

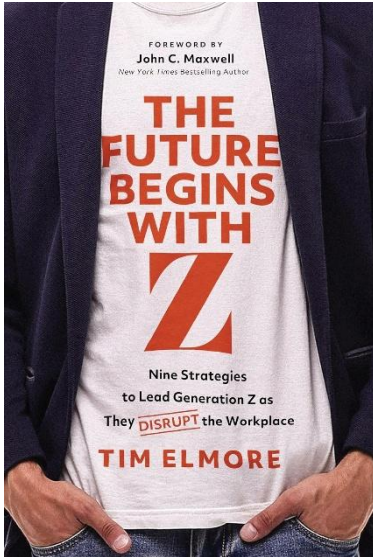
Leader's Edge Summary

January 2026 Summaries

Missio Nexus

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*** Leadership ***



[The Future Begins with Z: Nine Strategies to Lead Generation Z as They Disrupt the Workplace](#)

By: Tim Elmore

Harper Collins, 2025

352 pages

[Find it on Amazon](#)*

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Summary

Tim Elmore is the founder of Growing Leaders, an organization created to develop emerging leaders. He has spoken to more than five hundred thousand leaders in corporations nationwide including Chick-fil-A, Home Depot, Ford Motor Company, Delta Global and others. His curriculum has been used by the Kansas City Royals, New York Giants, Buffalo Bills, Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Houston Rockets, as well as by athletic departments at numerous universities. His expertise on the emerging generation and generational diversity in the workplace has led to national media coverage on CNN Headline News, Fox Business and Newsmax. He was listed as one of the Top 100 Leadership Speakers in America by Inc. magazine and has written numerous books, including the present volume.

Generation Z has entered the workforce and is challenging leaders in ways they've never experienced before. Gen Z'ers often bring little work experience following college graduation, with parents encouraging them to focus on academics. Plus, having grown up on screens, they frequently bring lower levels of emotional intelligence than previous generations.

Today, 4 in 5 hiring managers say Generation Z is the most difficult population to manage. Almost one in three avoid hiring them altogether. Elmore argues that we cannot walk away from this challenge as these young teammates represent the future. While the boss has visibility on the past, they have visibility on the future. *The Future Begins with Z* offers nine strategies to inspire and connect with the next generation of workers as they enter the workforce. Some of those strategies involve:

- How to attract and onboard them so they'll want to stay.
- How to offer firm feedback to a fragile young employee.
- How to uniquely motivate and incentivize them.
- How to cultivate full engagement in Gen Z teammates.
- How to equip them to manage their mental health challenges.

Charts and reflection prompts are included.

Best Idea

“This new generation of team members entering the workforce today is different. I continually hear from employers and leaders who are frustrated with their attitudes and performance. When I speak at events, I hear managers complain about them, asking me what I think they should do. I usually admit that I too might be a little frustrated at the kind of conduct they describe in Generation Z. Then I always encourage them to adapt. That’s one of the most important skills leaders can practice today. Adapting doesn’t mean you always give in to their requests and give up your values. It means you size up the people in front of you and adapt your leadership to offer what they need to reach their potential.” Kindle location 375

Best Illustration

“In my book *A New Kind of Diversity: Making the Different Generations on Your Team a Competitive Advantage*, I share Tony Piloseno’s story. During his senior year of college, he took a part-time job at a paint store. He loved his work so much that he started a TikTok account to post all the amazing colors he’d created by mixing the paints at the store. People loved Tony’s posts so much that he attracted a massive following. By 2020, he had 1.4 million followers and twenty-four million “likes.” Having gone viral, Tony decided to share what he’d done with the executives of the paint brand. Maybe they could monetize it. He was surprised, however, when he didn’t get one leader who was open to meet with him. He never got one set of eyeballs to look at his slide deck on how they could monetize his social media following. Instead, he got something he didn’t expect. He got fired. So, after graduation, Tony moved to Florida, now has 3.8 million followers across TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, and has started his own paint store. He ships out thousands of gallons of paint from Tonester Paints. While I admit we don’t have all the details on his career journey, I do know one thing: that paint store in Ohio missed out on an opportunity to grow if they’d only listened to a kid.” Kindle location 571

Best Take Away

“How Do We Lead Them? 1. Earn their trust - although you have a title and tenure, earn their trust through connecting. 2. Build their incentive - Gen Z sees their job more as a hobby. Since your voice competes with so many others, offer a “why” before your “what.” 3. Give them ownership - we now must lead descriptively, describing a goal then letting them determine how to reach it. They will support what they help create. 4. Invest in their future - Gen Z doesn’t want to be managed; they want to be mentored. Why not approach supervisory roles by offering tips to succeed and coaching them to get ahead on the job? 5. Offer them hope - since their perspective is cynical, choose your words and actions well. Provide hope for them as you lead them.” Kindle location 1,116-1,129.

Our Recommendation

This is a VERY thorough, comprehensive analysis of the psychological profile of Generation Z and the best methods of connecting with and leading them in the workplace. It includes much helpful research as well as specific bullet points that inform and instruct the reader in how to leverage the many strengths of Gen Z’ers, while helping them overcome some of their several weaknesses. Definitely recommended for anyone leading these individuals.

