

## SUMMER DEVOTIONS WEEK #6: July 6 – July 12

Sharon and I just got back from celebrating our 34 year anniversary. We took a cruise to Alaska. We had a blast. Both Sharon and I were stunned by the beauty of the landscape. On one of the days of our trip, we took an excursion out to a remote island for a crab bake feast. It was way too good. I ate like it was my last meal. On our way back to shore, we were privileged to see several American Bald Eagles. Majestic. Beautiful. Powerful. Graceful. You can see a few of the pictures Sharon took of these magnificent creatures below. Really quite awesome. A spectacular day. When we got back on the cruise ship, I started thinking about Isaiah 40.

**Isaiah 40:30-31 (NIV)** *“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

I remember an old pastor friend of mine, Dennis Henderson, saying you can either walk with the turkeys or soar with the eagles. I want to soar with the eagles. My guess is you do too. In this week’s devotions I want to give you some insight from God’s word into how you can be an eagle. I love you guys. I’m praying for you. Endure. Persevere. Keep on keeping on.

Pastor Mike



### Monday, July 6, 2015• Summer Devotions Day #36

**Deuteronomy 32:11** *“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.”*

In this verse, God is compared to a mother eagle. The verse above talks about what a mother eagle does when it’s time for her baby birds to fly. You know that eagles don’t build their nest in apricot trees or little bushes along the side of the road. They build their nests up high in majestic trees on the side of mountains. Up on the cliffs. On the pinnacles of mountains. I learned that an eagle’s nest can be as wide as 12 feet and as deep as six feet and can weigh up to 2000 pounds. Crazy.

So the mother eagle creates this cushy environment for her babies to hatch and grow in this sprawling nest. She's got it padded with feathers and leaves. She's got the sticks arranged in such a way that it's really comfortable. But the mother bird knows when it's time for those babies to fly.

So to get them to fly – she uses her talons and she begins to stir up that nest. She begins to rearrange those twigs so that some of those sticks start poking the little birds. Instead of it being a comfy, cushy place, it's now uncomfortable. She keeps nudging them over to the edge of the nest so that they will, in their discomfort, decide to jump out.

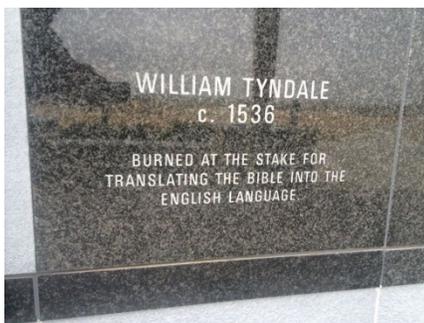
From the little baby eagle's point of view it's, "Excuse me! Over there is an abyss. I'm on the side of the mountain, and she wants me to jump out of this nest? There's nothing down there but certain death."

But the baby eagle eventually gets nudged out of the nest. As it begins its freefall into what would be certain death, the mother eagle comes down and she swoops down underneath it. And she catches her eaglet on her wing and she brings it back up to the nest, and she sets it there.

Then she makes it uncomfortable again and the little bird has to try again. She pushes it out of the nest and the process begins again...this time flapping a little bit but not getting anywhere. She comes and she catches it on her wing, and she puts it back up in the nest. Wash, rinse and repeat. What's my point?

Some of you have been in the nest way too long. If you want to soar with the eagles, you've got to get out of the nest. You've got to quit playing it safe. Take some risks in faith. Don't settle for the security of the nest. God is going to use these devotions this week, the circumstances of your life, or other things that are going on in your life to stir the nest of your life and make things uncomfortable.

You could say, "God - You've got to be kidding me! There's an abyss. I'm going to fall." But here is the unvarnished truth: You can be certain when He pushes you out of the nest, He will catch you. You will not fall.



## **Tuesday, July 7, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #37**

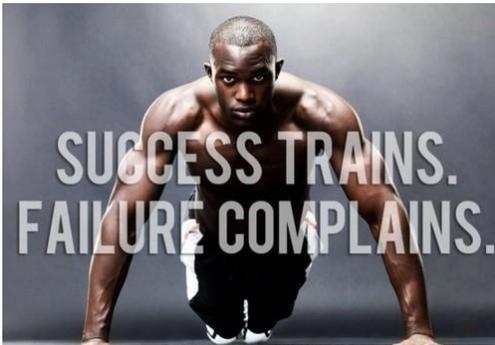
**1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)** *"Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."*

My brother Marty used to say, "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future." That's so true. If you want to soar with the eagles, if that's the future you see for yourself, you've got to rub shoulders with eagles. You've got to get close to people who will push you, challenge you, encourage you, rebuke you, and inspire you to be all that God has made you to be. You need to associate with folks who are further down the road than you are, people who will pass on wisdom to you and teach you life and faith principles.

You need friends like William Tyndale who are willing to lay it all on the line for the sake of Jesus Christ. You need friends who love the word of God and love to serve and love to sacrifice for the gospel. The truth is, we become like those we hang out with. Let's take this one step further... what kind of friend are you?

The road to greatness for all things God is a hard road. It's an arduous road. You need people who will walk with you. People who are like-minded. That is, of course, if you want to soar. This is the importance of being in a church family. You come to know Jesus Christ and then you get into a church family. If you want to know God's dream for your life start hanging around people who are saying, "I want to do whatever God wants me to do."

**Proverbs 27:17** says "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Two questions: Who is sharpening you? And who are you sharpening? If you want to break out of a rut, some of you need to change friends. Some of you need to make some friends here in this church family to build God's dream in your life.



### **Wednesday, July 8, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #38**

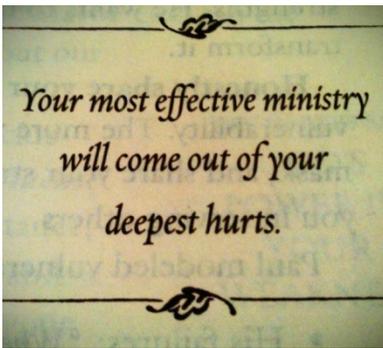
**1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (NIV)** *“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”*

There is no way around this truth. If you want to soar with the eagles, you must go into strict training. For the follower of Christ, this means you get plugged into discipleship. You learn and put into practice the essential spiritual disciplines. This will cost you.

David Frost, the journalist, once asked General Norman Schwarzkopf what was the greatest lesson he learned from the Persian Gulf War. Schwarzkopf replied, *“Unless the soldier on the ground has the will to win and the strength of character to go into battle believing that his cause is just and he has the support of his country, unless he’s got all that, all the weapons and planes and stuff is irrelevant. If Iraq had all our weapons and we didn’t, we still would have won because they lost their will to fight. There are some things that are worth fighting for and dying for.”*

You have to ask yourself, *“is the cause of Christ and the purpose that God has for my life worth fighting and dying for?”* 100% it is. But you have to decide that – everyday. The moment I wake up, every single day of my life, I pinch myself and confirm I’m still alive. Once confirmed, I realize God is not yet done with me on this side of eternity, and I recommit my life to Him. I commit my day to Him and His purposes for my life.

When will you cross the Rubicon and get on with it? When will you go into the strict training that 1 Corinthians 9 talks about? When? The moment you cross that line, you take flight.



## Thursday, July 9, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #39

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV)** *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”*

If you're going to soar with the eagles, you have to learn how to deal with the pain that life delivers to your doorstep. Everyone one of us will be stricken with pain. How you deal with it will go a long ways in determining your effectiveness for the Lord.

Have you had a major hurt in your life? Don't waste it. Let God use that pain to help others. That's what 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 is all about. When you suffer pain, God comforts you. God walks with you. God ministers to you, and eventually heals you. Then our job is to do the same for others who are in the middle of a painful crises such as ours. We become the hands and of feet of Christ to others and dispense His grace, mercy, wisdom, and love.

Maybe your pain happened as a child. Maybe part of your healing is that you now work in our children's ministry or can join the children's ministry team to help build the children of COV and this valley.

Maybe your pain came as a Jr. High or High School student. Maybe the way to completely heal from those wounds is to go and join our student ministries staff and build students, making sure that they are getting encouraged and that their self esteem is rooted in the way God thinks of them.

Maybe your pain came as a young mother. Then have a ministry with young mothers - Maybe your pain has come in your marriage. Then have a ministry with married folks. You get the point don't you? Use the pain you have experienced to bring healing to others with their wounds.

The Bible says this in Galatians 6, *“If a person is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself. You also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ.”* What is the law of Christ? Love your neighbor as yourself. How do you love your neighbor as yourself? When you use your pain to help others and you carry their burdens when they're in pain. This is how you soar.



## Friday, July 10, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #40

**Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV)** *“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 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.’”*

If you're going to soar with the eagles, you must develop a life mission, and part of that life mission must be that you are going to do something for those who are lost.

Here in Matthew 9:35-38, you see the heart of Jesus. People matter to God. His desire is that none go into eternity not knowing Him. Consequently, you must develop a life mission that matters. People living today in your neighborhood and your schools are harassed and helpless, living like sheep without a Shepherd: aimless, directionless, and purposeless. Unhappy, lacking joy, empty. You might say, that doesn't sound like the people in my neighborhood. Well, there in lies the issue. We have to look beyond the exterior and see people just like Jesus did. That's what this passage is about. Read below the life mission of Jesus and Paul:

**Jesus' Life Mission:** *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”* **Luke 19:10**

**Paul's Life Mission:** *“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.”* **Acts 20:24**

How about you? The Pedlowe family mission is simple. **Love God. Love people. Work hard. Be honest.** I have embroidery hanging in my office that states it just like that. What will your life mission be? Soar.



## Saturday, July 11, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #41

**Psalms 90:12 (LB)** *“Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should.”*

If you're going to soar with the eagles, at some point in your journey with the Lord, you have to pray something like this: *“God, teach me to make the most of my time so I don't waste my life and this limited time that You've given me on earth.”* Let me share with you what the Apostle Paul had to say the church in Thessalonica.

**2 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (KV)** - *“We hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and wasting time meddling in other people's business. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we appeal to such people. No. We command them. Settle down and get to work. Earn your own living. I say to the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.”*

Notice the phrase, *“We hear that some of you”* When I read that, I think about our church. What are people saying about your life? What are people hearing about your life? If somebody was to write a letter about your life what

would they say? Here in Thessalonica, Paul says to some of these folks, “We hear that some of you are living idle lives.” Not a compliment.

The word “idle” is a little confusing because as soon as you hear “idle” you think “motionless, lazy, wasteful, slothful.” But in the NIV translation, it doesn’t use the word “idle” it uses the word “busybody.” It says, “You are busybodies.”

What is a busybody? It’s a lot of movement but no substance. Lots of motion and maybe commotion, but no real progress. Busybodies. They were busy, just not with what matters most. They were busy, but not accomplishing anything that really matters.

Do you know any busybodies? Maybe, in a moment of honest reflection, could busybody describe you? You’ve given the illusion of busyness because somehow in our society we’ve messed things up. We think that busy is better. Or maybe it’s not the illusion. Maybe you’re over here and you’re legitimately busy. Out of control busy. Overcommitted busy. Stressed out busy. Just not busy doing eternal kingdom stuff for the Lord?

**Ephesians 5:15-17 (LB)** *“So be careful how you act; these are difficult days. Don’t be fools; be wise: make the most of every opportunity you have for doing good. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but try to find out and do whatever the Lord wants you to.”*



### **Sunday, July 12, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #42**

**Psalms 121:7-8 (NLT)** *“May the Lord keep you from all harm; May He watch over your life; May the Lord watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”*

I love this picture of me watching out over Brooklyn. The power of a picture. This was her first birthday party – in the family room here at COV. It reminds me of the verse above and what God does for us. It is my prayer for you today, along with the verse below.

**Numbers 6:24-26 (LB)** *“May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*

If you want to soar with the eagles, you need people praying for you and you need to be praying for others. All of you moms and dads out there – if you’re not praying these verses for your kids, who is? If you’re not praying this for your spouse, who is?

Once a month, I take a few hours on a Saturday morning and pray these verses for every member and regular attendee at COV. That’s what shepherds do. That’s what eagles do. Today, make a list of 20 people. Your family and then friends – whoever God lays on your heart, and you do the same. One Saturday a month, you pray these verses for your 20. Watch how God takes you into a new level of faith and leadership.