



30 Days of Inspiration

Encouragement for your **ONE THING** journey

Dr. Randy Carlson

30 Days of Inspiration

Encouragement for your ONE THING journey

Dr. Randy Carlson

© 2013 Dr. Randy L. Carlson

Published by Family Life Communications Incorporated

Intentional Living

PO Box 35300

Tucson, AZ 85740

TheIntentionalLife.com

Scripture marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture marked NIV are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Copyright ©2001 by Crosswalk Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from the *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2001. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Printed in the United States of America.



Introduction

Now that you have chosen your ONE THING for the next 30 days, my team and I at the Intentional Living Center® want to encourage and inspire you as you embark on this journey. Please know that our team will be standing in faith with you asking God to help you stay committed. It's our prayer that you would see transformation in your life as a result of your desire to live an intentional life in Him.

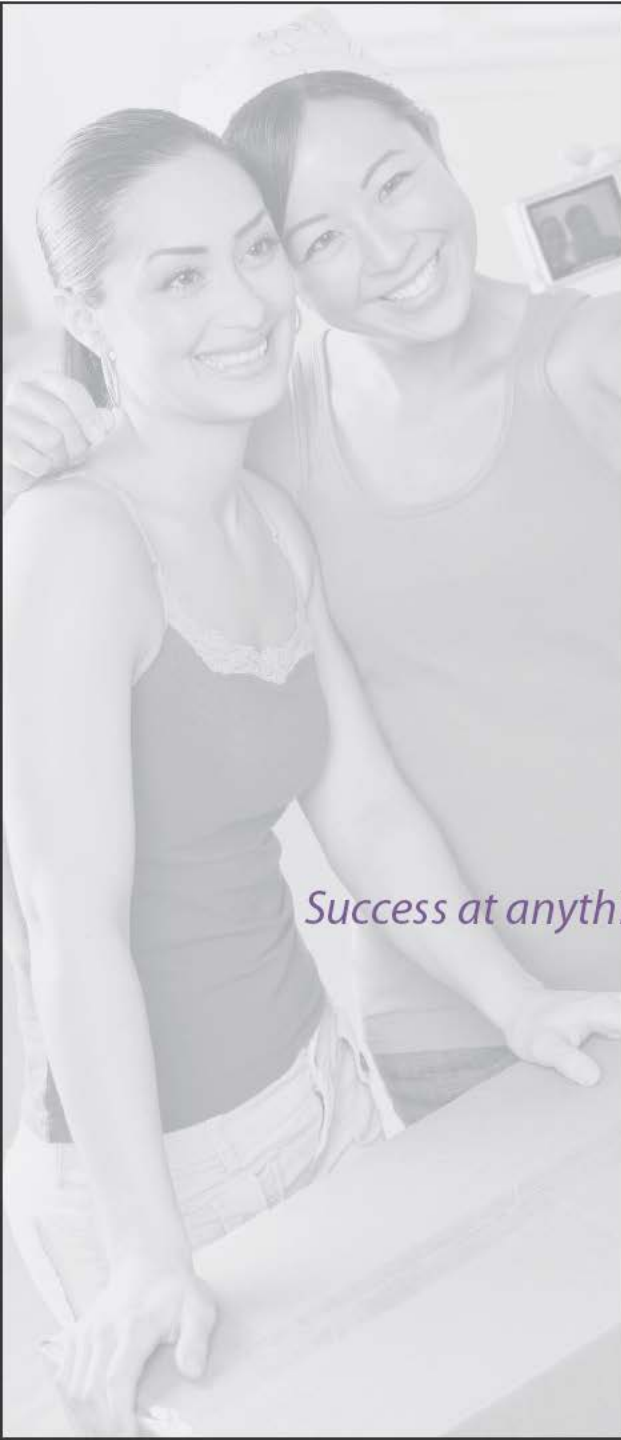
This eBook is our gift to you. Read one entry each day to inspire you in completing your 30 day challenge. I pray this book will help you get a picture of the purpose God has for you and allow you to see your future from His perspective.

Let's get started!

Dr. Randy Carlson

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 NLT



Day 1

You Are Not Alone

First of all, let me say how excited I am about your decision to do the next right ONE THING. I believe that you will experience hope in Christ and see changes in this particular area of your life as you pursue this godly goal and take daily action toward your commitment.

You can do this! One reason I know you can is because you are not alone. Jesus said, I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever (John 14:16 NKJV). We are praying for you as well, asking God to give you the strength and wisdom to press through.

There will be days where you may not feel like making the effort to do your ONE THING. Just remember, you are creating a new habit in your life. Each day that you take the required action, you are one step closer to making an intentional difference in your life and your future.

Success at anything isn't by accident, but by decision.

Go Deeper: Numbers 11:16-18; John 8:28-30



Day 2

No Worries

One thing that separates those who succeed from those who fail is a decision not to give in to the fear of failure. Your thoughts are important. If you spend your time concerned about *not* getting it right, then most likely you won't.

The Apostle Paul has some encouragement for you:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Philippians 4:6-8 ESV).

Paul gives you four specific action steps to take daily with the promise that peace will follow.

1. Pray daily.
2. Ask humbly.
3. Give thanksgiving daily.
4. Tell yourself the truth.

One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is to be sure our thinking matches what we believe, and then start behaving in line with those truths.

Go Deeper: Matthew 6:24-34



Day 3

Choose Peace and Freedom

You're well on your way to reinventing your life by focusing on your ONE THING, but sometimes this type of life change involves identifying an underlying problem. This is where you need to think through and discover the root problem and real issues you face, not just the symptoms.

You don't have to read very far into the Bible to see examples of people failing to identify their real problem.

1. In Genesis 3:12, Adam blamed both God and his wife for his sin "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."
2. In the very next verse, Eve blamed Satan saying, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate," ignoring the fact that God had given her free will to choose.
3. Cain's sacrifice was given without the right motive and it was rejected by God. Rather than examine his own heart, Cain killed Abel in jealousy.

Prayer is a great place to start! Ask God to reveal the truth to you so you can address the real problem and make huge strides toward achieving your 30-day challenge.

Peace and freedom happen at the intersection of God's intentional love for me, the gifts and talents He gave me and my willingness to be obedient to take action.

Go Deeper: John 4:1-26



Day 4

Let Love Break Down Prison Walls

What do you fear today? What keeps you imprisoned inside walls of fear emotionally? Fear can do strange things to people. It brings out behaviors that wouldn't be typical under different circumstances.

- Fear destroys relationships. The fearful person builds a wall around himself for self-protection. Eventually the fear, masked in busyness, control or anger gnaws away at the foundation of the relationship until it collapses under the weight.
- Fear steals your motivation.
- Fear can lead to bad decisions. Fear causes a drowning victim to fight the rescuer and both can perish in a situation like that.
- Fear causes distrust. It can cause leaders to throw in the towel and give up too soon. Fear can keep us from connecting with people we need, and who need us.

1 John 4:18 says, *Perfect love expels all fear* (NLT). I believe whatever fear you have in your life today, God has a solution for it, but you have to embrace it. As you embrace His unconditional love for you, allow His love to break down fear's prison walls in your heart.

Freedom from fear is the result when you embrace the truth of God's love.

Go Deeper: 2 Timothy 1:6-8; 1 John 4:17-19



Day 5

It's Really Worth It

Have you been tempted to give up on your ONE THING this week? I only ask the question because as I talk to people, I get the feeling they are much more willing to give up, to throw in the towel and not pursue what they know God has for them.

That kind of attitude is so far removed from how God wants any of us to feel. The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 3:14, *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus* (NIV1984).

The point of division between just getting by and really living in the success you're looking for comes down to taking action. Maybe this week you got to that place, where you missed doing your ONE THING a time or two and instead of pressing in, you backed up.

Wherever you find yourself today in your commitment—know that doing your ONE THING for 30 days is worth it. Each action you take will catapult you right into the success God has for you.

There is a line that represents a point where you have to make a decision, and then take action.

Go Deeper: Ecclesiastes 9:9-11; Philippians 3:12-16



Day 6

Words of Encouragement

The words you speak matter. They can have the authority to empower or destroy—your life and lives of those you speak with. King David, the writer of Psalms provided an example of how we are to pray so the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts would be acceptable in God's sight (Psalm 19:14).

Research shows that by the time they graduate, the average 12th grader will have been criticized 16,000 times. What those words do to the spirit of any child is very destructive. Perhaps you were a child with ambitious goals flickering like a candle—but somebody came along and blew that candle out.

Encouraging words bring life and hope to the hearer. As you continue doing your ONE THING, share your ONE THING with a few close friends you trust and then ask them to help you by offering encouragement. If they know you very well, they'll give you the words you need at just the right time—like we hope we're doing as you read this book.

You can take it a step further and focus on speaking words of encouragement to those friends you've shared your ONE THING with.

The words you speak change lives.

Go Deeper: Proverbs 18:21; Ephesians 4:25-29



Day 7

Peace for Parents

You've made it to the seventh day of your 30-day challenge—**CONGRATULATIONS!** Today I wanted to share a word of encouragement to those of you who took the challenge to be more intentional parents.

How many times has your overbearing hand of discipline provoked an already rebellious child to lash out even more against you? Or perhaps your laid back attitude allowed your child an opportunity to dismiss your direction? The answer is to find a balance of discipline, the fine line that varies according to each child. That balance of discipline is not a simple task for any parent, but especially the parent who wrestles with over-or under-compensating for the guilt or self-doubt they're experiencing in their role as a parent. See how these feed into each other? Left unaddressed, they have a dismal result.

Proverbs 31 is a wonderful model of a parent who has a household under control. Take time to read the account and I believe you will find some principles that might help you pinpoint ways that can help you discover peace today in parenting your child.

Let the Word of God come alive for your situation, and experience the hope of God's help to parent His child and yours.

Go Deeper: Proverbs 31



Day 8

Give God the Glory!

As you start your eighth day of your 30-day challenge, remember to keep your focus on pleasing Christ. If you've missed something here or there in your commitment, don't let that give you a reason to quit. Stay committed and stay connected to God.

Sometimes we fail to seek God when things are going well, then when the bottom seems to fall out of our lives—we turn to Him. Don't wait until the bottom falls out, but be intentional and seek God now.

That is why the Lord says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish. Joel 2:12-13 NLT

Each moment spent with God prepares you for what lies ahead. When you face adversity, you can remain confident in your faith in Christ because you've taken the time to build those spiritual muscles. You can remain strong through the challenges life brings. Stay intentional and give God the glory!

Living intentionally means doing the next right ONE THING each day and leads to an abundant life in Christ.

Go Deeper: Ephesians 5:8-10; Joel 2:12-13



Day 9

Don't Let It Stress You Out

I sincerely believe that living an intentional life in Christ is the only way you can accomplish those things you believe matter most. We all have good intentions—whether it's to be a good spouse or parent, to excel on the job, or to be successful in general. But often what happens when things don't go exactly as intended—you begin to stress out.

You're already ahead of the game on this because you've made a commitment. You've focused on your ONE THING with a purpose of making it work. The Bible says in James 1:8, *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*. In other words, this person can't make up his mind one way or the other (KJV).

When you allow external situations to drive your life and you're not intentionally committed one way or the other, stress eventually creeps in. When you learn to be committed, first to God and then to your situation, you'll soon notice a calm in the midst of life's chaos.

When you are committed and God is invited to be a part of your decision, He will help you meet the challenge.

Go Deeper: Proverbs 3:5-6; James 1:12-18



Day 10

Is It Time to Let Go?

Sometimes it is hard to let things go. For some, forgiveness can happen quickly, offenses left behind and a person moves on. For others, it may be a daily, on-going process, continuing to forgive which means not holding an offense over someone's head and moving on.

A lack of forgiveness can negatively impact your physical and emotional well-being, and can keep you from an intimate relationship with Christ. Jesus, in His own words says, *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (Matthew 6:14-15 KJV).

What if the other person does not deserve forgiveness? *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16 KJV).

God did the forgiving long before you did the repenting.

God knew in advance of His act of loving forgiveness that millions and millions of people over the ages would reject His act of love, but Jesus died for them anyway.

If you've struggled with forgiveness, or forgiving someone during this 30-Day Challenge—talk to God about it and let it go.

Forgiveness is something you can do even if the other person is unwilling to accept it.

Go Deeper: Matthew 6:14-15; John 3:16-18



Day 11

It's Attainable

I believe God-given goals can make a difference in your life and as you've continued your ONE THING on your 30-day challenge, you have probably quickly realized this as well.

You have taken the first step as you sensed in your heart that something needed to be better or different. You set the goal and have pursued it for 11 days. Truthfully, ideas are cheap—everybody has an idea, but turning an idea into a goal is a totally different story.

Success is turning a good idea that God has given you into reality. That requires a goal, and a goal simply is something that you write down; something that you know is doable; and something you know is tangible. You can see it, touch it and smell it. It should have an end—a deadline to get there.

Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it (Habakkuk 2:2 NKJV). If you haven't actually written your ONE THING down, do it now—take some time—write it on your bathroom mirror, stick a note in your pocket, or put it on your computer monitor.

Make it your highest priority to honor God and follow His principles.

Go Deeper: Habakkuk 2:1-4



Day 12

Hand in Hand

Perhaps your ONE THING is to work on your relationship with your spouse. When a couple doesn't have a sense of direction in their marriage or a purpose beyond today, it's easy to look for other things to fill that void in their lives. But when you're in agreement, powerful things can happen.

Amos 3:3 asks, *Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?* (NKJV). When a couple really sees a long-term vision from God for their lives, they can work together toward the future.

Now I exhort you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10 NAS).

You Need a Marital GPS: 1) Goal – Know where the finish line is and agree where you're going; 2) Plan—know what steps you need to take to get from point A to point B; and 3) Sacrifice—tradeoffs are necessary in your marriage if you really want to get there together. Take time today to discover what your spouse needs in order to travel your journey together.

Walk it out—hand in hand—together!

Go Deeper: Amos 3:1-8



Day 13

Tapping into God's Purpose

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope* (NLT). I really believe God has a wonderful purpose for your life. The key is to be able to tap into it and to put it into motion.

So how do you do that? It happens through the decisions you make daily. In Exodus 18, Moses speaks of how the Israelites constantly came to him to "seek God's will" about various matters and quarrels. But look closely at how the Bible says Moses dealt with this weighty responsibility: *When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions* (Exodus 18:16 NLT).

Did you catch that? Moses turned to God's decrees, standards, rules for living, His Word, or what I like to call God's intentions—to define God's will for the people. Moses applied it to every circumstance or situation brought before him.

You should do no less today. Your pursuit for God's intentions must begin with the Bible, and more specifically, obedience to his Word.

***A diligent search of Scripture can reveal God's intentions
for your circumstance.***

Go Deeper: Deuteronomy 11:1-25



Day 14

Keep On Keeping On!

Changing a habit or fulfilling a commitment sometimes feels like you're pushing a giant boulder up a steep incline. Refuse to be overcome by disappointment and instead, find your courage by looking forward to the future you desire. What changes are you already experiencing as a result of your ONE THING? Can you see a difference in your relationships as a result? Look how far you've come, and get a picture—a hope of what that can look like in just 12 more days.

Just a few days ago, you were committed, excited and working to be more intentional in your life. Remember that feeling of moving forward? Don't allow discouragement, defeat and a sense of failure to set in as opposition tries to keep you down. Look at each dip in life as an opportunity to recognize God as your strength.

Psalm 27:1 says, *The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid* (NKJV). He has given you all you need to rise above the challenges standing between you and achieving your ONE THING.

Find your courage by looking forward to the future you desire.

Go Deeper: Joshua 1:6-8; Joshua 23:5-7



Day 15

Demonstrate Your Love for Him

Wow! You're halfway through your commitment to do ONE THING for 30 days. The Christian life is a directional life. You get up every morning and make decisions about what you are going to do that day—you choose the direction your life is going to take by those actions. The Bible is not silent about the direction you are to take. Psalm 119:105 says, *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path* (NIV). Following God's intentions for our lives gives us a clear path that you can follow.

The direction you take ultimately determines your destination. God created you on purpose and filled you with passion to succeed in becoming who He destined you to be. How you live today sets the tone for tomorrow and the day after, and the day after that. Your gift to God is the choices you make and the actions you take. What you think, feel and do each and every day demonstrates your love for God. In John 14:15, Jesus said, *If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you.*

***It's only when you choose a direction for your life that pleases Him
that you can move from mediocrity to really living
the way He intended!***

Go Deeper: Psalm 37:24-24; Isaiah 48:17-18



Day 16

Choose to Do the New

We tolerate bad habits because they require no additional effort on our part. As you've discovered by doing ONE THING over these past two weeks, it takes effort to change a habit. I am so excited to know that you are intentionally choosing to replace that bad habit with a good one.

James 1:22-25 says, But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing (ESV).

As you press on in your 30-day challenge today, I want to remind you that a bad habit developed over time limits you and limits God's ability to use you. Each day as you do your ONE THING continue to choose to do something new.

Do whatever it takes to develop the necessary habits that will create sustained daily action, to live out your purpose.

Your purpose is to glorify God and love others.

Go Deeper: Isaiah 43:18-20; James 1:22-25



Day 17

Remember What Made Your Relationship Great

If you're working on something that will benefit your marriage during this 30-day challenge, discontentment is really one of the first serious signs that something bad is about to happen in a marriage relationship (this can be said of other relationships as well). My observation, as I've worked with couples, is that usually when a marriage starts to move from strong to weak—somebody—at least one person or sometimes both grow discontented with what they have.

Discontentment in any relationship—friends, coworkers, siblings or parents—results when you stop doing what made the relationship successful in the first place. It's vitally important that you don't stop doing the things that you used to do to make your marriage great. Maybe you think, *I'm not getting what I think I should get. This isn't what I bargained for. My expectations have not become reality, and I'm discontented.*

If you're married, make it a point to go back to the basics and do some of the things that you used to do to make your marriage great. If you're struggling in another relationship—ask what first drew or connected you to that person and use those things to rebuild on.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:6 NKJV

Go Deeper: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13



Day 18

What You Say and Do Matters

People are trying to find their purpose in life. No matter what your job is, God wants to use you in His ministry—and His ministry is people. Whatever God has called you to do—wherever He’s placed you to do it—use it to His glory. Jesus’ thoughts were always on others, even as he was about to be arrested. In John 17 he turned to the cross and did three things: 1) prayed for himself, 2) prayed for his disciples, 3) prayed for all believers, including you and me.

Jesus replied, “I assure you, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does (John 5:19 NLT).”

Do your actions add to people’s lives? Do you offer affirmation, inspiration and hope? Are you equipping them from the overflow of joy in your heart that comes from knowing Christ?

People need to connect with one another and hear the Truth in a loving way. Whether you mean to or not, you share the Good News through your actions. Believers and nonbelievers are watching you. What you say and what you do every day really matters.

Strive to live intentionally for Christ by being aware that what you say and do really does matter.

Go Deeper: John 5:16-23; John 17:1-19



Day 19

Strip Off the Weights

Years ago I participated in a popular bicycling event, the “El Tour de Tucson.” In preparation, I stripped down my bicycle, removing everything that wasn’t absolutely necessary in order to make it light.

When you race, you don’t want to carry any extra weight. Weights can keep you from pursuing an intentional life in Christ. Hebrews 12:1 tells you to strip those weights off like I stripped off everything unnecessary from my bike in order to race: *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us* (NKJV).

Some of those weights include: worry, fear, anxiety, too much work, over commitment, too much entertainment. You can be tempted to load your life with lots of stuff while trying to run the race with a full backpack. It slows you down.

As you continue your 30-day challenge, take a few minutes today and consider if there are some weights in your life that God is prompting you to lay aside. If so, set them down as you press forward to finish the last leg of this 30 day race.

There is freedom to run your race when you strip off the weights.

Go Deeper: Hebrews 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:12-17



Day 20

Use Your Emotions in a Healthy Way

No doubt you've experienced some emotion as you've chosen to do your ONE THING these last 20 days. You know how it goes...something occurs—a thought or event—and you react to it. Your emotions need attention every day. Stress is a negative response everyone has when faced with run-away emotions. It's a physical reaction to life that comes back to our bodies.

Success in life depends on how well you manage your emotions. Your emotions are a result of your thoughts about what is going on around you. Philippians 4:6-7 has been an anchor for me when I feel like responding negatively: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (NIV). This verse reminds me that I must choose to *think* like Christ so I can *behave* like Christ.

Your thoughts lead to your behavior. When you choose to think and behave like Christ, you can use your emotions to bring God honor.

*Only then can you fuel your emotions
to light a fire of passion that will honor God
and bring peace to your mind.*

Go Deeper: Ephesians 5:1-3; Ephesians 1:17-19



Day 21

You and I Are the Why

John, the disciple Jesus loved, says that God's great love for us compelled Him to sacrifice His only Son, which gave us each security in knowing we belong to God and our relationship with Him is assured (John 3:16-18). But this is not the end of the story.

If you compare John 3:16-18 to 1 John 3:16-18 you will discover the *why*—why did God do it? God wants you to experience His love—and it can only be experienced through a personal relationship with Him. Just as Jesus gave His life so that you could know God, you and I are encouraged to follow His example of sacrifice. When you prefer someone else, or in a manner of speaking, lay down your life for the good of someone else, you are demonstrating God's unselfish love. You are giving others a picture of God's love at work in you.

God gave you eternal life. That's His gift to you whether you choose it or not. If you choose to accept His gift, then you should want to give your life back to Him. Intentional Living—doing those things that please Him—is your gift back to Him. Your decision to be intentional—or not—comes down to what you do in response to your love for God.

Good words and a great speech is not enough.

It's taking what you know, caring about others enough to take action and doing something that demonstrates God's love to them.

Go Deeper: John 3:1-21; 1 John 3:16-23



Day 22

Yes, You Belong

Little children give a vivid picture of an often unexpressed need inside of us—even through our adult lives—to belong. Young children unashamedly express this need. They want their parents to give them lots of attention, to watch over their progress toward success and to share their lives.

“Come see my puzzle—I did it all by myself!”

“Daddy, look at me. I can ride a bike with no hands.”

“Mom, look what I made!”

That’s the way God wired us. As adults, most of us have found it can be a cold, cruel world that greets us when we step outside our homes. As we get older we have a tendency to express this desire less and less and eventually—even as believers—sometimes feel as though we don’t have a place where we belong. That’s why it’s imperative that we find our confidence in our relationship with Christ

The Bible is full of affirmations that demonstrate that you belong. Jeremiah 31:3 says, *“I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself”* (NLT). The Creator of the entire universe loves you. He cares deeply about everything that happens to you in your lifetime. You have a place reserved in God’s affections.

The one who made the oceans, the mountains, the moon and stars loves you!

Go Deeper: Romans 8:30-32; 2 Thessalonians 2:15-17



Day 23

Praying for You

Have you experienced a lot of interruptions and distractions during your 30-day challenge? Honestly, there are times that the distractions and interruptions are truly beyond your control. As you reflect over the last few weeks, I hope that you were able to say that you, for the most part, were deliberately and proactively in pursuit of your ONE THING.

My wife, Donna and I, along with our team continue to prayerfully support you through this challenge. We continue to ask the Lord to help you take the time to zero in on that ONE THING. We are trusting God that your ONE THING is making a big difference every day in your relationships—that you, as well as your friends and family—are seeing God's hand on you.

Please know that your ONE THING is worthy of the energy you pour into it. You have probably seen changes in your thoughts, feelings and behavior already. I am thrilled that you have taken Ephesians 5:10, have figured out what pleases Christ, and are doing it today.

*Choose today how you will live
before life chooses for you.*

Go Deeper: Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 10:38-39



Day 24

Generations of Faith

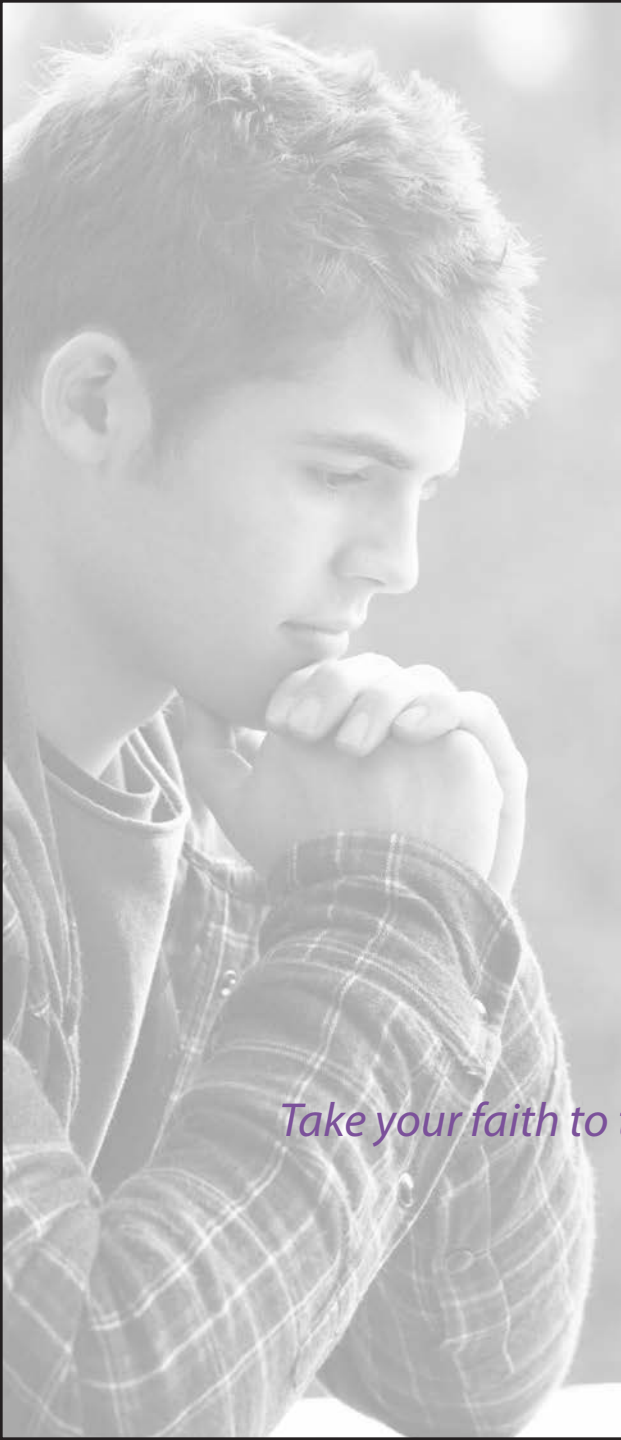
If you are a parent, you hope that your children will always be willing to listen to your counsel. You also know that you won't always be in a position to give it. It's a great comfort to know that God can go with your children where you may not be able to go.

Isaiah 54:13 says, *All your children shall be taught by the Lord, And great shall be the peace of your children* (NKJV). When God becomes your child's personal teacher and mentor, peace is the result. In your dreams of happiness for your children, isn't that really what you want for them?

Life can be tough, even for Christians. God didn't promise to insulate us from the troubles of this world. You can't provide environments for your children that are void of conflict, but you can lead them to an incredible inner source that will sustain them during tough times. *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name* (John 1:12 NKJV).

**If you give a child generations of faith as his background,
you give him the ultimate head start in life.**

Go Deeper: Joshua 1:3-9; Deuteronomy 30:11-20



Day 25

ONE THING in Your Faith

In the past three weeks or so, I hope you've been encouraged with the simplicity to focus on ONE THING. So many times when you want to make a change in your life, you are tempted to look at the enormity of the big picture. While it's important to have that big picture for long term, it can sometimes overwhelm you. Looking at ONE THING you can do, breaks off any discouragement and allows you to see your goal as altogether manageable.

ONE THING can bring results in any area of life you focus on. As you seek to make Christ the center of your life, faith is one of the five essential areas of life where you want to be intentionally growing and improving. But when you become overwhelmed with all that you want to change, the enemy often tells you that it's not even worth starting. You are almost there in this 30-day challenge. Don't give up! You can do this!

Don't let that kind of discouragement – that lie – get in the way of deepening your faith. As you've discovered throughout this challenge, doing ONE THING in your faith today can lead you into the kind of vibrant, intimate walk with God that you desire.

Take your faith to the next level by doing the next right ONE THING!

Go Deeper: Romans 5:2-6; 2 Peter 3:18



Day 26

Remember God's Compassionate Care

Before you close out this 30-day challenge, I want to talk to you again about forgiveness. When you've been hurt emotionally by a loved one's words, or set back mentally by a lack of trust shown to you, you can feel angry. Even as you've stayed committed to your ONE THING this month, you may have experienced this. The last thing you want to give that person is grace, unmerited love, or forgiveness, and that's a normal response that comes out of our human nature.

But responding with love is exactly what God asks you to do. Let your memory serve you here—and remember the undeserved and undying love you've received from Jesus. He responded to you with a compassionate care so strong that He was willing to die for you. The same great God who gave His life for you will help you forgive those closest to you—those same people who can hurt you the most.

Try to see your loved one through God's eyes. Turn your hurt over to God so He can heal and restore you. Consider writing a letter of forgiveness for the person who has hurt you. Read it back to God in prayer and carefully listen as He speaks to you.

***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish
but have eternal life. John 3:16 NIV***

Go Deeper: Colossians 3:12-13; Psalm 103:2-4



Day 27

Daily Decisions Determine Your Destiny

After much prayer, professional baseball player Tim Burke and his wife decided to adopt four special-needs international children. This led to one of the most difficult decisions in Tim's life—to give up baseball, telling reporters, "I'm the only father my children have. I'm the only husband my wife has. And they need me a lot more than baseball does."

As a Christian your decisions are really a continuation of working out your salvation. Your choices about whom you marry, where you live, whether or not to accept Christ as Lord and Savior...all add up to who you are today. The good news is you can change something today and redirect the course of your future.

Philippians 2:12-13 says, *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure* (NKJV).

Salvation is not merely a gift received once; it expresses itself as an ongoing process in which you are strenuously involved, developing perseverance, spiritual growth and maturity through the decision you make to live intentionally for Him.

You become the product of the decisions you make.

Go Deeper: 1 Corinthians 2:7-9; Hebrews 11



Day 28

Hit the Reset Button

Often as you pursue the intentional life in Christ, it helps to take a step back periodically and think about your actions and decisions. Your commitment to do ONE THING over these past four weeks has most likely tested your resolve, patience and stamina.

The philosopher Socrates observed that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” A powerful thought, but self-examination is tough and often emotionally unpleasant.

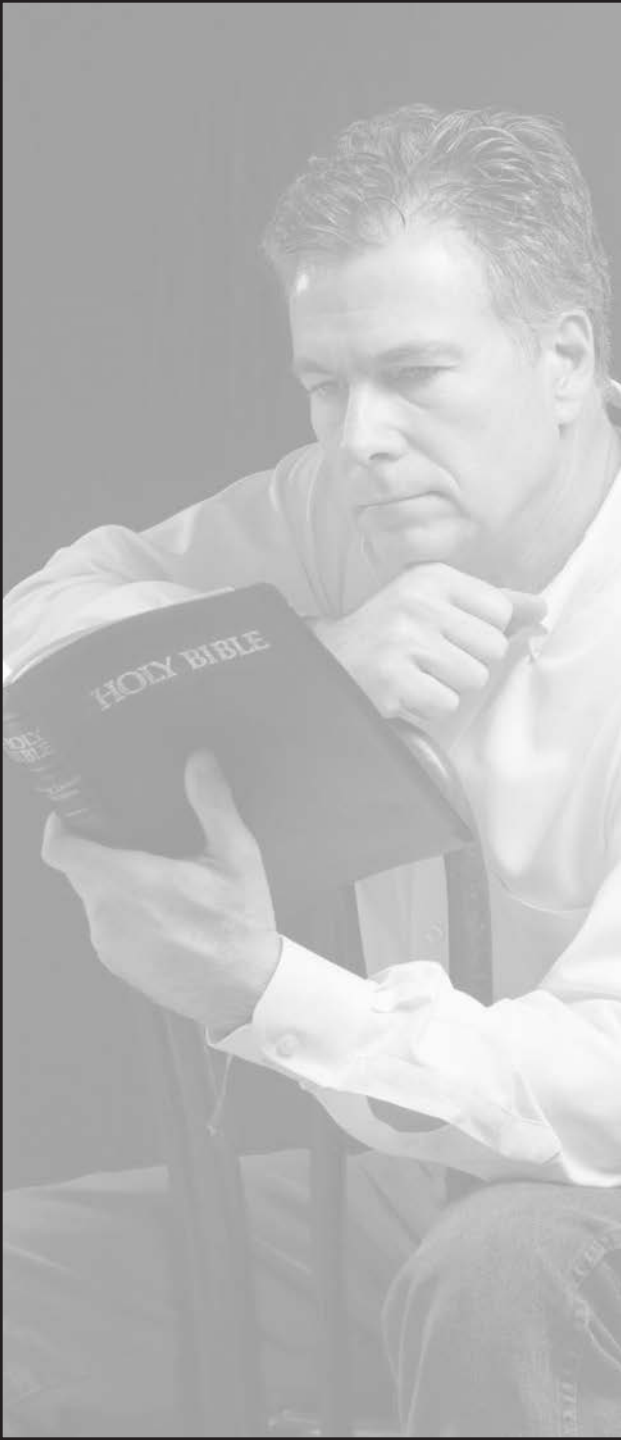
To stay sharp and effective, you must schedule time to reflect and then be prepared to hit the “reset” button. Ask yourself questions about the choices you made and answer honestly - in what ways you were most effective with your ONE THING?

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:18-19 ESV).

In your prayer time, ask the Lord to help you carefully examine your heart through your personal evaluation. Make the adjustments He shows you to make and then hit the reset button.

Give yourself grace and mercy and start again.

Go Deeper: John 14:1-3; Jonah 2:1-10



Day 29

Prayer Backed by the Power of God

The prophet Elijah was identified in Scripture as a man of God, chiefly because he was first a man of prayer. When the apostle James chose to write about prayer, he used Elijah as an illustration of powerful, effective prayer. In response to Elijah's intercessions during a time of severe drought, *the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops* (James 5:18 NIV). Imagine how many lives were literally saved through God's answer to Elijah's fervent prayers.

