



Free choice is one of the greatest gifts God has given us. Each day we get to choose things like what to eat, what to wear, and what to think and say. This also applies to major decisions—like who to marry, where to live, and what we will do with our lives.

We also choose whether we will love and serve God or not, because the Lord won't force us to do anything. Yes, He could make us worship Him, but He doesn't want us to be robots who have no choice about being in relationship with Him. He desires for us to love Him because we want to—not because we have to.

So much of our lives comes down to the choices we make. That's why I love Deuteronomy 30:19 (AMP), which says:

"...I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, you shall choose life in order that you may live...."

I love this because God not only gives us the options, but He gives us the right answer as well: "Choose life!"

Galatians 6:7 says it this way: "Do not be deceived...whatever a

man sows, this and this only is what he will reap."

God is good, and He loves us tremendously. He has good thoughts and plans for our future (Jeremiah 29:11); however, we have a part to play in the process. Our decisions (the "seeds" we sow) will produce a harvest in our lives.

Good choices lead to good results and a good future, while bad choices will lead to regret and unhappiness.

Here's a practical example: My husband, Dave, has exercised regularly most of his life. Because he's been so diligent in this area, he's rarely been sick, and he always looks great.

I, on the other hand, did not enjoy exercising, so I didn't make good choices to work out over the years. Eventually, I began to see the negative results in my body.

When I finally realized I had done a serious disservice to myself by not exercising regularly, I was in my sixties. God put a desire in my heart to begin the habit of regular exercise, and now I walk several miles almost every day. I feel better now than I did when I was in my forties!

Think about your life... How are your choices affecting your relationships? Your health? Your finances? Are the thoughts and words you're choosing having a positive impact on the atmosphere at home or at work? Are your decisions producing good results, leading you closer to God or further away from Him?

I'm not talking about being perfect, and I don't mean to make you feel bad about yourself or the things you haven't done the way you should have. We all need God's grace to live right...to make good choices consistently that bring us the life He wants us to have.

Sometimes making wise decisions means we do what we need to

do now—not what we feel like doing—so we can be happy later on. The truth is, the better our choices are today, the fewer "messes" we'll have to deal with tomorrow or further down the road.

If you need wisdom to know what to do, take time to study God's Word. The Bible is packed with instructions about how we can live a great life and reap a harvest of blessings. Psalm 1:1-3 gives us a wonderful promise from God for those who will obey His Word:

"Blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked [following their advice and example]...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law [His precepts and teachings] he [habitually] meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted [and fed] by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season; its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers [and comes to maturity]."

If it feels like you're in such a difficult place in your life that you could never get where you really want to be, I want to encourage you. There was a time in my life years ago when things were so bad it didn't seem I could ever make enough good choices to get to a good place.

But as I began to do what I could do, God met me where I was and He did what I couldn't. And today, I'm happier and have more peace and fulfillment in my life than I ever have before!

Your situation probably won't change dramatically overnight, but if you'll focus on doing your part—what you can do—and make a determined decision to trust God to do what you can't do, you will see good results in time. The key is to keep making one good choice after another, one day at a time, and never give up!

BIRTHS

Heather Coussa and Dustin Upton of Cottage Grove welcomed a baby girl, Delanee Mae Mari Upton on October 4 at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center-RiverBend.

Monica and Jim Somerville of Cottage Grove welcomed a baby boy on October 5 at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center-RiverBend.

Julie and Curt Leibrand of Cottage Grove welcomed a baby girl on October 3 at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center-RiverBend.

IN MEMORIAM

Lorene Woody 1925-2017

Lorene Woody, 92, of Cottage Grove died Sept. 28, 2017.

Lorene was born March 21, 1925, and spent most of her life in Cottage Grove.

She was married to Claud Woody, who passed in 1985. She spent many happy years, hunting, fishing and camping with Claud, her family and friends.

Mrs. Woody is survived by two daughters, Ann Taus of Grants Pass, Ore., and Linda (Mike) Vaughn of Culp Creek, Ore., four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren, as well as two brothers and a sister.

