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**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Meaning in the Mundane

July 20, 2020

Growing up, I spent a lot of time sitting on the green seats of my family's white 1978 Buick Estate Station Wagon. Throughout my early childhood, my typical day would start with a 20-minute ride to school, sitting next to my twin sister in the back row of our car, looking out the window of the tailgate. Those rear-facing seats always made traffic lights a little awkward. We made this drive six days a week—five days for school and one day for church, back and forth, totaling four hours a week.

We often made stops on the way home from school to grab groceries. Sometimes my mom ran into the store while my four siblings and I remained in the car. Usually, she would be in and out pretty quickly, but occasionally a checkout line would be long, a prescription wouldn't be ready, or something else would delay her, meaning more time in the car.

As kids, my parents kept us very busy. Piano lessons, sports at the local YMCA, and gymnastics filled our schedule on weeknights. All this running around earned my mom a black and yellow checkered keychain with the words "Mom's Taxi" written on it. It also meant even more time sitting on the green seats looking out the back window.

Riding around in our car was an ordinary, everyday occurrence for me. Oregon Campus Pastor, Andy Rectenwald, used the word "mundane" to describe these everyday moments. Mundane moments are the humdrum, day-to-day things we do in life, like sitting in a car as we commute to and from work.

Everyday moments like these don't have to lack excitement or purpose, though. When I think back to my childhood, some of my greatest memories are from that car's back seat. We had a ton of fun in the car playing games and dreaming about the future. Together as a family, we made our time in the car a meaningful and significant part of our lives.

We all have mundane moments. Things like doing the laundry or the dishes don't exactly make us jump out of bed in the morning, but they could.

This weekend, Pastor Andy shared that God created us to bring eternal meaning to everyday moments. We can do this when we show up on purpose, stepping into mundane moments with our eyes open, searching for opportunities to connect with God and others.

Moments of eternal meaning don't have to be big mountaintop experiences; God can use the smallest parts of our day. When we run into the coffee shop, we can take a moment to encourage the barista. When we check out at the grocery store, we can ask the clerk how we can pray for them. When we drive somewhere, we can sing a song of worship. When we do the dishes, we can take time to pray for our neighbors. No moment is too small for God to use, and when you choose to show up on purpose in them, inviting God to be a part of them, you will be amazed at how he can bring eternal meaning to the day-to-day parts of your life.

### **Romans 11:36**

*<sup>36</sup>For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.*

### **Questions:**

What are the mundane moments of your life?

How can you bring eternal meaning to them?

Read [Romans 11:36](#). What can this verse teach us about every moment of the day.

### **Next Steps:**

Write down ways that you can show up on purpose in your most common mundane moments this week.

Tell someone your plans to turn a mundane moment into an eternal moment.

### **Prayer:**

*God, thank you for caring about every moment of our day. I know that you are always at work, even in the mundane. You are always revealing yourself to us and giving us opportunities to point people to you. Open my eyes to these opportunities to connect with you and with others. Help me find the eternal*

*meaning throughout my day-to-day life and use me as I choose to show up on purpose each moment of my day. In Jesus' name, amen.*

*This post was written by Ben Bockert, the Director of the LivingitOut.*

# Intentional Obedience

July 21, 2020

Have you ever felt God was leading you to do something you didn't want to do? Maybe you were too busy, obedience was too hard, or you were afraid. Sometimes the last thing I want to do is to obey God. It is easy for me to find excuses for why I can't obey: I don't have the time, the energy, the ability, or the desire to obey. I am ashamed to admit that my desire to be disobedient usually stems from my own selfishness or pride.

Andy Rectenwald, Oregon Campus Pastor, spoke about Queen Esther during the weekend message. Queen Esther and her beloved adopted father, Mordecai, were Jews. Haman, an evil man, tricked King Xerxes (Esther's husband) to decree that all the Jewish people be destroyed. (The king had no idea Esther was Jewish.) Mordecai asked Esther to go before the king and ask that he spare the lives of the Jews.

In [Esther 4:11](#), she replies: "All the king's officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. And the king has not called for me to come in 30 days."

I don't know about you, but God has never asked me to put my life in danger for him. At times, I have a hard time obeying him because his plans for me are inconvenient or I want my own way. Yet Mordecai was asking Esther to risk her life to save the Jews. I understand why Esther initially said, "NO!"