Best Quotes

“If we care about the future, we must focus our attention on helping younger generations learn from our mistakes and successes. The book you’re holding is a handbook to connect with and empower Gen Z. Tim Elmore has given his life to helping generations connect. He’s the best at equipping leaders to understand the

next generation and to know how to lead them.” —Dr. John C. Maxwell, #1 New York Times Bestselling Author, Founder, Maxwell Leadership Kindle location 23

This book is the accumulation of forty-five years of work with younger generations. Yes, you read that correctly. I began teaching and leading young people when I myself was a young person. In this volume, I put the heart before the course. I begin the chapters helping you see why Gen Z has become the people they are, then provide a mini-course on leading through these challenges. Today, I can honestly say to anyone who reads my words: I believe in Generation Z. And I believe they will disrupt the workplace as they eventually take it over. How that plays out is chiefly up to us. Kindle location 411-430

I have a confession to make. I need to acknowledge that I changed as I studied Gen Z. I had been frustrated with them, even furious with them at times because of how they acted. But getting up close, I began to see the why behind their words and behaviors. Now, I am a fan. Kindle location 432

The average Gen Z employee stays on the job two years and three months, according to a report by CareerBuilder.com. Kindle location 487

Twenty-first-century kids have matured in a “phone-based” rather than a “play-based” childhood, which affected how they approach life. The downside is they endure high anxiety and lower social and emotional development. The upside is they don’t have to unlearn many things my generation has had to unlearn. Kindle location 586

Walk back in time with me. Centuries ago, the life experience of kids was limited (they were either illiterate or they didn’t have much to read). The experience they did have was sequenced (as they were ready) and real (not virtual) as they worked the farm and understood how to manage risk and energy. Today, a young teen likely has unlimited exposure to information, even adult information, mostly on a screen. Information is instant access, on demand, and usually free on television, computers, tablets, and smartphones. The hierarchy has collapsed.

Kindle location 607

This means that millions from Gen Z enjoy “rookie smarts.” Although they don’t have any positional authority, they might just have intuitive authority. Rookie smarts often stem from rookie ignorance regarding how things have been done. Kindle location 615

A December 2023 survey of eight hundred employers and hiring managers in the U.S. from Intelligent.com found more than half of employers thought Gen Z’ers were unprepared for the workforce and displayed unprofessional behavior during job interviews. One recent study from ResumeTemplates.com revealed that 25 percent of Generation Z members bring their parents with them to their job interview. Kindle location 675

How do we explain this combined brilliance and delayed maturation in Generation Z? First, let me say again, there are many exceptions to the rule. But—this data seems to be the rule. Millions of Gen Z’ers endure a condition I describe as “artificial maturity.” Today’s young adults are: Overexposed to information earlier than they were ready. Underexposed to first-hand experiences later than they were ready. This gave teens and young adults a facsimile of maturation; after all, they know so much at such young ages. Yet, digging a bit deeper, it’s clear that knowledge is based on consuming information on a screen, not from real-life experience.

Kindle location 683 – 690

Here is what I've concluded about Generation Z: Millions Are Advanced **Cognitively**. They process more information and ideas younger than ever. **Biologically**. They are developing earlier, entering puberty earlier, and living longer. Millions Are Behind **Socially**. Their interpersonal skills are developing later in their lives. **Emotionally**. Their self-awareness and self-management is lower. Kindle location 685-692

This book is all about how to lead in such conditions. Kindle location 695

Let me offer some ideas that will enable you to connect with young job candidates ... specifically in Gen Z job interviews. Shift your approach from gatekeeper to guide. Be warm and clear in your communication, using simple language. Utilize various leaders and team members in the interview process. Keep the interview process to two weeks or less. Invite them to ask questions about the organization. Extend the interview process into the onboard experience. Kindle location 1,813-1,846

Address their issues using their language. **Preferences**. Ask them about what they prefer to be the reality on the job, such as breaks, PTO, community building, policies, and so on. **Expectations**. Ask them what they expect at your workplace. **Requirements**. Gen Z frequently voice demands about the conditions of their job, having little employment experience. Sometimes these demands are only preferences that are best to distinguish early on. **Keys**. Often these issues pop up too late. What are the keys to understanding who they are and helping them flourish? **Salary**. This one is obvious, but as you discover who they are, this is a natural place to discuss compensation requirements or desires. Kindle location 1,851

Generation Z's Ideal Workplace: Openness and contact. Fun and play. Fluid and adaptive. Meaning and mission. Growth and learning. Kindle location 1,898

Three Doable Ideas to Retain Generation Z Team Members: Make their first day unforgettable.

