

*From Grandpa With Love*

*Ten Years  
of  
Overtime*

*“The length of our days is seventy years—  
or eighty, if we have the strength...”*  
(Psalm 90:10a)

*Late in Life Events*

# *Ten Years of Overtime*

## **A Personal Note**

Many years ago a wise man challenged me,

*“Marvin, there are ‘precipitative events’  
that happen suddenly and change our lives.  
When they occur—Act!”*

The 2020 Pandemic has been one such event for all of us. I tried to give my view of that story in *2020: Pandemic and Pandemonium*, a booklet we recently distributed. If you didn’t get a copy, it is available free of charge on [fromgrandpawithlove.com](http://fromgrandpawithlove.com).

Those traumatic months made me look back and realize there was a *series* of life changing events during the ten years preceding the Pandemic. It also became clear that many of us are having similar experiences at about the same stage of our journey. But, each person is still different and our lives are forever changed by what happens to us. As we sometimes say in our family,

*“If it didn’t happen to you, it didn’t happen!”*

Hopefully, this booklet will give a broader picture of some of the late in life changes in one man’s life. I relate them in the hope these experiences may trigger something helpful in your journey.

Events highlighted in the Index are written as a guide for some perspective of the events. But I will let the writings tell their own story of these *“very old years”*.

Since Jo and I spent 90% of our lives with others before our marriage, many of these final writings are memories directed to family and friends from earlier years. Because of my love and respect for Jo, and my great thanks to her and to God for our time

together, we are also assembling some additional material for her and “her boys” and their families and friends, to preserve events unique to our relationship.

I am deeply grateful to all of you who have been a part of my life. You have my profound, “Thanks”. Without each of you, I would never have known some part of the love, joy and profound gratitude I am experiencing as I “finish the race“.

As usual, remember we all err. This is just one man’s view, so hold on to what is “good” (of God)—and discard the rest.

*From Grandpa With Love*

Copyright © 2021 Marvin J. Martin

If you find the information beneficial, and you want to pass it on to others, permission is given to reproduce this booklet, provided the copies are complete, unaltered and unabridged, including this Copyright page, and circulated free of charge.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture 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.

The “NIV” and “New International Version” trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by the International Bible Society. Use of either trademark requires the written permission of International Bible Society.

# Index

## Events #1 and #2

		Page
September 2, 2009	<b>Death of Ellie and</b>	
February 10, 2012	<b>Remarriage to Joan</b>	
	<i>Beginning a New Adventure</i>	1
	<i>Forty Days in the Wilderness</i>	11

## Event #3

August 10, 2015	<b>90<sup>th</sup> Birthday</b>	
	<i>Our Identity Crisis</i>	17
	<i>Who Am I—Now?</i>	21
	<i>Last Messages</i>	32

## Event #4

July 2, 2018	<b>Heart Failure and Separation</b>	
	<i>The Lights Went Out</i>	42
	<i>The Gardens of God</i>	44
	<i>The Bucket List</i>	49
2021	<b>Another New Adventure</b>	51



## **Events #1 and #2**

### ***Death of Ellie***

September 2, 2009

Age 84

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***Remarriage to Joan***

February 10, 2012

Age 86

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Beginning a New Adventure***

Ellie, my dear wife of 61 years, went Home on September 2, 2009. She was the light and love of my life and it was a wrenching experience. But it was God's will, and neither of us ever questioned it was the right time for her. We wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

However, it did leave me in a quandary. As I described in "*Letting Go*", a booklet I wrote about a year after her death, I knew it was to be a new life, but I didn't know just what to do. Here is what I said:

*"After Ellie left last year, I felt rudderless. I knew I had been privileged to be with her until she reached the other shore. But, then it was as if Jesus took the boat and put me back out on the river. When I asked for direction, I seemed to get the same simple answer He so often offers those who are searching:*

***"You must follow me." (John 21:22)***

*So that is what I intend to do."*

The next several months were very difficult. Like many others who have gone through this kind of experience, I felt I was not whole. The love, time, attention, cards and letters I received from so many helped

immensely, and I shall always be grateful. But it seemed half of me was gone. I felt as if my boat was not going anywhere—just sitting in the harbor, while I waited to rejoin Ellie.

I remember thinking it would be much easier if I had just left when she did. I found myself praying to see her in my dreams. And I realized that was not healthy—simply spending my life thinking and speaking about our good life together made me a prisoner of the past. I had no sense of the future, and the Bible says, “*Where there is no vision the people perish.*” (Proverbs 29:18 KJV) I knew I needed to do something, but I didn’t know what.

My dilemma came to a head in February of last year, after Ellie had been gone about a year and a half. A young man with whom I had been meeting came in one day and laid a DVD movie entitled, “*UP*”, on the table and told me, “*You need to watch this.*” I did. And after watching it, here is what I wrote in my Journal:

*“2-26-11 I was given the DVD, “UP”, an animated movie. Showing a couple of kids growing up, marrying and growing old together. They started with an “Adventure Book” with blank pages showing what they were going to do. Finally she dies. As an old, sad man, he opens the book and then realizes she had put in pictures of their life together. At the end of the last page was a note he hadn’t seen before. She had written: ‘Thanks for the Adventure. Now go have a new one.*

*Love, Ellie.*

*I wept and wept, Lord. And asked is this your word, and Ellie’s word to me—to go forward and do whatever you have yet for me to do. To reach out? To risk more? To love and to live? I am confused. I only know I love You, I love Ellie, I love so many who are so nice to me. Dear Father, Show me now Your way and Your Adventure until you bring me home to You and to Ellie. I am willing!!*

*Your Loving Son, Marvin.”*

Over the next several months I searched in many directions. Someone told me I needed to learn how to live alone. So I asked and probed to see what other singles were doing, but I never found anything that seemed right for me.

The senior center where we lived had been a Godsend during Ellie's illness and death. But it was becoming clear that my health and abilities did not require all the benefits they provided, so I considered moving back into a house. But this didn't seem to be right, either.

I even thought about going to live with one or more of our children, but I had no peace about that—and maybe they didn't either! I told them I knew something was happening but I didn't know what it was, and I did not believe it was all going to be easy.

One person encouraged me to begin dating. (I would later discover others were also praying for a mate for me.) About that time I received a call from someone in Chicago who informed me that some people in Wichita said I should date. A short time later a friend told me he had a message from a mutual friend in Washington D.C. who told him to ask me, "*When are you going to remarry?*" Frankly, that was the last thing on my mind, but since I was trying to follow God's lead I began to consider it.

Still nothing happened. While I knew many wonderful women, none seemed right for me— and, frankly, it seemed almost disloyal to consider it. Last summer a leader of my old church called and wanted to know if I would come over and teach a seminar I had been giving about "*The Last Half of Life.*" I still had many friends there, and I was honored to have the opportunity to share some of my journey with them.

The seminar was given on Wednesday nights following a weekly church supper. Jo and another long-time friend and I began to eat and then go to the seminar together. The next thing I knew the weekly dinners with Jo turned into other times together, and with a rush we

both were suddenly aware we were attracted to each other in a totally new way.

We had been family friends for over 30 years, but this was different! For the first time we saw one another in a new light, and I suppose God decided to open the “eyes of our hearts”. Sometime after Thanksgiving, we decided to get married.

There were only two women in my life that I ever considered marrying: Ellie in 1948 and now Jo. It was right with Ellie, and now it seems completely right with Jo.

We have had sign after sign that we are in God’s will. For example, I had looked and never found a house I liked. But in one day with Jo, the first one we looked at was just what we needed. In two hours I had signed a contract!

But others were concerned. One person asked if I really wanted to do this considering our age and that I had been a caregiver for Ellie. My response was that the Bible says,

*“Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25)*

It is my firm belief that we do not go into marriage to get something but to give something. I can hope for something, but I don’t want ever to expect anything. Instead, if we do what God tells us, He will give us what we really need. And that isn’t true only of marriage, but in everything we do. If we come to church to or go to work just to get something, we will probably be disappointed. But if we come to give what God has given us, (as so many of you do in innumerable ways), then God will give us what we need and our life will be fulfilled and complete.

