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The Wonder of...

Living Loved



The Jesus Lens
& New Books
– Page 10

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Autumn 2011

Quiet Lives of Profound Consequence

By *Wayne Jacobsen*

They are all over the world. I've met them everywhere—men and women who have been seasoned with the joy of living loved and are capable in the simplest of conversations to encourage others along that journey as well.

You can sit in their homes and be at rest, knowing you are cared for—not because of what they want out of you, but simply because you are one of God's kids. They live quiet lives, neither pressed by their responsibilities, nor engaged in self-promotion or the advancement of their personal agenda. They do not manipulate others to get what they want. You never have to guess what they are thinking. They are honest with others, but gently so, and patient with those who struggle.

These are the things living loved wins in the human heart over a significant period of time. These are not principles to live by, or traits to emulate. They cannot be faked. The weight of words of people like this rises out of the depth of their character. They don't play to the spotlight, but give their lives

freely to others as God leads them.

I am often asked what other authors or books have shaped my thinking. I can list many because I am a reader. But that which has most shaped my life has not come from books. It's come from people, just like those I described above, whom I've had the opportunity



to walk beside for various seasons of my life.

The people I know who have the most impact on the planet are people who live quiet lives of profound significance. That significance isn't measured by book sales or followers, but by the free sharing of their lives in face-to-face engagements. Few of these have ever written a book or host a website or podcast. They are not clamoring for the stage, nor do they bask in the adulation of others. Their one overriding

~CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

"I am convinced that even now there are multitudes of followers of Jesus Christ who are sick and tired of the church playing games and playing down the call of God. My travel only confirmed that the murmurings of revolution are everywhere. I am convinced that there is an uprising in the works and that no one less than God is behind it!"

— Erwin McManus in *The Barbarian Way*

“Just because the term elder has been abused, doesn't mean that there aren't true elders among us today and a crying need for more.

passion is to enjoy God as their Father, and to help others find that joy as well.

Elders

These are in the truest biblical sense of the word, elders. There, I've said it even as I know the term itself will grate on many. It's an awkward word in our day. Our society doesn't use it much any more, at least in respectful tones. We may use it of the elderly, but only when we talk about caring for them.

Congregations use it to denote those who manage the affairs of the corporation, making the weighty decisions, and sometimes demanding to be honored by those not so anointed (or educated, or well-heeled). One of the things I noted late in my last pastorate was that those who most wanted the position of 'eldership', weren't really elders—at least not as the Bible describes them. And those who most demonstrated the maturity and compassion of an elder refused the position when we offered it to them. That confused me at the time, when it probably should have educated me.

When Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus, it was clear he saw elders as a very different reality than what the title conveys to us today. In fact, he didn't see it as a title or position at all. It was the reality of one's relationship with Jesus—won on the painful battlefield of human experience and resulting in a life filled with God's wisdom and a deep compassion for those who struggle.

They weren't elders of an institution, but simply older (not necessarily in age) brothers and sisters who could easily encourage others on their journey.

Even at the end of the New Testament we discover that not all those who called themselves elders were true elders. Some, who were regarded as elders for a season didn't continue to live in that reality. Others became puffed up in their desire to have first place in the body—a place reserved for Jesus alone. Those who lorded over others were roundly rebuked. Those who pushed others into unsound doctrine were openly exposed. And those who led people after their own desires were confronted.

But just because the term 'elder' has been misused, doesn't mean that there aren't true elders among us today and a crying need for many more. These are not people you'd want to hide from, but those you'd want to be near because they bring such wisdom and encouragement to our own journeys.

What it takes to help others live loved is one of the most engaging conversations I have of late as I travel around the world. When people are settled enough in their own journey of living loved by the Father, they want to know how they can help others to a similar journey. I hope to do more retreats like this in the future, so those with the passion to help others live loved won't

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EMAIL UPDATES

If you want to sign up to subscribe to *Living Loved*, or be notified when something significant is happening at Lifestream, or to receive information when Wayne is planning a trip to your area, you can go to lifestream.org and sign up for "Email notifications".

THE SHACK DEBACLE

We so appreciate all the people who have been praying with us over Paul Young's lawsuit regarding *The Shack*. In the end we never had the opportunity to speak with him or have others help resolve it. We had to work through a retired federal judge to sort out an agreement that would remove this action from court. We agreed to it to fulfill what 1 Corinthians 6 asks believers to do in the face of conflict—better to be defrauded than take a brother

to court before the world. While I'm relieved to close this chapter of my life, I deeply regret that we could not live out the reality of the relationship we wrote and talked about so passionately.

ORPHANAGE IN KENYA

With amazing generosity, we were able to complete the orphanage in Kenya and the 72 children have been relocated from the slums. It now costs about \$2500.00 per month to house, feed, and educate these children. The drought this year has left them penniless. If you'd like to help us you can get more information on our website or send a donation to Lifestream. We are also looking for ways to help them find a means to make the orphanage sustainable through a business enterprise locally. Any suggestions any of you might have would be most welcome.

Books and CD Collections by Wayne



BOOKS

- A MAN LIKE NO OTHER (\$24.99, (Available around November 1, 2011)
- IN SEASON: (\$13.99) (Available around November 15, 2011)
- HE LOVES ME! (\$12.00)
- AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS (\$14.99)
- SO YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO CHURCH ANYMORE (\$12.00)
- THE SHACK (by Wm Paul Young, in collaboration with Wayne) (\$14.99)



AUDIO/VIDEO - Please see our website for a complete list of CD collections

- THE JESUS LENS (8 hour DVD collection - \$34.99)
- HE LOVES ME! as read by Wayne Jacobsen (4 CD set - \$20.00)
- SO YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO CHURCH read by Wayne Jacobsen (5CD set - \$23.00)
- LIFESTREAM SUPERDISC - (All our Audio on mp3 format - \$25.00)
- THE GOD JOURNEY PODCAST Archive 1-5 (5 CDs in mp3 format - \$12.00 each/ \$40.00 for all 5)
- TRANSITION: Religion to Relationship (8 CD set - \$30.00)
- FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE BODY (4 CDs - \$16.00)
- THE HEART OF RELATIONAL CHURCH LIFE (CDs - \$16.00)
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- THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX (4 CDs - \$16.00)

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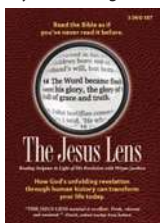
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We are releasing three new resources from Lifestream this fall!

THE JESUS LENS

The audio has been released through the Lifestream podcast, and the video is now available both at TheJesusLens.com and in a DVD collection from Lifestream. This is 8 hours of Wayne sharing how he engages the Scriptures as the transforming story of God’s unfolding revelation through human history and how it invites you into an intimate friendship with him. If you’ve ever felt that the Bible was too long, too confusing, or full of unresolved contradictions THE JESUS LENS was designed for you. This revelation penned through the hearts of people across centuries was never intended to be read as the owner’s manual for religious training, but as an unfolding story of God making himself known in course of human history. Now you can read the Scriptures with greater understanding, confidence, and personal engagement that will become a treasured guide in your own spiritual journey. (3 DVD collection including more than 8 hours of instruction and dialog. \$34.99 in a boxed set. Available only from Lifestream.)



A MAN LIKE NO OTHER

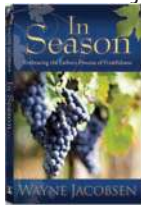
We are now hearing that we should have this new book around November 1. I can’t wait to share this book with all of you. The inspiring paintings of Murry Whiteman capture the story of Jesus like nothing you’ve ever seen, and Brad Cummings and I added the writing. It is a visual feast as well as a powerful tool for personal reflection or reading together with your spouse and family. On your coffee table it will become a focus of conversation with



visitors. Our hope is that it will make people hungry to know the Jesus of Scripture and see him as the most engaging person that has ever lived. (*A Man Like No Other: The Illustrated Life of Jesus* • Jacobsen, Cummings, and Whiteman • 128 pages • \$24.99 • 128 pages • 8.5 x 11.5 • Hardback.) You can pre-order it from Lifestream. See the web site or call us at (805) 498-7774. This will make a great Christmas gift if you’re looking for something special to give friends and relatives.

IN SEASON

The farmer knows not to look for grapes in spring, nor lament the barrenness of winter. Each season is critical in making his vineyard fruitful. The same is true for you. Fruitfulness is part of a cycle that includes promise and hope, perseverance and struggle, and even rest and refreshing. Recognizing that God works differently depending on what season you’re going through will help you embrace his greater process and not strive so much in your own efforts. When Jesus wanted his followers to understand what it meant for them to be fruitful he took them to a vineyard and showed them how they could live in him like a branch lives in a vine. This is a re-presentation of Wayne’s material on the vineyard he published over 20 years ago. (*In Season: Embracing the Father’s Process of Fruitfulness* • 208 pages • Trade Paperback • \$13.99) Available from Lifestream.



Wayne’s Travels

- St Louis, MO** • Sept. 29 - Oct. 2
- Kansas City, KS** • Oct. 3-4
- Wichita, KS** • October 5-8
- Omaha, NE** • October 28-31
- Holden, LA** • December 2-5



We are currently praying about trips in 2012 for Germany & Holland • France & Switzerland • New England • Montana • New Zealand • Australia

fall victim to old methodologies, which simply can’t work in this environment. It might be helpful for us to rethink what elders are in this family.

Looking In the Wrong Places

Today those who pretend to lead in the body of Christ, or speak for her in the world, do so by power of their influence measured in a position, congregational size, book sales, celebrity status, or academic pedigree. Just because someone can write a good story, or hold a crowd spellbound with a word or a song, does not mean they are living out the truths they talk and sing about. I meet many people who seem to understand the theology of God’s love and grace, but cannot seem to live it out practically. It is still only a conviction in their intellect—not a rising reality in their heart.

God has put the biggest and deepest treasures in the smallest places. I’m convinced of it. Our world, even the so-called Christian world, values all the wrong things—money, fame, success, scale and influence. We think those whom our media interviews as spokespeople for Jesus must be more spiritual, more favored, or are being rewarded for something good they must have done. Nothing is further from the truth.

When we value what the world values we can be pretty sure we’ve lost our perspective. Jesus confronted the Pharisees for their love of money and position over people. “What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight” (Luke 16:4) He wanted us to know that doing things to be admired by others and manipulating people after our own programs or agendas not only distorts the treasure he has put in us but it also destroys the treasure he put in them.

Every month I meet people who want to be famous for their writing, their teaching, their music, or their art. Their frustrations fill my inbox

every week as they fight to serve their need for significance even as they deny doing so. I know what it feels like. In the early days of this journey I remember lamenting, “I never had so much to share and so few people to share it with.” Now I know that this season was inviting me into living the truth instead of just teaching it, and sharing it in

“Our world, even the so-called Christian world values all the wrong things—money, fame, influence, success, scale and influence.”

personal conversations rather than in lectures and articles. Living out the truth there is so much more fun and far more effective.

Reality television has introduced hoards of new people to celebrity status and has become the coveted ring for so many carousel riders who stretch from the up and down beat of their fake horses hoping they can find their way into the spotlight. It is an obsession and it runs askew of what Jesus taught us. Yet so many people end up falling off their horse *never realizing it was God’s mercy that protected them.*

Amongst all those searching for celebrity or trying to push movements, I want to put another voice into the consciousness of the community or believers: The people I know who most profoundly affect kingdom culture around the world aren’t often known broadly beyond the local people their lives touch, and yet surprisingly they have connections all over the world as the Spirit has linked men and women of common ilk together.

If you want to know what true eldership is, consider their way of life. This

is what I see in those who have allowed Jesus to shape them so that they can encourage others in living loved.

Authentic Lives

My last four years living in the shadow of *The Shack* has only confirmed my convictions. The more “known” someone becomes, the less impact they have on individual lives. People view them

“**And because they are at ease with themselves, they set others at ease around them. They don't get defensive or angry when challenged.**”

as something other than what they really are, and put them at a distance. There is nothing about my growing notoriety from my involvement with that book that made doing what Jesus has asked me to do in the earth any easier. Image always distorts reality.

Didn't we all learn early on that if you wanted people to like you, you had to conform to their expectations? That's how we became so skilled at pretending so we'd be approved by “the right kind of people.” Life in Jesus untwists that in a beautiful way. The more you live loved the more comfortable you become with who you are and with the process of God's work in you. You no longer feel the need to impress others and you certainly know there's no value in others pretending around you.

So while they are not perfect and won't pretend to be, people who live in love are honest to the core. They are at peace with God's process of transformation, knowing he has done wonderful things in them, and yet, they are fully aware that his work is not done. They are honest in weakness and the same people in private as they project in public.

So they are compassionate with the journeys of others even as they demon-

strate a vast integrity in their own lives. They are true to their friendships and faithful to their word even when it creates greater hardship than they knew at the time. They don't seek to be in control of events around them because they've learned to trust God's purposes in their unfolding circumstances.

And because they are at ease with themselves, they set other people at

ease around them. They don't withdraw or get defensive or angry when challenged. They will let you notice what you need to notice, question what you need to question, and be honest about your own struggles and doubts without feeling diminished. They know loving someone and agreeing with them are two very different things.

Horizontal Friendships

Those who are learning the joy of living loved by the Father realize that love transmits in twos and threes and the kingdom grows by loving the next person that crosses your path, not by becoming another loud voice on an overcrowded stage. They serve in the simplest of places—at home caring for young children or infirm parents. They offer a shoulder to a distraught stranger, or an evening of conversation with a struggling pilgrim. They live in huts and homes in far off lands loving the people God has put near them.

They will have a number of healthy relationships around them, including with their spouse and children. They are not perfect relationships, but they are healthy with mutual respect and affection. That doesn't mean everyone likes them, of course. They can be

doing things upon things to get right with God. I never knew for most of my life, that Jesus was God himself. I also never knew about grace. Through all the years of striving and working hard to earn favor, I have only recently become acquainted with the living God, and after reading your book that God, my loving Father, so graciously placed in my hands. I finally feel that I am loved—loved by a God who wants to be my dad.

Mike in Mississippi

I'm not sure sometimes how to say thanks without it sounding all mushy. I just received *Authentic Relationships*. You just keep blowing me away with your insight. I wanted to let you know how much your writing has meant to me. You lay it out in a simple, easy to understand, yet very deeply and challenging.

Daniel in Switzerland

I read *So You Don't Want To Go to Church Anymore* and the lights went on. Then I read through the protocols of the last leadership meeting (of my congregation) and realized that we spend so much time, money and energy for the institution that we actually don't have the time to think about spiritual things. We believe we work for the kingdom, but actually only maintain an institution. Somehow church replaced our relationship with God and became our spiritual life.

Tyrene by email

I was just introduced to your site and wanted to tell you your Winter 2011 article is probably the best written expression of our Father's heart to us. Build our relationship on loving him and out of that will flow everything else. You were able to get down on paper what has been in our hearts for years.

George in Georgia

Wayne you articulate so well the journey I have been on as God has set me aside and stripped back some of the things I thought he wanted. It is a wonderful and scary journey, but my love for my Daddy God is growing daily as he teaches me and shows me his love.

Neil in Wales

The Father has revealed so much of himself through things you have recorded and written, and I feel so alive and free in my journey. I know even in my immediate friends and family I am not alone in that, so I can only imagine how many more there are around the

world whom your gracious teaching has touched.

Jenna in Maryland

I have read *He Love Me* twice and will do it again. Each time I hear something different. I hear the Fathers heart when you teach. I cried when I finished the book it was like sitting with a friend!

LaDonna by Email

For many years it has been my privilege to lead a small group of friends in a weekly prayer session. We just concluded weekly discussions on your book, *He Loves Me!* I don't think there was a single chapter that did not at the same time educate, encourage, challenge, motivate and inspire us.

Ed by Email

When I'm doing listening to your teaching I'm facing the Father and not Wayne Jacobsen. In the past, when I've received 'good stuff' from a teacher, I always ended up wanting more from the teacher to 'show me the way'. With you, I am facing the Father to receive from Him as a result of what you're saying!

A Sister in Jamaica

I am forever changed because of your book. One of my husband's coworkers told him about *So You Don't Want To Go To Church Anymore*, so he emailed it to me. I was overtaken by the true love of the Father. I couldn't stop reading it. It's one thing to read about His love and another thing to feel His love engulf you.

Jennifer in Virginia

I just finished reading *So You Don't Want To Go to Church Anymore* and it has rocked me to my core.

David in Virginia

I liked *The Shack* but I was blown away by *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore*. It took me to places in my heart and mind I had never visited.

Susan in Indiana

With *The Jesus Lens*, I feel like I've been handed a missing piece of my heart.

Julie in California

I love everything about *The Jesus Lens*, especially what it says about the Bible being a love letter. This has breathed new life into my Bible reading!

Sam in South Dakota

Thank you for putting that free book *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore* online for free. I can't describe to you how it has helped me and a friend. It's blessed us both so much. I literally just finished reading the book and the only way I can express how I feel is to say that you've opened the door to a room where God was sitting, smiling, waiting for me to come in.

Don in Florida

I read the *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore* and *He Loves Me*. I pastored for 27 years and have shared with my wife what I hear on the podcasts and we have wonderful discussions. We both were brought up in very traditional backgrounds. The other day when she was at work, she said she was feeling very alone. So she cried out to Father, *I just wish I had a friend here at work*. Father very gently conveyed, I am your friend talk to me. Now she converses with Father and the peace I now see in her life is amazing. I am resigning from my church this Sunday. As a pastor I was too busy to be wowed by Father. Now I get to be wowed every day.

Al in Wisconsin

We were swept up into new life in Christ in the early 1970s during the peak of the Jesus and the Charismatic movements. In forty years we've experienced various attempts at alternatives to church from inner city Jesus people communes, to neighborhood intentional communities, to living in the woods in trailers. In all our experiences there were two extremes that worked against us. The first was authority structures that always appeared sooner rather than later, usually under the guise of following the "New Testament pattern." Second was the arrogance of being the only ones to have true church life that resulted in cutting off fellowship with the rest of the body of Christ.

Patsy via email

Well, I just finished reading *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore* and I am stunned, excited, and scared. I initially thought this was going to be about describing how I could be a Christian and avoid going to church. I never dreamed it would be simply about trusting in God to control my life. I was captured by the story from page one and read it in two and a half days. Every question, complaint, accusation I had was addressed in this book. Even some of the comments from Jake were verbatim accounts of my cries to God. The idea of let-

ting go of myself, my control, and just living in God's love with trust is exactly what I have been crying out for. This book helped me begin to see my need to know who God really is and who I am to him.

Courtney via email

I'm reading *He Loves Me* and it is giving me a whole new set of glasses to see the Gospel through. What I really love about it is it gives me a hunger to re-read the scripture with my new glasses and I think it is unique for a book to draw people back to the scripture as opposed to replacing them.

Amanda by email

I literally just finished *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore*. I am about to turn 25 on Friday and have never been so excited in my life. Saying goodbye to John in the book left me in tears. I'm not much of a crier but the last two books I've read of yours leave me feeling so emotional. Tears of joy once again!

Tammy in Nevada

We (lost) our 12-year-old son last month in a tragic accident. He was a miracle baby we adopted at 11 months of age, addicted to crack and with many medical problems, which God had healed him of completely. He loved Jesus more than anyone and wrote many poems and songs about going to heaven. We just never realized it would be so soon. God has been so faithful to us in so many ways since that awful day. I just wanted to thank you for your teachings on God's love, including your book *He Loves Me*, and other teachings we have listened to on CD. If we had not had those teachings over the last year, I'm not sure where we would be with God right now. We would have probably been doubting God's love for us and wondering what terrible thing we had done to deserve this severe punishment. This would have thrown me for a loop, but instead, by God's grace, we discovered you and your teachings about a year ago, just in time to "unlearn" so much and get the truth that God has given you to pass along to others.

Nadia in the UK

I grew up in a very 'religious' church. It was always about how to please God, how many prayers to say to earn our salvation, and the threat of going to hell if we did not conform to the angry God of the Old Testament. I always knew deep within me that it wasn't right, and that there had to be more to all this religious stuff, and

threatening to those whose agenda runs counter to their simple approach to God's love.

They won't seek to control or force others into a group or program. They have a heart for the unity of the whole body and resist being drawn into "us versus them" conversations, whether it is over matters of doctrine or church styles. They're not looking for another strategy to change the world, nor ways to make people dependent on them or their gifts. They simply enjoy helping others learn to trust Father more, knowing as people learn to live in that reality Jesus will put his church together in amazing ways.

They live alongside people always avoiding the pretense of being above them. They don't seek to be "leaders" in any traditional sense, because they know they can have far better input as your brother or sister than by being put into some kind of false leadership box. They are not looking to be spiritual mentors or fathers; they simply want to be accessible to help others discover the joy of their own relationship with the Father.

Being this kind of person is not a matter of learning a new theology or ministry technique. Unfortunately there are many who teach a theology of love or a message of grace who don't yet understand how to live it in their own relationship with God or with others. They are still looking for a name, a following, or a ministry for themselves. They have a meeting for you to attend, a program for you to follow, or a book for you to buy.

False elders will often demand that you trust them or commit to their program, and not care for you beyond how you benefit them. If you challenge them, or ask a difficult question they will get defensive and angry. They have to be the expert—always above you and wanting you to serve them or

“ They simply enjoy helping others learn to trust Father more, knowing as his people learn to live in that reality Jesus put his church together in amazing ways.

their vision. If you stop serving them, they will reject you and will seek to destroy your reputation by calling you bitter or rebellious.

Not even the Holy Spirit acts that way. Jesus called him the 'Paraclete'—or, 'the one who is called alongside to help.' If anyone had the place to take authority over us and command our obedience, it would be him. But the Spirit comes alongside to help us in our growing journey with Father. He never demands and never pushes. He gently asks the questions or makes the observations that have the potential to open our hearts in a greater way to the Father. If we choose to walk away from that, he will still come with us in hopes that we will yet turn our hearts his way.

Hospitable Hearts

In former days if you wanted to help people live loved you had to pastor a church or be a missionary. In more recent days you have to start a ministry by writing a book, forming a house church, or doing a podcast and trying to find a way to promote it. Real ministry alongside people, however, grows more organically than that—and if it doesn't, it will destroy you in the end.

This isn't about using other people for your purposes, but helping others just because you care about them. Certainly I wouldn't discourage people

who feel they have something to share at a wider level that will encourage others. By all means, write and podcast and do whatever God has put on your heart, but realize that the best way to encourage and equip others on this journey doesn't come by strategizing your next project, but by following the nudgings he puts on your heart. That will mostly involve loving the next person he puts before you. When I travel the most significant moments don't happen when I'm in front of a roomful of people. They happen in conversations during breaks, over meals, and in the homes that invite me to stay.

That's why Paul listed hospitality as one of those critical attributes of an elder. In the old system, hospitality was never crucial. Finding my place in a program and getting others to do the same doesn't require hospitality. Even organizing a class or seminar doesn't demand that. That may be why we were comfortable in the old programs, because someone else set the times and places, all we had to do was show up.

But if real encouragement happens in twos and threes, across tables and sitting on back patios, then hospitality is critical. Opening my heart as well as my home puts me in the kinds of conversations where real life is conveyed. If you want to help others on this journey let Father cultivate in you an open heart and an open home. Make room for others. Take the initiative in inviting people into your life and in facilitating connections with other people.

What Love Wins

Authentic lives, horizontal friendships, and hospitable hearts are what love wins in us. If you want to help others live in the reality of God's love, let him shape these things in you. Don't force them to happen. Just know that the more secure you become in his affection, the freer you'll be to love


others in a way that will bring life and transformation to them.

I didn't write this article so that you would go out and seek an elder to follow. They wouldn't let you follow them anyway. I wrote it to encourage the conversation of what eldership really is, so you won't be manipulated by anyone under the guise of their so-called leadership mantle. If they are not helping you follow Jesus, even when you make mistakes, they are not elders in his kingdom. If they are not encouraging you to greater trust in Jesus' ability to manage your life, don't listen to them.

Furthermore, I want to encourage those who do have a heart to help others learn to live loved. How do you do that? By learning to live in his love yourself. If you want to grow in these freedoms, simply let him teach you how to rely more on his love each day—that will transform everything about the way you live.

And for those learning to live in the Father's love, I want to encourage you to make yourself available to those around you—not by starting a ministry, but by simply engaging friendships with people as God makes connections. When someone is on your heart, seek him or her out. Spend time with them and see where God takes it. Look for ways to encourage their journey.

It's not the loud lives that have consequence in the world, but those who live behind the scenes loving those God puts before them. You'll notice they don't need to form a group and get people in it to have impact. Just being with people is enough. Jesus never created an environment and invited others into it. *He joined people in the environments they were already in* and by loving them there they were changed, sinners as well as believers.

If enough of us do that, all that God wants to accomplish in the world will be done. 

Book Recommendation



The Butterfly and the Stone

By Dan Mayhew

If you are the parent of a child who seems like a prodigal to you, wandering in a far off place from God, go get this book! But even if you don't have such a child, go get this book! It is a powerful read of a father's love for a rebellious son. If you're experiencing anything similar his journey will surely encourage your own. Available at Amazon.com and at stonebutterfly.net.



Sharing the Journey

Margie in Australia

Thank You for writing the book *So You Don't Want To Go To Church Anymore*. This book has been so healing and freeing. It has explained my experiences and answered yearning questions I've had for so long. I can't express in words how much it means to be free from the guilt and exclusion. As I type the tears of relief and gratitude to our Father are flowing.

Michael in Massachusetts

Thank you for wrecking my life. There a saying in Alcoholics Anonymous that once an alcoholic get exposed to AA it ruins his drinking. I think the same with you and religion. I long for deep and meaningful relationships, first with Father and then with others, but they can't be manufactured through formula or discipline, tried it many times, always end up back here. Before I only knew the self-indulgent part and religion would get me out of that so I thought. But even that doesn't work anymore, thanks to you!

Markus in Switzerland

I have heard plenty of your stuff, *The Jesus Lens*, *Transition*, *Jake-book*, *He Loves Me*, *The Shack*, etc. At first I could not believe it was real. It would be too wonderful. Then I hoped it was true, and now two years later I have experienced some of this. It's great! A long time ago I felt there is something wrong with my church. It was horribly boring to me and I thought I was just an abnormal guy. Then years later I began to study theology and with the knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, church history

and your stuff (books & podcast) things changed. I am now in my last year of studding theology and the funny thing is this: God used all of this as a tool to lose my religion. Now I know God is not a angry monster but a lovely Father.

Josh by email

One year ago this week, a good friend and mentor introduced me to the "Transitions" series and God used it to teach me a lot and give me a clearer picture of what it means to follow Him and maybe more importantly, what it doesn't mean. A lot has changed in the past year. I know, love and trust the Father so much more than ever before and I'm more excited than ever about telling others about him. Recently I've begun to listen to *The God Journey* and already I'm falling in love with this podcast. I love the frank, honest and humble discussion about God, Jesus and the Bible. I look forward to each new upload.

Marryann by email

I just wanted you to know your book *He Loves Me* was just what I needed. I also read *So You Don't Want to go to Church Anymore*...Oh my. I cried because I stopped going to church a couple of years ago and felt so guilty that I wanted to hide under a rock. The Shack really blessed me and your two books rescued me. As a child I knew some of the things I was being taught in church wasn't a good fit. I thought how could my God be so mean, but say he loves us. I didn't know he loved me, or how much he loved me... sin and all! Your two books have me all shook up.