No services are planned at this time. Arrangements by Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel, 123 S. 7th St., Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

DEATH NOTICES

James E. Fox, 91, of Creswell died Oct. 2, 2017. A memorial service will be at 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3 at Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel in Cottage Grove.

Gary Steven Davis, 68, of Cottage Grove, died September 21. A celebration of life will be planned at a later date. Arrangements by Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel in Cottage Grove.

Local news commentary

By Jim Zachary
For The Sentinel

While no one should ever say "I know it's real because I saw it on the internet," everyone should be able to say, "I know it's real. I read it in the newspaper."

Real newspapers reporting real news have never been more important or more valuable to readers and communities.

This week, newspapers across the nation recognize National Newspaper Week and the theme — Real Newspapers...Real News — points to the importance of accurate reporting, watchdog journalism, strong editorials, comprehensive public notices and a free, open public forum that can be easily accessed by readers in more ways than ever before.

In print, on digital sites, via laptop, desktop and mobile devices, through SMS or social media, newspapers across the nation continue to be the leading source of reliable information in all the communities they serve.

In a world of fake news spread on social media and attacks on the media from people in power, it is important for the public to know the difference between legitimate reporting by credible sources and all the noise posing as "the media."

Here are some of the reasons your local newspaper is the most trustworthy source for news and information:

- Newspaper newsrooms are staffed with real people — people you know — reporters, photographers, editors — gathering the news, conducting interviews, covering meetings, attending events, writing, editing, fact-checking and making sure every day you can trust what you read.

- Newspapers rely on recognizable sources. Quotes in the articles you read are attributed to real people and can be easily verified.

- Newspapers work hard to stay away from single source reporting, giving readers context and balance.

- Newspaper websites have legitimate URLs ending in .com or .org extensions, listing contact information, the names of staff members and the media organization's leadership team on the website.

- Newspapers correct mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes at times, but there is a big difference between an error and intentionally and knowingly publishing a false report because of some political or social agenda. Spurious websites, blogs and social media do not correct errors. They thrive on them.

In the United States newspapers have a long and important legacy of holding the powerful accountable, defending the First Amendment and advocating for government transparency.

Democracy is protected when the newspaper provides checks and balances as the Fourth Estate of government from city hall to the courthouse to the statehouse to the White House.

Straightforward news reporting and thought-provoking commentary give a voice to the voiceless and empower the powerless. Newspapers hold government accountable because at our very core we believe that government belongs to the governed and not to the governing.

Don't be embarrassed because you shared some sensational, agenda-driven report on social media only to find out it is totally fake. Get your news where real news has always been found: Your local newspaper, the real deal.

Jim Zachary, CNHI Regional Editor for Georgia and Florida newspapers, is the president and chairman of the Red & Black Publishing Co., serving the University of Georgia, director of the Transparency Project of Georgia, open government trainer and member of the board of directors of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation.



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In Honor of All Veterans

The Cottage Grove Sentinel is preparing to publish its "Salute to Vets" a special section devoted to all military veterans who are Cottage Grove-area residents or have a connection to this area.

If you are interested in sharing your military story in the annual Veterans Day publication, or in updating information that we have published previously, please complete the form below and submit it to the Cottage Grove Sentinel. Service photographs are also welcome.

Submit forms and photos (preferably) by e-mail to cgnews@cgsentinel.com; or by mail to Cottage Grove Sentinel, Attn: Caitlyn May, PO Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424; or drop forms off at the Cottage Grove Sentinel, 116 N. 6th Street, Cottage Grove.

Please be sure that all materials are carefully labeled with your name and phone number. **ALL FORMS AND PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY OCTOBER 31, 2017.**

Thank you for participating in this project to remember and honor our veterans.

Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Rank Achieved (optional): _____

Dates Served: _____

Where did you serve? _____

Special Information (E.G., POW): _____

Has your veterans information been published previously in the Cottage Grove Sentinel Veterans Publication?
YES NO

Do we have your military photo(s) on file? YES NO

(Note: If you have submitted photos in the past, we will still have them on file.)

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