtle Point, OR. She and husband, Dean enjoyed hosting card playing parties with family and friends. She also enjoyed sewing, quilting, bird watching, and large family events. Callie was always the host for Holiday dinners which seemed to grow in size every year. One of Callie's greatest claims to fame was her chocolate chip cookies which gained legendary status. She is survived by her daughter Penny Berry, Springfield, OR, daughters Rayme and Anna Epperson and son, Harvey Epperson all of Cottage Grove, OR, son Ryan Epperson and wife Denise, Eugene, OR, 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Callie was preceded in death by her husband Dean Raymond Epperson (2005). Callie will be greatly missed by all who loved her. Arrangements by Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel, 123 S. 7th St., Cottage Grove, OR 97424.



David A. Vann

April 12, 1950 – January 29, 2015



The world lost a friend today. Dave was once described as "everyone's best friend" and he was. Dave was born April 12, 1950 in Myrtle Creek Oregon, his parents were Alvin and Gloria Vann. He had two sisters, Merilyne Burke and Jeris Vann. He was raised in Dorena and had too many friends to count across the whole State. After he graduated from Cottage Grove High School in 1968 he attended LCC and the plan was to get certified to be a welder, but ... he spent the summer logging and never looked back. He loved being a logger, he said once "I just sometimes feel like letting out a big shout when I'm on a mountaintop". He loved hunting, fishing and trapping. He tolerated hiking because his wife liked it. He and Marilyn were married on June 11, 1971, he was 21, she was 17. They had four children, Steven (Meghan), Nancy (Darren), Nicole (Nick) and Cliff (Melissa) and 13 grandchildren, Alieva, Brianna, William, Kate, Wyatt, Annie, Edie, Andy, Danny, Kenny, Mike, Sam and Jack. All four of their children live within a mile of their home because "a family that works together, plays together, stays together". To say they are a close family is a big understatement. His grandchildren will forever remember the water fights with Poppa. After his family, hunting, and other get-togethers, trapping was his top enjoyment in life. He received some traps for Christmas when he was 14 years old and a lifetime of enjoyment was the result. He was proud of his accomplishments in that area and happy to share equipment, time and knowledge with anyone who showed interest, young or old. He was instrumental in getting the Oregon Youth Trapper Day started for the Oregon Trappers Association. In August 2013 he was inducted into the Oregon Trappers Hall of Fame and received multiple awards for excellence in fur handling. He was a lifetime member of the National Trappers Association and the Fur Takers of America. He and his family were big supporters with time and finances at the annual Oregon Trappers Association Rendezvous at Waldo Lake. Dave was diagnosed with Pulmonary Fibrosis in 2010. This terrible disease takes too many people too soon. He will be terribly missed by his family, he was a great husband and father and the best Poppa ever. A Celebration of Life will be held February 7, 2015 at 2:00 PM at the Dorena Grange, Dorena, OR. Dress is casual. Pie and coffee will be served following the service. Please sign the quest book at smithlundmills.com.

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