## [Esther 4:13-14](#)

*Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. <sup>14</sup> If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"*

Esther loved and respected her adopted father (they were actually cousins...see [Esther 2:7](#)) and obeyed him. She knew her obedience could lead to a death sentence. She knew she didn't have the ability to save the Jews on her own. She requested that all the Jews of Susa along with her maids fast

with her for three days and nights. Esther formed a plan and had the courage to go before the King in his inner courts.

Esther's obedience saved the Jews. She showed great wisdom and courage. She prepared and accomplished God's task for her. I know when I have listened and obeyed God, he has given me the supernatural ability to accomplish things I was unable to accomplish on my own. God has a purpose for each and every one of our lives. It is so important that we obey... because he put you in that job, that situation, for such a time as this.

**Questions:**

What is God calling you to do? How do you prepare to be obedient? What are the reasons you say no to God?

**Next Steps:**

Pray and fast when God asks you to do something hard. Ask others to pray and fast for you. Spend time in his Word. Join a Group. Pray and encourage others. Praise God for his miracles.

**PRAYER:**

*God, I am amazed that you want to use me in your perfect plan. I am overwhelmed by your grace and mercy. Help me to always listen to and obey you. Help me to bring glory to your name and accomplish the purpose you have for my life. Help me to encourage and pray for others. I praise your glorious name! Amen.*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingitOut.*

# Show Up on Purpose

July 22, 2020

Oh, the pain! The suffering! The very thought of it was impossible to accept — a career promotion with an unwanted stipulation attached to it. REALLY? Yes, really. There was a short window of opportunity to speak up or forever hold my peace.

Thankfully, God gave me the courage to confront the impossible. Were it not for his empowerment, ignoring the elephant in the room would have been easy. However, the opportunity to speak up about what needed to be addressed was laid right at my feet. Not responding with truth would have been wrong and left me full of regret. Undoubtedly, God allowed this circumstance as an opportunity for spiritual and personal growth for me.

That experience mirrors the focus of Oregon Campus Pastor Andy Rectenwald's teaching on the story of Esther. In yesterday's LIO, we read about Esther's reluctance to act upon Mordecai's plan for her to go before the king to convince him not to allow his minister, Haman, to kill all the Jews in Susa.

Can you imagine if Esther would have missed out on playing a pivotal role in the salvation of the Jews? Imagine the regret she might have experienced. Esther didn't miss out though, because [Mordecai helped her shift her focus](#) from the power of King Xerxes to the power of God. That shift in focus is what gave her strength in her weakness and allowed her to find the faith and courage needed for the task.

So it is with you and me. Maybe, just maybe, you are in a position to be the hands and feet of Christ by standing up for someone, fighting against injustice, or dismantling an evil plan?

During the weekend service, we were challenged to show up on purpose. What does that mean? It means that we have the opportunity to step into every conversation, circumstance, or task ready to make a difference — at work, home, in our neighborhoods, at a checkout counter, to name a few. Every interaction is an opportunity to give eternal meaning to a mundane moment.

**Questions:**

What holds you back from saying what needs to be said? What keeps you from standing up for someone else? What stops you from fighting against injustice?

**Next Steps:**

Choose to grow spiritually. Download the CedarCreek app and dive into “Resources” where multiple tools are available for your spiritual growth.

Join a Group in the fall semester.

**Prayer:**

*God, you allow circumstances to surface in my life that I often fail to recognize. Sometimes I even run from the opportunity. Please forgive me for doubting you and your strength within me. Help me step into daily opportunities where I can give eternal meaning to the mundane. May your light shine in me and through me each day. It is my desire to put you on display with my words and my actions. In the precious name of Jesus, amen.*

*This post was written by Karen Peck, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Pray First

July 23, 2020

During the weekend service, Oregon Campus Pastor Andy Rectenwald spoke on the book of Esther. She was the beautiful wife of King Xerxes I and was of Jewish descent. She and Mordecai persuaded the king to reverse the decree to annihilate all the Jews in the Persian Empire. At first, Esther was not receptive to Mordecai's request to intercede on behalf of her people. She knew that anyone, including herself, would risk death by appearing before the king if they had not been called. ([Esther 4:11](#)) In the second request, Mordecai pointed out the cold hard fact that her life would not be spared and suggested that she may have been made queen for just this purpose. ([Esther 4:14](#))

## **Esther 4:15-16**

*<sup>15</sup> Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: <sup>16</sup> "Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I die, I must die."*

Even though prayer is not mentioned in these verses, Esther knew the importance of fasting as a way of drawing closer to God. She requested others to join her in the fast to help build up her confidence and strength to confront the king. The fate of the Jewish people was not in her, but in God. Her own fate depended on her faithfulness to God. It was not until she was prepared, through prayer with God, that she was able to do something that made an eternal difference.

