

# THE BEST OF 125 WORDS

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MICHAEL NATT



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# MICHAEL NATT

The Best of 125 Words  
By Michael Natt







*To my dear wife Cheryl for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*





**PART I**

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**MY LIFE IN 125 WORDS**

STORIES OF MY LIFE



A seminary student preached his first sermon on the topic “The Ten Commandments of Marriage.” After he graduated, got married, and took his first pastorate, he changed the title to “The Ten Principles of Marriage.” After his first child was born, he changed the title to “The Ten Facts About Marriage.” When his children grew into teenagers, he changed the title once again to “The Ten Questions About Marriage.”

I was 21, and Cheryl was almost 19 when we got married on October 13, 1973. As we said our vows, “I take you for what you are now, what you will become, and what we will become together”, neither of us knew where we would be 50 years later.

I’m glad we are still together.



## A PERFECT GAME

According to the Umpire Scorecards account on Twitter, home plate umpire Pat Hoberg called a "perfect game" in Game 2 of the 2022 World Series between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Houston Astros. Hoberg called each of the game's 129 pitches correctly in the Astros' 5-2 win.

That's a rare occurrence which got me thinking, "What would be a perfect 'game' for me?" Maybe getting through the day without saying something offensive? Maybe doing my work without making any mistakes? Maybe driving within the speed limit for an entire day?

We are not perfect, but we are called to be (Matt. 5:48).

Therefore, a perfect "game" for me would be to do everything that God shows me to do today with a perfect heart attitude.





## AGING BACKWARDS

"Age is something that doesn't matter... unless you are a cheese!" - Billie Burke

Denny McLain is a former Major League pitcher who played in the big leagues for ten seasons. He has the distinction of being the last major league pitcher to win more than 30 games in a single season. He won an amazing 31 games for the Detroit Tigers in 1968; a year in which they won the American League pennant.

Denny took part in a scheme that imposed exorbitant interest rates on those who bet on sports and coerced them to pay illegal debts. He was convicted on charges of extortion, racketeering and conspiracy, and served 29 months in Federal prison.

The cocky right-hander was featured in an article in the March 2018 edition of The AARP Bulletin. Then at the age of 74, reflecting on his past 50 years of triumph and tragedy, McClain said, "I've got a whole lot of things to talk to God about. Number one is, you have this damned old-age thing screwed up. We should have been born old people and aged into childhood."

Die first and get this out of the way. Pass the wisdom of age onto a younger version of myself when my vitality is at its peak and end up a

glimmer in my parent's eye. What an intriguing idea! Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way. Time marches on, and all of us yield to the unchanging law of entropy.

My reading vision started to fade in my 40's. In my ignorance, I asked my optometrist what percent of people experience declining eyesight. His response was "100%." I have had one knee replaced. The skin above my knees is getting droopy despite the number of squats and lunges I do. Eventually my hearing will start to fade, and my reaction time will slow down. There is a world of difference though between the intrinsic effects of aging and the preventable effects of aging.

For example, with the proper mental self-care and good fortune, I don't expect my mental facilities to diminish. My mother was as sharp as a tack into her mid-nineties. According to the MacArthur Foundation Study on Successful Aging, "The three key features that predict strong mental function in old age are: regular physical exercise, a strong social support system, and belief in one's ability to handle what life has to offer."

I have aged well. I am now 70 years old, but friends say I look much younger. My biological age is much younger than my chronological age because of my commitment to a healthy lifestyle.

I also have better than average genes. My mother still has more brown hair than grey. I have a smattering of grey in my beard, and I don't plan to touch it up with "Just for Men" hair coloring.

The MacArthur study has shown that genes are less of an important factor than environment and lifestyle are in determining mental and physical health as we age. Some health issues are outside of our control, but we can usually make wise and healthy choices that are within our control.

I am still able to keep up with everyone in the challenging group fitness classes where I am often the oldest person in the class, except for Bill and Peggy the instructor who are ten months older than me. My friend Skip still teaches exercise classes at 77-years-old. Eventually my physical prowess will succumb to the effects of aging, because nobody wins the battle against time.

There was one day when I felt old. I came in to a local gym for an interview for a personal trainer position, and there were a couple of 20 somethings sitting around the desk who cast what appeared to be a disbelieving glance my way. Then it occurred to me, “*THEY THINK I AM OLD.*” “*Old? I’m not old*”, I protested to myself.

There have been other occasions when similar things occurred in my interactions with younger people.

I understand how young people think; after all I was young once too. However, it took me a day or two to shake this feeling of being old.

Maybe they are right though – maybe I am old. I just don’t feel like it yet. Bob Dylan’s lyrics “I was so much older then, I’m younger than that now” in his epic song *My Back Pages* ring true.

Our physical body ages and deteriorates, but our spiritual person is eternal and develops every day. Maybe I feel younger now because I am more conscious of my inner man, the spiritual person within me than my outer man. Eventually, I will have an incorruptible body for eternity.

In the book *Where is God When it Hurts*, author Philip Yancey describes the contrast between the struggle of aging and the hope of eternity:

“Belief in a future home beyond this one should affect more than how we die. It should affect how we live.”

J. Robertson McQuilkin, former president of Columbia Bible College, was once approached by an elderly lady facing the trials of old age. Her body was in decline, her beauty being replaced by thinning hair, wrinkles, and skin discoloration. She could no longer do the things she once could. And she felt herself to be a burden on others. “Robertson, why does God let us get old and weak? Why must I hurt so?” she asked.

After a few minutes McQuilkin replied, “I think God has planned the strength and beauty of youth to be physical. But the strength and beauty of age is spiritual. We gradually lose the strength and beauty that is temporary, so we’ll be sure to concentrate on the strength and beauty which is forever. It makes us more eager to leave behind the temporary, deteriorating part of us and be truly homesick for our eternal home. If

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we stayed young and strong and beautiful, we might never want to leave!”

Aging can be beautiful if we focus on eternity.

## ALL IN

“If a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live.” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

*All In* is a book written by Mark Batterson, lead pastor of National Community Church in Washington, DC.

Batterson states:

- “Quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death.”
- “Stop repeating the past and start creating the future.”
- “Stop playing it safe, and start taking risks.”
- “Expand your horizons. Accumulate experiences.”
- “Burn sinful bridges. Blaze new trails.”

The chicken is committed to our breakfast, but the pig is ALL IN. I have often been more of a chicken than a pig, but now I am giving liberality, going to new places, and doing everything God puts on my heart.



## AM I RUNNING WITH YOU JESUS?

In 1969 I read the book *Are You Running with Me Jesus?* That was my question then, but today I ask myself the question, "Am I running with you Jesus?"

In the final scene of the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, Ryan, as an older man, sees the grave of Captain Miller and says "I have tried to live my life the best that I could. I hope that was enough. I hope that at least in your eyes I have earned what all of you have done for me." Then he says to his wife, "tell me I have led a good life. Tell me I'm a good man."

Her response was, "You are."

May Jesus say the same to me when I see Him.





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## BASEBALL CARDS

A mint condition 1952 Mickey Mantle Topps baseball card recently sold for \$12.6 million.

I had a 1958 Mickey Mantle Topps baseball card (\$202). I also had Hank Aaron (\$80), Yogi Berra (\$51), and Ernie Banks (\$45). I also had about 300 other 1958-1959 baseball cards (~\$3,000).

I had the complete set of 1960 baseball cards including Carl Yastrzemski's rookie card (\$4,677), and the complete set of 1963 baseball cards including Pete Rose's rookie card (\$7,750).

I also had the complete set of 1961 (\$5,040), 1962 (\$3,120), 1964 (\$3,826), and 1965 (\$5,982) and a few 1966 cards (~\$400) baseball cards.

In 1968, I was too cool for baseball cards, so I threw them all down the incinerator. My prefrontal cortex was not fully developed yet.



## BROILED FLOUNDER

I usually visit my mother in New York City around her birthday in April. This year was no exception.

However, this year my wife Cheryl, my daughter Rebecca and my granddaughter Violet came with me. We usually eat one meal at my mother's favorite restaurant Blue Bay. Blue Bay is not the best restaurant in the world; its's not even the best restaurant on Johnson Avenue, but it is the only place nearby where I can order one of my favorite dishes - broiled flounder.

My mother decided to stay at the apartment, so it was just me, my wife, my daughter and my granddaughter going out that afternoon. My wife said, "Let's go to Lieberman's Deli. I would really like to get a corned beef sandwich." "Yeah, I would like to eat at Lieberman's too. The matzoh ball soup is delicious," my daughter chimed in. "No way," I responded, "I want to go to Blue Bay and get broiled flounder." Violet was silent. So off we went to Blue Bay.

The waiter delivered the menus, and there it was in bold letters, "BROILED FLOUNDER". I was salivating already. I ordered first, "I'll take broiled flounder." Everyone else ordered something, then the waiter went to the kitchen. I was primed for my favorite meal, and all was well in the world for me that afternoon. The waiter returned a minute later

and said, “We are out of flounder.” My heart sank as did my appetite. “That’s what you get for only thinking of yourself,” my wife uttered. Then Violet spoke up, “Why does grandpa only think of himself, grandma?”

There I was – speechless – caught in the net of my own folly. The only flounder that got broiled that afternoon was me. I don’t know if I have learned my lesson or not, but I know that the next time I come to New York with this group, I will not be eating broiled flounder.

My opportunity for redemption came very quickly though. We attended a family event 30 miles outside of the city the following day and stopped at a diner for lunch where my wife got her corned beef sandwich, my daughter got her matzoh ball soup, and I got my flounder. But the flounder episode did not end there.

The word “flounder” has taken on a new meaning in our family. For example, when we returned from our trip and loaded our luggage in the car, I barely left enough room for my daughter to fit her carry-on luggage in the trunk. When she got into the car she said, “Dad ‘floundered’ again.” And indeed, I did! To make amends (not flounder) I put on her favorite radio station, rather than mine.

The truth is there are many opportunities to “flounder” or “not flounder” every day in our interactions with others. When you’re not around other people, it’s easy to not be a flounder. Being around other people can bring out the fish in us – the selfish.

## BY THE NUMBERS

I have run races like nobody else in history. Believe me; this is true. I am not referring to my speed, as I was a middle of the pack runner in my prime, and somewhat slower as I aged into my fifty's and beyond. But I had a unique way of selecting which races to run. I raced by the numbers, and ultimately, I completed an 18-year racing journey (1989 – 2007) with the most pristine numbers in racing history.

Here are the numbers! I have completed 60 half-marathons, 30 10Ks, 15 marathons, 10 25Ks, and 5 ten milers. I have completed exactly 70 distinct races in exactly 60 cities, in exactly 10 states.

I had a lot of fun during this process, and I ran races throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Arizona. I also planned annual destination marathons that took me to Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, Appleton, Sacramento, Jacksonville, and Albany, which was my final marathon.

My crazy plan was hard to concoct and harder to accomplish. It sometimes took years of planning for which city to go to and which race to run over an 18-year period. Rain, freezing temperatures, or oppressive heat, I was on the race course whenever and wherever I needed to be. And believe it or not, this was a lot of fun for me, and it motivated me to keep going over those years.

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I wrote an article for Runner's World magazine. My daughter said "If Runner's World doesn't publish it, you should try Psychology Today."

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## CELEBRITY

In 1968 I met Rod Stewart in Greenwich Village and told him, “You sound like Sam Cooke.” “Thank you,” he replied, “that’s one of the nicest things anyone’s ever told me.”

My daughter’s friend Alien Ness came to my mother’s apartment to pick up her television set. We had a nice chat, and he left.

When my daughter returned, she told me about Alien. “He was mentored by the guy who’s named hip hop hip hop.”

“Wow!” I replied.