### **PASSING IT ON**

As usual, God has used all these events to teach me what He wants me to know. Since I am a firm believer that God also wants us to pass

on to others what we learn, I have set forth below some conclusions I hope will also be helpful to you.

## **1. The Effect of Remarriage On Others**

It isn't too hard to get married if you love someone and firmly believe it is God's will—no matter how old you may be. The hard part is to deal with all the waves this sets off in other relationships!

It was difficult for me to comprehend how much my remarriage would affect everyone else in our lives. I knew it was causing big changes, but I had no idea how deeply others were going to be impacted. I am ashamed to say that I was so engrossed in my own life that I wounded others by failing to see the changes from their point of view. I thank God and those of you who helped bring home this reality.

I found it is most difficult for those closest to us and least difficult for those out on the periphery. We especially need our children's support or it can be a miserable decision. Our family is rather large and it takes time and effort to be sure everyone is on board. One grandchild said it well from the perspective of their age group, "*This is just weird!*"

Looking back, I believe the most fundamental effect was to force us all to accept that Ellie was dead. As long as I was alive and single, our status as a couple remained. But my remarriage altered all we had known, and we had to grieve— and that took some time.

Somehow it did not seem right or proper for me to be with anyone other than the mother and grandmother they had always known. One of my grandchildren was brave enough and wise enough to write me and explain it so I could understand. First she posed the problem I think we all had to face when she said:

*“I have had quite some time to really think about what it is that is hard to accept, and I think it is simply that I have always seen you and Grandma as a unit. You were one. You were such a special couple. I was so proud of the obvious love you still shared together after 60 years together... So to hear the news that you were interested in someone else really jolted my whole thinking. How could that kind of love be replaced?”...*

*I can't think of you and grandma as a unit. It isn't you and grandma anymore—it's you and Jo.”*

But then she gave me a great gift of inward peace and sense of gratefulness when she concluded by telling me what I have now felt from all our loved ones:

*“But I want you to know that that is not something you should feel burdened to fix, or feel guilty about. It's simply a change that I need to get used to....I know you have prayed and sought out the best way to make everyone feel most comfortable with this. And I know that this relationship makes you happy and fills a void that no one else really could. So as you begin a new journey and adventure in life, I want you to know that I support you both and the decision you have made. And I love you so very much!”*

It still overwhelms me as I realize the grace that God and all of you have extended to me, and I say, “*Thank You*” with all my heart.

To emphasize our love and concern, and to make sure everyone understood we were simply completing our lives and not replacing our former spouses, (or others in our lives) we asked the Pastor to read the following comment at the beginning of the marriage ceremony:

*“...we both recognize and thank all those who have contributed to our lives over the years; and we take this step, not to replace our former spouses and families whom we shall always love and honor, but rather to complete and fulfill God’s plan for this late chapter of our lives after our former spouses have gone Home to be with Him.*

*Thanks for joining with us in this ceremony.*

*We love you all!”*

A few days later we traveled to Texas to visit each of Jo’s children so they would begin to know me, and realize I wanted to know them.

And it wasn’t just family who were confused by my actions. One good example was a dear lady who sought me out and explained that she was really angry with me, because she had loved Ellie so much, and it did not seem right for me to do this. But she, too, then gave her blessing and told me she understood.

Here let me emphasize again, I did not get married in order to avoid being lonely, or to have a woman in my life. Instead I got married because God made it clear to me in so many ways that I was supposed to get married to Jo. It was as if I were in a giant current or perhaps a tornado funnel like Judy Garland in “*The Wizard of Oz*”. I was not in control. It was only after it has happened that I have begun to realize the unimaginable gift and treasure God has given me for the last half of the last chapter of life. I do not know what is to be, but I am convinced it is necessary to carry out the role God has for us as we complete our race and finish the course.

## 2. Premarital Agreements

I now realize it is very important to have a premarital agreement before we remarry. As one person told me, *“Second marriages are not always easy.”* So we need to do everything possible to make them work well.

This is not a new idea. One of my sons, who has worked in the Holy Land for many years, told how much these were used in ancient times, not just for property issues, but so both parties would know their responsibilities. We need complete disclosure. Both of us need to have lawyers and be fully informed so we have a clear understanding about what we are doing. For us it was not merely who owns what, but who takes care of each person when we can no longer care for ourselves, who has powers of attorney and who plans the funerals.

## 3. Keeping Our Sense of Humor

We have had lots of jokes and laughed, mostly at ourselves, more than we have done for years. For example:

- A daughter said, *“Oh good, Dad. This gives me hope!”*
- When Jo called a credit card company to give her change of name because she had gotten married, the operator asked her birth date. When she answered, *“December 8, 1928”*, the lady exclaimed: *“And you just got married? Oh! You made my day!”*
- One old friend and I lost our wives the same year and told each other we would never remarry. I decided I had to “eat crow” so I called to tell him. I asked, *“Are you sitting down?”* He seemed puzzled and said, *“Yes, Why?”* I told him, *“I’m getting married.”* There was a pause, and then he said, *“I should have been lying down!”*

One final observation: We find we will often refer to each other by our former spouses' name. It happened to us three times in one day! It isn't so bad when you are alone, but it really shocks others when we do it in public. But it is reality and so we simply chuckle and go on with life. One person told us the answer was to call each other "*Honey*" and then we won't embarrass ourselves. So when you hear us often use that term you will understand why!

## CONCLUSION

We were married in a little chapel on February 10, 2012. As I looked out on the family gathered for our wedding and the small family reception that followed, I thought about all the little children running around. I told Jo, "Just think. Someday those little children can tell their grandchildren,

*"I attended my great grandfather's wedding!"*

I have discovered that not only are God's ways not always our ways, but also God's timing is not always our timing. A short time ago, I attended the memorial service for a former law partner who attended our wedding a few weeks before. He was a good friend and a fine lawyer who had loved and served the Lord, his family and a host of clients and friends. He had died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 61. We were terribly shocked and deeply saddened.

At the close of the service, an older partner who also attended our wedding, commented ironically,

*"I attended the wedding of my older senior partner, and now I am attending the memorial for my younger partner."*

He didn't say it, but we both knew it would have seemed much fairer in our eyes if it had been reversed.

But God determines the times and places. And the Bible makes it clear that He makes "...everything... beautiful in its time."

For Jo and me, that seems to mean beginning a new adventure as we approach this last part of life. We do not know how much time we have. That really isn't too much of a concern. The important thing is that we follow Jesus and make ourselves available to God to use for as long as He has us here on earth. We do not believe it will all be easy. But we are convinced our being together has a purpose. And our conclusions were confirmed again when one friend noted,

*"I believe you will be more together  
than the sum of each of you acting alone."*

Sometimes we wonder if the rapture may be near. It would be good to go Home together wouldn't it? But whenever and however it occurs, we can be sure God will use everything in our lives for His Glory, for the benefit of others, and ultimately for our own benefit, as long as we follow Him.

*From Grandpa With Love*

# *Forty Days in the Wilderness*

June 21-July 31, 2012

Age 86

*“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

Proverbs 3:34

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand,  
that He may lift you up in due time.”*

I Peter 5:6

On June 21, my wife Joan and I left for Colorado. This was the latest in a series of rapid changes that began for me when my first wife died a few years ago and accelerated after I remarried.

After the initial shock waves rolled through our family and friends, I found myself dealing with one significant change after another. It was traumatic to leave my home with the friends and surroundings I had come to enjoy. Next, I ended years of teaching a wonderful Sunday School Class and said, “Goodbye”, to a myriad of longtime friends at a church I enjoyed. The pressure continued as I immersed myself into my wife’s world at her church and on to Texas to meet with her children and later her introduction to our family, including visiting one of our daughters in another state.