Establish personal connections early. Illustrate how you need them. Assign a Sherpa guide to train them. Kindle location 1,926-2,015

Educators are not needed for information or knowledge, thanks to Google, Siri, and Alexa. In a phrase, Gen Z members respectfully explained to me their view of authority: "I'm not sure I even need them." They've learned how to do things from YouTube, they have notifications popping up on their smartphones that fill them in on everything, and they prefer the collective wisdom of AI on that device over one person's opinion at work, even if that person is in authority. Kindle location 2,087

So, How Do We Lead in Such Circumstances? Older leaders vs. Gen Z perspectives: 1. Position gives you the right to influence. 1. Connection gives you the right to influence. 2. If you're older you have wisdom. 2. If you're older you may be irrelevant. 3. Systems offer order to curb the chaos. 3. Systems must be disrupted to open doors. 4. You should listen to the man at the top. 4. The top person should be listening to us. 5. The top dog wins the debate. 5. The best idea wins. 6. The leader is a gatekeeper. 6. The leader is a guide. Kindle location 2,092

Ten Ideas to Attract and Retain Generation Z Team Members: Create an internal "gig" economy. Since Gen Z loves change and job-hopping, what if you focused on cross-training and welcomed teammates to move around every several months? Offer flexibility and autonomy. Make room for no-collar and new-collar jobs. Forget blue or white collars. The new workforce may be no-collar pioneers who serve from home. Provide meaning as well as money. Gen Z loves knowing how their small task is tied to the larger mission. Practice the policy: speak as if you're right; listen as if you're wrong. Young teammates feel heard because seasoned veterans listen to them

with as much focus and humility as they would a peer. Furnish continuous learning and growth opportunities. Meet to ask them about their “superpowers.” When possible, embody descriptive, not prescriptive, leadership. What if you focused on results not steps? Don’t gaslight. When we gaslight, we react to young teammates’ comments with impatience, making them feel foolish for making the remark. Practice reverse mentoring.

More than anything, practicing these ten ideas connects people who would normally not connect because they are so different. Kindle location 2,229-76

Nine Places to Stay Silent as a Leader: In the heat of anger. If you don’t know the whole story.

When you feel too emotional. If you can’t talk without raising your voice. In times of grief.

If your words can offend a person. When someone has misspoken. If the topic is worthless.

If your words can destroy a relationship. Kindle location 2,359-76

How Do We Offer Feedback to a Fragile Generation? Gain permission by earning the right to give input. Be targeted with your approach. Offer input with belief and expectation. Communicate progress with your words. Do it in a timely fashion. Give them the opportunity to practice and implement the feedback. Kindle location 2,405-23

Nick Saban was the head football coach for Alabama’s Crimson Tide from 2007 to 2023, where he won six national championships. Saban was not known for his nurturing style – in fact, he was one of the toughest coaches in the NCAA. Even Coach Saban recognized when to be tough minded and when to be nurturing with young team members, based on the context and on who they were. Kindle location 2,433-43

I learned a sequence of steps that enabled me to build trust with even the most anxious staff members. I suggest you manage issues in this order: Personal issues before work issues. Hard topics before easy ones. Big picture before details. Kindle location 2,445

I’ve learned I must stop getting furious and start getting curious. Kindle location 2,481

Over the past five years, I have used an acronym when I am in such situations. It spells A LEG. I encourage you to note the sequence of steps I now use that result in growth for both of us. This is A LEG We Have to Stand On. A—Ask questions. L – Listen well. E – Empathize deeply. G – Guide wisely. Kindle location 2,482

One of the greatest challenges for employers is the need Generation Z expresses to guard their mental health. As I spotted mental health issues in my young team members, I first had to acknowledge that I’m not their doctor, therapist, or chaplain. I am, however, a caring leader who wants the best for them, as well as for our organization. Kindle location 2,703

Be sure the four practices below are part of your culture and that your managers encourage all your employees to practice them. **Margin. Movement:** even technology wizards—perhaps especially tech wizards—know the secret of living well is to get off a screen for part of our day. And for at least thirty minutes walk, run, play, go outside, shoot hoops. **Mindfulness –**

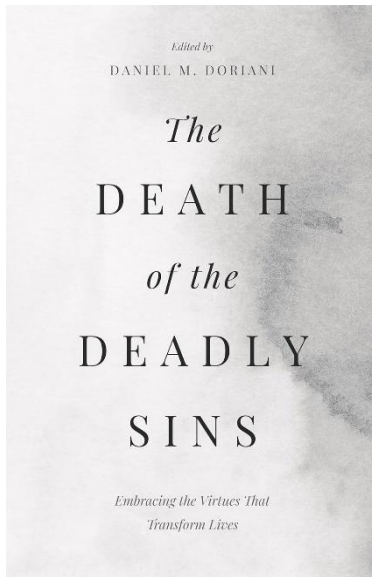
mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us. **Management –** Today, everyone must learn to



Learn, Meet, Engage In the Great Commission

manage their stress and anxiety levels. We all have them, but stress does not need to turn into distress. Kindle
location 2,706

***** Spiritual Formation *****



[The Death of the Deadly Sins: Embracing the Virtues That Transform Lives](#)

Ed. by: Daniel M. Doriani (with others)

P&R Publishing, 2025

208 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

*As an Amazon Associate Missio Nexus earns from qualifying purchases.

Summary

All human beings, including Christians, struggle with the seven deadly sins. This book helps the reader understand that each deadly sin is indeed harmful to their wellbeing, but each vice also has a virtue to counterpoint it that makes for godly living. Daniel Doriani, Michael Kruger, Jen Pollock Michel, and others explore biblical teaching on godly character and the practices and means of grace that promote virtuous living and freedom from these sins that so easily entrap us.

Best Illustration

“I still remember years ago when we first purchased our dog, Gus. He was a Lab puppy, only about four months old when we got him. He was a kind, sweet, and playful dog that was great with the kids. But the first few times I fed him, he would growl at me if I got near his bowl. As soon as I reached toward the bowl, he would stop eating, and I could hear a deep, guttural sound emerge from his chest. Although I was his owner, although I had actually provided the food he was eating, and although I had put a roof over his head, he was willing to threaten me with violence in order to protect his food. That’s pretty much how we are if God (or another person) ever touches our idols.” Kindle location 1625

Best Idea

“Sloth robs us of living with all our might. We must be faithful to the demands of daily life that God calls us to face out of love for him and love for others. When we don’t, we rob God of glory, we rob others of love, and we rob ourselves of joy.” Kindle location 2253

Best Take Away

“Grace, then, is the first, middle, and last word of godliness. God is the giver of seed—and the giver of growth. His is the soil and seed, sun and sky, and every branch (and tree) grafted into Christ must simply open wide its arms to receive his gifts, among which is the gift of godliness itself.” Kindle location 2879

Our Recommendation

This book will help the reader to gain a greater and broader understanding of what the seven deadly vices really are – behaviors that most of us believe we are immune to, but may be surprised they are part of our lives. A spiritually healthy exercise would be to review these vices, then ask yourself if you are living it its counter virtue.

Best Quotes

“It is not only a study of deadly vices and their corresponding virtues, but also a reliable guide that explains how our union with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit enable us to pursue conformity to the one in whom all goodness and virtue reside.” Kindle location 130

“We define virtue as the reliable disposition to desire what is good, to discern what is good, and to practice it faithfully, even when that is difficult. The virtuous person has a capacity to do good and practices the good with discernible consistency.” Kindle location 249

“To summarize, every deadly sin violates the first great command, to love and worship God, and the second, to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37–40). After that, pride especially violates commandment one.” Kindle location 324

“So Jesus embodies virtue. If anyone wants to know virtue and grow in godliness, let that person begin by meditating on Jesus and imitating him.” Kindle location 338

“Let’s remember: to gain virtue, we must discern and practice what is good, even under duress. A truly patient woman remains serene despite preposterous accusations and sleep deprivation. A realistic self-appraisal is essential to growth in virtue. If we are too negative, we despair; if too positive, we see no need to grow.” Kindle location 446

“Scripture sees our motivation differently. It declares that our ultimate goal is the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). It says that the ultimate source of virtue is a good heart, one that loves God and neighbor (Matt. 12:34–35; 22:36–39). Scripture also acknowledges secondary motivations. We can be moved by duty (Luke 17:10), by a desire to be like God (Rom. 8:29), or by fear of God (Prov. 1:7).” Kindle location 457

“Still, it’s difficult to break with ingrained vices. Not many people can say, ‘I’m going to start doing the right thing’ and simply do it. We need assistance. We call that assistance the means of grace.” Kindle location 489

“The means of grace are the most common pathways to spiritual growth. The first three are the Word of God (including the sacraments), prayer, and Christian fellowship.” Kindle location 505

“We don’t fast or practice chastity because we think desire is intrinsically evil. We discipline our desires so that they don’t dominate us, so that we can act on them in the right way, at the right time, with the right people.” Kindle location 556

“The disciplines of engagement are study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission. The disciplines of engagement are never rote practices. They require reflection.” Kindle location 560

“For Paul, virtue comes only from a life-giving divine relationship. It is the fruit of a person’s relationship with the Spirit, who is sent by God to those who receive and are united to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. Those who ‘walk by the Spirit’ will not ‘gratify the desires of the flesh’ (Gal. 5:16).” Kindle location 672

“The teaching that eventually became the seven deadly sins originated with the desert father Evagrius of Pontus (A.D. 345–399). Evagrius became famous as a teacher who had a knack for understanding and helping others face temptation.” Kindle location 689

“Augustine considers virtue a result of participation in the life of God, which takes a particular form and results in a happy life. In short, for Augustine, ‘virtue is rightly ordered love.’” Kindle location 725

“Augustine argues that in human beings virtue is always at war with vice. The virtues of temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude, he contends, are never victorious in this life.” Kindle location 740

“‘We know nothing of humility by nature, for we are all born proud,’ writes J. C. Ryle. He concludes that humility is the ‘surest mark of conversion’ because conversion (as we’ll see below when we construct a properly Christian anthropology) involves admission of our true state before God. Of course, Ryle’s sentiment can be supported biblically, but it can also be backed up by logic.” Kindle location 1035

“For Paul, selflessness isn’t a given. It isn’t born in a vacuum; it’s born in a stable. The gospel narrates the ultimate anti-Übermensch story: Jesus left the throne room of heaven to be born in a cave as a refugee. As he grew older, he had no place to lay his head. He suffered

under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, he died, and he was buried. His arduous journey was downward, from heaven to hell.” Kindle location 1076

“To fight pride, we need the Christian story and a Christian anthropology. Said differently, to be humble is to truly know oneself. How do we know ourselves? In the words of Flannery O’Connor, ‘To know oneself is, above all, to know what one lacks.’” Kindle location 1097

“Humility is both the source and the outcome of self-knowledge. To know ourselves, we need something outside ourselves. We need transcendence; we need truth, including the truth about human rebellion, sin, weakness, and finitude. Each of these should move us to humble ourselves before the Lord.” Kindle location 1101