She continued, “He is a world renown hip hop artist, sponsored by Red Bull and has a number of dance moves named after him. You met him once when you lived in Phoenix. He left a cigarette butt in your hot tub.”

Oh yeah, I remember.





## EASY RYDER

I have had four dogs in my life.

Edgar was the first, named after former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover because he looked (and acted) like him, so Edgar didn't last long.

Valentine was my favorite, whose joy in life was to sniff and mark her territory. I counted 47 times on one walk.

We got Bella in Phoenix.

Recently my wife prayed that she would get a dog under unusual circumstances. This happened when a friend gave us Ryder, a four-month-old Pomeranian.

Ryder bugged me at first because he yapped and yapped and chewed up my shoelaces, but he grew on me because he is easy to love.

Today he did his business on my bedroom carpet, so he is back in my doghouse.



## FAIR FOOD

I eat healthy, and I am not exaggerating! I live largely on a plant-based diet. I am 70 years old; I weigh around 160 pounds, and my percentage of body fat is around 20%.

But today, I went to the Minnesota State Fair, and I consumed more calories than I normally eat in a week, and more saturated fats than I eat in a month.

Fries, cheese curds, A malted, and even a bite of fried alligator. No eating rules apply at the Minnesota State Fair.

I skipped the Pronto Pups and Sweet Martha's Cookies because that would be going too far, even at the Minnesota State Fair.

On the way out I ate some corn on the cob. At least it was a plant!



## FATHER'S DAY

I grew up in New York City as the oldest of three siblings: there was me, my brother Bruce, and my sister Esther. I left New York in 1970, moved to Minnesota in 1971, married my wife Cheryl in 1973, and had two daughters, Anna in 1975 and Rebecca in 1976.

We moved to New York in 1978, which was an opportunity for my parents to spend time with their granddaughters. In 1979, I completed computer programming training, and picked up skills that carried me vocationally for the next 38 years.

While in New York, I often visited my grandmother Celia on Long Island. One day Celia mentioned to me that my father had been married before and had a son. This sent my head spinning. I was 28 years old, and I never heard this before. When my grandmother realized that I didn't know about this, she asked me not to say anything to my parents. I obeyed her wishes, but I began to pray about this.

My father was part of General Patton's 45th Division of the U. S. Army that liberated the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps during World War II. This was a tragic time in his life. I asked him about his experience at Dachau a few times, but he never liked to talk about it. This coupled with a painful divorce weighed heavily upon him. So,

when he met my mother in 1947, this was his opportunity to begin a new life.

In November, 1980, I invited my parents to our house for Thanksgiving. My mother pulled me aside and told me it had been weighing on her heart and she had to tell me I had a brother in Long Island and his name was Irwin. The next day I looked him up in the phone book and wrote a letter to introduce myself.

Several days later I received a phone call from Irwin. We had a warm exchange and arranged a time to get together. I met him a few days later, and we had a great time together. I also met his wife and two children. He was seven years older than me, and he had not seen his father in 30 years.

I told my parents about our meeting and they were delighted. My father soon contacted Irwin, and they got together. I was at my parent's apartment when my father returned from their first meeting. All I can say is that he went straight into his bedroom and wept like a baby.

My father and Irwin were inseparable for the next 15 years before my father's passing in 1995. There was an area in my father's heart that was healed in 1981 and in his son Irwin's as well. It was a tremendous blessing to be part of this reconciliation between my father and his son.

When I moved back to Minnesota I lost money on the sale of my house, but I gained a career and a brother.

## FINISHING SCHOOL

Much to my parent's chagrin, I dropped out of college at 17.

I got married at 21, and had two daughters by the time I reached the ripe old age of 24.

I loved learning, but I was too busy during this period of my life to go back to college.

Finally, as my children grew, I went back to college as a highly motivated adult learner. I earned my B.A. degree in 1992 at the age of 39, took a year off, then took on grad school with a vengeance and earned my M.A. three years later.

However, my real finishing school was working at Lakewinds Food Co-op in Chanhassen as a cashier. Here is where I learned how to be a better servant.





## HALF MARATHON MAN

Adlai Stevenson was a two-time Democratic presidential nominee. He lost the 1952 and 1956 presidential elections to Dwight Eisenhower. He mounted a third attempt in 1960 but lost to the young and charismatic John F. Kennedy, who easily won the Democratic nomination, and went on to win the presidential election that year.

Someone once asked Stevenson how it felt to lose, and he said “I was reminded of a story that a fellow townsman Abraham Lincoln used to tell. When asked how he felt after losing an election, he responded ‘He felt like a little boy who had stubbed his toe in the dark. He said that he was too old to cry, but it hurt too much to laugh.’”

The second half of a marathon starts at mile 20. I have tried many times to break the four-hour barrier in the marathon, but each time I suffered gastro-intestinal problems and cramping and hit the wall around mile 20.

There were 15 attempts between 1989 and 1999. There were five attempts at the Twin Cities Marathon. There were plane trips to Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, Jacksonville, Sacramento, and New York, and return trips with mixed feelings of accomplishment and disappointment.

Only one half of one percent of the U.S. population has completed a marathon, and I have completed 15 of them. Those who followed my journey would often say to me, “at least you finished.” This was no consolation to me.

In fifth grade, my friend Mark Schlosberg, the wisest guy in the class, said to me, “Michael, you are not the strongest or the fastest, but you have the most endurance.” Those words have had prophetic significance to me.

I was a good half-marathoner, and usually broke two hours in my early years of running. I ran my best half in Mora, MN in 1990 on a hilly course in 1:45. Based on those results, I should have broken four hours in the marathon that year.

Adlai Stevenson never attained the presidency, but he served as Governor of Illinois and U.S. Secretary to the United Nations.

Half marathons may not be as glamorous as full marathons, and I have completed 60 of them, so I guess being a half marathon man is pretty good too.

## HASSAN

After cleaning my mother's apartment, my brother gave my daughter and me \$50 for dinner. My daughter met with a friend that evening, so I went to Lieberman's Deli alone.

My waiter Hassan took my order - a roast beef and brisket sandwich that you could get lock-jaw biting into. Since it was slow that evening, Hassan hung out at my table, and we had a very engaging conversation.

Hassan grew up in a small close-knit Kurdish village in Southern Turkey where they grew potatoes and herded sheep. Hassan and his wife immigrated to American more than 30 years ago to seek a better life.

I paid the meal bill, which came to \$60.32, left a \$50 tip on the table, and quietly walked out.



## HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

I grew up in a predominantly Jewish area of New York City where Chanukah menorahs outnumbered Christmas trees.

Chanukah commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabees. It's an eight-day celebration of the miracle of one day's supply of sacred oil lasting eight days.

After I became a believer in the Messiah, I was amazed to discover the Jewish aspects of Christmas. It takes place in the Jewish city Bethlehem, as foretold by the Jewish prophet Micah, featuring devout Jews Mary and Joseph.

After I married Cheryl in 1973, I came to appreciate the family aspects of Christmas. There was something magical about the Christmas Eve meal with our children gathered in anticipation of opening gifts. Year after year we gathered at Cheryl's parents Clem and Kay's house in Minnetonka with her brother Steve (and later, his wife Lisa and their three children Jenny, Tyler and Spencer), her sister Linda, our daughters Anna and Rebecca, and Grandpa George while he was living.

We were living in New York in 1978, so we invited friends who were away from family to our home for Christmas. We were like Mary and Joseph

who were also travelers away from their family during that first Christmas.

In 1979 I started working for the Grumman Corporation. Grumman closed its facilities from Christmas to New Year's Day, so I was off work for the next ten days, and we had no particular plans for Christmas that year.

We came home from church on Sunday, December 23 and I asked Cheryl, "What are we going to do for Christmas?" Half jesting, she said, "Let's drive to Minnesota. If we leave now, we can be at my parent's house for dinner on Christmas Eve."

This crazy idea gathered steam quickly, so 30 minutes later our car was packed with our two young daughters and their wrapped Christmas presents bound for the 24-hour trek to Minnesota.

We had an unexpected meeting with a deer in Western Pennsylvania that took out the right high beam headlight of our Toyota Corona, but the only other casualties of our trip were our daughter's Baby Feel So Real dolls that froze solid in the trunk. Our journey was filled with anticipation and excitement about surprising Cheryl's family and being with them at Christmas after a year's absence.

Cheryl's mother called us shortly before we left, but we didn't divulge our plans to her. Cheryl finally called her mother in Indiana and told her that we were on our way to their house. At first, Kay didn't believe Cheryl, but after it sunk in, she bought more groceries and gifts. This was a special Christmas and our most memorable as a family.

These 20 years of family gatherings came to an abrupt end after my mother-in-law passed away in 1993, and my father-in-law two years later. We eventually established new family traditions, but we all remember that special unplanned Christmas gathering in 1979 when everybody was with us.

## JARS OF OIL

The Prophet Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don’t ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars ...

She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.”

But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing (2 Kings 4:3-7).

I brought a note pad with me on my recent trip to New York, and filled up 43 pages of story ideas. I wish I had brought two. The oil was flowing.





## KOSSOW

My maternal grandparents Abraham and Esther were born in Kossow, a small shtetl (village) outside of Warsaw, Poland. They were childhood sweethearts. The Jewish people in Poland faced repeated pogroms (persecution) inflicted by the Russians causing many of them to emigrate to the United States after World War I. Those who left were fortunate. Those who remained in Kossow were exterminated in the Holocaust a generation later.

A friend of Abraham's visited Kossow after World War II and told him that you can't even tell that civilization ever existed there.

Hitler tried to wipe out all the Jews in Europe, but he didn't succeed. I am living proof that the descendants of Kossow are still alive today. And so are my two daughters and granddaughter.



## LEAVING THE CARPENTER'S SHOP

Jesus worked full-time in his father Joseph's carpenter shop until he was thirty years old, and then he began his public ministry.

I worked in various capacities in business, health and fitness until I was seventy years old, and then I went into full-time ministry.

“So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant” (1 Kings 19:21).

I followed God's calling and as an act of faith, I gave away my entire final month's paycheck.

My last day in the workforce also became my first day of full-time ministry.



## LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

My five-year-old granddaughter went trick-or-treating with two of her closest friends, one of whom was three years old. When she got home, she said that the three-year-old was getting all the attention and extra candy because she is only three, and everyone thinks little kids are cuter than big kids. She wanted to write to the President to change this way of thinking because it is not right, so here is the letter that she dictated to my wife Cheryl:

**Dear President Trump,**

I think it would be good if the big kids could be cute too and not just the little ones. Tell this on every show. We want both to be the same amount, the big kids AND the little kids.

**Violet**



## MAYOR OF THE GYM

Alan Olson was governor of North Dakota from 1981 to 1985. I met him at a caucus in Eden Prairie. Although he didn't have or seek jurisdictional authority there, he still carried weight.

I retired as a project manager in 2017 and completed a 40-week training program to become a certified personal trainer. Toward the end of the program, as we were about to begin our internships, our instructor told us, "Be bold. Be confident. Act like you are the mayor of the gym."

I was very busy training older adults for two years, then Covid hit, and business slowed dramatically during the next two years.

I served my clients well for four years, then moved on, but I still carry weight in the gym.





## MEET THE BEATLES

73 million people met the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show on February 9, 1964.

It was A DAY IN THE LIFE, a day IN MY LIFE that even a LITTLE CHILD, MEAN MR. MUSTARD and ROCKY RACCOON in the YELLOW SUBMARINE remember like YESTERDAY.

YOUR MOTHER SHOULD KNOW as well as ELEANOR RIGBY, SEXY SADIE and LOVELY RITA, the PAPERBACK WRITER, BECAUSE EVERY LITTLE THING went HELTER SKELTER.

