

MOVING UP HIGHER

with *Joyce Meyer*



I think it's healthy to stop periodically and take inventory of our lives. It's important to ask, "Am I really living the life Christ died for me to have? Or am I settling for something less?"

Regardless of what's happened in the past or what obstacles seem to be in our way, God has a big, full life in store for each one of us. But it's up to us whether we're going to get the best out of life and make the most of our time, talents, relationships and opportunities.

The book of Genesis contains a great lesson in this area. It shares the story of Abraham's father, Terah, who gathered his family, packed up everything, and set out for his ultimate destination—Canaan.

However, Genesis 11:31 tells us, "...They went forth together to go from Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there" (AMPC).

Wow! I wonder how many people start out to do one thing in life but settle somewhere along the way because they get tired or because it's convenient. It's not really what they want, but it's something they think they can "settle for."

Are there areas in your life where you have settled, or maybe just haven't made as much progress as you had hoped?

The Lord has called us to excellence, and we don't have to settle for mediocrity. The word mediocre literally means "to live halfway between success and failure." And that's where so many people live; they haven't completely failed, but they're also not where they really want to be.

This applies to every area of our lives. Maybe you've begun studying the Bible and you have a goal to really know God's Word and develop an intimate, close relationship with Him. If that's the case, don't settle for

just reading a chapter a day to "put your time in"—stay determined to make it a priority and reap the benefits of truly knowing God.

Or maybe you have a goal to lose 20 pounds. If so, make a decision that you're not going to give up when it gets difficult. Even if you have a bad day and actually gain weight, be determined to bounce back the next day!

Sometimes we get used to the place where we are and forget there's something better. Life gets busy, complicated, or even comfortable, and we lose sight of the dreams and goals we used to have. That's when we need to stir ourselves up and become determined to attain every single part of God's plan for our lives.

The Bible is full of scriptures that encourage us to do our best. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed..." (AMPC).

I love that phrase, "Do your utmost." It may be easier to go halfway, but just imagine what could happen if you decided to give your "utmost" in your marriage, at your job, or any other

area of your life.

Some of the greatest blessings in my life now are things that have required the most effort. Today, my husband, Dave, and I have the awesome privilege of sharing God's Word with millions of people through Joyce Meyer Ministries. Many times over the years it required tremendous sacrifice and the decision to keep moving forward when we felt like giving up.

Yes, it required time and effort to do everything God placed in our hearts to do—but it was worth it in the end! Today, I am so glad we didn't stop halfway when things got tough. I thank God that I didn't get discouraged and quit during the days when only 50 people were attending my conferences.

The truth is if you will give your best and do what you can do, God will do His part and do what you can't do!

So, don't settle for average, mediocre, or halfway. God has an incredible, fulfilling and exciting life just waiting for you. Yes, it's going to require effort and determination, and in many cases it may require you to push past fear so you can enjoy greater freedom and success. But I promise you this: Whatever it takes, it's always worth it.

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RUSSELL CARY THOMS 1958-2017

After a courageous fight against cancer, Russell Thoms, 58, passed away surrounded by his family on Sunday morning, April 2, 2017. He was born on November 10, 1958 in Eugene, Oregon, as the son of Emil (Bud) and Delores Thoms, growing up in the Cottage Grove area.

Russ graduated from Cottage Grove High School and also attended Blue Mountain Community College on a golf scholarship. Russ first worked in the lumber industry along with his father and brother. After a number of years, he decided to make a career change that eventually proved to be his passion. Working as a construction contractor was the right move, as he loved his work from the foundation to the roof and everything in between, starting his own business, Investor's Choice Construction. He later decided that finish carpentry was his true passion and sunk his heart into it. The quality of his craftsmanship, work ethic and leadership skills were recognized by all who knew him.

Although his real pride and joy came from being a father and husband of 37 years to Carrie Strebe, Russ also loved the game of golf. He was an accomplished golfer, earning Club Champion at Emerald Valley Golf Club and won many two-man tournaments with his brother, known as the Thoms Boys. Being competitive in nature, Russ always enjoyed playing poker, pinochle, Yahtzee and crochet with family and sharing good food and fine wine with both family and friends.

We will always remember Russ as being quick witted, funny, talented and creative. He was a loving member of our family, always willing to help and share his knowledge with others. He was an avid Duck fan and hosted many "Duck Parties" to watch his favorite team. He will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his wife Carrie, their sons Vincent, Kyle (wife Hannah), and Cameron, two grandchildren, his mother Delores Thoms, brother Randy Thoms (wife Lisa) and sisters Ronda Cranmer (husband Fred) and Rochelle Miller. He is preceded in death by his father Bud Thoms.

A summer memorial will be planned for family and friends. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in his name to Cascade Health Solutions, Hospice Care.



IN MEMORIAM

Sherri Wynn-Dumong

Sherri Wynn-DuMong passed away of an accidental death on April 4, 2017. She is survived by her mother, Judy Wynn Toon, stepfather, Glenn Toon, two brothers, Randy and Jim Wynn, a sister, Terri Zancanella, and many nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held on April 22, 2017 at 3 p.m. at the Waldport Seventh-Day Adventist Church, (next to the KOA), 1506 NW Pacific Coast Hwy., Waldport, Oregon 97394.

If you have any questions call 541-961-5253.



Richard DeAutremont



Richard P. DeAutremont 62, passed away March 24, 2017. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Richard was an amazing father, brother, uncle, grandfather and friend. He touched many hearts. He loved family, fishing, outdoors, carpentry work and helping others.

Richard is survived by his brothers Steve and Dan, sisters Renee, Vicki, and Donna. Nine nieces and

nephews. His four daughters Toshua, Tia, Tara, and Tiffany. Along with nine grandchildren.

Carol Lorraine King 1951-2017

Carol Lorraine King, 65, of Cottage Grove died April 1, 2017.

She was born Dec. 28, 1951 in San Francisco, Calif. to Donald and Jacqueline (Futch) King.

She had an associates degree in nursing from Lane Community College and worked as a registered nurse, was President of the American Association of Office Nurses from 1993 to 1996, and was a nurse for World Relief in the Philippines and Ethiopia.

She enjoyed oil painting and photography.

Survivors include a son, Nicholas King of Los Angeles, Calif., and a sister, Donna King of Cottage Grove.

A Celebration of Life was held April 8 at 3 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in Cottage Grove.

Arrangements under the care of Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel, Cottage Grove.

BIRTHS

Karrie and Christopher Cone of Cottage Grove welcomed a baby boy on March 30 at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center-RiverBend.

Charity and Stephen Perez welcomed a baby girl on March 30 at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center-RiverBend.

DEATH NOTICE

Clifford Charles Gadway, 72, of Cottage Grove died April 5. Arrangements by Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel in Cottage Grove, Oregon.

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