The last big change was to keep my agreement to try and go for two months this summer to the home my wife and her former husband had built some 25 years ago in Colorado. As the departure date came nearer, I became increasingly apprehensive and nervous for several reasons, including:

- My mother’s near death experience at altitude when she was age 85.
- My first wife’s need to suddenly come home from Colorado because of altitude.

- My 85<sup>th</sup> birthday spent in a hospital in New Mexico because of the altitude and my drinking too much liquid.
- My recent diagnosis for high blood pressure and no medicine yet that worked.

In addition, the car and the cabin had belonged to my new wife and her former husband, and I knew no one where we were going.

After taking four leisurely days to come up to 8600', we arrived at the mountain cabin on June 25. It seemed "his" presence and "his" name were everywhere—pictures, carvings, signs on the garage and front porch, fishing gear, clothing, hats, tools, etc. This was the town the two of them had made their own—including many, many, wonderful friends and memories—and where they had spent 4-5 months a year, including Jeeping and snowmobiling.

The result was that I felt alone, out of place and a virtual extension or male replacement for her former husband.

By the time we went through the ritual of the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade with her old group at her house, and meeting a horde of new faces and names and going to many of her old friends' homes, her old church, her art association and theater groups, the feeling of being alone and out of place only intensified.

On the morning of July 12, I felt disoriented and nauseated. I sensed it was the blood pressure problem. We went to the Medical Clinic and found I was at 200+ /100+. For the next few weeks we worked through various meds and the stomach distress that seemed to accompany them.

I felt from the beginning of our relationship that I was to come out to Colorado to know more of my wife's history, and that God wanted to teach me something. As you will see, I was right.

I did not expect it to be easy and that also proved to be right. When my wife offered to have me make the cabin over with my things instead of theirs, I said, "No!" It was their place and their

environment, and I did not believe it was for me to change. My only possessions were a few clothes in a small closet and my computers. It became clear that I was to voluntarily let go of everything, so God could start me with a fresh new slate.

I realized later that it was a time of “*fasting*”. In a small, much less significant way, it reminded me of Moses and Jesus as they spent time alone with God on Mt Sinai and the Mount of Temptation. Although I was only dealing with my own ego, I, too, felt alone in the mountains, as I separated from all that was familiar and gave me a sense of belonging, and spent the next several weeks without much of what I felt was important in this world.

Most of all I missed the “*people*”—family and friends back home. Next were my “*possessions*”—home, automobile and everything else I owned except a few clothes and my computers. More subtle was the loss of “*position*”—I felt like a person without a history since no one knew me or cared what I had been or done. And since I was trying to overcome the high blood pressure and stomach distress I went on a rather strict diet—eliminating many of my favorite “*foods*” that I had enjoyed over the years.

I was thoroughly down and licking my wounds. I wanted in the worst way to head back home! Yet I knew it was important to persevere and work through it, if I wanted God to have His way rather than me satisfying my immediate wants. My wife sensed how miserable I was and offered to go home any time, but I told her I felt it was important that we stay through the summer.

On July 31, just 40 days after we had left Wichita for Colorado, we talked about the difficulties I was experiencing. It quickly became clear that both of us had *independently* reached the same conclusion: God was teaching me *humility*! He was taking away everything that had given me confidence and position. We both felt He was stripping me and leaving me only Himself for my strength and wellbeing.

That was a turning point! Over the next few days, I found myself no longer concentrating on all the negatives. Instead, I began recounting with joy and wonder the good things that God had been substituting during these weeks away.

The list was almost endless, including:

- Mountains and drives
- Streams and walks
- Cool and rain
- Excellent Clinic and people
- Control of High Blood Pressure with low dosage
- My wife's former life and habitat unfolded
- Bucks, does and fawns in our yard and street
- Art Center/Local artists
- Small town life and community
- A mountain city charm and wooden boardwalks
- Churches
- Bible Studies
- Small town Grocery
- Small town Bakery
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration
- My 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration
- Celebrate end of WWII on August 15
- Having a local artist paint our WWII plane
- Jeep trips visits with friends

The greatest blessings of all were the people. Names of her longtime friends now became connected with faces and personalities. They were now my friends, too!

Today is August 13. Our time in Colorado is coming to an end. We leave for home two weeks from today. We both are ready and content to go. I do not know if I (or either of us) will ever return. Only God knows the future. We will simply wait and see how He directs.

Of one thing we are certain: We both want God's will in our lives more than having our own way. So now we head home and walk with Him and one another into whatever He has planned for us.

It is good to come down from the mountains, knowing we let God have His way. Romans 8:28 is right.

*“And we know that in all things God works  
for the good of those who love him,  
who have been called according to his purpose.”*

I can't wait to see what He does next!

A Grateful Old Man

**Event # 3**

**August, 2015**

***90<sup>th</sup> Birthday***

To My Dear Family,

I think this past weekend may have been the biggest celebration since World War II ended and the world went wild with joy and excitement!

It surpassed even my hopes and dreams. To see all the children and parents and grandparents and siblings and cousins and aunts and uncles and every other family relationship interacting and laughing and genuinely having fun, while renewing old friendships and making new ones, was a dream come true for me.

I know it was a gracious (and expensive in time, effort and money) gift from you and it was far more welcome and gratifying than any physical gift or exotic travel experience. I started to list each of you and what you had done, but I quickly realized I didn't have any real idea of all that happened. So simply accept my sincere and humble appreciation. Nothing you could have given me could have made me happier, and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

I recognize that my 90<sup>th</sup> was the catalyst that gave rise to the occasion, but it was so much more a total family reunion. In fact, it was so good that you are all invited for my 100<sup>th</sup>!

And if I am not around, please meet anyway—and lots of times in-between!

*From Grandpa With Love*

# *Our Identity Crisis*

2015

Age 90

As a follower of Jesus and a 90 year old veteran of World War II, who practiced law for over 40 years and has a family of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, I have a *life-long* love and respect for the United States of America. As I have walked through the years, it has become increasingly apparent that I have—and rightly should have—an *even greater eternal* love and respect for the King and Kingdom of God.

I pray these thoughts are helpful to all who may read them. If the words resonate with you, feel free to pass them along to others.

## **“Whose am I?”**

For the past several years, I have been asking myself, “*Who* am I?” And more importantly, “*Whose*” am I?” Like many Americans, I have been going through an “Identity Crisis”.

From the time we are born physically into this world, our identity is rooted in our worldly Kingdom. The government issues our birth certificate, then our marriage license, our driver’s license, our social security number and ultimately, our death certificate. It is our worldly government who tells us who we are.

The Bible tells us that we change our *primary* identity when we surrender and submit to God and are “*born again*”. Now we are “*citizens*” of the Kingdom of God and “*aliens and strangers*” in the world.

In our beloved USA we were originally peopled largely by European, Bible believing immigrants. Since we have had the privilege of self-government, our founders and those who followed, established and *sustained a “soft theocracy” who saw us as “endowed by our Creator”*, announcing “*In God we trust*” on our coins and our paper

money, and repeating “*under God*” in our pledge of allegiance. And our laws were sprinkled with reminders of the Bible, from “*punitive damages*” to special condemnation for “*burglary in the night time*”.

For those who were born here, our Christian heritage and culture seemed the norm. In fact, it has been a phenomenon of history. A few hundred years carved out of the reality of forced compliance with the rules and orders of those few who were in control at their particular time and place.

However, with the passing of years and vast immigration from other cultures, mixed with the rapid advance of science and growth of secularism, we no longer see the USA as a sort of Kingdom of God on earth. Our country is changing. Slowly at first; but recently, with court decisions changing the traditional view of marriage to require acceptance of same sex marriage, and elevating non-discrimination laws above the constitutional protection of religion, we are suddenly aware the Kingdom of the USA is another worldly Kingdom, and not an earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God. I guess we are a little like Dorothy, in the *Wizard of Oz*, who says to her little dog,

*“Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore!”*

Now we are beginning to understand that as “*born again citizens*” of the Kingdom of God, we are “*aliens and strangers*” even in our own land.