NOBODY I KNOW even LADY MADONNA from SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND doubted that SOMETHING did COME TOGETHER. THIS BOY sure knew.

HEY JUDE, DO YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET? IF I FELL and IF I EVER NEEDED SOMEONE WHEN I'M '84', I'll get by WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS.

THE END



## MOTHERLESS

Since I am motherless, I took my grandmother Anna to my high school graduation which was held at Carnegie Hall. After the graduates, guests, and parents had taken their places, my eyes wandered to the second balcony, where an old woman with her soft gray hair sat. She was dressed in black which was almost somber. Her eyes were brimming with tears. In spite of this her eyes were glad. Her face was bright with an almost youthful sparkle.

Although she did not understand all that was being said because English is not her native tongue, she was obviously happy - happy because I was elated beyond the point of reality.

(Written by Frieda Bronz in 1941 upon graduating from Walton H.S. in the Bronx)



## MY BAR MITZVAH

I hated going to Hebrew school. It was a huge sacrifice for me to miss an afternoon of stickball with my friends in the P.S. 82 school yard and attend another class after I had just completed a full day of 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

My parents forced me to learn some Hebrew, read Bible stories and learn about the culture and traditions of my people. My parents were mean.

On January 30<sup>th</sup> 1965 I read my haftorah portion at the Hebrew Institute of University Heights. Afterwards, I dropped out of the synagogue. I only went there when my parents forced me to go with them to The High Holy Day services at Riverdale Temple, where my mother worked as a secretary.

Oh, to be 13 again!



**MY LAST TIME DOWN SUMMIT**

Running my race year after year  
Brought me fulfillment, fitness and cheer.  
Up at daybreak and right out the door,  
Putting in miles while many still snore.  
Step after step, millions by now;  
A smile on my face and sweat on my brow.  
Training through summer, enduring the heat;  
Loving the discipline and structure. So sweet!  
Passing the tree-lined streets of St. Paul;  
Ten miles not twenty-six, so I won't hit the wall.  
No pressure, no timing in a virtual race;  
No need to compete or to push the pace.  
No crowds to applaud as I approach the finish line;  
Only my family's warm embrace. So sublime!

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Last time down Summit Avenue, State Capital's in view;  
After thirty-one years of racing, I bid you adieu.



## NOT MY WILL

I don't give up my workouts without a fight; especially my 9:30am Saturday cycle class.

### 8:00am Saturday:

My daughter calls. "I need you to do me a favor."

"What's that honey?" , I cheerfully respond.

"My allergies are acting up, so I want you to take Violet to the writing workshop today."

"What time is the workshop?"

"10:00 a.m."

"I have my cycle class at 9:30, can't mom take her?"

"I want you to take her."

"Ahem ahem Okay."

### 10:00am Saturday:

After a great morning of writing and taking care of things at home, I drive Violet to the workshop in Minneapolis.

MICHAEL NATT

**3:00pm Saturday:**

I go for a three mile walk on a beautiful fall day.

Exercising was great.

Seeing my granddaughter create poetry was priceless.

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**NOW DANCE!**

There are short-cuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them.” -  
Vicki Baum

The other night, my wife, Cheryl and I were hanging out in our living room with our five-year-old granddaughter Violet. Cheryl and I were acting a bit snitty toward each other. Most of our conflict over the years has been related to issues of neatness and order in our house.

Cheryl and I live on the opposite ends of the neatness spectrum like Felix and Oscar from *The Odd Couple*. However, this and other dissimilarities have not prevented us from living harmoniously together for 45 years.

Violet, sensing the tension between us, said,

“We need to have a meeting.

It’s about marriage.

Stand up.

Face each other.

Hold hands.

Now dance!”



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## OLE MISS

On October 1 1962, despite the resistance of Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett and the solid white establishment, James Meredith became the first African-American student to attend the all-white University of Mississippi in its 116-year-old history. This event became one of the flashpoints in the Civil Rights Movement.

There were many powerful forces in place, dating back to slavery, that limited options for black people in the segregated Deep South. Mississippi was the last bastion of the confederacy in 1962, and Ole Miss was its Fort Fisher. Even the name 'Ole Miss' was a term slaves used to refer to the wife of a plantation owner.

The hatred leveled against Meredith for defying the institution of white supremacy was unimaginable. Meredith stated: "We are engaged in a bitter war for the equality of our citizens. The enemy is determined, resourceful, and unprincipled. There are no rules of war for which he has respect."

He writes in his memoir, "My greatest single reason to act is my son. He is only one year old, and yet I have already spent countless sleepless nights, trying to answer this question of my conscience – when he grows up and sees all of the injustices and learns the illogical justifications

MICHAEL NATT

upon which they are built, he will ask me, what have you done to correct these conditions? What will I give as an answer?”

Today 23% of the student population at Ole Miss are minorities, and in 2006 Ole Miss erected a statute in his honor.

## ONE MARSHMALLOW OR TWO

In 1972 Stanford University conducted a study of children ages 4-6 years old. Each child was given one marshmallow and told that if they would not eat it, they would get a second marshmallow. Children who ate their marshmallow immediately would get no more.

The objective was to see how delayed gratification affected the long-term academic achievement of the children. 216 children were tracked from nursery school through high school graduation. The researchers found the children who received two marshmallows later scored an average of 210 points higher on SAT's, were more socially competent, self-confident, showed greater initiative, and handled pressure more effectively.

Therefore, goal directed, self-imposed delayed gratification is a powerful predictor of future success in any endeavor.

I'll hold on to my marshmallow.





## PAY ATTENTION!

“Grandpa, you need to pay attention more.” These words from Violet got my attention! I admit, my head is in the clouds sometimes, and I only listen to and retain a fraction of what people say.

So, what is attention?

Attention refers to goal-oriented focus, filtering irrelevant stimuli, and selecting important information. There are four components of attention:

1. Selective Attention is the ability to focus despite distractions.
2. Divided Attention is managing multiple streams of information.
3. Attention Switching is the ability to switch from one task to another.
4. Sustained Attention is maintaining a response persistence and continuous effort over extended periods of time.

Most of all, I want to listen to and understand everything that is going on in my granddaughter's life.



## 36 YEARS OF INJUSTICE

After spending 36 years incarcerated for a murder that they didn't commit, three African American men were exonerated and released from prison. Alfred Chestnut, Ransom Watkins and Andrew Stewart were 16-year-old boys when they were arrested on Thanksgiving Day in 1983, charged with murder, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison.

How do you reconcile such injustice? You can't. You can only forgive and live.

Standing next to the men, now in their 50's, Baltimore State Attorney Marilyn Mosby apologized for the miscarriage of justice.

Upon their release, the men hugged their families and loved ones and began their new lives. "I'm going to spend Thanksgiving with my mama," Stewart said. "And live a normal life. I got to learn how to live right now."



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## THE EMPTY APARTMENT

The empty apartment is all that remains,  
Full of memories of joy and of pains.  
As a boy, I was always wild about sports,  
As a teenager, it changed to rock n' roll, of course.  
Lived in Riverdale till I graduated high school,  
Hung out at The Monument and thought I was cool.  
Convertible couch in the living room is gone,  
Where Anna slept before she was one.  
Visited mom when she turned 90 years,  
Violet at 90 days brought her to tears.  
Five-mile walks by the Hudson, no more,  
But left the mezuzah on the door.  
My Mother's school papers bound in a book,  
Memories of my father, boy could he cook!

MICHAEL NATT

Two full trucks of 1-800-got-junk,  
And packed the treasures into my trunk.

## THE GUY IN THE SAUNA

Johnny is a retired sports management executive, and I am a retired corporate project manager. We are about the same age. I met him in the sauna at the gym where we work out, and we've become locker room buddies.

We often talk about common interests like health, and finances.

Johnny says, "We need to listen to the health and financial professionals. I pay a lot for their advice, but we make the final decision. Some people do everything that they say. I appreciate their insights, but it's kind of like outsourcing your brain."

Johnny goes on, "You also need to take my advice with a grain of salt, eat the chicken and discard the bones, for I am only a guy in the sauna."





## THE INVISIBLE SHREDDER

I have an invisible shredder that I take with me wherever I go. It has saved me countless times from uttering foolish words, making poor decisions, and advancing my own agenda.

Here's how it works. When a friend or colleague says something that rubs me the wrong way, I take my defensive words and pour them down the shredder.

When I realize that my plans are not God's plans, I feed boxes of items into the shredder.

The shredder is particularly helpful at meetings, because it fits perfectly under the table. I always come prepared with agenda items, but as the meeting progresses, I feed many of my files into the shredder.

I don't know where the shredded stuff goes, but I'm glad it's gone.



## THE MINORITY VOICE

My wife received a notice to report for jury duty. This brought back some memories – very painful ones.

I served on a jury in 1974 that considered the case of a woman with cerebral palsy who was allegedly raped multiple times by a worker at her care facility. The victim was unable to speak for herself, so the prosecutor spoke on her behalf.

In the deliberation room only two of us believed that the defendant was guilty, a young lady and me. After a brief discussion, and with little resistance or debate, the young lady and I acquiesced to the majority and we returned a unanimous verdict of not guilty within 45 minutes.

Afterwards we all went back to our normal lives, except the victim.



## THE PHYSICAL EXPLOITS OF INSECTS

During my down time from digging trails on the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness in Montana, I read the book, *The Evidential Power of Beauty* by Thomas Dubay.

I learned that the physical exploits of insects dim some of the athletic accomplishments of world-class sports figures.

An ant can lift 50 times its weight, and a bee can draw a load, on small wheels, 300 times its weight. A flea can jump 350 times its own length, and an Oriental rat flea can jump 600 times an hour for three days without stopping. A tiny midge can beat its wings 133,000 times a minute. A flea jumps over a foot, which is 130 times its own height, and subjects itself to a force of 200 gravities.

Amazing!



## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

I learned about the plight of Iranian refugees on my recent trip to Germany.

Branded by the government as an activist, Nima took his 7-year-old daughter and fled his country, walking 3000 miles to freedom. Likewise, Mohamed left friends and family, passing through eight countries to reach freedom.

They met each other at a refugee camp, and I met them at a Farsi Welcome Café in Hamburg. Nima spoke fluent English, so he brokered our three-way conversation. Mohamed showed me the bullet wound in his abdomen, and the bullet still lodged in his forearm.

I prayed with Nima for a quick and safe reunion with his wife, and I asked God to bless them in their new homeland. Mohamed, a self-described agnostic, also requested prayer.





## THE PRISONER

Idi Amin once arrested a man for speeding on a Ugandan highway. The dictator asked the motorist, “Why are you in such a hurry, we have such a beautiful country?”

I wanted to become an adult, and I became an adult.

I wanted my children to grow up, and they grew up.

I wanted to retire at 65, and I retired at 65.

I sped through life, and missed a lot of scenery along the way. My best friend John once asked me, “What are you going to do with all the extra time that you save?”

Now that I am older, I am learning to savor each second, and travel at a much slower pace. There is beauty in every inch of the journey.



## THE RED MAVERICK

*I was too scared to ask her out.*

I flew to New York that fall to see my parents and to pick up a car. I took a bus up to Peekskill to see my uncle Nat who drove me to the sheriff's house. The sheriff was an imposing figure with a huge gun fastened to his side. I felt like canceling the deal on the spot, and taking a bus back to Minnesota.

Nat told me not to worry, this is legit, so I handed him the check and became the proud owner of a Red Maverick.

When I got home, I asked Cheryl to take a look at the ripped upholstery to see if she could repair it, and I asked her out.



## THE SUMMERS OF '69 AND '19

Those were the best days of my life - Bryan Adams

These are the best days of my life – Me

I attended the original Woodstock Music and Art Fair in 1969, and I attended the 50-year reunion in 2019.

