

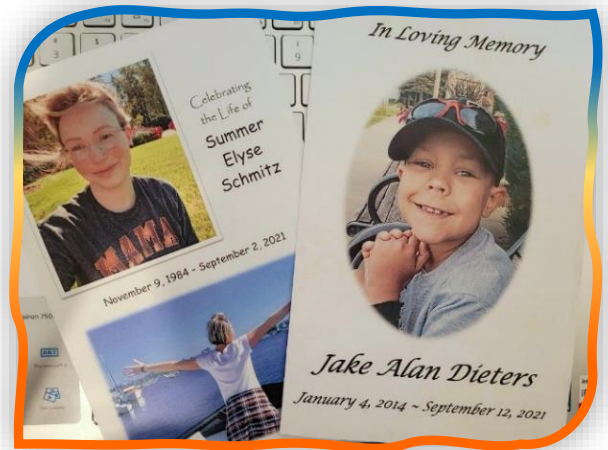
The Monthly Mat: September

Purposeful - Hopefully Helpful - Insights and Perspectives
from our Family, Life, & Ministry of Care Provider
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Nine days separated the funerals of a young little boy and a young mom.

Jake fought cancer for 3 ½ years of his 7-year life.
Summer fought cancer for 17 days of her almost 37-year life.
Jake entered the world 30 years after Summer.
Summer departed from it 10 days before Jake.

I shared the tribute folders from Jake and Summer's funerals during Impact the following week. I remember wanting to share what God had put on my heart: I attended two funerals for lives that ended in ways I didn't understand (the why); my heart was hurting for these two families – very different from one another, yet experiencing so much of the same heartbreak; and lastly – the only thing I knew for certain which God spoke through the worship song “Promises” at Summer's funeral: God's promises remain the same, He is faithful and true, and we are to remain steadfast in the storms.



So why do I lay this here before you on The Mat? There are spans of time in your lives that hold space in unique-to-you ways. While these segments include varying amounts of time, experiences, storms, trials, emotions, consequences, changes, struggle, and depth – we all have our times. You know, there's a man in Matthew 9 who had his span of time, too. He was paralyzed and lying on a mat –for an undisclosed span of time. Some men brought him on the mat to Jesus. Now, I'm just two verses into the chapter and I have questions: how long was the man paralyzed? What kind of mat is this and – what's the condition of the mat? Is it the *only* mat the paralyzed man has used for the duration of his paralysis? Has it seen better days? Does it smell? Is it comfortable? Is it a new mat or had it been freshly cleaned before he was brought to Jesus? And one more thing – why did Jesus specifically tell the man to “Get up, take your mat, and go home” after He had forgiven and healed him?

Verse 7: “the man got up and went home.” Most wouldn't give that verse a second thought. And I love that because the bigger picture here is that Jesus is the Healer. But you know what? I get stuck on the mat. I want to know: *What. About. The. Mat?* Did he take it with him?? The scripture doesn't say he did; the scripture doesn't say he didn't. Of course, had I been in the crowd, would I have even noticed? Would I have been so filled with awe as stated in verse 8 to even be able to wonder about the mat?

Why am I seemingly fixated on the mat? Because without it, the story would be different. Yet perhaps it's just a detail I'm spending too much time noticing. But here's the punch line for me: what or who are you bringing to Jesus on your mat? The mat holds a paralyzed, assumingly defeated man who had lived a span of time dealing with things that his friends knew he needed help getting to a place of healing, the presence of Jesus.

What is on your mat? What is occupying this current span of time in your own life? Do you have anyone in your 'hood to accept you right there, as you are, with your mat – and want so badly for you to “get up, take your mat, and carry on”? If you're stuck on your mat; if you are experiencing a “span of time” that holds any variety of unfair, difficult things – please reach out. I am not Jesus (*hallelujah*); I cannot heal you; but I can figure out ways to help you get up, take your mat, and confidently carry on.

Steadfast with you because of Him –
Anita