

STRAIGHT TALK: Never Settle for Less Than God's Best

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. However, it's up to us if 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.

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 "put up with."

Are there areas in your life where you have "settled" or maybe just haven't made as much progress as you have hoped? The Lord has called us to excellence; however, so many times we settle for being mediocre. 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! 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 in His Word.

Sometimes we get used to the place where we are and almost

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.

Let's take a few moments to play what I call the "What If?" game. This game isn't meant to make you feel guilty about what you haven't done—it's designed to help you picture what you *can* do. Use your imagination and really think through the answers to these questions:

What if you decided to give God your all and seek Him with your whole heart?

What if you demanded the best from yourself instead of settling for "just average?"

What if you stopped making excuses why you can't accomplish your dreams and goals?

What if you changed the way you speak and refused to say anything negative?

What if you started confronting problems instead of running away from them?

What if you decided to stop procrastinating?

Can you imagine where you would be this time next year if you followed through on even just one or two of these things?

The Bible is full of Scriptures that encourage us to do our best. For instance, 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." Sure, it's always easier to go halfway, but just imagine for a second what could happen in your life if you decided to give your "utmost" in your

marriage, at your job, or in other areas of your life.

Some of the greatest blessings in my life now are the things that 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. However, it required tremendous sacrifice and the decision to keep moving forward when so many times we felt like giving up. Today, I am so glad that I 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.

I've learned this powerful lesson: If you will give your best and do what you can do, God will do His part and do what you can't do! A great life isn't just for someone else—it's for you, too. 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: It is always worth it.

So, don't settle for average, mediocre or halfway. God has an incredible, fulfilling and exciting life just waiting for you can take it as far as you're willing to go. The next move is yours.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times' bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored 130 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and her newest devotional, *Quiet Times With God (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .