

Foreword by Jani Ortlund

Cruciform Press

# Wilderness Wanderings

Finding Contentment in  
the Desert Times of Life

Stacy Reaach



# WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

*Finding Contentment in the  
Desert Times of Life*

Stacy Reaoch

For Ben—my late-night editor, my biggest fan,  
my best friend. Thanks for believing in me and loving me  
through the wilderness journey of life.

– Stacy Reaoch

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“Our lives often mirror the Israelites’ journey into and through the wilderness years: hardship, uncertainty, and doubt. And yet, the same God who provided and cared for them cares for us today. Stacy extracts for us the truths regarding God’s constant character, character that he displayed to the wandering Israelites and that can sustain us even now.”

**Christine Hoover**, author of *Searching for Spring* and *Messy Beautiful Friendship*

“Stacy Reaoch has thought long and hard about the Israelites and their wilderness journeys. In this devotional book, she peers into the doubts, fears, discontentment, and disobedience of their hearts with insight and discernment. And then she accurately and incisively demonstrates how these very realities reside in our own hearts. She focuses on the truth of God’s character, God’s promises, and God’s ways shown throughout the wilderness wanderings, encouraging all of us to trust, fear, hope in, rest in, and obey our Redeemer and Savior. Stacy writes with clarity and creativity, using appropriate illustrations and applications. Each entry has a suggested prayer and several questions for self-examination. We highly recommend this book for careful, prayerful reflection.”

**Bruce and Jodi Ware**, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“In the midst of my own journey through the wilderness, I found myself encouraged and challenged by the biblical, insightful, and practical wisdom woven throughout *Wilderness Wanderings*. There is much to glean from the Israelites’ time in the wilderness and Stacy does a wonderful job applying its biblical truths to our own lives.”

**Sarah Walton**, co-author of *Hope When It Hurts: Biblical Reflections to Help You Grasp God’s Purpose in Your Suffering*

“There’s a reason to remember the places God’s people have been and the many, many (many) times He has carried them through. We all find ourselves wandering at times. Wandering through the desert of disappointment, the desert of fear, the desert of pain. . . we need the reminder that the God who was with Moses is with us, every step of the way. Consider this delightful devotional your must-have guide for any season of wandering.”

**Erin Davis**, author, blogger, and wilderness wanderer

“*Wilderness Wanderings* is a feast of truth for tired, busy women. Stacy points us to the Israelites’ wilderness journey to draw a compelling parallel to our lives as twenty-first century women, offering us true hope in gospel grace. I wish every woman would pick up this book — but especially young women — and taste the joy, peace, and contentment that come from resting in Christ.”

**Jaquelle Crowe**, author of *This Changes Everything: How the Gospel Transforms the Teen Years*

“Adulthood is so much harder than we expected in adolescence. The hills are steep, the path is not evenly paved, and the twists and turns are often treacherous. But the joys! The wilderness joys of trusting our heavenly Father, and releasing our grasp on earthly comforts, are deeper and sweeter than we could have dreamed. Stacy Reaoch is a gifted guide for real joy in hard places. She loves God, is full of his word, has walked this way herself, and is ready to take you through the stresses, strains, pains, and pleasures of desert life on the path to the Promised Land. The exodus from fear and discontent isn’t easy, but oh is it worth it.”

**David Mathis**, executive editor, [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org); pastor, Cities Church, Minneapolis/St. Paul; author, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines*

“In our struggle to find contentment where God has us, we can often feel completely alone, as if no one else has ever experienced our struggle. But Scripture tells a different story, for there we see that there is nothing we face that is not common to us all. The struggle of the Israelites to find contentment in the wilderness has a message for all of us, and Stacy helpfully offers us that message. I pray this book serves you not only to rest in God’s abundant care for you, but also to know that his word still speaks even all these centuries later.”

**Courtney Reissig**, author, *Glory in the Ordinary* and *The Accidental Feminist*

“Wilderness Wanderings is insightful and engaging. Pick it up as a companion to your reading of the Exodus and you will find yourself exhorted, convicted, and most of all encouraged about the great God who ultimately sent his Son to free his people from slavery to sin.”

**Keri Folmar**, author, *The Good Portion: The Doctrine of Scripture for Every Woman* and *Joy!, Faith, and Grace* Bible studies for women

“Wilderness Wanderings is a tonic for the soul. Reaoch takes us through the experiences of Israel in the wilderness and deftly applies the text to our lives today. The book is biblically faithful, spiritually challenging, and encouraging. A wonderful resource for both personal reading and for group discussion.”

**Tom and Diane Schreiner**, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Every single one of us is met with seasons of life where difficulty seemingly lingers without end. In *Wilderness Wanderings: Finding Contentment in the Desert Times of Life*, Stacy Reaoch seeks to help readers by faithfully taking them through the Exodus story, pointing them to Christ, and then providing them with practical guidance from the Word of God. I encourage you to pick up Stacy’s book and learn the faithful-

ness and greatness of our God from a fellow pilgrim. In doing so, you'll be blessed by her biblically faithful exposition, her gospel-centered focus, and her practical guidance from a life lived before the face of our beloved Lord Jesus."

**Dave Jenkins**, Executive Director, Servants of Grace Ministries; Executive Editor, *Theology for Life Magazine*; Co-Host, The Equipping You in Grace Podcast

"Faithfulness to Scripture marks the pages of Stacy's book, as she helpfully unfolds the wilderness journey of the Israelites and applies the timeless truths of God's Word to us. Through her writing we behold our powerful, trustworthy, and wise God, the God of biblical history and the God who walks closely with us in our wilderness wanderings, right now."

**Kristen Wetherell**, co-author, *Hope When It Hurts: Biblical Reflections to Help You Grasp God's Purpose in Your Suffering*

"Anyone who has lived the Christian life for a season knows that following Christ inevitably means walking into suffering, trials, and discouragement. *Wilderness Wanderings* is a guidebook through these barren and difficult paths, and a drink of cool water for the weary traveler. Using the biblical narrative of Israel's years in the wilderness, Stacy Reaoch lifts our eyes from our dusty feet and points us to the Lord's grace and mercy in even the most trying circumstances. Arranged into a series of twenty five devotionals, this book is sure to bear fruit in the lives of readers for a long time to come."

**Megan Hill**, author, *Praying Together: The Priority and Privilege of Prayer in Our Homes, Communities, and Churches*; editorial board member, Christianity Today

"As Stacy leads us through the wilderness with the Israelites, keenly unveiling God's deeper purposes in their seeming aimlessness, she also patiently testifies by her own life that it is the sovereign hand of a loving God that directs each wandering step.

She shows us that God’s providence always conspires to give his children more of Christ—and it is in the desert that we learn the sweetness of the living water found only in him.”

**Abigail Dodds**, blogger, author

“*Wilderness Wanderings* follows Israel’s years in the desert before entering the Promised Land. In studying this portion of biblical history, you’ll see yourself and God’s faithfulness in your own desert wanderings. Like Israel, we are quick to forget all God has done in our lives. Stacy’s Word-centered devotional will remind you afresh of God’s unending grace and faithfulness and, above all, his provision of life in Christ.”

**Christina Fox**, speaker; writer; author, *A Heart Set Free* and *Closer Than a Sister*

“In *Wilderness Wanderings*, Stacy Reaoch puts on her tour-guide hat and walks us through one of the most significant sections of Scripture. On page after page, Reaoch applies ancient truths to contemporary life in a style that will inspire reflection and devotion. Read and be stirred to trust the God who can part waters.”

**Matt Smethurst**, managing editor, The Gospel Coalition



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*Wilderness Wanderings: Finding Contentment in the Desert Times of Life*

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# FOREWORD

Are you a control freak like me? From my calendar to my kitchen, from my money to my make-up, I like to create a plan and control it to completion. No wandering off course for me! How could God be pleased with that? I've got too much work to do! I'm just too busy to waste my time meandering through a day.

So when I find myself in a dry spell where all my self-important busy-ness disintegrates, where normal life gets strangled in the wilderness of a new job or the complexities of a new relationship or the desert of an unexpected loss, it's then that confusion and guilt find their way straight to my heart. And it's then that I need help—the kind of help that Stacy Reaoch beautifully offers us in this treasure you are holding in your hands.

Tracing the “Wilderness Wanderings” of the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land, Stacy skillfully helps us see ourselves within those wanderings, showing us how much like Moses and the Israelites we really are. And then she offers us the hope of a powerful, loving, and sovereign God for our inevitable wilderness experiences.

This book is ideal for busy women who have limited time to be in the Word, but desire to study a chronological

section of Scripture and see how it applies to their lives. It could be used individually, in a small group Bible study, or in one-on-one mentoring. The simple but concise thought questions that follow each devotional help guide her readers into a meaningful response to God's Word.

Winsomely relating her own experiences as a woman, a wife, and a mother, Stacy identifies with our needs as we each walk our own pathway toward the eternal Promised Land. She reminds us that with God, there is no unnoticed suffering, especially on that seemingly pointless pathway marked with injustice. She encourages us to loosen our grip on the circumstances and people we so often want to control as we walk toward Heaven.

Stacy also carefully warns us about the dangers of disobedience--not only for us, but also for those closest to us. She opens up one of my favorite biblical themes: generational blessings. She shows us God's desire for complete, heartfelt obedience. What kind of legacy do we want to leave? As you read through this book, you will be reminded that your own wilderness wanderings have a purpose, and that your responses to your present desert experience have eternal consequences.

Settle in with this gem of a book. Read it with both an open Bible and an open heart. Let it be your manna for a month or so. Say with Jeremiah, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). Let the God of Moses and Joshua guide you through your own wilderness wanderings, giving you "drink from the river of his delights" (Psalm 36:8).

And when our days in this worldly wilderness are finally finished and we have reached the Promised Land, let's look for each other and praise our kind King together for the wonder of being included in those who sing around his Throne, "Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph" (Deuteronomy 33:29). I can't wait!

Jani Ortlund  
Author; Vice President, Renewal Ministries  
Franklin, Tennessee

# INTRODUCTION

This past fall, my husband and I had the privilege of attending a retreat for ministry couples in upstate New York. On a clear, sunny day we had some free time and decided to take our first hike in the Adirondack Mountains. The path we wanted to follow was supposed to lead to a beautiful peak where you could see for a hundred miles. As we got ready to go, we felt excited for our new adventure. The owners of the bed-and-breakfast we were staying at warned us that it was a fairly difficult four-hour hike, but we felt up for the challenge and were eager to head out.

So off we went, armed with only a granola bar and a bottle of water. And as for hiking gear, we had none. Just sweatshirts, shorts, and tennis shoes for each of us. We were blissfully unaware of the intensity of the climb and how ill-prepared we were. As we began our hike things seemed easy enough, but the path quickly became more difficult, with slippery leaves covering the trail and steep rocks to climb. I soon realized that running shoes are not made for mountain climbing.

Our hike was marked with spray-painted red markings, or flares, on the trees. Normally you follow the same color flare to your destination — different-colored



flares change the course and often the difficulty. After following the red flares on the trees, suddenly we only saw blue flares. What happened to the red? With no other hikers in view for well over an hour, we decided to follow the blue (which then turned to orange). I began to imagine our friends at the retreat calling out a search party for us as my husband and I tried to figure out which way to go.

Life can often seem like a maze. Like my husband and me on our hike, we enter adulthood with high hopes and big dreams, blissfully unaware of the challenges set before us. We don't anticipate the steep, rocky trails that will come our way through job loss or sick children or a strained marriage. We struggle to know the right path to take and can get easily frustrated along the way. At times we persevere in climbing a steep hill and then are rewarded with a glorious mountaintop view—but we can't stay on the mountaintop forever, and soon are winding back down the path, with twists and turns in every bend. We think we know the best or easiest path to take, but God often chooses a path less known, marked with unwanted difficulties that cause us to lean on him.

The wilderness journey of the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land parallels our lives in multiple ways. God's promise of an abundant land flowing with milk and honey propelled them forward, but they were met with constant struggles and discouragements along the path. From fear of enemy attacks to hungry bellies to the daunting 40-year trek, their faith in God was severely tested. And they often failed through their complaining spirits and idolatrous hearts. Discontentment was

a constant companion. But our God, who is rich in mercy, gave them grace upon grace. He guided their path through a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. And he gave them a faithful leader, Moses, to guide them along the way. A leader who demonstrated consistent love and forgiveness to a difficult and whiny people. A leader who points us to the greatest Leader who sacrificed his life for the sake of sinful man.

Throughout this devotional, you'll likely see reflections of yourself through either the Israelites or Moses or both. Our sinful hearts are not much different than the Israelites' were. And the battle for contentment rears its ugly head often in this life on earth. But I also trust you'll see the hope God offers us during our own wilderness periods. In the dark times of life where we're left wondering which way to go, God is with us. He hears our prayers and sees our suffering. He guides us by illuminating the truths of his Word and sending the comfort of his Spirit. And through the deliverance of the Israelites, he reminds us that he is faithful to keep his promises.

After many twists and turns, and moments of silent panic in my mind, my husband and I finally made it to the top of the mountain and were rewarded with a glorious landscape view of lakes, trees, and mountaintops. Despite our own wrong turns along the way, God protected us and guided us in our climb. And he even provided an easier way down via a long, windy road that had been closed for the winter. That hike tested our faith in God in multiple ways and caused us to rely on his guidance and strength to finish the course.

Nothing is wasted in God's timeline. I'm sure the Israelites had many moments when they questioned the purpose of God taking them on such a difficult and lengthy trip. Yet God is using the dark and difficult times of life to draw us to himself and showcase his own glory. Just as God miraculously parted the Red Sea to show Pharaoh and all the Egyptians that he is the Lord, God will use the trials of our life to remind us of his strength, power, and sustaining grace. Contentment isn't found in having everything turn out just how we would like, but in trusting a faithful God to give us just what we need. It's the wilderness times in life that shape and mold who we become. It's the wilderness times in life that will lead us to glory.

# 1: GOD HEARS US

*Exodus 2:23–25*

Life is full of both hills and valleys. And when we're in the valley, it can often feel dark and lonely. We wonder if anyone sees our sorrow. Does anyone notice our sadness? Does anyone care? There is something in human nature that longs to be noticed, cared about, loved. This is one reason social media has become such a phenomenon. Anyone can post their terrible day or their epic accomplishment to a world of virtual viewers who can then provide encouraging words within seconds. It can be a quick fix to lift our spirits, at least for a little while.

The Israelites were no different. They too wanted their misery to be seen and heard and noticed. They had been held captive in Egypt for centuries, working as slaves under the harsh oppression of Pharaoh. Although they had been blessed by the Lord in that they increased and multiplied greatly, on the heels of the blessing was a great sorrow: severe oppression and persecution.

As the Israelites became more numerous, the Egyptians began to fear that they would eventually mount an uprising. So they “ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard

service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves” (Exodus 1:13-14). Pharaoh even ordered all the male infants to be killed. It’s hard to imagine the oppression the Hebrews must have felt. To be buried under loads of heavy physical labor, and on top of that, to fear that your new baby boy might be killed.

The Israelites’ pain and suffering made them turn to the only One who was able to change their awful circumstances. They groaned and cried aloud to the Lord for help. And the sovereign, almighty God of the universe heard their cry. He was not immune to their enslavement and daily drudgery. He did not leave them to figure out their situation on their own. But he saw them and remembered the covenant he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:24): “The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God” (Genesis 17:8, NIV).

This prayer of the Israelites was the beginning of the exodus of God’s people to the Promised Land. God would use their prayer as a means to start the journey from oppression to freedom.



When you are in despair, where do you turn? Whom do you cry out to? For me, it’s all too easy to reach for the phone, the computer, the fridge, or my husband. Like the Israelites, we want our sorrows to be noticed and cared about, but for our rescue we often look to the things or

people of this world. A piece of triple-chocolate cake can lift my spirits for a few short minutes, but that comfort is gone as soon as I'm left with a stray few crumbs and a dish to wash. Talking to a friend on the phone can bring encouragement and comfort as well, but if our conversation isn't grounded in the truth of God's Word, there is little hope to stand on.

The Lord wants us to cry out to him. He delights to hear our voice and the needs we have. He longs to be the first one we turn to when we are low in the valley. And even though he sees us and already knows our needs before we ask, he nonetheless calls us to pray to him (Matthew 6: 6-8). Our prayers for help highlight God's power and strength as the only thing that can truly rescue us.

If you are in the pit of despair right now, take heart, that your suffering does not go unnoticed. God sees you. He cares for you. And he longs for you to cry out to him for help. Whatever suffering we are experiencing is part of his greater plan to give us more of himself. It's the wilderness times of life that will lead us to the Promised Land.

*Lord, help us in the midst of our suffering to lift our eyes upward. Forgive us for the times we look to the things of this world to ease our sorrow. May we find comfort knowing that you see us and hear our prayers.*

### Reflection Questions

1. Where do you look for help during times of suffering?
2. How has the story of the Israelites reminded you of God's care for you?

## **2: CAN GOD REALLY USE ME?**

*Exodus 3:1–12, 4:10–13*

I married young. Just months after graduating from college, I wed my high school sweetheart, my best friend. We loaded the U-Haul with all our worldly possessions— basically our wedding gifts and some hand-me-down furniture from my in-laws— and moved 12 hours away from our families. It was an exciting time, for sure. But I was also apprehensive, nervous.

Having given my life to Christ during my freshman year of college, I was still a new Christian. My husband, on the other hand, had grown up in a strong Christian family and now felt called to full-time ministry. We were in stage one of the ministry training God had planned for us. Ben was to begin a pastoral apprenticeship at a large church, and together we would be working with the college students. So I was, in effect, still a pastor's wife in training. I felt *very* ill-equipped for the role. I still knew next to nothing about most of the Bible, I was trying to figure out what it meant to be a godly wife, and I was just beginning my study of the domestic arts (my failed dinner

attempts had landed us at McDonald's on more than one occasion). How could I be a godly example for these college girls when I was still learning the basics myself? It seemed that God could have found much better "pastor's wife material" than me at my husband's elite Christian college.

Fears plagued me as I considered my new role. What if I were to end up meeting with a young woman and had no idea how to answer her questions? So many of these young people were attending Bible schools and probably knew far more about Scripture than I did. What did I have to offer? I felt I had so much to learn before God could really use me in the lives of these young ladies. But he had called me to this time and place, and now here I was, desperately trying to find the book of Jonah before someone realized I had no clue.

Moses felt that ill-equipped, and worse. More than once.

At the start of the book of Exodus he is called to a task much greater than himself. From a burning bush, God speaks to Moses and lays on him an enormous responsibility. He is to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt—more than 2 million of them. They had been oppressed by Pharaoh as slaves for many years, and it was time for their liberation. But Moses doesn't respond with a lot of enthusiasm. Instead, he questions God's call on his life for this task, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11).

God simply responds that he will be with Moses, and



after he has delivered the people from the Egyptians, Moses will serve God on that very mountain (Exodus 3:12).

Even with God's promises to be with him, to deliver the people, and to provide through plundering the Egyptians, Moses still doubts. He keeps thinking of excuses as to why he is really not the best choice for the job. "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'" (Exodus 4:1).

God answers his request by equipping Moses with miracles to perform in front of the Israelites as proof—a staff that becomes a serpent, a cloak that heals a leprous hand, water from the Nile that will turn to blood.

But still Moses resists, doubting his ability as a public speaker. "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue" (Exodus 4:10).

By this time, the Lord simply rebukes Moses and tells him to go, affirming that he is the maker of the mouth and tongue, and will give Moses the words to say (Exodus 4:11-12). Despite God's graciousness and patience with this insecurity, Moses resists one final time and begs the Lord to send someone else (Exodus 4:13-14). God's anger is kindled, but he nevertheless responds to Moses' request: God will send Aaron out to speak to the people on Moses' behalf.



It seems preposterous, arguing with God over something he has clearly called us to do. But I wonder how often we

do the same thing? We refuse to say yes to an assignment from the Lord. Either by complaining, or simply refusing to do it, we take our stand. We think we know our capabilities and to what extent we can serve, but God often wants to stretch us beyond what we think is possible. Maybe you're given a new assignment at work that seems overwhelming and beyond your abilities. Maybe you just took a pregnancy test and realized you're expecting again, when your first baby isn't yet walking. Or maybe you're asked to lead a Bible study, when you feel you're ill-equipped in knowledge of the Word.

Whatever the calling may be, God wants us to remember the same thing he told Moses. He will be with us. If he has clearly called us to the task, he will see that we carry it through. He will give us the grace and the tools needed to accomplish the assignment he has given. Maybe not perfectly—in fact, probably not—but all he asks is our service, leaving the outcome to him.

*Lord Jesus, thank you for the reminder that you will be with us and equip us to do whatever you've called us to. Give us the grace to not spurn our calling, but joyfully receive it and move forward in faith.*

### Reflection Questions

1. How have you argued with God over something he has clearly called you to do?
2. In what area of your life do you need to trust God's promise to be with you? How might he be calling you to act in a new and stretching way?

# 3: BLINDED FROM GOD'S PROMISES

*Exodus 5:1–9, 6:1–9*

Our 3-year-old son is notorious for making sweet but empty promises. When caught in the act of playing with his older brother's special and reserved Legos, he tells me with an earnest voice, "I'm sorry, Mommy. I promise *never* to do that again." My husband and I look at each other with knowing glances. As much as we'd like to believe him, we know these are probably empty words and that very likely, in just a short while, we'll find him once again digging into the same box — and once again offering another empty promise to *always* obey and *never* play with his older brother's Legos.

I wonder if the Israelites sometimes felt like God's promises were just empty words — such as his promise to relieve them from the misery of slavery.

Moses and Aaron had met with the people of Israel and told them of God's plans for deliverance and rest for them (Exodus 4:29–31). They went to Pharaoh and requested that he let the Israelites make a three-day journey into the wilderness to hold a feast for the Lord (Exodus 5:1).

Pharaoh interpreted this request as a sneaky way for the Israelites to take time off and be lazy. So he punished them: in his hardness of heart, Pharaoh made the Israelites' work more difficult by forcing them to make bricks without the straw that had previously been provided to them.

“You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’ Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks” (Exodus 5:17-18). The Israelites were more than discouraged and took out their frustration on Moses and Aaron, saying they had made the Israelites “stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us” (Exodus 5:21). Even Moses doubted why God had sent him, since Pharaoh had only done evil to the Israelites.

But in Exodus 6 the Lord reminds Moses of his promises. He reminds him of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan. God reminds them that he hears the groaning of the Israelites. He has not forgotten them and will make good on his promises, if only they will believe. Through the promises of deliverance from slavery, God will redeem them.

Through the famous words, “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God” (Exodus 6:7), God promises them a relationship. He promises ultimate rest through the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—spiritual rest and salvation despite their sins and failures. But when Moses speaks these hope-filled promises to the Israelites, they don't listen to him, “because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery” (Exodus 6:9).

Despite being offered such precious promises, the Israelites remained numb. The intense working conditions they faced under Pharaoh had robbed them of their joy and hope for the future. The promises of God must have seemed as unrealistic as finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.



Difficult circumstances in life can tend to harden us. How often have you doubted a promise of God because your present situation deemed it unrealistic? Your marriage is struggling and instead of trusting God's promises to heal and transform, you assume it's beyond repair and are ready to throw in the towel. The overbearing boss at work has been making your life miserable and instead of praying for him and asking God for patience and forbearance in your own life (Colossians 3:12-13), you chalk it up to an inborn difference in personality types that has no hope of changing. Maybe your bills keep piling up and money is tight. Instead of trusting God to provide for all your needs (Philippians 4:19), you begin to fret and compare with others, allowing your heart to become jaded and envious.

Our natural, human bent is toward unbelief. We're prone to be discouraged and to allow our life circumstances to control our attitudes and actions. But the supernatural grace of God offers us something so much better. As we learn to trust in the power of his Holy Spirit, we can have faith-filled hope that allows us to bank on the promises of God's Word. Ask the Lord to keep your heart

soft throughout all the twists and turns of life. Don't let a hardened heart blind you from the beauty of God's truth.

*Father God, help us not to become hardened and without hope amidst the trials of life. When pressures surround us, help us cling to the promises of your Word. Give us faith to believe the beauty of your promises.*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. How did the Israelites' difficult circumstances in life blind them from God's promises?
2. What situation in your own life is tempting you to ignore the promises of God? What truth do you need to believe today?

# 4: GOD WILL MAKE HIS GLORY KNOWN

*Exodus 7:1–6, 9:13–16*

The daily news can be terrifying and depressing. From hurricanes, to shootings, to bombings, to racial and political unrest, our world is filled with catastrophes. Have you ever wondered what God’s purpose is in allowing so much evil in the world? God is God! Why won’t he put an end to all the violence and terror?

Our reading for today gives us a small glimpse into God’s purposes in calamity. He gives Moses another intimidating assignment: Moses must again ask Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. Moses is worried that Pharaoh won’t listen to him, just as the Israelites didn’t listen to the promises of God he proclaimed. Moses is also concerned that he is a man of “uncircumcised lips” (Exodus 6:12). Nevertheless, God prods him forward, telling him he is like God to Pharaoh and that his brother, Aaron, will do the talking for him.

Thus begins a series of ten horrific plagues, acts of

judgment against the Egyptians that display the power and glory of God. The first plague begins with Moses meeting Pharaoh on the bank of the Nile River. After acknowledging Pharaoh's refusal to let the Israelites go, Moses strikes the Nile with his staff and the water turns to blood. But Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and he refuses to listen. The plagues continue—frogs, gnats, flies, the death of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally the Passover. A similar pattern emerges in many of the plagues: the Egyptians are afflicted, Pharaoh promises release of the Israelites in return for ending the plague, Moses keeps his end of the deal, but Pharaoh ultimately hardens his heart and does not let the Israelites go.

We might wonder what God's purpose was in sending multiple harsh judgments upon the Egyptians when he had the power to deliver the Israelites from captivity the first time. But we're reminded through God's words to Pharaoh that nothing is wasted. He has a greater purpose than what we can see on the surface.

“For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (Exodus 9:14-16).



God wanted to repeatedly show the Egyptians and the Israelites that he is God! There is no one like him! Who else could turn a river into blood; cover a land with frogs, gnats, and flies; kill only the livestock of the Egyptians and not the Israelites; and drape the world in darkness? God's strength, power, and sovereignty was displayed at the beginning and end of each plague. He wanted all to see, without a doubt, the judgment that was being cast on the Egyptians for their refusal to obey his commands. Not only was God's character made apparent to the Egyptians, but as the Israelites stood by under the shelter of God's wing, their faith must have been strengthened as well.



When our own lives turn chaotic, we often become blind to God's purposes. We wonder why he has allowed our heart to ache from a broken relationship, why he permitted us to suffer from sickness or disability, or why he has let our child stray from the faith. But in all such examples, God's proclamation to the Egyptians and Israelites is true for us as well—these things take place that we would know there is none like him in all the earth.

How does this happen? As believers, it's often in the heartaches of life that we turn our eyes upward, and come to realize that all the comforts of this world mean nothing compared to a childlike trust in the good and sovereign hand of almighty God. Our wayward child, or the death of a loved one, or a national tragedy will force us to our knees, to cry out to the only One who can offer true hope and healing in our pain.

And as we cry to him, his name is exalted, and his glory is manifested through our hope and our tears.

*Lord Almighty, you are a faithful, powerful, and sovereign God. As we dwell in a chaotic world, help us to see your goodness and trust your sovereign hand. There is no one like you! May your glory be proclaimed among the nations!*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What do you learn about the character of God through the plagues he inflicted on the Egyptians?
2. What chaos or heartache in your own life is causing you to know there is no one like him? How has God ministered to you in your time of need?

# 5: PASSING THE BATON OF FAITH

*Exodus 12:1–13:16*

A handful of years ago our family was on vacation and sitting around the campfire. In between roasting marshmallows and eating gooey s'mores, we were telling stories from the past. Our then 10- and 8-year-old children surprised us by asking how Ben and I met and eventually married. As we recounted our first meeting at the county fair, my coming to faith in Christ while in college, our painful breakup, and the meeting that reunited us two years later, I realized what an opportunity our kids had just given us. Sharing with our children stories of God's faithfulness and sustaining grace in our lives helps us pass the baton of faith.

Like all great ideas, this is one God thought of long before we did! In Exodus 12 we find the momentous occasion of the Passover. God tells each household in Israel to sacrifice a lamb without blemish and put the blood on the doorposts of their houses. When the Lord passed through the land of Egypt that night, striking the firstborn, he would pass over the houses with blood

on the doorposts. God uses this very tangible teaching style to point to the true Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). And he wants this memorial to be kept throughout all generations. “You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service” (Exodus 12:24-25).

After the tenth plague—the death of all the firstborn sons in Egypt—Pharaoh was more than ready to be rid of the Israelites. God’s people were finally free after 430 years of slavery! Thus the exodus was successful, even to the point of plundering the Egyptians of their wealth on the way out the door (Exodus 12:36). Now God was instructing Moses to mark this day of liberation by celebrating a Feast of Unleavened Bread and consecrating the firstborn of both animals and man.

The Israelites had fled Egypt in such a rush that there had been no time to leaven their dough, so in the wilderness they were able to bake only unleavened cakes. As a way of remembering that hasty exit from Egypt, each year the Israelites would eat unleavened bread for seven days and then, on the seventh day, celebrate a feast to the Lord. In addition, as a way of remembering how God spared the Israelites when he struck down the firstborn of all the Egyptians, God instructed the Israelites to consecrate the firstborn of all animals and man. A lamb was to be killed and offered as a sacrifice for the firstborn male or for the firstborn donkey. The clear lesson is that redemption comes through the death of the firstborn (Exodus 13:15). Sound familiar? It

should, because the ultimate redemption for the Israelites would be the death of Christ, the Son of God and “the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29).

In designing this remembrance, God had more than the adults in mind. He knew the children would wonder why their families do these things, so he tells the Israelites, “and when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery’” (Exodus 13:14). Earlier in the same chapter, God instructs the Israelites, “You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:9-10).



God doesn't want to be forgotten. He wants his faithful and mighty acts of deliverance to be remembered every time we look at our hands or open our mouths to speak. Remembering these things is both a glory to him, and a blessing to us. And what better way of passing on such faith-building memories than by telling our own children?

Think about God's mighty works in your own life. How did you come to faith in Christ? How has God provided when you've been in need? How has he sustained you when everything else in life has gone awry? Finding opportune moments to share these stories with

our children highlights God's faithfulness and personal, moment-by-moment involvement in our lives.

Each year when the various children's birthdays come around, I tell them the story of going into labor with them, the exciting and surprising things that happened in those hours, and how God miraculously brought them safely into this world. It never ceases to amaze me that, even on birthdays when I've forgotten to tell them the story (or been too tired at the end of the day), they are quick to remind me: "Mom, you haven't told the story yet about how I was born." It has become a yearly tradition of remembering God's miracle of life being brought to earth. I suppose this is something they will age out of eventually, but it's a great joy to us in this season of life.

Similarly, even the simple routines of family devotions at the end of dinner, or praying in our minivan on our way to Sunday worship, are ways I hope God will stir in our children's hearts eyes of faith and praise. Your traditions don't need to be elaborate, though. Simply finding space in the everyday of life to point to God's goodness and steadfastness can do much to help pass the baton of faith to our children.

*Lord Jesus, help us to remember the mighty works you've done in our lives. Just as the Passover reminds us of your powerful deliverance of the Israelites, help us establish traditions that remind us of your faithfulness in our own lives. Let us not neglect passing the baton of faith to our children, that your name may be praised in generations to come!*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What were some instances of God's mighty power that the Israelites' could share with their children?
2. How did the Passover and consecration of the firstborn demonstrate a tangible lesson about the gospel?
3. What are some simple traditions you can implement to remind your children of the goodness and faithfulness of God?

# 6: GOD PROVIDES A WAY OF ESCAPE

*Exodus 13:17-22*

As the Israelites began their journey to the Promised Land, the most direct, convenient route passed right through the heart of Philistine territory. The Philistines were brave, strong warriors who likely wanted a piece of Canaan for themselves. There would be no way the Israelites could take that route without a full-on battle. Yet the Israelites were a weary group of mostly women and children who saw themselves as victims of the Egyptian oppression. They had never traveled outside the land of Goshen, had never been trained to use weapons, and had no idea how to fight. Without a doubt they would have been crushed by the Philistines. Yet God knew all this and had compassion on them.

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17-18).



God knew that if he allowed the Israelites to go the most direct way, their confidence and trust in him would be shattered by the pummeling of the Philistines. The Israelites could easily decide that life had been more comfortable and predictable in Egypt, and want to turn back around (which is exactly what happened two years later). So in the Lord's wisdom he led them the long way to Canaan. The way of the wilderness would be a much lengthier journey, and marked by many difficulties. But God would build the Israelites' faith in him as they saw him provide water for the thirsty, food for the hungry, and protection along the way. He provided a way of escape from certain disaster, but that escape wasn't going to be a smooth-sailing, easy-peasy kind of ride.



How many times has God spared us from suffering or temptation, a trial that could very well crush our faith in him? How often do we think we can see the obvious way to accomplish our goals, yet God blocks that route and chooses a different, longer path for us, one that turns out to be marked with unwanted difficulties?

He uses these wilderness times of our life to shape us and mold us to be more like him. And when temptation or an insurmountable trial arises, he always provides a way of escape. First Corinthians 10:13 tells us, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

The saying is true that God only gives us what we can handle. But not what we can handle *on our own*— what we can handle by his sustaining, enabling grace. Temptations and trials are a natural part of life. We should not be surprised when they come our way (1 Peter 4:12). But when the trial seems too much to bear, we need to cry out to the only One who can provide a way of escape.

When you've been battling the idol of food and the second piece of cheesecake is calling your name, cry out to the Lord for a way of escape. But know that often those escape routes require difficult steps of faith and action. You may need to throw the dessert in the trash, plead for grace not to give in to the lusts of the flesh, or step outside and go for a brisk walk. Maybe all three.

The way of escape is likely not the easy thing to do. Don't think of it as a shortcut or a hack, some kind of spiritual quick fix. It's typically the longer but the far better way to go.

When the temptation to wallow in self-pity and despair is at your door, sing to the Lord a new song. Ask him for grace to get out of bed and do the next thing. Look for a way to serve another in need instead of being absorbed in your own problems. God is compassionate and gracious to us in our trials. Just as he knew the Israelites could not handle battling the Philistines right off the bat on their journey, he sees us and knows our besetting sins and weaknesses.

God is eager to be the One who rescues us from difficulty. And he longs for us to cry out to him to *provide a path to freedom*.

*Lord, thank you for the compassion you show us in our trials. Your ways are higher than our ways and so much better! When sin and temptation are crouching at our door, help us to cry out to you and trust you'll provide a way of escape!*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What aspects of God's character are displayed in his choosing to take the Israelites on a longer path through the wilderness?
2. When have you seen God deliver you from a trial or temptation in an unexpected way?
3. In what area of your life do you need to trust God to provide a way of escape?

# 7: IDEALIZING THE PAST

*Exodus 14:1-12*

Have you ever noticed a tendency to look back on a previous time in your life as your golden age? As we mother school-age children, it seems life gets faster with each new school year. For my family, entering middle school has involved shuttling our teenage daughter to daily sports practice, play rehearsal, or music recitals. Although I'm thankful for the opportunities she's been given, I can find myself remembering the "simpler" days of mothering when she was at home with me all day, our main outing being a trip to the grocery store. Now it seems the Reaoch shuttle bus is running almost 24-7.

At this stage, I can easily fall into the trap of thinking things were easier and happier in the early years of mothering. But if I could rewind time, I'd likely find myself busy with diapering and potty training and keeping little ones entertained, wishing for a few minutes of peace and quiet. *Surely, things will get easier as the kids get older!* was something I remember thinking often. Reflecting on past times in life as the ideal is part of our

human, sinful tendency. We're prone to be discontent, and often wish for what we do not have.

Despite the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian rule, they are filled with fear as they see the Egyptians pursuing them near the Red Sea. Immediately they wonder, *has God led us out of Egypt only to die?* They cry and whine and wish they were back in Egypt as slaves. This time of trial and testing causes them to idealize their former life of slavery, and they quickly lose sight of hope.

And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." (Exodus 14:10b-12)

Their present hardship is causing them to forget the chains they were in just days earlier. They're forgetting the forced labor, their treatment as possessions rather than people, their inability to choose where to live or work, and they're ready to blame Moses for all their current problems.



The danger of letting our minds dwell on the past is that we can gloss over the trials we were experiencing then

and paint in our minds a picture-perfect ideal. Like the Israelites, we are prone to think that trading today's problems for yesterday's would erase our unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Instead we need to trust that the Lord, who knows our every need, is worthy to be trusted in whatever situation he currently has us in. It's a matter of contentment, a matter of choosing to bloom where he has planted us.

When you find yourself daydreaming about a former time in your life that you wish you could go back to, fix your mind on these truths about God's character.

1. **God is good.** This simple fact is a poignant reminder that he is worthy to be trusted. God is for us and not against us. Whatever problem you may be dealing with, remember the goodness of God, in both the happy times and the bad.
2. **God is sovereign.** Nothing catches God by surprise. He knew and ordained that the Israelites would be pursued by the Egyptians at the Red Sea. He created your inmost being. He knows the very hairs on our heads. And he ordains whatever circumstances we find ourselves currently walking through. Much peace can be experienced when we trust the goodness and sovereignty of God.
3. **God is faithful.** He will never leave you or forsake you. He is faithful to keep his promises. And he promises to use all things for the good of those who love him, who have been called by his purpose (Romans 8:28).

*Father, give us thankful hearts and keep us from looking at the past with rose-colored glasses. Let our ultimate satisfaction be found in you instead of our imagined ideal circumstances. Help us to choose to bloom where you've planted us.*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What evidences of God's faithfulness should the Israelites have turned to when they were gripped with fear?
2. What seasons of your life do you find yourself idealizing? How can you choose to trust God and bloom where he has planted you?

# 8: THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU

*Exodus 14:13-30*

A dear friend of mine in ministry shared with me how she and her husband had been maligned by someone in leadership at their church. Due to theological disagreements, they had decided to leave the church, where they had served for many years. But as they started to visit new churches in their small city, they quickly learned that the pastors of these churches had been warned of their “divisiveness,” so they were not warmly welcomed. When her husband applied to a ministry internship program in another state, he was rejected because of a bad report from this same person.

With every bone in her body my friend wanted to scream the truth, to describe what had happened in their church to cause the relational fracture, and to defend herself and her husband. But a mentor advised her to be quiet, pray, and wait for the Lord, the avenger who will fight for us. How difficult this can be when we’re being persecuted or slandered! We want to prove the other person wrong. We want to defend ourselves so that no



one thinks badly of us. But sometimes, being silent and letting the truth prevail is exactly what we should do.

Can you imagine the fear the Israelites felt as they saw the massive Egyptian army coming toward them at top speed? They desperately needed protection. In their panic and fear they wished they were back in Egypt, living as slaves. Their understandable terror filled their thinking with idealistic visions of the past. Surely they felt utterly helpless to defend themselves against such a great and powerful army. With no military training and no familiarity with the area, they believed their lives would soon end. But God in his mercy had a different plan.

And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” (Exodus 14:13-14)

When their every instinct was preparing them for fight or flight, the Lord was telling them to be still and confidently watch him work. He would be their defender. They didn't need military might. They didn't even need to open their mouths. No cries of fear were needed, no screams of defense. “You have only to be silent,” said Moses (Exodus 14:14). Being still and quiet in the face of a fierce attack demonstrates trust in God. It's like putting down our toy cap gun because we know the tanks will arrive at any moment.

And in a miracle only God could do, he instructed Moses to stretch his hand over the sea and God drove back the waters, allowing the Israelites to walk across on dry ground. When the Israelites arrived safely at the other side, their Egyptian enemies pursued them full-force into the seabed, but again God had Moses stretch out his hand. The waters broke in on the Egyptians, throwing them into a panic and burying their chariots and horsemen under an overwhelming flood.

God's omnipotent power and sovereignty over this situation was shown through his confident commands to the Israelites (Exodus 14:13-14), followed by his actions. He is a comforter, offering peace to the fearful. He invited the Israelites to rest in himself, the source of salvation. He offered hope through the promise they would never see the Egyptians again. And he is actively working for us, today, as we face our own "fighting without and fear within" (2 Corinthians 7:5).



My friends whose reputation had been marred quietly waited for the truth to prevail as they continued doing good and seeking God's will. The following year the husband was accepted into the ministry internship program that had first rejected him. Eventually he was offered a ministry position at that very church. God has since blessed them with decades of fruitful ministry. Instead of rushing to defend themselves by sharing their side of the story with anyone who would listen, they allowed the Lord to fight for them. And God honored their trust and humility.

How often do we feel the need to run ahead of God? When have you taken matters into your own hands and assumed the role of divine avenger? It can be tempting every time a snarky remark is made on social media, or someone says something that casts you in a bad light. Or maybe you have worked hard in hopes of getting a promotion at work, yet someone else is picked for the job. Do you want to let your boss and coworkers know the unfairness of the situation, or why the other person is less qualified than you?

Our natural, sinful temptation is to return evil for evil and give the offending person a taste of his own medicine. But God reminds us that there is a better way. Although there is a time to stand for justice and truth, there are also many times when we need to leave matters in God's hands, to let him do the fighting for us. Often our best fighting happens on our knees.

*Thank you, Lord, that you are our avenger! Keep us from the temptation to take matters into our own hands and repay evil with evil. Help us to trust that you will fight for us.*

### Reflection Questions

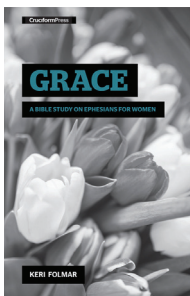
1. How do these verses provide hope and comfort to you?
2. What is a situation in your life that would be better fought by putting your weapons down and letting the Lord fight for you?

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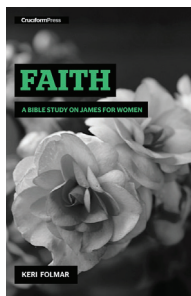
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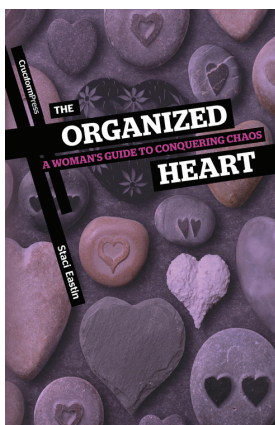
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**Kristie Anyabwile**, holds a history degree from NC State University, and is married to Thabiti, currently a church planter in Washington, DC., and a Council Member for The Gospel Coalition.

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## *the Scars that have Shaped Me*

HOW GOD  
MEETS US  
IN SUFFERING



## The Scars That Have Shaped Me

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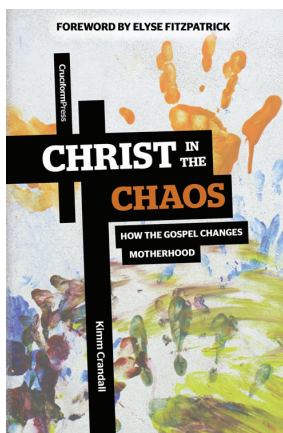
***Paul Tripp, pastor, author, international conference speaker***

“I could not put this book down, except to wipe my tears. Vaneetha’s testimony of God’s kindness to her in pain was exactly what I needed; no doubt, many others will feel the same. It has helped me process my own grief and loss, and given me renewed hope to care for those in my life who suffer in various ways.”

***Gloria Furman, author, *Missional Motherhood; Alive in Him****

“Vaneetha Risner’s credibility makes us willing to lean in and listen. Her writing is built on her experience of deep pain, and in the midst of that her rugged determination to hold on to Christ.”

***Nancy Guthrie, author, *Hearing Jesus Speak into Your Sorrow****



## [Christ in the Chaos](#)

How the Gospel Changes  
Motherhood

by Kimm Crandall

**MOMS: Stop comparing yourself to others. Stop striving to meet false expectations. Stop thinking your performance dictates your worth.**

**Look to the gospel for rest, joy, sufficiency, identity, and motivation.**

112 pages [bit.ly/Christ-in](http://bit.ly/Christ-in)

“Although Kimm Crandall’s message would revive any soul longing for the breath of the gospel of grace, I am especially eager to recommend this book to that heart who strives to know God and to make him known to the little ones who call her ‘Momma.’ Kimm is a candid and gracious fellow sojourner, faithfully pointing to God’s immeasurable steadfast love and grace in the midst of our mess.”

***Lauren Chandler, wife of Matt Chandler (pastor of The Village Church), mother of three, writer, singer, and speaker***

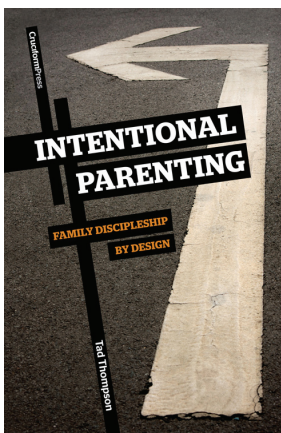
“What an amazingly wild and wise, disruptive and delighting, freeing and focusing book. Kimm’s book is for every parent willing to take the stewardship of children and the riches of the gospel seriously. This is one of the most helpful and encouraging books on parenting I’ve read in the past twenty years. This will be a book you will want to give to parents, to-be parents, and grandparents.”

***Scotty Smith, author; Founding Pastor, Christ Community Church***

“As mothers we are tempted to stack up our maternal achievements as a measure of our godliness. Consider Kimm’s book as a megaphone—loud and clear—calling out the better way: Moms need to build their hope on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. Read this book in the context of community and see the gospel powerfully affect your motherhood and friendships.”

***Gloria Furman, author of Glimpses of Grace***





## [Intentional Parenting](#)

Family Discipleship by Design

by Tad Thompson

**The Big Picture and a Simple Plan—  
That's What You Need to Do Family  
Discipleship Well**

*This book will allow you to take all the sermons, teachings, and exhortations you have received on the topic of family discipleship, make sense of it, and put it to use.*

“As parents, we know God has given us the responsibility to train our children in his ways. But many parents don't know where or how to start. Tad has done us all a favor by identifying seven key categories of biblical teaching we can utilize in teaching our children godly truth and principles. This easy-to-follow plan will help any parent put the truth of God's Word into their children's hearts.”

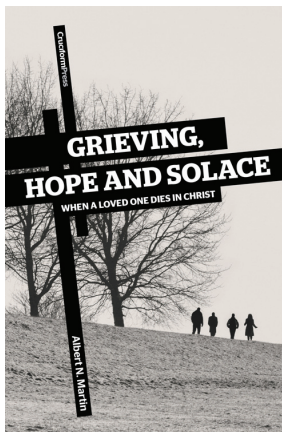
***Kevin Ezell, President, North American Mission Board,  
Southern Baptist Convention; father of six***

“Here is a practical page-turner that encourages fathers to engage the hearts of their families with truth and grace. In an age when truth is either ignored or despised, it is refreshing to see a book written for ordinary fathers who want their families to be sanctified by the truth. Thompson writes with a grace which reminds us that parenting flows from the sweet mercies of Christ.”

***Joel Beeke, President, Puritan Reformed Theological  
Seminary***

“Need an introductory text to the topic of discipling children? Here is a clear, simple book on family discipleship, centered on the gospel rather than human successes or external behaviors.”

***James M. Hamilton, Associate Professor of Biblical  
Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary***



## Grieving, Hope and Solace

When a Loved One Dies in Christ

by Albert N. Martin

**There is comfort for the grief.  
There are answers to the questions.  
The Bible does offer hope, solace,  
healing, and confidence.**

**Pastor Al Martin has been there.**

112 pages [bit.ly/GriefHope](http://bit.ly/GriefHope)

“This tender book by a much-loved pastor, written after the death of his beloved wife, offers comfort to those in tears. A rare guidebook to teach us how to grieve with godliness, it is relevant to us all – if not for today, then no doubt for tomorrow.”

***Maurice Roberts, former editor, Banner of Truth magazine***

“Albert N. Martin is a seasoned pastor, skilled teacher, and gifted writer who has given us a priceless treasure in this book. All who read these pages will, unquestionably, be pointed to Christ and find themselves greatly helped.”

***Steve Lawson, Christ Fellowship Baptist Church, Mobile, AL***

“Like turning the corner and being met by a glorious moonrise, or discovering a painter or musician who touches us in the deepest recesses of our being—this little book by Pastor Al Martin has been such an experience for me. Whether you are a pastor or counselor, one who is experiencing the pangs of grief, or a member of the church who wants to be useful to others, you need to read this book.”

***Joseph Pipa, President, Greenville Presbyterian Theo. Sem.***

“Personal tenderness and biblical teaching in a sweet book of comfort. Buy it and give it away, but make sure to get a copy for yourself.”

***Dr. Joel R. Beeke, President, Puritan Reformed Theo. Sem.***



## [The Company We Keep](#)

In Search of Biblical Friendship

by Jonathan Holmes

Foreword by Ed Welch

**Biblical friendship is deep, honest,  
pure, transparent, and liberating.**

**It is also attainable.**

112 pages

[bit.ly/B-Friend](http://bit.ly/B-Friend)

“Jonathan Holmes has the enviable ability to say a great deal in a few words. Here is a wonderful primer on the nature of biblical friendship—what it means and why it matters.”

***Alistair Begg, Truth for Life, Senior Pastor, Parkside Church***

“Jonathan has succeeded in giving us a picture of how normal, daily, biblical friendships can be used by God to mold us into the likeness of Christ. If you want a solid, fresh way of re-thinking all of your relationships, read this book.”

***Dr. Tim S. Lane, co-author, How People Change***

“A robust and relevant GPS for intentional and vulnerable gospel-centered friendships...a great book not only for individuals, but also for small groups...a significant contribution to the Kingdom.”

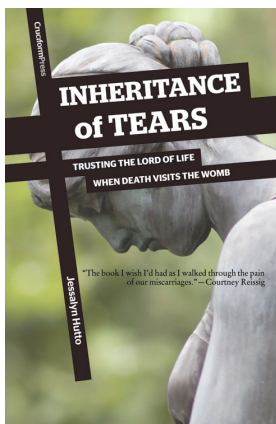
***Robert W. Kelleman, Exec. Dir., Biblical Counseling Coalition***

“Short. Thoughtful. Biblical. Practical. I’m planning to get my friends to read this book so we can transform our friendships.”

***Deepak Reju, Pastor of Biblical Counseling, Capitol Hill Baptist***

“Filled with answers that are equally down-to-earth, nitty-gritty, and specific...taking us where we need to go with warmth and wisdom.”

***Wesley Hill, author, Washed and Waiting***



## [Inheritance of Tears](#)

Trusting the Lord of Life When  
Death Visits the Womb

by Jessalyn Hutto

**Miscarriage: deeply traumatic,  
tragically common, too often  
misunderstood.**

95 pages [bit.ly/OFTears](http://bit.ly/OFTears)

“We wish there had been good Christian books on miscarriage available when we faced that terrible trial. This book is written out of deep suffering, but with an even deeper sense of hope. This book can help you think and pray if you have faced miscarriage, and it can help you understand how to minister to someone who has.”

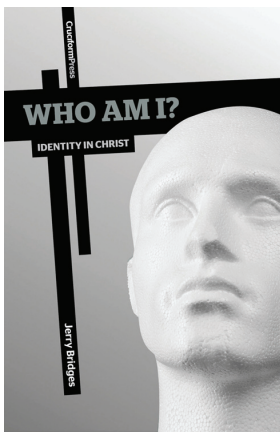
***Russell and Maria Moore***

“This book is equally important for those who have suffered miscarriage and those who have not. Rarely is the topic of miscarriage addressed with such candor and depth. Deeply personal and brave, *Inheritance of Tears* unveils a picture of miscarriage drawn from first-hand experience and attentive consideration of Scripture. Jessalyn invites us to ask the hard questions, to enter into the suffering of our sisters, to remember the goodness of God even in the midst of unspeakable loss. May her words minister to many.”

***Jen Wilkin, author, Women of the Word (Crossway)***

“If you are suffering, I’m so glad you are holding this book. You won’t find soggy counsel, glib advice, or verses ripped out of context. Jessalyn writes with warmth, conviction, and clarity, helping us stare down suffering by directing our gaze to the Lord of glory. I think you, and thousands more, will be helped by this wonderful book.”

***JA Medders, author, Gospel Formed: Living a Grace-Addicted, Truth-Filled, Jesus-Exalting Life (Kregel)***



## Who Am I?

Identity in Christ

by Jerry Bridges

**Jerry Bridges unpacks Scripture to give the Christian eight clear, simple, interlocking answers to one of the most essential questions of life.**

91 pages

[bit.ly/WHOAMI](http://bit.ly/WHOAMI)

“Jerry Bridges’ gift for simple but deep spiritual communication is fully displayed in this warm-hearted, biblical spelling out of the Christian’s true identity in Christ.”

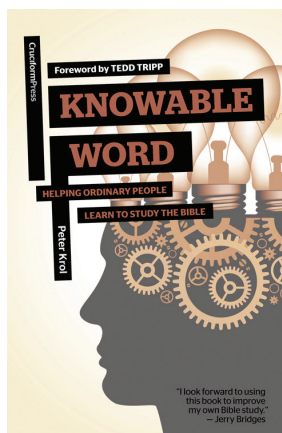
***J.I. Packer, Theological Editor, ESV Study Bible; author, Knowing God, A Quest for Godliness, Concise Theology***

“I know of no one better prepared than Jerry Bridges to write *Who Am I?* He is a man who knows who he is in Christ and he helps us to see succinctly and clearly who we are to be. Thank you for another gift to the Church of your wisdom and insight in this book.”

***R.C. Sproul, founder, chairman, president, Ligonier Ministries; executive editor, Tabletalk magazine; general editor, The Reformation Study Bible***

“*Who Am I?* answers one of the most pressing questions of our time in clear gospel categories straight from the Bible. This little book is a great resource to ground new believers and remind all of us of what God has made us through faith in Jesus. Thank the Lord for Jerry Bridges, who continues to provide the warm, clear, and biblically balanced teaching that has made him so beloved to this generation of Christians.”

***Richard D. Phillips, Senior Minister, Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC***



## Knowable Word

Helping Ordinary People Learn to Study the Bible

by Peter Krol

Foreword by Tedd Tripp

**Observe...Interpret...Apply**

**Simple concepts at the heart of good Bible study. Learn the basics in a few minutes—gain skills for a lifetime. The spiritual payoff is huge...ready?**

108 pp. [bit.ly/Knowable](http://bit.ly/Knowable)

“Peter Krol has done us a great service by writing the book *Knowable Word*. It is valuable for those who have never done in-depth Bible study and a good review for those who have. I look forward to using this book to improve my own Bible study.”

***Jerry Bridges, author, The Pursuit of Holiness, and many more***

“It is hard to over-estimate the value of this tidy volume. It is clear and uncomplicated. No one will be off-put by this book. It will engage the novice and the serious student of Scripture. It works as a solid read for individuals or as an exciting study for a small group.”

***Tedd Tripp, pastor and author (from the Foreword)***

“At the heart of *Knowable Word* is a glorious and crucial conviction: that understanding the Bible is not the preserve of a few, but the privilege and joy of all God’s people. Peter Krol’s book demystifies the process of reading God’s Word and in so doing enfranchises the people of God. I warmly encourage you to read it.”

***Dr. Tim Chester, The Porterbrook Network***

“Here is an excellent practical guide to interpreting the Bible. Krol has thought through, tested, and illustrated in a clear, accessible way basic steps in interpreting the Bible, and made everything available in a way that will encourage ordinary people to deepen their own study.”

***Vern Poythress, Westminster Theological Seminary***