

MOVING UP HIGHER

with Joyce Meyer



Most people would say they have goals and want to make progress in life. It's a natural desire, and there's nothing wrong with wanting promotion in various areas. But we need to realize that anytime we ask God to promote us, or use us in greater ways, we're going to have to go through a time of testing and preparation to get there.

It's important to understand that God will never tempt us with anything evil, but He will allow—and even sometimes arrange—for things to happen in our lives that will challenge us and help us develop the character we need to successfully handle greater privileges and responsibilities.

James 1:2-3 (AMPC) says, "Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience." When we go through trials with a good attitude, trusting God to use them for our good, then they will work things out of us—immature behaviors and ungodly mindsets—and cause us to grow in our faith.

There are different kinds of tests that get us to the point where we learn how to do things God's way. One of the most common tests is the forgiveness test.

Forgiving people who hurt you, disappoint you, do something you don't like, or maybe even betray you is not easy. It's one of the most challenging things we have to learn to do as Christians because it can seem so unfair to just let someone get away with the injustice they've done.

I understand this very well because I felt that way when the Lord spoke to my heart about forgiving my father for the years of abuse that he put me through. But I came to realize that holding on to my anger was really just continuing to hurt me. I needed to be more concerned about myself and my relationship with God, rather than trying to make him sorry for what he had done. The truth is when you choose to forgive people, you're doing yourself a favor.

In Matthew 5:8, Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (NIV). And Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else,

guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

It's so important for us to keep our heart right with God. When we do, we can hear Him more clearly, be a lot more sensitive to His presence and enjoy close fellowship with Him. And there is nothing we need more than the presence of God in our lives! God is the source of every good thing, and Psalm 16:11 (NKJV) says, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." I love Psalm 17:15, which says, "...I shall be fully satisfied, when I awake [to find myself] beholding Your form [and having sweet communion with You]" (AMPC).

If we are not pure in heart, we're sacrificing an intimate relationship with God because we'd rather harbor anger, bitterness and resentment toward others in our heart.

Everyone experiences offenses at times, and when we do, we have to be determined to do something about it with God's help. The Bible says in Proverbs 4:23 that YOU need to guard your heart...not that He'll send an angel to miraculously do it for you. So when you recognize that you're offended by something, you need to quickly take action, doing what God tells you to do to overcome it.

Mark 11:25 says, "Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father Who is in heaven may also forgive you your [own] failings and shortcomings and let them drop" (AMPC). This verse is saying that if we choose to hold on to unforgiveness, then God can't forgive us of our sins, and our intimacy with Him will suffer.

The best thing we can do when we need to forgive someone is pray for them, make the decision to forgive and "let it drop (leave it, let it go)." That means you stop talking about what they did, stop thinking about it and rehearsing it over and over and over in your mind.

The quicker you decide to let offenses go, the easier it will be; however, if there is a hurt that has been in your heart for a long time, it may take some time for you to get totally free of it. But you can do it—by God's grace—if you won't give up!

Jesus gave His life so we can have relationship with God, not religion. I want to encourage you to choose a pure heart, free of unforgiveness, so you can have a personal, intimate relationship with God that will fill you with His joy and prepare you to fulfill His good plan for your life!

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

Gary L Funk 1935-2018



A covered bridge. Lush green trees. An azalea shrub, heavy with magenta blossoms. Narrow trails through fragrant woods and dark mud next to the river. The creamy brown and gray hues of river stones. Images of Cottage Grove paint the picture of Gary Funk's life, which began in that verdant town on May 11, 1935.

26 years later, two days after his birthday in 1961, he married the great love of his life, Alice. Together, they built a life full of family and friends, of camping and fishing and hunting and gardening. Their house was full of kids, and once the kids were grown, they returned at every holiday to fill the house with their own children. Gary loved to watch the grandkids play, and when they weren't climbing all over him, the children marveled at Grandpa's ability to fall asleep in his recliner despite the noise. A talented craftsman, Gary built a thriving masonry business and taught the trade to his sons, Terry and Steve. His work was featured in Sunset magazine, and a drive through the Eugene/Springfield area reveals the fruits of his labor and artistry: gorgeous edifices, each stone placed lovingly by hand. He excelled at the utilitarian aspect of his art as well—he invented, patented, and manufactured exterior air vents for masonry. When he wasn't working, he was in his woodshop, creating furniture and birdhouses and lawn art and anything the kids asked for.