“But pride and isolation go together; so do humility and community. To fight pride, we must submit ourselves to God’s Word (of chief priority) and to God’s people. As iron sharpens iron, the church will help us see our areas of defect. The church will spur us on.” Kindle location 1152

“We can think of ‘practices’ as one foot and ‘desires’ as another. Whichever foot takes the first step, each will be bringing the other along on the journey. Conceiving of discipleship in this way allows us to see the Spirit’s work not only in the immaterial recesses of our hearts, but also in our day-to-day habits.” Kindle location 1173

“Humility can be understood as a proper virtue only if the givens of the gospel—creation, the resurrection, the giving of the Spirit, the ascension—are, in fact, true. The Spirit grows us in humility by means of the church and godly habits. And with these means as our crutches, we limp onward down the humble path toward the resurrection on the other side.” Kindle location 1180

“Simply put, to be greedy is to want more money. What most people do not understand quite as well, however, are the various ways that we are tempted to be greedy, or why this vice turns out to be so deadly.” Kindle location 1248

“The Bible closely connects greed to coveting, which is such a serious transgression that it shows up both in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:17) and in New Testament lists of notorious and defiling sins (e.g., Mark 7:21–23;

Eph. 5:4–5). Greed—or avarice, if you prefer—is the ardent desire for earthly gain, often at the expense of one’s neighbor.” Kindle location 1254

“One type of greedy person is the miser. Misers are hoarders. They get, gather, or grab as much as possible and never let go, thus committing transgression by accumulation. Like Ebenezer Scrooge, they want to have it all and keep it all by any means necessary.” Kindle location 1262

“The other main type of greedy person is the prodigal—someone who is unable to hold on to his or her money but quickly squanders it for selfish purposes. Another term for such a person is spendthrift, which the dictionary defines as someone who spends ‘in an extravagant, irresponsible way.’” Kindle location 1269

“Our greed is harmful to other people because it deprives them of whatever help they need from us. Every dollar we hold back for ourselves could be used to help someone else. Avarice is a form of self-love.” Kindle location 1333

“The more we get, the more worries we have, and this only adds to our misery. Our greed turns out to be a form of bondage. The quest for “more” makes us increasingly dissatisfied.” Kindle location 1344

“Greed is the consequence of fear and the enemy of faith. At its core, our constant hunger for more, as well as the assumption that it is up to us to help ourselves, constitutes a lack of confidence in God to provide what is best for us.” Kindle location 1359

“Rather than getting and wanting to get more, God is calling us to start giving and find ways to give more. The replacement for our deadly greed may be hard to put into practice, but it is easy to state in the form of an imperative: be generous!” Kindle location 1375

“Our own small acts of generosity are inspired by the gift of our salvation and deeply grounded in the character of God. God first granted us the gift of life. Then he became as generous in our redemption as he had been in our creation. The Father did not spare his Son but offered him freely for our eternal salvation. Out of his abundant liberality, this generous God has promised to ‘graciously give us all things’ (Rom. 8:32).” Kindle location 1392

“Here is where we can begin to see the definition of anger. David Powlison defines anger as ‘active displeasure toward something that’s important enough to care about.’ In other words, anger involves a judgment that something is wrong, followed by displeasure about that wrong, and then some action (or intended action) to stop or remove that wrong. And in this way, anger can be a good thing. It often motivates people to enact real change and to stop real evil. But it all depends on whether the wrong thing is really wrong in God’s eyes, and whether we handle the anger properly.” Kindle location 1570

“The second category for sinful anger, however, is a little different. Rather than being angry about the right things but handling it in the wrong way, sometimes we are just angry over the wrong things. In other words, sometimes we are angry over things that we shouldn’t be angry over.” Kindle location 1611

“The point is simple. The forgiveness shown to us is the foundation for our forgiveness shown to others. The power of anger is undercut by a greater power—the power of grace.” Kindle location 1692

“In the list of vices, envy may seem like a rather minor type of sin. Yet the pattern it takes in our hearts causes us to question what is good, as well as question the goodness of God. As we grow increasingly discontent with our

circumstances, envy fuels our disobedience in such a way that the Puritan pastor Thomas Watson called coveting a ‘mother sin’ because it gives birth to all the others.” Kindle location 1807

“Coveting encompasses the problem both of desiring a good thing in a wrong manner (an inordinate desire) and of desiring a wrong action or possession, clearly prohibited by Scripture (a culpable desire).” Kindle location 1830

“Coveting is such a problematic vice that multiple words are used to explain specific types of coveting: envy, lust, and greed. Envy is a type of coveting that involves setting our affections on that which belongs to another. Lust describes coveting that is sexual in nature. Greed typically describes coveting that is focused on money and possessions. In many situations, these words are used interchangeably, but they all refer to different types of inordinate or culpable desires.” Kindle location 1838

“Too often, envy robs us of the joy of what is by focusing our gaze on what isn’t. The more we contemplate what’s lacking, the more discontent we become.” Kindle location 1870

“Envy isn’t conquered by gaining. Paradoxically, contentment flows from a life of giving. We begin by giving praise to God: thanking him for all the blessings he so generously gives to us. Every spiritual blessing is ours in Christ (Eph. 1:3). In light of his great mercy, how can we not give generously to others?” Kindle location 2000

“Our lives in Christ are blessed with true riches that can never perish, spoil, or fade—secured in heaven. We don’t need more possessions; we need more understanding of what we already possess.” Kindle location 2020

“For the purposes of this chapter, we will define sloth as “avoiding the responsibilities that loving God and loving neighbor require.” This definition assumes that we have been created by God and that we owe something to him and to the other people that he has made, namely, love.” Kindle location 2083

“Another form of hopelessness is the belief that we were better off before we met God. When the path of redemption entails hardship or suffering, we may begin to resent God.” Kindle location 2111

“When we succumb to sloth, we waste our lives succeeding at things that don’t matter because we’re afraid to fail at the things worth doing.” Kindle location 2127

“The final manifestation of laziness that we will consider is the inability to finish what we start. Proverbs 26:15 says, ‘The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.’ Though the picture is humorous, the sentiment is deadly.” Kindle location 2162

“If sloth is fundamentally a failure of love for God and neighbor, then we must develop the virtue of love. When we diligently apply gospel truth to the sin of sloth, we will see love grow and move us to do the costly, scary, and even boring things that love requires.” Kindle location 2194

“In addition to love, we fight the vice of sloth by putting on the virtue of perseverance. For the early monastics, the great temptation of sloth was to leave one’s cell, and those who had more experience warned against doing so.” Kindle location 2213

“Perseverance in the practice of the Christian disciplines requires hope that such practices are not in vain. So much of our spiritual life depends on our willingness to continue doing the same things day after day and year after year. Sloth tempts us to think that we need something new and novel to make progress.” Kindle location 2224

“The connection between gluttony and a global lack of direction and self-control is so common in Scripture that theologians call gluttony a gateway vice, one that easily leads to additional sins.” Kindle location 2349

“For centuries, the church focused on self-indulgence, not girth. Leaders said that gluttons can be plump or lean, for the essence of gluttony is selfishness.” Kindle location 2384

“So there is honest pleasure in food, but the pleasure easily becomes disordered. Then gluttony becomes a deadly sin. Gluttony can be an obvious sin if it leads to weight gain. Gluttony can also bring discredit to the faith, since secular folk relish the sight of overweight believers. They detect hypocrisy and explain: ‘Those Christians!’” Kindle location 2411

“Heedless drinking—a form of gluttony—is the opposite of service. Leaders shun alcohol so that they can fulfill their duty to the needy. Every realm needs sound, sober guides. The privilege of headship brings the responsibility to care for ‘the poor and needy’ (Prov. 31:9).” Kindle location 2472

“Orwell might say, ‘At sixty, everyone has the body he deserves.’ That sounds harsh, and it’s somewhat unfair because genetics and accidents cause random wounds. But people can forfeit their strength by eating and drinking foolishly and by using tobacco and drugs; they are a form of gluttony, too. So it is partially true to say that at sixty, we have the body we deserve.” Kindle location 2494

“So service, thanksgiving, stewardship, restraint, and the beauty of love for God and neighbor are virtues that uproot gluttony. At best, we don’t have to battle misdirected appetites; they wither away because other loves surpass them. There is a time to say no to food and drink, but with thanksgiving.” Kindle location 2524

“Lust is tricky, hidden, quiet. It loves to lurk in the dark and hide behind legitimate excuses and upright explanations. But its purpose is destruction; its result is death. It entices with excitement and sensual comfort, and then is revealed for what it is—a counterfeit love.” Kindle location 2610

“Fiery desire within marriage and the sexual union to which it leads are appropriate, expected, God-honoring things. Outside marriage, they are dangerous. As Frederick Buechner explains it, ‘sex is not sin. ... It’s not salvation either. Like nitroglycerin, it can be used either to blow up bridges or [to] heal hearts.’” Kindle location 2619

“But Scripture also sees lust as one species of disordered desire, and we will note the way in which all illicit desires resemble one another. Lust is any disordered desire or perverted longing, any appetite that surpasses our appetite for God.” Kindle location 2637

“Lust convinces us God will not provide for our legitimate desires. Whether it be the desire for agency in the world or for sensual and sexual intimacy, lust tells us we must meet our own needs. ‘Lust is the habit of trying to engineer my own happiness for myself, on my own terms. In lust, my own pleasure is the goal, and I decide where to get it, and when, and with whom,’ writes Rebecca DeYoung.” Kindle location 2652

“Lust is not a male sin; it is a human sin. Lust is the result of a heart that longs for happiness and fulfillment, and seeks it in a cheap substitute. It is, according to Paul House, ‘the craving hunger of an empty heart.’” Kindle location 2756

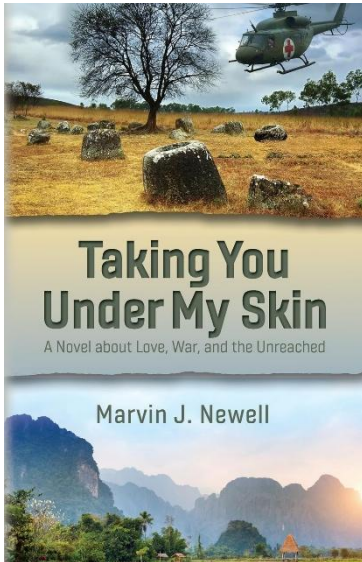
“The strength necessary to say no to surrounding temptations cannot come from accountability groups, vulnerability, and discipline alone. While they are necessary, they are not sufficient. Only the resurrection power



Learn, Meet, Engage In the Great Commission

of Jesus working in our hearts can make us truly free. Only the exquisite beauty of Christ and the attraction of his shocking grace will prove powerful enough to push out our worldly desires.” Kindle location 2778

***** Missions/Ministry *****



[Taking You Under My Skin: A Novel about Love, War, and the Unreached](#)

By: Marvin J. Newell

William Carey, 2025

270 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

*As an Amazon Associate Missio Nexus earns from qualifying purchases.

Summary

The book is a historical fiction (specifically a wartime drama) set against the Vietnam war, unpacking stories of unwavering faith in God. The narrative revolves around the commitment of an army medic (Mike Neilson) who was captured during a secret mission in Laos, and miraculously spared from death in the hands of an unreached tribal group (Kamet in Ban Phong, Laos). This miracle led to the conversion of the tribe to Christ and the transformation of this village and its neighboring villages. Mike ministers to the tribe for 25 years by translating the New Testament and the Psalms until his death. The story also centers on Mike's fiancée (Lisa Engler) who became a Bible translator for the Tai Lue people in Thailand. The book traces their unexpected journey of obedience that inspires and challenges readers to embrace God's call, whatever the cost.

Best Illustration

"Of the 17,259 people groups in the world, 7,220 (represented by the Kamet) remain unreached. Combined, these unreached groups encompass 42 percent of the world's population." Page 270

Best Idea

"The measure of a missionary is not how far from home one serves, but how close to God one stands." Page 3

Best Take Away

"Rather, and more often, it is God thrusting a person like a boomerang. We take flight from his hand and do his bidding throughout the course of circuitous circumstances. But during the flight, we circle back around and end up doing his will his way, not ours. We learn to flex with God-ordained circumstances as we are carried along throughout the course of his perfect will for our lives." Page 236

Our Recommendation

We recommend this book to Christian mission pastors and leaders who are novel lovers (especially of historical fiction) about missionary adventures in following God and his will. These readers will appreciate in the book the experiences of obeying God in the mission field that is full of changes and challenges, coupled with fulfillment and God's miraculous work.

Best Quotes

“If you take care of your spiritual relationship, God will take care of your geographic location.” Page 3

“Well, it looks like God has other plans.... I have no idea why or what those plans are, but I am sure it will eventually become obvious. We will have to wait in faith to find out.” Page 28

“His specialty would be in the service of saving lives (as an army medic) rather than taking them (as an army soldier).” Page 31

“‘This is the Book of Life,’ the spirit-man said in a calm, reassuring voice. ‘Obey its words and it will bring life to all.’” Page 42

“May your faith in God give you courage, comfort, and peace of heart, so that you never give up hope no matter how dark and dangerous the way ahead.” Page 49

“I arise today, God’s strength to pilot me, God’s might to uphold me, God’s wisdom to guide me, God’s eye to look before me, God’s ear to hear me, God’s word to speak to me, God’s hand to guard me, God’s shield to protect me, God’s host to save me from snares of devils, from temptation of vices, from everyone who shall wish me ill, afar and near.” (St. Patrick’s Breastplate) Page 52

“Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise.” (St. Patrick’s Breastplate) Page 52

“I still struggle to understand why God has separated us especially when our shared dream of becoming missionaries aligns so closely to his purpose. But I hold on to the truth that ‘all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.’ This belief comforts me, reminding me that his plans are beyond our comprehension. One day we will understand.” Page 61

“He couldn’t have known that he was protected by the coffin of a beloved Lao warrior prince whose ashes had been placed inside over 2,300 years before.” Page 75

“Throughout the history of mankind, the emotion-driven triad of revenge, hate, and fear has always been a catalyst for extreme behavior. Some would say that the blending of these three emotions is the root of irrational behavior. But what is considered irrational in one culture’s worldview may be thought of as prudent in another.... Yes, it was considered a perfectly pragmatic undertaking, as difficult it may be, to bring this hated American back to Ban Phong.” Page 85

“We dare not underestimate the gravity of the situation. But we dare not give up hope either.... God will give you the courage to take you through this.” Page 91

“Yes, your heart is breaking, but don’t let it break your trust in God.... God works on behalf of those who trust and wait upon him.” Page 94

“Lord, I give up my own purposes and plans, all my desires, hope, ambitions, and accept your will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to you, to be yours forever.” Page 95

“The story took two full hours to tell because the Kamet way of storytelling is not linear; instead, they would make a point, then circle back to it with full descriptions, subsequently adding additional information and continue circling until the story was complete.” Page 107

“It’s the black book of life, he exclaimed. ‘That’s the book that would bring us life, the one we were shown in the vision.’” Page 112

“‘We want you to teach us these words,’ said the chief. ‘We want to know them. We need to know them because our people have known nothing but fear and death.’” Page 117

“The Mekong River accounts for up to 25 percent of the global fresh water catch and provides livelihoods for tens of millions of people. It is the third largest river in Asia and the tenth in the world. Some of the cities along its banks include Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, Phnom Penh in Cambodia, and Vientiane in Laos.” Page 125