And, strange as it may seem, I actually believe that is good.

Before we had the illusion of a Christian Culture in a Worldly nation to whom we owed our *primary* allegiance and respect. Now we have come to realize that is a mirage. God seems to be making a clear distinction between His Kingdom and this visible Worldly Kingdom with some of the now disappearing aspects of His Kingdom that has had our deepest and truest devotion. Now we are being required to choose whom we will serve, at the deepest level of our being just as Peter and John were required to choose whom they would serve, as reported in the Book of Acts.

Our *primary* task is to follow Jesus and help others see and enter the Kingdom of God and live eternally with Him and all the saints—not to expend our *primary* energies and resources trying to maintain a Christian Culture in a so-called Christian nation. And when we do, to accept that we will not have all the privileges the nation has afforded to those who allow themselves and their institutions to be created by, and therefore defined and controlled by their creator—the state, i.e. Federal, State or Local governments.

The temptation is to try and live in both Kingdoms and enjoy all the rights and privileges of both. I submit, from personal history and the history of the world, it will not work.

God has given us four institutions to keep order in this world: Government, Family, Church and Work Place. Each has rules and laws to help them function. If we use the institutions as created by God we are then named and defined and controlled by Him. If we allow these institutions to be created by the Worldly government, then they have the right and ability to name, define and control what they have created.

The government requires oaths of loyalty from its officers. When the government’s laws are contrary to God’s laws we must decide whom we will serve. It may mean we forgo the right to be in those offices and to give up our right and privilege to earn a living from powerful positions and lofty posts.

The government provides “free” schools, grants corporate charters with limited liability, unlimited life, and often tax breaks and subsidies for married couples, churches and other organizations. But the price is the right to control what the schools can teach and what those couples, churches and other organizations can say and do. To paraphrase an old refrain,

*“Love and marriage,  
they go together like a horse and carriage.  
Dad was told by Mother—  
you can’t have one without the other”.*

If we want all the “goodies” offered by government, we must also accept its restraints and control. When the two clash, we must make our decision who we will serve.

We are to be “in” the world, but not “of” it. We are to “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s”. We are to be loyal members of our nation, but only when it does not require us to go against God’s order. When it requires ungodly conduct, we must, like Daniel, continue to honor the God whom we serve.

We cannot take oaths to follow the constitution and laws of worldly government, accept their pay and position and then refuse to carry out the function we have sworn to uphold. So we are forced out of much government service.

For years we have been told we should be like the New Testament Church. It appears we will now have that opportunity. And we aren’t going to like it! No government positions, no tax relief, and no limited liability, if it means we must say only what we are told to say, hire those we are told to hire, and assist in marriage ceremonies as we are told even though it violates God’s instructions to us.

It is obvious we are being called to move our *primary* allegiance from merely a Christian Culture and a Christian Nation here on earth to the King and Kingdom of God—both now and for eternity. When we do our identity crisis will be resolved.

May God grant us the strength we need, as we follow Him through whatever lies ahead!

Marvin J. Martin  
Wichita, Kansas  
September, 2015

# ***Who Am I—Now?***

**In Order to Know**

## ***What Am I to Do—Next?***

**2015**

**Age 90**

**Making Plans**

**For the Next Chapter of Life**

*“Will the real Marvin Martin please stand up?”*

It was a sobering question and it shocked me. It came in my mid-forties shortly after I had made an eternity changing decision.

For years I had attempted to play out the role of what I should be to satisfy myself and the different people in my life. Gradually I had become a compartmentalized, fractured person. I wanted to be what God had intended but I also wanted to be accepted and respected in the world around me. Deep down I knew that the person I was trying to build was not adequate, nor complete

Finally, in true labor lawyer style, I negotiated a settlement with Him. I couldn't bring myself to surrender my will in one step, but I agreed in the early summer of 1969 that I would surrender on August 10, 1969, my 44<sup>th</sup> birthday. As each day passed, it seemed a part of the countdown to my own execution, which it was. As a friend explained later, “Don't you see; you have to die (to yourself) before you can be born again!”

My birthday finally arrived. Following a celebration with my family, and without advising anyone of my intentions, I walked up the stairway, down the hallway, into our bedroom. There I knelt alone and confessed something like this:

*“Lord, I commit all of myself to you that I am able;  
and I accept Jesus as your divine Son.”*

Without realizing it, I had been born again spiritually on the anniversary of the day I was born physically. My physical and spiritual birthdays were the same—but 44 years apart! For me there were no flashing lights or emotional outbursts at that time. But that birthday did mark the death of my old life and the beginning of a new life in Christ.

Many things have happened since that time. Some of them have been pleasant and some have been unpleasant. I know now that when I surrendered my will to God to direct and control, I had to expect some changes to happen both to myself and to those around me. Sometimes those changes were painful. Yet, they were like a surgeon’s scalpel, which hurt temporarily to correct a problem, but that ultimately allowed me to live.

But now it was a short time later and a person very dear to me was asking “*Will the real Marvin Martin please stand up!*” Now I had to ask, and try and answer, “*Who am I—Now?*”

That same question has followed me for the past forty six years. And with it has been the companion question, “*What am I to do—Next?*”

As the years have gone by, I have become increasingly convinced that we often reverse the order. We start by asking ourselves, “*What am I to do in life?*” when the more important and underlying question is, “*Who am I?*” “What I am to do” will flow naturally from “Who I am.” I can’t stop it. As the apostle Paul said, “*Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel*” (1 Corinthians 9:16b).

We all have inward purposes waiting to become activated. God has a plan for each of us and He has made us exactly right to carry out His purpose for each of our lives. When we don’t know who we *are*, we often try to *do* what He has gifted and charged others to do. When that happens, we never look or feel completely at ease. Or totally productive. We know it, and so do others.

*When we discover who we really are, we perform well, we are at ease, we are attractive, and we are fulfilled.*

Charles Swindoll places the issues in proper order, in his excellent book, “*Saying It Well*” as he urges his readers to

*“Know who you are;  
Accept who you are;  
Be who you are.”*

There are many ways we could, and often do, try to learn who we are. The following is just a brief look at some of these avenues, but I hope it is helpful. Keep in mind this is merely from my experiences and observations. We all err, so hold on to what is good (of God), and discard the rest.

### ***According to Whom?***

We are really a collage of different people, according to whom we ask. It begins before we are born with a name given us by our parents, which speaks of their memories or hopes or dreams for us.

Later, we give our own version, perhaps through a resume’ when we apply for admittance to a school or a job. And sometime during our lives (often when we grow older and want to pass on our memoirs to those who are following) we may write an autobiography giving others our personal version. As one very practical man put it, “If you want to look good in history, write it!”

As life unfolds we may even be the subject of a biography which will be based on a writer’s view of who we are. If there were multiple biographies, there would be multiple versions, each somewhat different, but read together they may have significant validity.

And after we die, we are usually the subject of a eulogy or obituary which, hopefully, tells what we hope they will remember well of us.

But the question remains, “*Who am I?*” in reality, and even more pertinent, “*Who am I—Now?*”

### *Aptitudes and Abilities*

We can begin to answer at least a part of “*Who Am I?*” by identifying the mental and physical aptitudes and abilities God has given us to hone and use. Sometimes these become clearer through psychological, aptitude or I.Q. tests.

Many years ago when I was an Aviation Cadet, they tested us to determine whether we should be a Pilot, Navigator or Bombardier. My highest score was as a Navigator, who thinks and plans. My lowest passing score was as a Pilot, who is more interested in action and reaching the objective. I wanted to be a Pilot since that was the glory seat. They said, “*You are a Navigator.*” I thought they were wrong.

But as the years rolled by, I came to the realization they were right. I learned I could fly an airplane, but I will never be a Pilot. Instead I have been a Navigator all my life, and functioned as a Navigator does, by determining where we are, where we want to go, and how we get there.

This all showed me that others often know us (at least in part) better than we know ourselves.

### *Relationships*

When we are “born again” into God’s Family and become citizens of His Kingdom, we receive a myriad of relationships that help define “Who I am” at different times of life. These relationships change as we occupy different roles during our journey. Life works well when we accept “Who I am” at each stage and in each role, but it can become very difficult when we fail to do so.

It has helped me to begin with the broad relationship all believers have with Him and with others. It is repeatedly voiced throughout the Scriptures and might be briefly summarized as, “Love God,

and love others.” However, we occupy many different roles as we make our journey, so I am grateful He also provides more detailed instructions many places in the Bible.

The Book of Ephesians has been one of my favorites. First, it speaks of the way I am to love Him as His Child. Then He gives me directions when “Who I am” is a Brother or Sister in Christ; a Husband or Wife; a Parent or Child; an Employer or Employee. In the final chapter He spells out my role as a Warrior as I fight against Satan in the Spiritual War that goes on until Jesus comes again.

It humbles me to see the ever changing faces of “Who I am”, and makes me eternally grateful that God is in charge!

### *Spiritual Gifts*

As members of God’s Family and citizens of His Kingdom, we also receive gifts from the Holy Spirit to enable us to function as members of the Body of Christ. Once we see where we and others fit, it completely changes our lives. An exciting new world of opportunities and responsibilities opens up as experience and various tests reveal whether we are primarily gifted in words or works, or as givers, or servers, or a host of other unique ways God endows us as we surrender our lives to Jesus and become members of His Family and citizens of His Kingdom.

As we begin to see who we are, it also opens our eyes to the identities of those around us. Including our own spouse! Traits which formerly irritated or frustrated us now become exciting opportunities to experience life through their eyes. We find they weren’t wrong, but simply seeing life in other ways.

When that happens we begin to *Complete—Not Compete* with each other, as we discussed in Volume III entitled, *Marriage*, in the *From Grandpa With Love* series of books.

## *Actions, Attitudes and Companions*

*What* we do and *how* we do it, as well as with *whom* we do it, also form a part of “Who I am.” Unlike the *Givens* in our life, such as ancestry, age, and place of birth, we do have much control over our actions, attitudes and companions. I make the decisions whether I do good or evil and whether I am contented or angry.

And, I largely decide with whom I will keep company. Much of the Bible relates to these issues. It admonishes us not to be yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). It also warns us “*Bad company corrupts good character*” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

The harsh truth is, we usually become like those around us, or they become like us, or we probably will part company. We may need to be with others as we help them move closer to God’s Kingdom, but we have to be careful some don’t end up corrupting us! It reminds me of a story Charles Coulson related to a group of us one evening about a man preaching at the gate of Sodom and Gomorrah. When a bystander admonished him the people would not change, he responded, “*Oh! I’m not trying to change them—I’m trying to keep them from changing me!*”

God’s Word gives us outward codes of conduct that Jesus completes in the hearts and actions of those who surrender their individual wills to Him. When we ask Him to live in and through us, we begin to act right, and we do it with the right attitude. As the Apostle Paul says, “*...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*” (Galatians 2:20).

Unfortunately, many of us who call ourselves Christians or followers of Jesus (including me) look back and see we gave Him only half (or less) of our life. Ultimately, we find that we are changed into the person we could be (and probably want to be) only to the degree we give up our old nature and bring Him into our lives.

## *Institutions and Credentials*

It is common to identify ourselves by institutions that represent our family, faith, nationality, or work. I suggest we be careful to be our

own person and not be falsely proud or ashamed of these institutions nor confuse their persona with our own.

At times we are also tempted to confuse our titles and type of work with who we really are. When that happens we may simply brandish *credentials* granted by Universities or other institutions to define us and assure others who we are. Many years ago an older mentor showed me a newspaper clipping to make the point. I have forgotten the names and titles, but the article went something like this: “Jay Thrakenberry, PhD, M.D., J.D., D.Min., will speak tonight. His subject is Humility!”

We live in a world where credentials are often necessary to open doors and allow us best to do the work God has called us to do. However, I have found it is not wise to allow them to define us. As one man put it, “*If who I am is what I do, then when I don’t, I’m not!*” These marks of achievement are terribly important for some of us (including me) at times in our lives. But as I grew older, the description I enjoyed the most was from one client who told me candidly, “*You always were more of a person than a lawyer!*”

### *Time*

One final issue we need to consider as we seek to know *who we are—now* and *what we are to do—next*, is *Time*. Recently I showed some of our great grandchildren a 70 year old World War II picture of our flight crew and asked if they could pick me out in the picture. I looked like *me* to *me*, but not to them. And they were right. The present *me*, sure didn’t resemble any of the youthful guys in the photo. And I wasn’t the same, because we all change continually throughout life.

A friend of mine often quotes an old proverb reminding us, “*We never cross the same river twice. The river has changed, and so have we.*” Both our lives and our environment change as we proceed through life. Second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour, week by week, month by month, year by year and finally generation by

generation, we are inexorably changing: emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Or, as the Bible might phrase it: heart, mind, body and spirit.

It has become increasingly apparent and important to me, to realize one of the largest factors in determining “Who am I?” is to be aware of the chapters in life we discussed at length in Volume I of the *From Grandpa With Love* series, entitled “*Four Generations: A Journey Through Life.*”

In Generation I, roughly Age 0-25, I am a *Child*. These are the *Learning* years during which we seek our own *Identity*, and ask, “*Who do I say I am?*”

Generation II runs from about Age 25 to 50. These are the *Action* years. During these years we often seek *Success* and look around and ask, “*Who do Others say I am?*”

As we reach Generation III, Age 50-75 we enter the *Grandparent* stage: some of us literally, and all of us, figuratively. Now many of us will seek *Significance*, and ask, “*Who will History say I was?*”

Finally, Generation IV Age 75-Onward brings us to the *Great Grandparent* stage of life. As we prepare to leave this earth we realize we have become invisible to much of the world, and we are not the focal point of life or history. It is good simply to seek *Selflessness* and trust God because “*He knows who I truly am!*”

### ***Conclusion***

I hope our discussion has been helpful to you and given you some tools as you seek to know *who you are—now; and what you are to do—next*. It has certainly been good for me.

Let me close with one final observation:

It is not only important for each of us to know who we are but also to let the real *me* be visible to *you*. Authenticity is essential if we are to be what God made us to be—and do.

Too often we try to paint the picture of the person we would like others to see. But, we look phony when we are phony. No matter how hard we try to make ourselves into something we aren't, it never feels right to us and it never feels right to others. No amount of makeup or gloss can change what is really inside us. We are what we are and it shows. Not always visibly, but the vibrations can clearly be felt.

Hypocrisy is the hall-mark of make believe. It deceives and leaves empty promises. By contrast, reality, with all its warts and seeming imperfections has a strange kind of beauty. It allows us to do what God had planned for us to do, and that, too, is beautiful! We are never more attractive than when we do what we were born to do, whether it is singing a song, running a race, giving a speech, painting a sunset, building a home or a business, researching a critical problem or caring for a child.

I have spent many years since I surrendered my life to Jesus, trying to be His witness. Not as an expert, but simply telling my story. I would prefer not to use myself in these writings, but that's what a witness does.

In telling you my story, I begin to see the *real* me in a whole new way. Writing it down is a mirror that requires me to take a deeper look at the *real* me. And as we see reality, it becomes exciting to let go of one more piece of our old nature and exchange it for His.

When we are younger we sometimes believe we will get it all figured out and we can stop searching because we will know just "Who I am", and "What I am to do", when we are older.

Don't you believe it! I *am* old! And I began placing the foregoing questions and my answers on paper, to answer once more the question I posed at the beginning of our time together: "*Will the real Marvin Martin please stand up?*" In other words, "*Who am I—Now?*" and "*What am I to Do—Next?*" in the decade of my 90's?

I know now, only God knows *the real Marvin Martin*, as well as the *real you and every other person who inhabits this world!*

And that is O.K. My job is just to keep asking and following His directions until I am Home with Him and all the saints. Then, I can follow the pattern of an old friend of mine who used to say his first words in Heaven were going to be:

***“Oh! Now I see!”***

I pray He will do the same for you as you search, and ask, and pray for His help and guidance. And I thank Him that He will!

***May God Bless You Richly  
As You Walk On Through Life and Into Eternity  
With Him!***

*From Grandpa With Love*

*So take a new grip with your tired hands,  
stand firm on your shaky legs,  
and mark out a straight, smooth path for your feet  
so that those who follow you, though weak and lame,  
will not fall and hurt themselves,  
but become strong.”*

(Hebrews 12:12; Living Bible)

# A Ten Point Check List

(If you want it)

1. Become a child of God and citizen of His Kingdom by submitting totally to Him and accepting Jesus as His Son.
2. Ask some I trust to tell me “*Who I Am*”, as they view me.
3. Review the “Strengths Finder” list on the Internet, and consider taking their test and/or other good professional tests.
4. Write down “*Who I Am*” in relation to my parents, siblings, spouse, descendants and other relatives.
5. Study Spiritual Gifts in Ephesians 4, I Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12 and I Peter 4; take some Spiritual Gifts tests; and then describe the Spiritual Gift(s) God has given me.
6. Compare my Actions, Attitude and Companions with the Bible, particularly the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.
7. List my credentials from Educational and other Institutions and write down how much they define me.
8. Study my Chapter of Life (0-25; 25-50; 50-75; 75-Onward) in *Four Generations: A Journey Through Life*—and other chapters, if helpful.
9. Write down my answers to the following questions:

What do I **want** to do?

What bears **fruit** when I do it?

What do others **repeatedly** ask me to do?

What “**bugs**” me that is not getting done?

10. Write a short paragraph describing “*Who I Am—Now*” and “*What I Am Going to Do—Next*”.

# *Last Messages*

## **Receiving from the Past and Giving to the Future**

**2017**

**Age 92**

### **A Personal Note**

Several years ago, an elderly Doctor who was writing his memoirs, told me, “*Writing is God’s gift to an old man.*” But in a broader sense I have determined, “*Writing is God’s gift to all mankind!*” Through writing we can receive from the past and give to the future.

The accumulated wisdom of the ages is available to us today because of the written word. What a gift! Not only does it overwhelm me with gratitude for what I can learn from earlier generations, it also challenges me to pass on all I can to help those who follow.

For me, the greatest and most profound writing is the Bible. Distilled in these pages is the Hope of eternity. It never grows old, and its breadth and depth are inexhaustible.

One of its great strengths has been the themes and common conclusions reached by various writers over thousands of years. The last message of many of these writers is one of those themes.

Please accept the following words as one man’s attempt to utilize for God’s Glory and our betterment His magnificent gift of writing.

*From Grandpa With Love*

## **Introduction**

First and last statements are important. Opening lines in a book or a talk often tell us what we can expect to read or hear, and closing lines tell us what the writer wants us to remember. Inaugural Addresses can tell us what to expect when a person is taking office. Farewell Addresses can tell us what the speakers hope we will remember after they leave office. Although new-born children can't tell others what they expect to do in life, many of us do have the opportunity when we are older to tell those we leave behind what we want them to remember.

Last Messages is the subject of this little booklet. Hopefully, reading through this information will help you receive and apply some of the gifts passed on to us by writings in the Bible. And, in addition, encourage you to write the Last Message(s) God has given you to pass on to succeeding generations.

Remember, these are simply my conclusions and experiences and we all err. So hold on to what is good (of God)—and discard the rest.

## **Seven Last Messages**

God created our world in six days and rested on the seventh. He instructed us to work six days and rest on the seventh. The number “seven” indicates completion. Since we are talking about passing information on to others as we complete our own lives, it seemed appropriate to choose seven examples: three from the Old Testament; a last message from Jesus; and three messages from the New Testament.

## **The Book of Deuteronomy (Moses)**

Moses lived about 1500 B.C. He led the Hebrews from Egypt to the Promised Land from age 80 to 120. During these years he wrote the first four books of the Bible. Just before his death, he compiled a fifth book we call Deuteronomy, which comes from the Greek word for second or repeated law. It reminds me of a Readers' Digest version of the first four books. In a way the whole book is a Last Message, but for simplicity, let's look at Deuteronomy 30:19-20:

*“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.  
Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”*

Shortly thereafter, Moses was told by God, *“There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die....”* (Deuteronomy 32:50)

### **Question # 1**

**How shall I record my journey and encourage those following me to “choose life” and not “death”?**

## I Samuel 12 (Samuel)

**Samuel** was an Old Testament prophet who led Israel around 1000 B.C. and anointed Saul and David the first two kings of Israel. His age is not listed but he refers to himself as “*old and gray*” (1 Samuel 12:2) when he prepares to leave office. He makes it clear he wants to finish well as he talks with his constituents in 1 Samuel 12:3:

*“Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right.”*

### Question # 2

**Who do I need to speak to and offer to “*make right*” any wrong I may have left unresolved?**

## **The Book of Ecclesiastes (Solomon)**

**Solomon**, the son of King David, lived a few years after Samuel. He is believed to have written the amorous Song of Solomon as a young man; the wise sayings of Proverbs in his middle years; and the book of Ecclesiastes as an old man. After determining “*of making many books there is no end*” and repeatedly explaining to his readers that we are “*chasing the wind*” when we seek the pleasure, possessions, position and power of the world, he concludes in Ecclesiastes 12:13:

*“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the whole duty of man.”*

### **Question # 3**

**How shall I explain the futility of “*chasing the wind*”  
and the need to “*fear God and keep His commandments*”?**

## The Upper Room Discourse in John 13-17 (Jesus)

**Jesus** was a public figure for about three years. Now, at approximately 33 years of age, He is preparing to undergo His crucifixion, death and resurrection. As the monumental event nears, He celebrates a Last Supper with His 12 disciples in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. After washing their feet, he gives them a new command: *“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”* He promises the coming of the Holy Spirit; explains the mystery of the vine and the branches; predicts the persecutions that believers must endure; speaks of the coming times and gives His magnificent prayer for the unity of the Father, Son and all those who believe. During these moments He makes it clear He is nearing the end of His earthly journey as He prays to His Father:

*“I have brought you glory on earth  
by completing the work you gave me to do.”*  
(John 17:4.)

### Question # 4

**What work do I need to complete  
before my life here on earth is over?**

## 2 Timothy (Apostle Paul)

**Paul**, a Pharisee and Roman citizen, was apparently born a few years after Jesus. Although they were contemporaries they never met during Jesus' lifetime. Later, while Paul was on the road to Damascus to persecute Jesus' followers, he was struck blind and commissioned by Jesus to bring the "good news" to the Gentiles. Despite innumerable hardships including beatings, imprisonments and shipwrecks, Paul faithfully carried out his assignment. Now in prison, probably around 65 A.D., and aware that his end is near, he writes to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith, to tell of his impending death:

*"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering,  
and the time has come for my departure.*

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith."*

(2 Timothy 4:6-7)

### Question # 5

**What do I need to do in order  
to keep the faith and finish my race?**

## 2 Peter (Apostle Peter)

**Peter** was one of the original 12 disciples. Brash and impetuous, he left the fishing business to follow Jesus and walked with Him for three years. Unlike the Apostles Paul and John, he wrote only two short Letters known as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. However, many believe much of the Gospel according to Mark originated with Peter. He is acknowledged as the first in the line of Popes established by the Roman Catholic Church. Historians believe Peter was crucified while still a relatively young man. The following quote in his second letter makes it clear he was acutely aware of his impending death, and he wanted others to remember the truth of the Gospel:

*“I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.”*

(2 Peter 1:13-14)

### Question # 6

**What effort shall I make to see that after my departure those following me can remember what I leave with them?**

## Revelation (Apostle John)

**John** was another of the original 12 Apostles. A contemplative man, he wrote the Gospel of John, and the Letters referred to as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John and Revelation. John is believed to have cared for Jesus' mother Mary, following his commission from Jesus as He suffered and died on the cross. Contrary to the probable fate of the other 11 Apostles, John died a natural death, probably in his 90's. For many years he was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, where he is thought to have written the last book of the Bible, *Revelation*. This book, and the Bible, closes with the great hope of every believer:

*“Behold I am coming soon!*

*Behold I am coming soon!”*

*“Yes, I am coming soon.”*

*“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”*

(Revelation 22:7, 12, 20)

### Question # 7

**How shall I express my hope and expectation that  
Jesus is “coming soon”?**

## Conclusion

For several years I have been writing booklets which were recently consolidated in the *From Grandpa With Love* series of books on Amazon. Most people will not write that extensively, but the following comments from an earlier booklet show how important it is to pass on our own Last Message(s) to future generations:

“On January 1, 1876, Sarah Jane Cook, the great, great, great, great grandmother of our great grandchildren wrote the following statement on an ordinary sheet of tablet paper:

*I consecrate myself afresh to God, today, laying all upon the altar with a full determination to ever lean upon Jesus and follow Him, and with God’s help to lead a new life. And also with a full determination to pray more earnestly for my boys.*

*God help me.*

*Sarah Jane Cook*

She died on January 26, 1876, just 26 days later!”

For years that framed piece of ordinary tablet paper with those priceless words hung on our bedroom wall. Little did Sarah Jane Cook know her simple witness would encourage her descendants for decades after she was gone!

***The issue is not so much how much we write,  
but that we determine the important things we want to pass on—  
and we place them in writing for those who follow!***

*From Grandpa With Love*

## Event # 4

### *Heart Failure and Separation*

July 2, 2018

Age 92

## *The Lights Went Out*

For the past 25 years I have been thinking and writing about *Life*. At first it was for my own understanding and direction; later to pass on to those who were following me. In 1995, I completed and gave our family a first draft of my own journey through the first seventy years. Later, it was expanded every five years up through age 85 at which time it was published under the title *Four Generations: A Journey Through Life*. During the next five years I gathered my writings from the preceding thirty-plus years and placed them in four more volumes entitled *Faith: A Foundation for Life*; *Marriage: Sharing Life*; *Vocation: Our Life Work*; and *Passing It On: Investing in Lives*. The five books were published as a series, entitled *From Grandpa With Love*, and shared with all our family on my 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, August 10, 2015.

I thought I was finished writing. But during the next two and half years God laid it on my heart to begin to prepare, and send to family and friends, 101 *One Liners...That Changed My Life*. In 2018, I felt God leading me to add these as a sixth volume under the title of *Time: Looking Back at Life*. I had meant to complete it by Christmas, but felt an urgency to finish and give it to our family when they gathered for a July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. The new book was published, packed and addressed to each person by the end of June, 2018.

**On July 2, the lights went out when I had a severe heart failure.**

The result was months of recovery which changed our lives forever. I stopped all my teaching and writing; my dear wife Joan went into a separate apartment at Assisted Living to receive the care she needed;

and our children followed our premarital agreement and assumed more responsibility for our needs.

As time went by, God gradually began to bring the lights back on. But life was never going to be the same for us. We moved from being “*givers*” to “*receivers*”. Our major view had shifted from this World and its emphasis on Now and Self, to an incredibly more important God and Eternity. As we searched the scriptures it became obvious why Solomon wrote about “*chasing the wind*” and the “*meaninglessness*” of the pleasure, possessions and position in life that we hold so dear for our short stay here on earth. The “*good life*”, which is promised here on earth if we follow the “*Law*” of the Old Testament, *is* good. But it pales when compared to the beauty and significance of “*eternal life*” offered by Jesus if we surrender to Him and are “*born again*” into the Kingdom of God He promised to those who are willing to give up their lives in this world and live a life of sacrificial “*Love*” set forth in the “*new command*” of Jesus.

It has now been seven-plus months since we started on this new phase of our journey. For now we are struggling. But we are also at peace. We are majoring in listening and loving. We feel the pull of earth’s gravity, but we feel an even stronger pull toward God and Eternity. These months have been incredibly important as we united with our families in a new, deeper and more mature way. God is so good to let us have this additional time. But, at our age, it can’t be too long until we are reunited with Jesus and all the Saints.

In the meantime we will try to love Him and carry out His command to “*love one another as He loved us*” until we can all be together for eternity!

*From Grandpa With Love*

February 14, 2019

# *The Gardens of God*

*The Garden of Eden*

*The Garden at Gethsemane and the Garden Tomb*

*The Garden in Heaven*

**2019**

**Age 94**

God used many different ways to present His Message in the Bible. For me, one of the most dramatic and memorable is to trace His actions through the *Gardens of God* we call *The Garden of Eden*; *The Garden at Gethsemane and The Garden Tomb*; and *The Garden in Heaven*.

## **# I *The Garden of Eden***

Let's look first at one of the most amazing and controversial stories ever written. It is set forth at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis 2. Here we are told that God gave Adam (and later Eve), His first two children, a perfect paradise in which to live. We call it the ***Garden of Eden***. Listen to part of the description of this beautiful garden with its perfect river and trees.

*“Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden.”*

God then gave Adam meaningful work, and the right to eat the fruit from all the trees –except one:

*“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in*

*the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

Next, God gave Adam a wife:

*“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him...Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.”*

Paradise was now complete: *A beautiful environment, work to do, and a mate to love!*

If people are born “good” and they either “stay good” or “go bad” based upon their environment and circumstances (as taught by some belief systems), then this first man and woman would surely have “stayed good” in this perfect environment.

But they didn’t.

Instead, Adam and Eve followed their own will and ate from the one tree that was forbidden. They deliberately disobeyed God who had treated them perfectly and given them perfect surroundings in which to live. The heartbreaking fact is that man, since the beginning of time, seems inherently prone to follow his own way, rather than obeying God and enjoying what God wants for us. I don’t know, “Why?” I only know that “self-will” and refusal to follow “God’s will” for us appeared in me and in every generation and in every culture. We call this “sin”, and the penalty for sin is death and separation from God.

If I believe I can be “good” or “bad” on my own, then I can surely get back to God by my own efforts. But it is clear from my own life and the lives of all the rest of the people I see in history, I need to find someone to help me.

Centuries later, about 30 A.D., a young man named Jesus appeared in Israel, claiming to be the “Messiah” who had been predicted for many centuries by various Jewish prophets. But He cautioned that His Kingdom was not of this world. He came not to bring a Worldly Empire, through force and violence, but rather an Eternal Kingdom for those who would follow God. And he announced that He was God! Fully man, but also, fully God!

He gathered a small band of followers, and moved through the country proclaiming His kingship, and performing miracles, including healing the sick and raising the dead. At the end of three years, He headed for Jerusalem where the death He predicted would await Him there when the Jews observed that year’s “Passover” celebration.

Earlier, Jesus had told His disciples, if they wanted to follow Him they would need to deny themselves and take up their own cross each day. Now, He was leading the way. He was showing them (and us) that it is a matter of *whose* “will” would be done—ours or God’s? I have discovered the answer is clear: *I cannot do it myself, no matter how hard I try, and no matter how many good works I do. I just can’t stop sinning by myself. The only way I can become clean and whole, is to surrender and let God do it.*

Following the Jewish Passover meal, Jesus and His followers went to an olive garden called **Gethsemane**, just outside Jerusalem, to pray and await His expected arrest. During the night, Jesus faced the great crisis we all face: *Whether to obey God’s will, or to seek our own will and be our own God!* Listen to His plea as He cries out to His Father with such agony that He sweat drops of blood:

*“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray’. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.’*

*Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will'.*

*He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.'"* (Matthew 26:36-39, 42)

Twice He asked God to take away the pending death. Twice, He surrendered His will to God. The next day He was taken away and crucified.

*If I want to be right with God-- if I want to be forgiven and washed clean—if I want to be reunited with God for all eternity, there is only one way: "Surrender"! Just as He surrendered that night in the Garden of Gethsemane, so must I accept the sacrifice He made for me and surrender each day and let God's will and not mine be done.*

After Jesus' death, he was taken by some of his followers and buried in a place that has been called ***The Garden Tomb***. Here Jesus fought the battle where he conquered death and set the stage for eternal life for all who were willing to die to self and follow Him into eternal life. Three days later, He arose. After a brief time with his followers, He ascended into Heaven, to await those who are following Him.

### ***# 3 The Garden in Heaven***

God has made it clear that He began this world and He will end it. Life is not an inane circle—it is a journey. First, it is a journey for all mankind. The Bible tells us that the world will end someday, and God will eliminate evil and Satan will be destroyed. But the Bible also tells us that life is a journey for each of us. Each of us has a beginning and each of us has a destination. We don't like to think of it, but people have always realized that there is an eternity, and that they will spend it in a "good" or "bad" place, depending on whether or not they surrender and let God control their life here on earth. In our culture, we call those places "Heaven" and "Hell". Hell is described in Revelation 20 as a "*lake of fire*". By contrast, Heaven is

pictured in the last chapter in the Bible as a beautiful new version of the original paradise God created in the Garden of Eden.

*“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their forehead. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”*

As we look at an overview of all ***The Gardens of God***, we realize they have given us a picturesque summary of the “*Good News*”, often called the “*Gospel*”, which assures us:

***God created us.***

***We each take control of our lives and fall away from Him.  
Fortunately, Jesus came and paid the penalty to redeem us;  
Those who accept His offer and let Him control our lives  
will someday be reunited with Him forever  
in a beautiful New Garden in Heaven,  
where there is no pain, no death, no darkness and no sorrow.***

***I look forward to seeing you there!***

***From Grandpa With Love***

# *The Bucket List*

2019

Age 94

## **Traveling With Two Children to Visit**

### **Each Grandchild and Great Grandchild in their Own Home**

To My Dear Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren,

A few months ago it became apparent (with a little coaching) it was time for me to spend the rest of my life enjoying personal relationships with family and friends. It was a wise decision and I have had a wonderful and Blessed Year.

I struggled and searched for decades to find the role of the Fourth Generation of life (Age 75-100). As I studied the Bible and lived through each of the earlier three chapters ((Learning (Child), Doing (Parent) and Teaching (Grandparent) their unique purposes gradually became more apparent and more achievable.

But the last chapter (Generation IV) has been more elusive. I never knew a grandparent, let alone a great grandparent, and the Bible never explained the role of a Great Grandparent. So what I have learned has been from watching and seeking direction from a few older and wiser heads, and now living out almost 20 of the 25 years.

Most of the first ten years (Age 75-84) was spent completing my 61 year journey with Grandma. She was by far the best gift God ever gave me—for becoming one with me and giving me our children and you. The last 10 years have been a productive *Overtime*, as our late-in-life marriage allowed Jo and me to enjoy time with each other, and settled me down enough to consolidate my earlier writings and complete the *From Grandpa With Love* series. I suppose this is my “pyramid”, but I truly believe it will be God’s gift through me to those who are following.

The Bible teaches our influence lasts for three or four generations. That is why I wanted the *From Grandpa* series available for our great grandchildren. Enclosed is a final Volume VII, *The Road*, which is a study of the most influential writing in my life. I knew I had not *completed the work God gave me to do* until I delivered it to you. So take it with my Blessing and Prayer that it will do the same for you.

It has been terribly hard to “let go” of any good part of life. But I am sure that is God’s plan at each stage of life. Unless we die to ourselves and get out of the way the next generation can’t take their rightful place. It was that conviction that caused me to announce at my 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday that I was no longer in charge. I knew your folks knew it, but I wanted to make it official! Only then could they become the grandparents and so on down the line.

I am not sure what I thought was the underlying purpose of the recent visits with you. I only knew it was important. As usual, I received far more than I gave. Each of you welcomed us with open arms and for that I thank you. I will always cherish the visits and the picture memories.

I pray one benefit was for you to know I wanted to be with you. A bonus for me is that I returned very encouraged. It was almost as if God confirmed that you were all doing well. Each in your own way; yet all of you showed your love for God and one another. And it made me feel our part of the world was in good hands!

My heart episode in July, 2018, made it clear my time is about over. *Loving God and Loving People* was the assignment God gave me at Age 64. Writing and speaking were acts of love in their time, and I will continue to do this when God nudges me. But I know now that personal time with Him and with family and friends, (*loving and being loved*) is my principal role for the rest of Generation IV.

With Love, Gratitude and Thanks

*From Grandpa With Love*

Enclosures: Picture and Volume VII *The Road*

## *Another New Adventure*

2021

Age 95

As I look back over the four traumatic scenarios related above, I realize there is a common thread running through them all:

*A “precipitative event” often gives us great grief and trauma,  
but it also gives us the chance to “reset”  
and move into the next chapter of life God is giving us!*

He first made it clear to me in “*Beginning a New Adventure*” as I sought to recover from Ellie’s death.

That awakening ultimately brought me into a new and totally unexpected marriage and chapter of life with Jo. The same sequence happened after each blow. Moving into the decade of my 90’s was somewhat confusing, but it brought new insights and writings. Heart Failure and Separation from Jo beginning in 2018 has also been difficult, but it opened the door for time to renew and deepen relationships with our families.

In 2020 the world-wide Virus Pandemic began bringing sickness and death to millions. It also brought “stay at home orders” and long periods of isolation, especially for older people in congregate facilities. For me it was a mixture of “fence and/or window visits” (meeting on each side of a fence or window) and lots of telephone visits; but unable to attend church, go out to eat or mingle freely with family and friends.

My son graciously came for Christmas for three wonderful days, but I spent my 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday and Thanksgiving alone. (I told my family, “Just have a really Big Reunion on my 100<sup>th</sup>, whether I am here or not!”) It proved a wise choice since one of the attendees at Thanksgiving later tested “positive” and another contracted the disease. Had I attended, I probably would have done the same—and, since I am an old man, I might not be writing this.

The flip-side was that the long days and nights alone spurred me into more writing than I have done for several years. Many times God awoke me in the night and I had no peace until I got up, turned on the computer and began writing. I sent these by email throughout the year to family and friends, and recently compiled them in a booklet entitled *2020: Pandemic and Pandemonium* now available free of charge at [fromgrandpawithlove.com](http://fromgrandpawithlove.com).

The Pandemic is truly an International “precipitative event” that will likely be the “World War II memory” of this generation. It is continuing into 2021 and we wonder, “What next?” Fortunately, God doesn’t often tell us the future. We learn from making the trip. I guess that is what makes life exciting, wonderful, sometimes sad or terrifying; and yet such a magnificent experience!

As we look to the mystery of the future, I believe we are being given a chance to be renewed. We know, of course, the world will never be completely right until Jesus returns. But we also learn that when God closes the door of an Old Worn-Out Chapter, He also opens a new door so we can Reset our course.

Many of us are swirling around in confusion, now. We have a lack of clear direction. But this also gives us a rare opportunity to realign our personal lives, our Families, our Church relationships, our Workplaces and ultimately our Government, with God’s View of how we should live.

In other words, He is giving us the opportunity to say, “*Thanks, Lord, for bringing us through to this time of life!*” And He is once again challenging us:

***“Now, Go Have Another New Adventure!”***

***I pray we will all accept God’s Offer, seek His direction,  
And move closer to Him and One Another,  
As we walk through the rest of our Journey!***

*From Grandpa With Love*