Elijah's prayers had purpose because

- He was in regular communication with God.
- He prayed for God's will to be accomplished, not his own.
- He was persistent, never giving up.

Such prayer, backed by the very power of God, starts with your choice to make prayer a priority, and then following through with that commitment. Choose today to make prayer the foundation of your relationship with God, and the means through which His mighty power and purpose is unleashed.

When you are determined to make prayer a daily, dynamic part of your life, your heart will change, and others will be impacted by your actions.

Go Deeper: 1 Kings 18



Day 30

Share Your Hope with Others

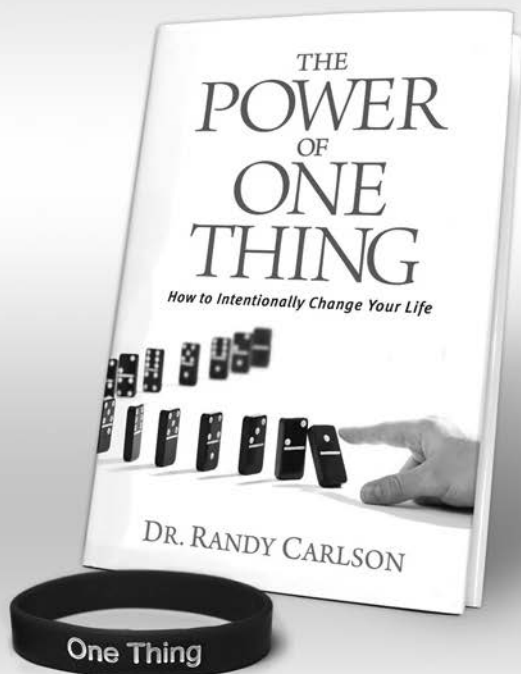
CONGRATULATIONS! You successfully completed your 30-day challenge. I hope by doing your ONE THING each day, you have seen an amazing difference in your life and the lives of those you love.

We live in a world today that wrestles with what it means to experience hope. As you have grown in Christ during these past 30 days, I pray you were encouraged to share your hope in Christ with others as you did your ONE THING each day.

The Bible says, *Without wavering, let us hold tightly to the hope we say we have, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near* (Hebrews 10:23-25 NLT).

You can give others the exhilarating opportunity to experience hope, freedom, peace, and purpose in Christ like they've never had before. Please share with us and with others how your 30-day challenge has impacted you. Your story can inspire others to do ONE THING that can impact their lives, just as we hope this challenge has impacted you! Please take a moment and go to TheIntentionalLife.com and share your story today!

Go Deeper: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 2:6-16



INTENTIONALLY CHANGE YOUR LIFE

From counselor and popular radio host, Dr. Randy Carlson, comes a book containing the surprising truth: Living a better life is easier than you think! *The Power of One Thing* invites you to begin moving toward change one daily, intentional step at a time. You'll learn how to figure out which positive change can make the biggest payoff in your life; you'll get practical tips and you'll see how your one thing, lived intentionally over time, will help you to achieve the dreams you'd almost given up on.

Order your copy today online at
shop.TheIntentionalLife.com

About Intentional Living

You can find hope for a better life in Christ with *Intentional Living*. If you would like to discover more about this unique world view, we are here to serve you with resources to help you live intentionally. You can listen to our nationally syndicated radio program and learn about our marriage and parenting conferences to grow your family. You'll also find articles and resources online at our web site TheIntentionalLife.com.

To make the most impact in your personal life and your family, you can turn your good intentions to reality. You'll learn to find out what pleases Christ and do it in the five essential areas of life: faith, family, health, finances and work.

intentional[®]
Living



About Dr. Randy Carlson

When it comes to parenting, marriage, and other relationship issues, people are turning to best-selling author, counselor and radio personality Dr. Randy Carlson. Recognized as an advocate for the family, Randy hosts *Intentional Living*, a live daily call-in program syndicated to radio stations nationwide.

As president of Family Life Communications Incorporated, Randy also oversees the ministries of *Intentional Living* (Parent Talk, Inc.) and Family Life Radio.

Randy has written or coauthored five books: *Starved for Affection*, *Unlocking the Secrets of Your Childhood Memories*, *Parent Talk*, *Father Memories*, *The Cain & Abel Syndrome* and his sixth book, *The Power of One Thing*.

Randy is a licensed marriage and family therapist with a doctorate in counseling psychology and over twenty-six years of counseling experience. He shares wisdom, encouragement, and comfort from God's Word with people who call the daily *Intentional Living* program with issues that affect their families today. He has appeared on national radio and television talk shows such as *Good Morning America*, *Focus on the Family* with Dr. James Dobson, and *Moody's Midday Connection*. He also speaks at conferences and seminars around the country.

Dr. Carlson and his wife, Donna, have three grown children and four grandchildren and reside in Tucson, Arizona. Randy and Donna share a deep commitment to each other, to their family, and to helping others live an intentional life in Christ.