CedarCreek Church is a proponent of "Pray First." Our church passes out blue bracelets with these words inscribed in white twice a year as a reminder of the significance of praying before everything. We should pray before starting our day, before starting a task, before meetings, before dates, before phone calls, before disciplining our children, etc. Prayer should become a priority for us as Christ followers, and not just in preparation for important decisions or facing trials. We need to remember to pray first, often, and always.

## **[Psalms 55:17 \(NKJV\)](#)**

*Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.*

Andy's bottom line was: My purpose is to give eternal meaning to the mundane. Queen Esther's life seemed anything but mundane given that she was the queen of a kingdom. As a follower of Christ, we too are in a kingdom, the kingdom of God (more on this tomorrow). Therefore, everything we do can make an eternal difference, even everyday occurrences.

**Questions:**

What are your biggest challenges in making prayer a priority?

Many Christians want to spend time in prayer with God but lack the spiritual discipline to do so. If this sounds familiar, what do you need to do to gain spiritual discipline?

God placed Queen Esther in her position for a reason, and she needed the courage to fulfill his plan. Has he placed you somewhere to fulfill his plan for you?

**Next Steps:**

We have a spiritual opportunity to be part of a MEANINGFUL moment starting Aug. 10. This is the first day of CedarCreek's 21-Days of Prayer. Challenge yourself to participate. This might just be the start of a great habit of praying first!

**Prayer:**

*Mighty Father in heaven, give me the wisdom to know that I need to pray before everything I do. Help me to understand that life is better when I am in constant dialogue with you. Grant me patience so I may see your will for my life. Give me opportunities to share spiritual blessings so I may make an eternal difference in others. In your Son's name I pray, amen.*

*This post was written by Jennifer Macke, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Jesus Is King

July 24, 2020

In the story of Esther, King Xerxes is very hard to please ([Esther 1:10-22](#))—but how wonderful is it that we have a king who is worthy of our praise ([Hebrews 1:3-4](#)), that does not require us to jump through hoops for his love ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). When I graduated from college, I already had my real estate license and was ready and willing to take on the world. I started a new job as a marketing director, continued to sell real estate, and then started a network marketing business that allowed me to leave my 9-to-5 job to raise my daughter. The more I pushed and succeeded, the more I realized it was never enough. No matter what level of success I reached, there was always another level that required more of me. At that point, I couldn't even tell who my real friends were. I had known God my whole life but I was not living in a way that said Jesus was the king of my life. I was striving instead of surrendering.

God has a funny way of letting us burn out so he can fill us up. When I finally got real with myself, I discovered that all my striving was coming from a place of very deep wounding that I had swept under the rug many years earlier. Jesus extended an invitation to me that meant I didn't have to take care of myself anymore. He gave me fresh eyes to see that he had blessed me with a husband that was just waiting to take care of me and I could trust. He showed me that I could trust him (God) with what was most important to me, and that I would be taken care of. When I finally started living out my identity as a daughter of King Jesus, the blessings just fell from the sky like rain. The blessings I am speaking of are peace, contentment, joy, and rest. I finally was able to view my journey in life from an eternal perspective instead of a worldly perspective. I was no longer a prisoner to the thought that I was only loved because of what I could do for others, but I was loved because I belong to Jesus and he is the king of my life. Surrender to Jesus and the blessings will fall like rain.

## Questions:

Do you struggle with thinking that what you do is never enough?

Do you feel contentment in your everyday life?

Do you want to have more peace and rest in your life?

**Next Steps:**

Share your answers to the above with a trusted friend.

If you are feeling isolated, reach out to family or friends, and you will find that you are not alone in your struggles.

**Prayer:**

*Father, we thank you for all the blessings that are ours because we belong to you. Please remind each of us that you love us unconditionally. Thank you that we are loved, accepted, and forgiven. Thank you that we can come to you with hard questions and you listen to us. Thank you for sending people into our lives that can remind us of these truths. Amen.*

*This post was written by April Willer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut*