

The Only Way to Step Into the Bounty God Has in Store for You

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.

Let's take a few moments to play the "What If?" game:

- 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 with just one or two of these things?

The Bible is full of Scriptures that encourage us to do our

best. 2 Timothy 2:15a 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. {eoa}