Then I had more hair; now I have more wisdom.

Then I was looking for the purpose of life; now I have the prize of life.  
Then I had my whole life ahead of me; now I have my granddaughter's life ahead of me.

I still have my health, and I have more wealth. My family has expanded, but not my waistline. The music has changed, and so have I. I will my take life now at 67 over the life I had then at 17.



## TRIBUTE TO FLOYD

Gentle Giant

Traveled the world

Bringing good news

Sharing His Word

Always gracious

A smile on his face

Drawing you in

With his warm embrace

On the streets of Amsterdam

Working on the Ark

Reaching drug addicts and hippies

Shining light where it's dark

Kabul Afghanistan

KC and Cape Town too  
A passion for the nations  
Reaching multitudes and the few  
  
Leader of leaders  
Servant to all  
Helping the youth  
Discover their call  
  
Sharing the message  
Doing his part  
Seeking to reveal  
The Father's heart  
  
Gracious in suffering  
A wound that wouldn't mend  
A warriors last battle  
Faithful to the end  
  
Well done said the Father  
You've finished your course  
Pain and suffering are over  
Enter now to your eternal reward

*(Floyd McClung 1945 – 2021)*



## TUESDAY PILATES CLASS

I love my Tuesday Pilates class. Our instructor Caroline is very knowledgeable about kinesiology and leads us very creatively and caringly through a series of movements designed to strengthen EVERY core muscle, and a few others besides.

I also get to see my friends like Leigh whom I have known for 30 years, Carol whom I have seen around for 20 years, and Bill, the other regular guy, who I met last year. It is always a treat for us to see other men join us.

Pilates, unlike yoga, is not associated with any religious practices. However, I do meditate in class. A few weeks ago, I was thinking about Prince's song, *The Most Beautiful Girl in The World*.

That would be my wife, Cheryl.



## WATERS OF THE SOUL

Teresa of Avila describes the changing relationship between our efforts and God's grace as we grow in intimacy with Him. She uses water as an analogy of God's grace, and describes four ways in which the garden of our soul is watered by the Holy Spirit:

1. We draw water up from a well using a bucket. This entails a great deal of human effort.
2. We crank a water wheel for water to run through an aqueduct. This involves less exertion and yields more water.
3. Water enters our garden from a river or stream. This requires less effort.
4. The Lord Himself waters our garden with a gentle and abundant rain. This requires no human effort.

As human effort decreases, divine empowerment increases.



## WHAT MAKES A GOOD LIFE

Psychiatrist Robert Waldinger, current Director of the 75-year-old Harvard Study of Adult Development, shared three important lessons learned from the study as well as some practical, old-as-the-hills wisdom on how to build a happier, healthier, and fulfilling long life.

1. Social connections are good for us, and loneliness kills.
2. It's not the number of friends you have or whether you're in a committed relationship or not, but it's the quality of your close relationships that matters.
3. Good relationships don't just protect our bodies, they protect our brains.

Over the 75 years, the study has shown that the people who fared the best were the people who leaned into relationships, with family, with friends, with community.

The good life is built with good relationships.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KkKuTCFvzI&t=40s>)



## YOGI BERRA DAY

Hall of Famer Yogi Berra was a legendary Yankee player and manager. Owner George Steinbrenner unceremoniously fired him after just 16 games in 1985 after telling Yogi that he would manage the team all season. Yogi said he would not come back to the Stadium as long as Steinbrenner ran the team.

Eventually, Steinbrenner went to Yogi's home to apologize for mishandling his firing. "I know I made a mistake by not letting you go in person. It was the worst mistake I ever made in baseball." "I made a lot of mistakes too," Berra responded. Then they hugged and shook hands.

Yogi ended his 14-year estrangement from the Yankees on July 18, 1999 when he was honored with "Yogi Berra Day" at Yankee Stadium.





PART II

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**GOD SPEAKS IN 125  
WORDS**

WORDS FROM THE LORD



## A LIZARD IN THE PALACE

*A lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palace. (Proverbs 30:28)*

Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

Bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." (2 Kings 5:1-3)

The young girl was in a strategic place to influence the king of Aram. God can put you in a strategic place to make a difference in the lives of influential people.



## ABRAM'S CALL

*Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. (Genesis 12:1)*

Abram was in a comfortable place in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization. He was surrounded by family and content when God called him to embark on a long journey.

We are pilgrims passing through this life. There are times and seasons where God calls us, like Abram, to go from our country into His country. (Genesis 12:1) How will we respond?

The call is clear, but the journey ahead and the destination isn't always clear. Our destination is the city that God has architected and built for us. (Hebrews 11:10)

If we respond to His call, venture out and continue in our journey of faith, He will fulfill the unique calling that He has destined for us from the foundation of the world. (Jeremiah 1:5)



## AN ENLARGED HEART

*I shall run the way of Your commandments, For You will enlarge my heart.  
(Psalm 119:32)*

Secretariat was best known for winning horse racing's Triple Crown in 1973—the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes. Secretariat was the first horse to accomplish that feat in twenty-five years and one of only twelve horses ever to do so.

The average thoroughbred's heart weighs about 8.5 lbs. When Secretariat was euthanized, the doctor performing the autopsy discovered that Secretariat's heart weighed nearly three times that number!

In the Bible the heart is considered the seat of our life and strength, consisting of our mind, soul, and entire emotional nature.

What is the average size of a Christian's "heart"? How much more could we accomplish if we give our hearts to Jesus and let Him fill our hearts with His love.





## AT 17

*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. (1 Corinthians 13:11)*

“I learned the truth at seventeen.” (Janis Ian)

I turned 71 today, but I decided to reverse the digits, turn back the hands of time, and imagine what I would do differently if I were 17 again.

1. I'd be more teachable.

I would listen more carefully to my parents and teachers and maybe avoid some bumps and bruises along the way.

2. I'd be more intentional.

I would apply myself to learning the skills I needed for the long run so that I could make a greater impact on the world.

3. I'd be more grateful.

I would tell my father how grateful I am for providing a stable home and taking care of me.

No regrets though, God has been good to me.



---

**BREAKDOWN**

*I waited patiently for the LORD;  
he turned to me and heard my cry.  
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;  
he set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.  
He put a new song in my mouth,  
a hymn of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear the LORD  
and put their trust in him. (Psalm 40:1-3)*

Yup, I've had a breakdown; in fact, I have had two. The causal factors were similar: conflict, isolation, fear and anxiety leading to extreme insomnia.

Recording artist and author Sheila Walsh writes in her book *Loved Back to Life: How I Found the Courage to Live Free* how she walked away from co-hosting a television show and checked herself into a mental hospital for a month. She writes, "Lord, please hold me. I'm falling into a dark well. I feel as if I am disappearing a little more every day. I am so angry inside that I am afraid of myself. I feel so alone." But she made her way back to health.

MICHAEL NATT

So did I, and beyond anything that I have ever experienced before.

---

## CHOSEN PEOPLE

*I have chosen you. (Isaiah 41:9)*

In the book *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok, Rabbi Isaac Saunders puts his gifted son Danny through a lengthy silent treatment to teach him compassion.

In the Book of Genesis, we read about Joseph, a young man with a prophetic gift and leadership calling who was a little conceited, so God brought him through a 13-year painful training program to prepare him for his calling.

A more compassionate Danny chooses a career in psychology rather than the rabbinical.

Joseph learns his lessons well and is exalted to second in command in Egypt as a result of his prophetic insight. He saves a nation from starvation, brings his family to Egypt where God preserves them and prepares them 430 years to be His chosen people.



## DIOTREPHEs

*I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. (3 John 1:9)*

*Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all. (Mark 9:35)*

Leadership is a gift, and not everyone has this gift. People have different gifts. The Apostle Paul lists seven in his letter to the Romans: prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, and mercy.

There are different styles of leadership:

- Democratic Leadership
- Autocratic Leadership
- Laissez-faire Leadership
- Strategic Leadership
- Transformational Leadership
- Transactional Leadership
- Coach-Style Leadership
- Bureaucratic Leadership

Leadership is good; it is necessary, and it is from God.

There are different realms of leadership; some lead people, some lead projects and others are knowledge leaders based on their areas of expertise.

There are different capacities of leadership; some lead tens, some lead hundreds, and some lead thousands. Moses led a congregation of two million people, and he was the humblest person on the face of the earth.



## DIVINE DISCONTENT AND HOLY DISSATISFACTION

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12,14)*

“If we leave out divine and holy, we are left with discontent and dissatisfaction. If we add divine and holy, we have the necessary ingredients to pursue our upward calling.”

“A divine discontent and holy dissatisfaction should be a cry from our hearts for something more. It’s aspiring and desiring more of God and less of us in our lives.”

It’s an exchange of what consumes our hearts and desires; less of our own desires, and more of His. We have to give up one to have the capacity to receive the other. It is a moment-by-moment decision of what we give our hearts to: our own selfish desires, or His all-consuming love for us and others. We must decrease, so that He can increase.

(Based on a message by Shelly and June Volk on *For Zion’s Sake* broadcast).



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## EPAPHRAS

*You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf. (Colossians 1:7)*

Epaphras was relatively unknown compared to Paul, but he was extremely important, especially to the people in Colossae. What we know about him is found in Paul's letter to the Colossians:

- He was “one of them” meaning he was from Colossae, and had friends and relatives there.
- He brought the gospel to them, probably having been converted in Laodicea.
- He was a faithful minister.
- He was a dear friend.
- He continued to wrestle for them in prayer.
- He also continued to work hard for them.

So, Epaphras was a relatively unknown believer related to the church in Colossae, which was actually a small church in a small town. We can all relate to Epaphras in many ways because that's what most of us are like.

(Based on a message by Jim McCracken)



## EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY ABOVE

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us. (Ephesians 3:20 NKJV)*

*No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.  
(Psalm 84:11)*

After the Lord had given David rest from all his enemies, wanted to build a permanent house for the God of Israel. Instead, God said that He would build David a permanent house and establish an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.

The Seven Primary features of the Davidic Covenant are:

1. David's line would have a kingdom
2. The covenant would establish a royal dynasty
3. The covenant would be unlimited and everlasting
4. Jerusalem would be the Spiritual center of Israel
5. The temple was the visible sign of the covenant
6. Wisdom would be the new law of the covenant
7. The King of Israel would be the son of God

MICHAEL NATT

So, David sat down before the Lord, and worshipped Him.

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## FIVE EXPRESSIONS OF LEADERSHIP

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)*

A man had an issue, so he went to an apostle for counsel, and the apostle said, “You need to be under authority in a local church.”

Then he went to a prophet, and the prophet told him, “I think you need to learn to hear God’s voice better.”

Then the evangelist said, “Brother, do you know Jesus?”

Then the pastor said, “You just need to be loved and taken care of in a local church.”

Then the teacher said, “You need more of the Word of God in your life.”

Which one was right? ALL FIVE. In order to grow, we need all of the gifted leaders God sets in the church. We live by EVERY Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.





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## GYM RAT

*To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. (Titus 1:15)*

*I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman. (Job 31:1)*

I admit that I am a gym rat. I have worked for three gyms, and I have been part of one for 35 years. The first time I stepped into a gym, it was a sensory overload. Eventually, I became subject to the doctor effect.

Does a doctor get turned on by a woman's beauty? Maybe, but he better not act inappropriately, otherwise it's over for him (think Larry Nasser).

You never become immune to temptation, but you can guard against it by avoiding compromising situations, keeping your heart pure, and listening to people who have your back.

I live by the rule: "One strike and you're out", so I never want to lose the privilege of being a gym rat by acting like one.



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## HIDDEN OR HIDING

*He has hidden himself among the supplies. (1 Samuel 10:22)*  
*He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle. (Psalm 27:5)*

Saul hid out of fear; The Lord hid David to protect him.

King Saul governed out of fear, especially his fear of his son-in-law David whom he pursued for 13 years attempting to kill him.

David was destined to inherit Saul's throne. He was a worshipper of God, and put his full trust in Him.

Where can I go from your Spirit?

*Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:7-10)*



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## HITLER'S MOTHER

*Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.  
(Hebrews 12:15 NKJV)*

On January 14, 1907, Hitler's mother saw her family doctor about a pain in her chest. Edward Bloch, who was Jewish, examined her and found she had advanced breast cancer.

It is said that Klara Hitler was the only person that Adolph Hitler ever genuinely loved. She died on December 21. Adolf was devastated. When Dr. Bloch arrived later to sign the death certificate, he said that he had never seen anyone so overcome with grief as Adolf Hitler at the loss of his mother.

I wonder if something took root that day which grew into an irrational and demonic hatred for Jews resulting in the extermination of six million, including 1.5 million children.

Be careful what you allow to take root in your heart.



## HOW TO ROW CORRECTLY

*A wise man will hear and increase learning. (Proverbs 1:5)*

I love the rowing machine because it is a great strengthening exercise for your legs and back, and it provides a great cardio workout.

I have had excellent training in kinesiology, personal training and exercise techniques, and I even attended a training session with a semi-professional rower.

As I was rowing at the gym, Fred came by and said to me, “Can I show you something?”

“Sure”, I replied.

Fred went on to explain that I should use a lighter tension on the pulley, push and pull my torso at the proper angles (11:00 and 1:00), and row high and return low.

“Wow, thanks”, I replied.

I listened carefully and applied his advice because I want to strengthen my back rather than blow it out.





## IF WE BUILD IT, HE WILL COME

*They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." (Hebrews 8:5)*

*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:34)*

God gave to Moses the blueprint for building the Tabernacle of God. Everything was built according to this pattern: the dimension of the structure, the materials used for each part, and every item which was included in the structure.

After the Tabernacle was completed, the glory of God filled it, but the Spirit of God did not permit Moses to enter.

Why? Because the High Priest had not yet entered the Holy of Holies to offer the blood of atonement on the altar to sanctify it.

MICHAEL NATT

The Tabernacle of Moses is a pattern of the Tabernacle in heaven. Our High Priest Jesus offered His own blood upon the altar in heaven as the required sacrifice to sanctify us so that we could enter God's presence.

## IMPATIENCE

*By your patience possess your souls. (Luke 21:19 NKJV)*

Abraham was impatient, so he conceived a son through the bondservant Hagar. God gave Abraham a miraculous son through Sarah thirteen years later.

The Israelites were impatient for Moses to come down from the Mount Sinai, so Aaron built them a golden calf to worship. Moses delivered the Law of God to the nation of Israel 40 days later.

Saul was impatient to wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice which led to his gradual fall from the throne. Samuel came minutes later to rebuke Saul and set God's standard before the army of Israel.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit; impatience is a work of the fallen nature.

Impatience is a manifestation of our stubborn will; patience is yielding to God's perfect will.



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## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

*“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen.” (Isaiah 43:10)*

*Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray. (Proverbs 10:17)*

Charles Tase Russell viewed himself as the “mouthpiece” of God for the Watch Tower Society, the administrative arm of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He predicted the end of the world would come in 1878, and in 1881, and in 1914, and in 1918, and in 1925. As each year passed, he concocted more elaborate schemes for why his predictions failed.

\*I stood before a group of prophetic ministers and asked them, “How many of you are Jehovah’s Witnesses?”

None stood.

Then I asked again, “How many have made predictive prophecies that have not come to pass, and have stubbornly refused to admit they were wrong.”

A few stood up.

MICHAEL NATT

May we be eager to humble ourselves before the Lord and receive His grace to admit our mistakes.

(\* This is a fictitious story, but I am eager to see it happen.)

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## JESUS REVOLUTION

*Behold, I will do a new thing. (Isaiah 43:19 NKJV)*

“The Jesus movement was characterized by vibrant, simple worship and constant witness to the gospel. I was there. The church, by and large, reacted to the “hippies” who were being saved and the more current expressions of worship. Many churches ridiculed this and quenched the Spirit, unwilling to accept new wineskins. Most of these churches have plateaued and died. The churches that humbly opened the door to lost people and wisely shepherded God’s activity, exploded. Calvary Chapel, a small California church, kept responding to God and, in the Jesus movements wake, have started 1400 churches.” (Bill Elliff)

I saw the movie with Kelsey Grammer. I was there at Woodstock. I was there in the Jesus Movement, and thank God I am still here today.





## MICHAEL

*Who among the gods is like you, LORD? (Exodus 15:11)*

Names are important. They have meaning, and they can define who we are. My parents gave me the name Michael.

Michael is derived from the Hebrew words ‘Micha El’ translated “Who is like unto God?” It does not mean godlike (though I hope that I am), it is a bold proclamation: No one in heaven or on earth is like unto God! I was thus named by God, and He called me to be a proclaimer of who He is, and what He is like.

I accept this calling.

What is your name, and what are His intentions for you?

God can change your name as He did for Jacob, transforming him from a deceiver to Israel, one who wrestles with God and is triumphant.



## MY FIRST AND LAST FIGHT

*They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2:4)*

I picked a fight with Willy Unroch when I was six-years-old. I lifted my dukes and he caught me with a swift upper cut to the jaw, and I was knocked out within 5 seconds of the opening bell. That was it for me as a prize fighter.

I took wresting in gym in High School, won my only bout, and retired from the sport for the rest of my life. Not many people have the distinction of being an undefeated wrestler!

I have never been much for violence. I never saw the Braveheart or Gladiator movies. Maybe I am still 60's peace child at heart. I may be calm externally, but don't mess with my convictions, because I can let out a ferocious roar.



## OUR BODIES TELL OUR STORIES

*A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*

*(Proverbs 14:30)*

*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Proverbs 17:22)*

Some sickness and diseases attack our bodies externally and are unavoidable, some we inherit genetically, and others are internally generated from the seedbed of our inner life and are avoidable.

And there are soul and spiritual blessings that spring from the abundance of peace, joy and gratefulness in our heart.

Recent medical studies confirm this fact taught by Solomon 3000 years ago. Those who laugh and enjoy life will live longer.

There is a category of sicknesses called psychosomatic (psycho = mind; somatic = body) illnesses, where the mind can cause physical problems in your body.

Bones make up the frame of our body, the physical house in which our soul and spirit dwells. All three are inter-related and each one affects the other two.



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## OUT OF THE DEPTHS

*Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD. Lord, hear my voice. (Psalm  
130:1-2)*

The word ‘kishkes’ in Yiddish literally means intestines or guts. Figuratively, it speaks of the depths of our soul.

Jesus prayed from his kishkes. He offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death. (Hebrews 5:7)

We often find ourselves in dire situations. We encounter troubles of all kinds. God is the only one who can save us, and He is present. Call out to Him. Pour out your kishkes to Him. He hears you, and He will answer you. He can deliver you from your situation, or He can deliver you through your situation, but He always hears and answers.

Sometimes our most effective prayer is, “Help, Lord.”

Pray for others that way too.





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## PRESENCE

*In Your presence is fullness of joy. (Psalm 16:11)*

He is always watching me. If I walk somewhere in my house, he follows me. I cannot sleep alone or watch TV without him sitting on my lap. When I ask if he wants to go for a car ride, he almost hyperventilates with ecstasy. He doesn't care if we get out of the car and do anything, he just wants to be WITH me. I am everything to him without doing anything. He is my 7-pound Pomeranian.

He has taught me more about unconditional love than any preacher. If I could have even 10% of his devotion and adoration, I would probably come close to the relationship that I aspire to have with my Heavenly Father Who left Heaven and did everything for me!

(By Cheryl Natt)



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## RE-TIREMENT

*Make yourself an ark of cypress wood. (Genesis 6:14)*

Noah was around 500 years old when The Lord called him to begin working on his crowning achievement and life's work. I don't expect to live that long, but the Lord gave me my new assignment when I was 70-years-old. That is, to start my Second A.C.T. and focus on my life's work as an author, coach and teacher.

I retired from full-time work as a corporate project manager when I turned 65, but that wasn't the end. I spent several transitional years pursuing my avocational interest in health and fitness. Now I have re-embraced my calling.

So, I haven't retired, but I have re-tired. That is, like a cyclist, I have been outfitted with two brand new tires so I can keep on pedaling.



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## SECOND A.C.T.

*Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. (Habakkuk 2:2)*

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, one definition of the word 'definition' is: "the action or the power of describing, explaining, or making definite and clear."

I have been working to define my life's mission for quite some time. Finding ITT (Investing, Training, Teaching) was a good first pass. I have since re-defined my life's mission as my Second A.C.T. (Author, Coach, Teacher) with a subtle reference to the second chapter of the Book of Acts where the Holy Spirit was poured out.

But at my core, I am an Author, I am a Coach, and I am a Teacher. Furthermore, the activities I engage in are:

1. Prayer
2. Share
3. Care

I pray a lot, I share a lot, and I care a lot.



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## SKINNED KNEES AND A BROKEN ARM

Do not be wise in your own eyes fear the LORD and shun evil.  
*This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your  
bones. (Proverbs 3:7,8)*

I thought that I was pretty cool in the summer of 1960 after finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I rode my new red bike around the neighborhood every day.

There was an alley between two buildings that had a steep incline. I got thrills speeding down the incline. Then I started riding down the incline without my feet on the pedals. Then without hands.

Crash! Bang! Tumble! Tumble! With my knees bloodied and my arm feeling weird, I made my way back to my apartment.

Aftermath: My mother got rid of the bike, and I spent the last six weeks of summer vacation with my right arm in a plaster of Paris cast. No stick-ball, no swimming, and no bicycle until I moved out on my own.





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**SLEEP**

*He grants sleep to those he loves. (Psalm 127:2)*

*In ... sleepless nights ... (2 Corinthians 6:5.)*

In the normal course of events a good night's sleep is necessary for our health and vitality. However, suffering according to the will of God often involves sleepless nights.

In other scenarios, we can lose sleep because of a careless life style, a medical condition or anxiety.

I love sleep; it is the most important component of a healthy lifestyle. The others are nutrition, exercise and healthy relationships. But sleep and I have not always been close bedfellows. I live a healthy lifestyle, and I don't have any medical conditions. Anxiety troubles me at times, but not too often.

So, what's my problem? I don't know that I have one. I am called to be a pray-er, and sometimes missing sleep comes with the assignment.



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## SMALL JOINTS

*From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16)*

*For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.  
(Matthew 18:20)*

Joints (ligaments) are connections between two bones. They make the skeleton flexible, and without them, movement would be impossible. Joints enable our bodies to move in many ways. There are approximately 360 joints in the human body that are grouped into types according to their construction and movement pattern.

Some are large like the tibiofemoral joint which connects the thigh bone (femur) and the shin bone (tibia). The incudomalleolar joint in the inner ear is involved in the conduction of sound vibrations. I wouldn't want my body to be without either joint.

We are the body of Christ. No one is a standalone joint because a joint is a connection, and every member and every connection is necessary for the proper functioning of the body.



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## SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

*Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet. (Acts 4:36-37)*

Barnabas laid it all on the altar: property, identity and submission to the apostles.

After Paul was dramatically converted, most of the disciples were afraid of him, but Barnabas received him into the fellowship and mentored him.

Years later they worked together at the church in Antioch where they were sent out together, with Barnabas as the lead apostle. As they ministered together, Barnabas recognized that the leadership anointing was upon Paul, so he yielded the leadership role to him.

They had a disagreement later because Barnabas wanted to give young Mark another chance, and Paul was not open to this. So, they parted ways, but later Paul writes, “Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”



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## STAN THE MAN

*So here I (Caleb) am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. (Joshua 14:11)*

I met Stan the Man in the sauna recently; it was actually “The Guy in the Sauna” who introduced us. After I complete my 75-minute workout, I always top off my time at the gym with 15-minutes in the sauna, and then I take a shower (in that order).

“The Guy” and “The Man” were already engaged in conversation when I entered the heated chamber. I elbowed my way into the conversation, “Hi, my name is “Michael, and I am 70 years old.” Stan replied, “I’m Stan, and I am 91 years old. I have socks older than you.”

I love to hang around Stan, he is an inspiration for where I want to be in 20 years.

Musial was a pretty good athlete also.





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## STUPID TAX

*Observe carefully. (Deuteronomy 28:1)*

I joyfully pay my income tax every year. Today I joyfully paid my stupid tax.\*

I booked flights for a winter getaway. I would get flight updates from the airline, and store them in my saved emails.

Today was the day for the big trip. I arrived at the airport, put my credit card in the kiosk to get boarding passes, but there was no record of my trip. I went to the ticketing agent, and she couldn't find a record of my trip either. Then I pulled out my cell phone to show her my flight information, and realized, "MY FLIGHT WAS LAST WEEK!"

I paid top dollar for new flight tickets, and lost a chunk of money, but I didn't lose my cool.

(\* Stupid tax is a term coined by Financial Expert Dave Ramsey for a penalty we incur for making dumb financial decisions.)



## THE FIFTH SPARROW

*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? (Matthew 10:29)*

*Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? (Luke 12:6)*

In ancient Jerusalem you could get quite a deal on sparrows if you bought in bulk. If you bought four sparrows, the fifth one was thrown in for free. You might say that the fifth sparrow had no value.

However, Jesus said that not one sparrow falls to the ground outside the Father's care, and not one of them is forgotten by God.

Jesus had more in mind than sparrows. He had you in mind. You are worth more than many sparrows. You might feel that your life is worthless, that nobody cares and you are forgotten, but you are of infinite value to Him. So much so, that he willingly offered himself as a sacrifice so that you could be with him for eternity.



## THE GOOD, THE BETTER AND THE BEST

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)*

In reality, God only has one will which Paul describes using three adjectives: good, acceptable and perfect. In life, I have found that there is often a good, better and best way to do things, like pursuing a new idea or a project.

The good is the first pass through the new idea. You come to the better as you work through the kinks in the good idea and develop enhancements to it. The best is when God shows you exactly how to do it.

God is also in the good and the better. He gives us new ideas and leads us as we work through them. As we seek Him diligently over time, He will show us and lead us into His perfect will.



## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

*It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation. (Daniel 4:2-3)*

Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest and most powerful of all the Babylonian kings. He was a great builder, conqueror and absolute monarch. He boasted against the God of Heaven, so God gave him a terrifying dream.

But in his arrogance, he did not heed Daniel's interpretation or his warning, so "He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird." (Daniel 4:33)

He went from a man outstanding in his field, to a man standing out in his field. After seven years, he came to his senses, and humbly acknowledged the God of Heaven as supreme.





## THE KNOWER

*For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. (John 6:64)*

*He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. (Isaiah 11:3)*

Do you ever get the sense about a person that you know outside the realm of your observation or knowledge about the individual? Jesus did.

According to type theory, we are either prone to trust information that is taken in by our physical senses or information that is based on our inner sense – our “knower”. In reality, we take in information from both sources, but which one do we trust more?

Living by our “knower” requires us to recognize our prejudices, put them aside, and tune in to the inner voice of our spirit. Woman seem to do this better than men. Maybe it’s because of our EGO.

If you want to avoid mistakes and make better decisions, learn to listen and trust your “knower”.



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## THE LISTENING EAR

*He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one  
being instructed. (Isaiah 50:4)*

Dan Rather once asked Mother Teresa. “What do you say to God when you pray?”

Mother Teresa answered quietly “I listen.”

Taken aback, Rather tried again, “Well, then, what does God say?”

Mother Teresa smiled, “He listens.”

It is worth noting that God gave us two ears and one mouth, which is probably indicative of the 2:1 proportion of how we communicate with Him.

He bids us to speak (Psalm 5:3); he bids us to ask (Psalm 2:8), and He bids us to listen. When we awaken, or when He wakes us, our heart and mind are still (for a while), which is the time to listen to what He has to say to us.

Then we move further into listening together.

Then comes silence.



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## THE NEW STOP SIGN

*If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them. (James 4:17)*

The city put up a new stop sign today on the busy road. Yesterday, I could blow right past the intersection, but today I had to stop, look and wait before proceeding.

Yesterday, I had an extra \$10k in my savings account. The serviceman came over for some scheduled maintenance in my basement. \$240, no problem, money well spent. When he finished, he pointed out several cracks in our foundation walls. As you can guess, I was not delighted with this news.

“Furthermore”, he said, “If you don’t take care of this soon, your walls could cave in, which would cost considerably more to repair.”

“Yes, Lord. Thank you for your provision.” I prayed, and then I made the down payment and scheduled the repairs.



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## THE NEXT GENERATION

*Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. (Psalm 71:18)*

*The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. (Judges 2:7)*

David saw God's glory and power in the sanctuary and in the battlefield, and he declared it to the next generation in his reign and in his writings.

Joshua was mentored by Moses and saw the glory and power of God in the tabernacle and on the battlefield, and his life is documented in the Scriptures.

David's sons fell from the faith, so did the generation that proceeded Joshua.

I have seen the glory and power of God in my prayer life and in my ministry, and I am responsible for everything I have seen. My mandate is to teach, demonstrate, and write about all that I have learned and experienced to the next generation.

MICHAEL NATT

This is my prayer and assignment as I grow older.



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## THE PHYSICIAN

*Only Luke is with me. (2 Timothy 4:11)*

Luke was a Greek physician who travelled with Paul on his missionary journeys. He was also a constant companion and true friend to the Apostle. When others forsook Paul during the rough times, Luke was always there for him.

When you read about Paul's afflictions, he sure needed a faithful friend and a physician by his side.

- He was whipped 39 times with a cat-of-nine-tails on five different occasions.
- He was beaten with rods three times.
- He was pelted with stones, and assumed dead.
- He was shipwrecked on three occasions.
- He labored, went without sleep, was hungry, thirsty, cold and naked (2 Corinthians 10:24-27).

We don't have any record of Luke's sermons, but he was probably an awesome teacher as well.

He did write two books.



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## THE RIGHT PLACE, THE RIGHT TIME

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required. (Luke 2:25-27)*

The righteous and devout Simeon was moved by the Spirit to go into the temple courts to see the promised Messiah. The lost teenager was moved to leave New York City and go to Berkely.

He hitchhiked across the West Coast with his best friend. Late one afternoon on Saturday April 25, 1970 he saw a double rainbow as they headed into Eugene, Oregon. They were set to stay overnight at the house of an acquaintance, but the acquaintance would not allow them in that day.

Instead, they were directed to Shiloh House on Jefferson Avenue where several young people shared the words of life with them. The lost teenager found the Messiah and became righteous in the sight of God, and a devout believer.



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## THE SEASON OF RE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,  
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19)*

A season of REnewal is taking place at Asbury University. What began as an ordinary chapel service in Wilmore Kentucky has grown into a continuous outpouring of worship and praise in many parts of the world.

Professor Lawson Stone described this REnewal as a focus on “REpentance, REstitution, REconciliation, REnewed character, REignited love for Christ, and a kind of REMobilization and REvitalization for service all over the place.”

James Goll described it as a “REvival of kindness.”

Stu Schultz described it as “A season of RE, a REturn to the God of our youth, to REmember His ways, to REfocus. When we do that, we’re REplenished, we’re REvived, we’re REstored.”

May the flames continue in Wilmore, and may the sparks spread throughout the world.



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## TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN

*To the Chief Musician. (Prelude to Psalm 18 NKJV)*  
*So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight. (1 Chronicles 25:7 NKJV)*

Worship was a high priority in David's time, and it is today, as synagogues employ cantors to lead congregational melodic worship.

Worship brings the presence of God into our midst:

When the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud. (2 Chronicles 5:13)

Worship is the activity of heaven:

The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. (Revelation 4:10)





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## TRAVAIL

*You've kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights, each tear entered in your ledger, each ache written in your book.  
(Psalm 56:8 MSG)*

*Whenever a woman is in labor, she has pain. (John 16:21 NASB)*

*The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.  
(Romans 8:26 NASB)*

I have never given birth to a child, but I have completed 15 marathons, so I know a little about pain. I have often tossed and turned at night and travailed in my spirit; not always knowing the reason why.

The Apostle Paul knew the joy of fellowship with other believers: "I rejoice and share my joy with you all." (Philippians 2:17), and the pain for those apart from Christ, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart ... for my kinsmen." (Romans 9:2,3)

I experience both emotions regularly. Frankly, I don't think this will ever let up on this side of heaven, because until the very last day before His coming, lost people need other people to be in labor for them.



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## TRIBUTE TO RAY

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38)*

Ray Jennings and his wife Dorothy moved to South Asia with their eight children. He travelled around the world and led multitudes to Christ and saw God perform miraculous healings and deliverance.

He has a larger man. "When my family moved to the mission field, some told us that we would starve there. Well, does it look like I am starving?" he roared from the pulpit, and downed another sip of water.

Afterwards, he called people to the altar, and prophesied over me, "I have appointed you a watchman on the wall with the anointing of the Spirit of God on your life and the wisdom of the Lord."

Hardly a day goes by for me without remembering his words. Ray was a large man.



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## TROAS

*Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:7-9)*

*"A rejection is God's re-direction." (Jeff Hill)*

The Apostle Paul and his team were on mission to spread the gospel throughout the Asia. They attempted to go into modern Asia Minor where they had much success on their previous mission. However, this time the Holy Spirit said "NO!" and He said "NO!" to Bithynia as well. Two closed doors, two rejection letters by the Holy Spirit.

Then they came to Troas, the end of the road where the only path forward was the Aegean Sea and places they had never been before. Through a vision in the night God directed them to Europe, and Europeans eventually moved to America. Where would we be today if Paul had rejected the Spirit's guidance and stayed in Asia?



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## UNOFFENDABLE

*It is impossible that no offenses should come. (Luke 17:1)*

Offense: an annoyance or resentment brought about by a perceived insult to or disregard for oneself or one's standards or principles. (Oxford Dictionary)

“It's impossible to offend a dead man.” (Michael Maiden)

An offense is like a burr in your sock or a thorn in your side. It is undesirable, and it hurts! However, it's virtually impossible to go through a day without something or someone offending us, especially if we are around mortals.

So, the next time an offense occurs, treat it as an opportunity to grow in humility and submission to Christ. We may not understand why the burr occurred, but it will bring out the 'flesh' in us which is of no value to our spiritual growth, and must be thoroughly crucified.





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## WEAKNESS AND MEEKNESS

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)*

*“Look, I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good is the birthright to me?” (Genesis 35:22)*

Meekness (humility) is “strength under control”, as in ancient Greek war horses that were trained to be strong and powerful, yet under the full control of their master, willing to fully submit to him.

Jesus was a very powerful man, yet he was fully submitted to His Father and obedient to His every command.

Esau was a morally weak and spineless individual who fully submitted to his appetite, and thereby lost his inheritance. He wept bitterly, but found no path to repentance.

The strength of a man is not measured in how much weight he can lift or how strong his opinion is, but in his readiness to admit when he is wrong and submit himself fully to the will of God and serve others.



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## WHO KNOWS WHAT'S GOOD OR BAD

*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Genesis 50:20)*

One day the farmer's horse runs away. His neighbor comes over and says, "I'm so sorry about your horse." The farmer says "Who Knows What's Good or Bad?"

The horse comes back the next day and brings another 12 horses. The neighbor comes back to celebrate, "Congratulations on your great fortune!" The farmer says: "Who Knows What's Good or Bad?"

The next day the farmer's son is taming one of the wild horses and he's thrown and breaks his leg. The neighbor comes over, "I'm so sorry about your son." The farmer repeats: "Who Knows What's Good or Bad?"

The next day the army comes through to conscript able-bodied young men to fight in war, but the son is spared because of his broken leg.



## WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD

*Then he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.  
(Exodus 37:4)*

*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-  
surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)*

Wood in Scripture symbolizes humanity; Gold in Scripture symbolizes divinity. As the Son of God came to earth fully human and fully divine, so are we in this world.

Jesus wept; He experienced sorrow; He is moved by our infirmities. We can be born anew. God's Holy Spirit can inhabit our spirit, and change our soul into conformity to The Son of God. The New Covenant restores in us a "heart of flesh," (Ezekiel 36:26) and The Holy Spirit dwells within us. (Romans 8:11)

Don't worry that you are not perfect. We are wood. God by His Spirit has made us worthy. We are overlaid with pure gold. Our imperfections are covered by His perfection. Each day is an opportunity to grow into His likeness.



**PART III**

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**MEN SPEAK IN 125 WORDS**

STORIES ABOUT MEN





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**ABRAHAM BRONZ**  
IMMIGRANT

My grandfather grew up in a small shtetl (village) outside of Warsaw, Poland. The Jews faced repeated pogroms (persecution) by the Russians causing him to emigrate to the United States after World War I.

He came with his three brothers and sister. He never saw his parents or three younger siblings again – they perished in the Holocaust. He worked in New York City's Garment District and was instrumental in establishing the Fur and Leather Workers Union securing fair wages and better working conditions for employees. He often came home bloodied from beatings by goons hired by the factory owners.

He died in January 1961 before I turned nine-years-old, but I remember him as a kind and humble man who was committed to the Jewish community.



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**ART KATZ**  
ENCOUNTER

Art Katz was a Marxist who was brought to a moral crisis as a high school teacher—able to raise, but not able to answer the perplexities of the modern age.

During a hitch-hiking odyssey through Europe and the Middle East, the cynical and unbelieving atheist was radically apprehended by a God who was actively seeking him. Art describes his encounter with Jesus in the New Testament account of the woman caught in adultery.

“The law said that the woman must be stoned. Yet Jesus had been teaching forgiveness, and earlier in the Book had actually said, “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Jesus was trapped.

... What would I say in Jesus' place? I searched my mind, exhausting my resources of logic and reason and finally conceded there was no answer. Fully expecting the worst, I reopened the book and read on. I found Jesus bending over, poking His finger in the dirt.

... And then came His answer, “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.” I gasped. A sword had been plunged deep into my own being. It was numbing and shocking, yet thrilling, because the answer was so utterly perfect. It defied cerebral examination. It cut across every major

issue I had ever anguished upon in my life. Truth. Justice. Righteousness. Integrity. I knew that what I had read transcended human knowledge and comprehension. It had to be divine."

(John 8:1-11)

(Katz, Arthur. *Ben Israel: Odyssey of a Modern Jew*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1970.)

## BENJAMIN DISRAELI

### ALTRUISM

Winston Churchill's mother once dined with two of Britain's prime ministers on back-to-back evenings. When asked her impression of each, she said of William Gladstone, "When I left the dining room after sitting next to Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. After dining with Benjamin Disraeli, I left feeling that I was the cleverest woman."

Gladstone was good at projecting his charismatic personality, and there is nothing inherently wrong with that. We naturally want to put our best foot forward. Disraeli was good at drawing water out of other people's wells; bringing the best out of others. The difference was Gladstone was self-focused, while Disraeli was others focused. "Talk to people about themselves," said Disraeli, "and they will listen for hours."

(Batterson, Mark. Please, Sorry, Thanks. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Publishing Inc., 2023.)



## BLAISE PASCAL

### SCIENTIST

“If I believe in God and life after death and you do not, and if there is no God, we both lose when we die. However, if there is a God, you still lose and I gain everything.”

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) lived in France during the scientific revolution and worked as a mathematician, physicist, inventor, polemicist, and writer. His invention of the calculator was one of the major achievements of the early scientific revolution and the precursor to the modern computer.

Pascal grew up as a nominal Catholic, but as an adult he had a dramatic spiritual experience that led him to commit his life to Christ and to put his remarkable mind to work for Christ's kingdom as a Christian philosopher, theologian, and apologist.

<https://reasons.org/explore/blogs/reflections/christian-thinkers-101-a-crash-course-on-blaise-pascal>





## BROTHER LAWRENCE

### DEVOTION

Brother Lawrence was a 17th-century Carmelite friar who lived a life of simplicity and devotion. He worked as a cook in a Paris monastery and became known for his deep spirituality and connection with God.

Despite his humble job, Brother Lawrence found joy and fulfillment in serving others and saw cooking as an opportunity to connect with God through prayer. "The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were on my knees."

"O my God, I beseech thee to grant me the grace to continue in thy presence."

(Lawrence, Brother. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Ada, MI: Revell, 1958.)



**DAVID WILKERSON**  
OBEDIENCE

One winter morning in 1958, David Wilkerson, pastor of a small Assemblies of God Church in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, was sitting in his living room, reading *Life* magazine. He turned a page and saw a picture of seven boys that changed his life.

They were on trial in New York City for the death of a young polio victim who was brutally beaten by members of a teenage gang. David was gripped by the defendants faces. In their eyes he saw an anger and loneliness he had never known existed.

He felt a growing conviction that he should take a toothbrush, get into his car, drive to New York where he had never been in his life, and try to help these boys.

And he obeyed.

<https://guideposts.org/positive-living/health-and-wellness/life-advice/finding-life-purpose/mysterious-ways-in-new-york-city/>

Dick Young



## DICK YOUNG RESPONSIBILITY

Dick Young was a senior project manager. Being an aspiring project manager, I attended one of his classes where he told us this story:

“Bob and Sally moved into their new house. As it got colder, Sally turned on the thermostat and nothing happened. Bewildered, she went down to basement, opened the utility door, and lo and behold, there was no furnace!”

Then Dick posed this question to the class, “Who was responsible for ensuring that a furnace was installed in the house?”

- Was it the electrician?
- Was it the construction foreman?
- Was it the home inspector?
- Or was it the couple themselves?

We discussed the situation and offered solutions. Finally, Dick spoke up, “NO ONE WAS RESPONSIBLE.”

I got the message loud and clear.



**DOUG REUTER**  
DREAMER

Thousands of people have bought a slice of a dream that woke Doug Reuter one night in the mid-1970s. In the dream, Reuter saw the scheme for a board game which was the impetus for him to invent Sequence.

"It was really clear to me in the dream," said Reuter. "I forced myself to get up and write it down. It's a good thing I did, because so often, things that come in dreams are lost in the morning." The idea for Sequence wasn't. Instead, it continued on through the inventing, perfecting and marketing process.

"Lots of games come and go with a few years' popularity. Then there are the perennials, like Monopoly, Clue, Scrabble. I've been told that Sequence will be a perennial, too."

([https://www.swnewsmedia.com/eden\\_prairie\\_news/news/community/turn-back-the-page-in-1992-a-dream-led-to-the-invention-of-a-board/article\\_2d6fi67a-070e-5f0b-b7fa-e1d9ca69fc59.html](https://www.swnewsmedia.com/eden_prairie_news/news/community/turn-back-the-page-in-1992-a-dream-led-to-the-invention-of-a-board/article_2d6fi67a-070e-5f0b-b7fa-e1d9ca69fc59.html))





**ED BASLER**  
PERSONA

After a long day as CEO of a 50-million-dollar company that employed 100+ people, Ed changed into his jeans and leathery biker persona Mr. Ed. Then he arrived at the Heart & Soul building for the Souled Out service, where 500+ young people from Generation X and Y were eager to come into God's presence.

This was indeed a miracle because 25 years earlier an older black woman told this shy blonde long haired hippie that one day he would stand before thousands of teenagers, sharing the gospel.

After a stand-up routine that the kids loved, it was time for worship. The same scene played out every Saturday night for 15 years. Thousands came to Christ, and today they are serving the Lord as adults.

(By his widow Cathi Basler)



## ELIEZER BEN-YEHUDA

### LANGUAGE

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922) was a Russian linguist, grammarian, and journalist, renowned as the lexicographer of the first Hebrew dictionary, and the editor of *HaZvi*, one of the first Hebrew newspapers published in the Land of Israel. He was the main driving force behind the revival of the Hebrew language.

He made Aliyah to the Land of Israel in 1877. At that time many devoted Jews did not appreciate Ben-Yehuda's efforts to resurrect the Hebrew language. They believed that Hebrew, which they learned as a biblical language, should not be used to discuss mundane and non-holy things.

In his book *Was Hebrew Ever a Dead Language*, Cecil Roth summed up Ben-Yehuda's contribution to the Hebrew language: "Before Ben-Yehuda, Jews could speak Hebrew; after him, they did."

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliezer\\_Ben-Yehuda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliezer_Ben-Yehuda))



**ERIC LIDDELL**  
CONVICTION

“He who honors God, God will honor.”

Eric Liddell was Scotland's fastest sprinter. He was their hero. His quick speed earned him a spot on the 1924 100-meter British Olympic team. However, Eric Liddell announced that he could not run in the Olympics 100-meter race because the finals were scheduled on a Sunday; a day of worship and rest for Eric. He was ridiculed and derided as a traitor, but he stood firm.

Eric knew his chance of winning the 400-meter race was slim because two of the runners in this race had set world record times. But Eric crossed the finish line first, winning the gold medal! He had also set a new world record! Eric received a hero's welcome when he returned home.

(1 Samuel 2:30)

(<https://www.christianity.com/church/eric-liddell-greater-than-gold-11634861.html>)



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## FRANCIS OF ASSISI

### POVERTY

Francis sold everything, and offered the purchase-money to the priest of San Damian for the service of God. His father brought him before the Bishop of Assisi that he might renounce his inheritance and give up all that he had.

Francis laid aside his clothes, and being entirely naked gave the money to his father and said to him, in the presence of all the company:

“Hitherto have I called you my father on earth; but henceforth I may confidently say, ‘Our Father who art in heaven,’ for in Him I have put all my trust.”

Then his father arose, took the clothes and the money, and carried them home, and the bishop took Francis in his arms and covered him with his own mantle.

*(Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20))*





**GLENN “DAD” EWING**  
FATHERHOOD

Glenn Ewing was a true father-in-the-faith. He was a bank cashier in Waco, Texas in the early 1940’s when his life was transformed through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He served as an elder in his church, and eventually took over as pastor, and served in that capacity for many years.

That church, though relatively small, raised up many great leaders who spread the gospel throughout the world. These leaders are the men that helped shaped my life and calling.

I met Dad Ewing in 1973. He was a man who could “read your mail.” I was 21-years-old, and he was in his eighties. He said five words to me that powerfully impacted me, “You’ll be an elder soon.” This happened a year later.



## HA HALUTZIM PIONEERS

“Mark Twain’s description of Northern Israel certainly wouldn’t have encouraged tourism: “The Galilee is a pile of musty mounds of barrenness; I never saw a human being on the way.” (See *Innocents Abroad*, 1867).

At the turn of the twentieth century many Jewish immigrants, who were fleeing persecution and pogroms in Eastern Europe and Russia, made their way to Galilee. The grandparents of a Messianic Jewish friend of ours walked from Russia. These returning pioneers purchased land from the Turkish Ottoman Empire before its defeat in World War I. Others came and bought land in the area from wealthy absentee landlords in Beirut, Damascus and Istanbul. These immigrants were the pioneers who helped drain the swamps of Galilee and create agriculture and industry.” (Page 52-53).

(Davis, David. *The Elijah Legacy*. Alachua, Fla.: Bridge Logos Foundation, 2009.)



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## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

### GLORY

At 48, Johann Sebastian Bach acquired a copy of the Bible and pored over it as a long-lost treasure, underlining passages, and making notes in the margins. Near 1 Chronicles 25 (a listing of Davidic musicians) he wrote, "This chapter is the true foundation of all God-pleasing music."

"He finished each of his scores with the words *Soli Deo gloria*: "Glory to God alone." He believed every note was sanctified and divinely inspired: "I play the notes as they are written," he said, "but it is God who makes the music." When asked he wrote music, his answer was simple but profound: "The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul."

(Brooks, Arthur C. *From Strength to Strength*. New York, N.Y.: Portfolio/Penguin, 2022. Page 156.)



JOEL  
MESSAGE

i. The Outpouring of The Holy Spirit

*And afterward,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams,  
your young men will see visions.  
Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*

2. The Events of the End Times

*I will show wonders in the heavens  
and on the earth,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

3. The Harvest Among Israel and the Nations

*And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved;  
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem  
there will be deliverance,  
as the Lord has said,  
even among the survivors  
whom the Lord calls.*

(Joel 2:28-32)



## KENDALL QUALLS

### ACHIEVEMENT

Kendall Qualls is President of TakeCharge an organization that celebrates the promise of America, and that the American dream can be achieved by anyone regardless of their race or social standing.

He has a unique vantage point to convey this message. During his childhood, he lived with his divorced mother and siblings in the public housing projects of Harlem, N.Y. In middle school he lived with his father in a trailer park in Oklahoma.

Despite the challenges of his early life, he worked full-time to pay for college, served as an officer in the U.S. Army and earned three graduate degrees. He worked his way up the ranks at several Fortune 100 health-care companies before becoming a Global Vice President of an \$850M business unit.

(<https://pinnacleforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Kendall-Qualls-Bio-2022.pdf>)



**LARRY WINNES**  
FORTITUDE

In the early 1980s, a programmer accidentally wrote some code that allowed users to drag and drop icons and files using a mouse.

At the time, this was considered a bug and the programmer was instructed to remove it from the code. However, Steve Jobs saw the feature in action and recognized its potential as an intuitive and user-friendly way to interact with a computer. He overruled the decision to remove the code and instead made "drag and drop" a prominent feature of Apple's user interface.

"God, deliver me from my stubbornness," Larry prayed. The Lord replied, "Thank me for it." Flaws can become features in the hand of God. Over the course of his life, Larry needed fortitude (sanctified stubbornness) to accomplish his mission.



## MICHELANGELO

### ARTIST

A vast majority of Michelangelo's works contain biblical themes. During his early years when he sculpted

David he was not religious, but he became more devout during his later years.

David portrayed as a youth mirrors young Michelangelo's own youthful views about art and his own stature and abilities.

"The elder Michelangelo produces in the Florentine Pieta not only an image of those at the foot of the cross, but he includes himself as a sad member of this small community. Although the dead Christ is in the central and focal position of the sculpture, Nicodemus is the tallest and topmost figure in the grouping. This emphasis on Nicodemus represented his faith—not as a confident youth, but as a penitent man who sought redemption!"

(<https://catholicstand.com/michelangelo-creates-sculptures-on-his-path-to-redemption/>)



## THE MUSICIAN

### TIMING

*A word spoken in due season, how good is it!*

I do not play a musical instrument, and I am not a particularly good singer, but the Lord wants to play us as instruments, part of His orchestra for His glory.

I was among a group of leaders in my city. As different ones shared, I was praying and flowing with the conversation, and the Lord gave me a vision of a percussive triangle. As the meeting progressed, there was a lull in the movement and a silence prevailed. Just then the Spirit of the Lord came upon me and the Conductor pointed to me and I played my note on cue.

Then I returned to my background position as an active member the orchestra.

(Proverbs 15:23)





**THE NEW MAN**  
**PEACE**

*His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace.*

Prior to the coming of Messiah, there was a great divide between the Jewish people, who were part of the covenants of God, and the Gentile people, who were outside these covenants. Messiah bridged the divide by His finished work on the cross to create in Himself one new man consisting of Jews and Gentiles.

Although we retain our racial, ethnic and gender identities, we are now one new man in Messiah. The result of which is peace. Outside the one new man there is often strife and friction between people based on our differences. Inside the one new man our differences accentuate different aspects of God's glory.

(Ephesians 2:15)



**NIKOLAUS VON ZINZENDORF**  
PRAYER

Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was a wealthy nobleman, a “rich young ruler”, who answered the call to give up everything he possessed to follow Jesus.

He learned the secret of prevailing prayer when he was young, and committed his life to spread the gospel throughout the world. In 1722 he invited a group Moravians fleeing persecution to live on his estate.

In 1727 they signed the Brotherly Agreement to dedicate their lives to the service of Jesus and covenanted to meet often in prayer and worship. This was referred to as the Moravian ‘summer of revival,’ and became the seedbed of 24x7 prayer that lasted 100 years.

Several years later, Zinzendorf released 12 Moravian missional communities to John Wesley who established the Methodist movement in England.

(<https://lowpc.org/story-of-the-moravians/>)



**RACHMIEL FRYDLAND**  
PERSECUTION

Rachmiel Frydland (1919-1985) was a Jew who suffered persecution under the Nazis, and he was a believer in the Messiah who sometimes suffered rejection by Christians during his years as a fugitive.

In 1944 he was one of the few surviving Jews in Warsaw outside the ghetto. He secretly slipped into the ghetto and spoke comfort to the Jewish believers still alive. Other Jewish people heard the message and believed in Messiah Jesus.

His friends in the ghetto insisted that he leave. They said God preserved him to be a witness of the woes they now experienced, which he did after the war. He was one of the last to leave the ghetto, because the Germans obliterated the entire Jewish area a few days later.

(<http://www.messianicassociation.org/bio-frydland.htm>)



**REES HOWELLS**  
INTERCESSOR

Rees Howells was a humble coal miner who found the secret to receiving answers to prayer that altered world events. He founded a Bible College in Britain where he trained and led intercessors.

In 1940, while the Battle of Dunkirk raged, Rees saw a vision of God with His sword drawn at Dunkirk. As Rees and his team of 100 intercessors persisted in prayer, they asked God to bring “disaster on the Nazis.”

As they waged war on their knees, a sense of relief washed over them. They felt something happened while they prayed. Hitler halted the German advance. It was a military blunder no one understood which gave the allies the time they desperately needed. In the miracle of Dunkirk, God rescued 338,000 troops.

(Grubb, Norman. *Rees Howells Intercessor*. Fort Washington, Penn.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1974.)





## RYAN THE DETAIL GUY

### TRUSTWORTHY

*Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings.*

Ryan is the best at what he does— detailing. And he has stood before many kings: kings of sports, kings of business; all kinds of kings. He knows them all, because he is the best at what he does— detailing. Cars, that is.

Randy Moss? Ryan knows him. Carl Pohlad? Yup. He's been detailing for 24 years, and a lot of kings call Ryan their friend. He knows personal stories too because kings trust him. I told him a few things about myself, because he's the kind of guy who draws conversation out of you.

He knows all the details, but he doesn't share a word about them because he is trustworthy.

(Proverbs 22:29)



**SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON**  
PERSEVERANCE

“Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success.”

Shackleton was looking for 27 recruits for his grueling Antarctic exploration, and it is said that his ad attracted 5000 respondents. “The quality I look for most is optimism: especially optimism in the face of reverses and apparent defeat. Optimism is true moral courage.”

Shackleton was associated with four expeditions exploring Antarctica, particularly the Trans-Antarctic Endurance Expedition (1914–1916) where the ship was grounded and the crew became stranded on the remote Elephant Island and were rescued four months later after Shackleton left to seek help.

Although it was unsuccessful, it became famous as a tale of remarkable perseverance and survival.



**SMITH WIGGLESWORTH**  
MIRACULOUS

“One day Mr. Clark came to visit Smith Wigglesworth’s house. “Mr. Clark, you seem downcast today. What’s up?” He answered, “I left my wife dying. Two doctors have been with her right through the night and they say she cannot live long.” I said to him, “Why don’t you believe God for your wife?””

“When we got to the house, we saw that Mrs. Clark was nearly gone. I was standing beside her at the top of the bed when suddenly the Lord Jesus appeared. After a few moments He vanished but something happened that day that changed my whole life. Mrs. Clark was raised up and filled with life, and lived to bring up a number of children; she outlived her husband many years.”

(From Stanley Frodsham's 'Smith Wigglesworth - Apostle of Faith,' chapter 3.)



**SOLLY GANOR AND CLARENCE  
MATZAMURA**

**FREEDOM**

Solly Ganor lay half dead in the snow after a death march from Dachau. He remembers the unshaven tired soldier who knelt down and gently touched him on the shoulder and said, “You’re free boy, you’re free now.” Solly was surprised by the soldiers’ Japanese features. His liberator, Clarence Matzamura, was a member of a segregated regiment of Nisei soldiers, American children of Japanese immigrants. Clarence smiled at Solly; a smile that stayed with him ever since. Solly called Clarence his angel.

Japanese Americans fought for freedom and democracy despite facing discrimination at home and within the army. They celebrated the survivor's freedom even though racial tension and fear during the war caused many of their own families to be put in U.S. internment camps.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOIHRQIQwU>)





## TEAM HOYT

### IRONMEN

Team Hoyt is father and son Dick and Rick Hoyt who have competed together in various athletic events. Rick has cerebral palsy and during competition Dick pulled Rick in a special boat as they swam, carried him in a special seat in the front of a bicycle, and pushed him in a special wheelchair as they ran.

Team Hoyt began in 1977 when Rick asked his father if they could run in a race together to benefit a lacrosse player who had become paralyzed. He wanted to prove that life went on no matter your disability. After the race Rick said, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped."

The Hoyts competed in 1,130 endurance events, including 72 marathons and seven Ironman triathlons.



**TOM PORTA**  
TRIBUTE

Tom Porta had nine children and pastored 42 years. One time when he was going through a difficult time he asked his oldest daughter Rachel, “Do you think I am the same person at home as I am and as I portray to be at church?”

Rachel said, “Yeah dad, you’re the same person.” Then she thought on that, and realized that it wasn’t true at all because, “I feel like how much better he was behind closed doors.”

Behind closed doors:

- He loved to give and was very generous and grateful.
- He said, “Keep your heart soft. Pliable is reliable.”
- He was able to be wrong, and quick to say he was sorry.
- He was quick to forgive.
- He loved and honored my mom.

(From Rachel (Porta) Maurer’s eulogy for her father)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael worked in business for 40 years, including 28 years as a systems engineer and project manager with IBM.

During this time, Michael served as a congregational and teaching leader in Minnesota, Arizona and New York.

He earned a B.A. from Bethel University, and an M.A. in Human Resource Development from the University of St. Thomas.

He is the author of four books, and is a Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coach. He has also completed 15 marathons and 60 half-marathons in 10 different states.

His passions are prayer and teaching, and he serves on the leadership team of Five Stones Impact, an international church planting and development network. He lives in Eden Prairie, Minnesota with his wife Cheryl. They have been married for 50 years.

