

DAD

Thoughts

Life Lessons for
 **Graduates**

Trust His mercy as
you abundant, but
don't abuse His
mercy as unlimited.
As you progress
through life, don't
be afraid to get
out of the boat.
You're not in charge.
Trust Him. Live by
your faith!
Don't go anyplace
presence is not pleased
God says that every
breath we take ought to be
reason enough to praise. He sa

His house
Always
remember
clean c
rub off onto
It only work
the other

If grace were fair,
then it wouldn't be grace
would it?

As a simple vessel of c
you have become the
recipient of an unrival
treasure. You are
blessed! Listen for
Him. Hunger for that
voice. Eat what He say
to survive!
In you
times
spons

SCOTT GRAHAM

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DEDICATION

To the two most amazing children in the world, I can't begin to tell you how much joy you've brought into my life. I thank God for you both regularly. When I list my blessings, Jeremy and Jessica are right at the top. For the rest of your lives, never doubt this unchanging fact for one moment—I love you!



Scott Graham with wife, Michelle, and son, Jeremy, at his college graduation.



Scott Graham with daughter, Jessica, at her high school graduation.



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Foreword

Friends. Real friends. It is among the rarest of things in this society where even our technology is designed to eliminate most human interaction beyond a keyboard. Even so, God in His wisdom sometimes places genuine friendships in our world that reach far beyond a keyboard and allows us the freedom to peer into the very heart of that individual.

Such is that friendship God has allowed me to have with Scott Graham. It is a friendship that has given me the unique perspective of seeing the purity of his spirit, the kindness wherewith he deals with people, and the caring concern he has invested into the lives of his children.

The contents of this book will allow you, the reader, a brief glimpse of the heartbeat I've appreciated for years. In these admonitions to his own children you will see for yourself the purity of heart, you will notice the kindness of spirit, and you will quickly appreciate the concern wherewith he approaches the task of imparting spiritual wisdom into the lives of those he loves the most—his own children.

This book is invaluable to anyone facing the daunting task of raising godly children or of being a godly young person in an ungodly society. Surely these writings will enhance our understanding as parents and youth that among our greatest callings in life is to ensure young hearts have a firm grip on old truths that can keep them in this present world.

Happy In His Hands,
Bishop Douglas D. White



Preface

Dear Young Reader,

Someone gave you this book! (OK, maybe you sprang for it yourself! If so, I commend you!) But it is more likely that a parent, another family member, an honored elder, or perhaps your pastor has put this in your hands. That individual did so for one reason above all others—he or she loves you!

I know you won't be able to fully understand this right now, but something very strange happens to us when we become responsible for a young life. In September of 1990 and in March of 1995, two doctors placed in my arms smelly, red, wrinkled, noisy bundles, and I fell helplessly and hopelessly in love with them. There are those in your life who feel the same way about you.

And so we love, and work, and give, and pray, and hope to influence you toward wise spiritual decisions. With a passion that borders on desperation, we long one thing for you above all else. We want you to live for God! Only after those two days referenced above did I fully understand this verse. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).

At the start of 2013, I decided to give my children a special gift. Something they could hold on to for years to come. You hold that gift in your hands, and it is the product of scores of hours of work. That year I began to read the Bible through in ninety days. Each day I read in three passages. Day one started in Genesis 1, Job 1, and Matthew 1 and progressed

Acknowledgments

Thank you, Jesus, for Your Word and the strength it has provided me through the years. I would never be here today without Your grace and mercy. Thank You also for Your blessings in Jeremy's and Jessica's lives. You have never missed one prayer I've offered for them.

A man is blessed if his wife is also his best friend. I'm blessed. Michelle, I know I spent a lot of time on this project. Thank you for your support and all you've meant to our children. Most of what they are is because of you and in spite of me. SHMILY!

I owe a deep debt to the staff and church family of The Sanctuary! You have provided a safe community in which to raise our children. Thank you for loving them, warts and all, and for allowing them just to be themselves with no unfair expectations. They are in church today largely because you have been the church through their yesterdays!

Special thanks to Pat Bollmann for your excellent work in editing this text. You have an amazing eye, and I'm grateful for your efforts in making me look smart to my children. (At least to the extent that's possible.)

Thank you to cherished friends and ministers who have made a spiritual impact on me and my family. Nearly all of what I am and what I know comes from investments others have made in me. Thank you for allowing me to pass some of this along to my son and daughter.



Day 1

Genesis 1–5

There are so many significant points to be drawn from these chapters. Genesis is the book of beginnings; it contains the beginning of every major Bible theme. In just these five chapters, you will read of the beginning of the Earth, the beginning of life, the beginning of sin, and the beginning of redemption. But as we begin this journey through the Bible together, I would point you to the very first words of the very first verse: *“In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1)*. That says it all to me. Before anything else . . . God! As you journey through life, keep that truth close to your heart. Before you worry about anything else, be quite sure that the God portion of your life is taken care of. Having that in focus comes before concerns about career, spouse, family, possessions, or anything else. Even though the words would not be penned for centuries, the first verse of the Bible states its truth, *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . .”* As you start a new chapter of life, a new beginning, your own genesis so to speak, make sure in that beginning . . . God!

Job 1–6

It is one of the most amazing accounts in the Scripture. A man, a just man, a man who had done nothing wrong, a man on whom God openly bragged, that man lost everything in the course of two horrific days. Before one messenger could fully report, the next one arrived. Gone were his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, and his camels. This represented nearly all his wealth and security. But then worse

I wish I could promise you days
with no sorrow.

still, the word that all ten of his children had died in a terrible windstorm. What happened next is a life lesson I pray you will learn. *“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped”* (Job 1:20). Did you catch that? When he could have whined, complained, and even cursed, this righteous man made a choice to worship. I wish I could promise you days with no sorrow. That you will never deal with sickness. Poverty. Heartache. Loss. But the reality is that those days will come to you as they have to your mother and me. The Book of Job teaches and I’ve learned that one of the secrets to surviving these times is to always be a worshiper. Worship in good times. Worship in bad times. You really can do it. You see, what Job’s wife did not realize when she advised him to “curse God and die” was that if he could make that choice, he could also choose to bless God and live. So can you!

*Worship in good times. Worship
in bad times. You really can do it.*

Matthew 1–3

These chapters include the record of the birth of the Lord and His family’s subsequent flight into and return from Egypt. Near the end of the first chapter are these wonderful words spoken by an angel to Joseph: *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). Joseph became the first human to hear what you have been blessed to grow up knowing—the wonderful, saving name that is above every name. One of the greatest joys of my life was to baptize each of you in that name. I have prayed over you in that name. I have attempted to ensure that you heard that name only praised and never dishonored. I pray that you will always cherish that name as I do!