Gary was a longtime member of the Elks BPOE 2145, spending many weekends at Elks events and even serving a term as Exalted Ruler in the 1990's. The Elks' lodge was like a second home to Gary and Alice, and their shining faces in the photos of those events attest to the great joy they found in the Elks brotherhood. Throughout his long life, Gary relished putting his rough mason's hands into the rich brown earth and nurturing a dazzling garden into bloom every year. He loved sharing the bounty of his garden with his family—it was impossible to visit in the summer months and not come away with a bag full of fresh-picked vegetables and fruits. He grew magnificent flowers, and his yard was worthy of the Birds & Blooms magazines he loved to read.

After a long battle with prostate cancer, Gary passed away on February 12, 2018. He is survived by his wife, Alice; children Terry Tofflemoyer (Cindy), Steve Tofflemoyer (Sheri), Rhonda Jellison, Cheryl Pitkin, Kathy McBride (Bryan), Joan Trombo, and Teri Moore; 13 grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren. A celebration of life will be held at the Springfield Elks Lodge, 1701 Centennial Blvd. at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 3rd.

The family asks that donations be made to Cascade Hospice or the Springfield Elks in lieu of flowers. Gary would approve if you wanted to plant some instead.

Beverly Carlson Feb. 20, 2018



Beverly Carlson, 90, of Dorena passed Feb. 20, 2018 of age related problems. She is survived by her sons, Dana Carlson who lived with her, Dale Carlson of Cottage Grove, and Dennis Carlson of Indiana.

Rose Berggren 1946-2018



Rose Ellen Berggren, 71 of Cottage Grove, OR passed away on February 22, 2018. She was born on June 21, 1946 in Cottage Grove, OR to Ernest E. and Adela (Miculka) Lacky. Rose graduated from Crow High School and married Charles G. Berggren in November 1968, Reno, NV. She was a homemaker who enjoyed making baskets, camping, and spending time with her family. Rose and Chuck have attended Cottage Grove Bible Church for more than 20 years. Rose is survived by her husband, Chuck Berggren, Cottage Grove, OR; daughter Christine Dukes and husband Mike, Cottage Grove, OR; sister, Bobbie Strebe, Dorena, OR; sister, Jeannie Godding, Elkton, OR; brother, Mike Lacky, Veneta, OR; sister, Sandra Hesscock, Chiloquin, OR; and 2 grand-children. A Memorial service was held at 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at Cottage Grove Bible Church. Private interment at Taylor Lane Cemetery, Cottage Grove, OR. Arrangements in the care of Smith Lund Mills Funeral Chapel.

Francene (Gates) Hall 1950-2018



Francene M. (Gates) Hall, 67 of Cottage Grove, OR passed away on Feb. 20, 2018. She was born on July 20, 1950 in Emmetsburg, IA to Merle E. and Suzanne (Brodigan) Gates. Fran graduated from Cottage Grove High School in 1967 and attended Lane Community College. She was the first woman deputy sheriff in Oregon, a baker for South Lane School District and a realtor in Cottage Grove for many years. Fran enjoyed crabbing, fishing, crafts, cooking and canning. She married Glenn L. Hall in July 1989, in Cottage Grove. Fran is survived by step-son, Bruce Hall and wife Margie, Roseburg, OR; sister, Christine Senn and husband Ray, California; sister, Sheri Phillips, Washington; brothers, Pat and Chuck Gates, Cottage Grove, OR; brother,

Mike Gates and wife Judy, Eugene, OR; sister, Jeanne Gates, Cottage Grove, OR; 7 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Fran was preceded in death by her daughter, Darla; step-daughter, Glenda; step-son, Gordon and husband, Glenn Hall and sister, Kathy. No service is planned. Arrangements in the care of Smith Lund Mills Funeral Chapel.

BIRTHS

Kristi Reigard and Zachary Maddess of Cottage Grove welcomed a baby girl on Feb. 13 at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center-RiverBend.



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