“The word Kamet means ‘dog.’ The Kamet believe they have an affinity with dogs. They have a creation story that tells about a mother dog who one day gave birth to a litter of pups. Among the puppies were two human beings, a male and a female. These humans became the first Kamet. They were raised by the mother dog until they matured and then had offspring which resulted in the Kamet tribe as it exists today.... That’s why the Kamet do not kill dogs.” Page 128

“Now that you have lived among us for over a year and have learned our language, we no longer regard you as a foreigner but as a friend and teacher. I am bestowing upon you a new name since yours (Mike) is so foreign to our ears. Your name is now Matoa, which means teacher. I declare you the Matoa of our tribe.” Page 137

“As for the wedding vows, the couple says, ‘Today I am taking you under my skin. You will be under my skin from this day forth.’” Page 154

“Mike felt certain that he had found the bridge to communicate the gospel to the Kamet (i.e., taking one under the skin). It is the concept of ‘redemptive analogy,’ a metaphor using a corollary story, event, or symbol from a culture to explain something about the biblical concept of salvation.” Page 156

“Manumak is the one and only true God... And he is mightier than all the spirits combined. He rules the world. He even has power over all the spirits you have feared your entire lives. Now, the way to show Manumak that you have his son Yesu under your skin is to no longer appease or fear the spirits.” Page 162

“Thus, the whole Kamet tribe of 24,000 people was swept into the kingdom of God.” Page 165

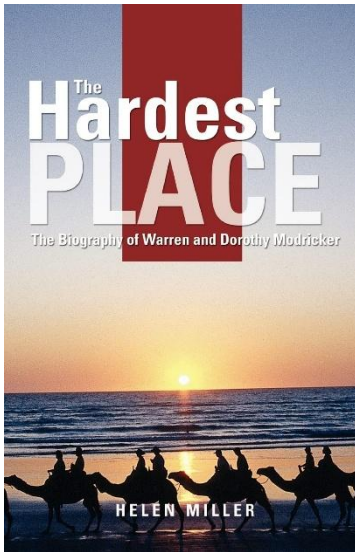
“Who could ever have imagined that your pledges that day would turn out as they have? Not one, but two unreached people groups have been brought to the light of the gospel through the separate witness of both of you.” Page 236

“Instead of fear, they now experienced peace of mind. Instead of treachery and deceit, there was trust and truth. Instead of amulets to ward off spirits, they wore beautifully crafted jewelry. Instead of drunkenness, there was sobriety. Instead of blood sacrifice, there was belief in Yesu, the sacrificial lamb of God. Instead of women with grotesque tattoos on their faces, there we’re clear-faced women of beauty. Instead of polygamy, there were households made up of one man and one woman. Instead of killing newborns, there was the protection of life for all infants, including twins.... Instead of believing they were descendants of dogs, there was a belief that were beloved creatures made in the image of God.” Page 247

“At one time, Matoa told us that God’s will may not be direct, but it is always perfect.” Page 251

[Listen to the interview here.](#)

***** Missionary Biographies *****



[The Hardest Place – The Biography of Warren and Dorothy Modricker](#)

By: Helen Miller

Guardian Books, 2006

272 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

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Who were these persons?

Warren and Dorothy Modricker were pioneer missionaries to the Somali people scattered over the Somali peninsula, a.k.a., Horn of Africa, the easternmost part of Africa. They are revered and remembered today as “The First Family” of the Somali Protestant Church. According to the Somali Bible Society Journal, 2020, “Almost every Christian found in the Somali Peninsula is directly or indirectly the fruit of the Modrickers.”

Beginning in 1933 as independent missionaries, over time, they lived in countries neighboring Somalia. In order to get a foot in the door, they first lived in Aden, Yemen at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. With the opening of WWII, the Modrickers, on furlough in the US, could not return to the field. In 1943, Warren returned under the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and lived in Aden alone for almost two years. They were reunited at the war’s end when Dorothy and their twins returned while their older children remained in America for their education. It wasn’t until 1954 that the Modrickers finally gained entry as missionaries into Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital.

Warren began a cassette tape-ministry in 1972, “The Voice of New Life,” which blossomed into a popular radio ministry that reached Somalis all over the Horn of Africa and neighboring countries. When they were forced out by the Marxist government in 1973, they moved to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to coordinate the translation and eventual publication of the Somali Bible. When conditions in Ethiopia forced them to leave, Warren and Dorothy moved to Nairobi, Kenya and continued to distribute the Somali Bible to refugees forced out by civil war. Eventually, in 1983, they “retired” to Florida, where Dorothy continued working on publication ministry and Warren traveled far and wide visiting Somali refugees in America. Dorothy died of cancer in 1995 and Warren lived till 1998, passing away peacefully while having his morning devotions.

What stood out to you about their story?

- A lasting commitment to know Christ and make Him known
- Warren had strong convictions or perhaps he was “just plain stubborn,” but he was not easily moved.
- Willingness to sacrifice financially, they lived very simple, no-frills lives wherever they lived.
- Strong trust in God’s provision required fund raising built on faith rising through persistent prayer.

- Trust in *the Lord for the body and the body for the Lord*, which led to their firm belief in divine healing.
- Sensitivity to the Spirit's leading from the first inkling of God's call to missions until the last days on earth.

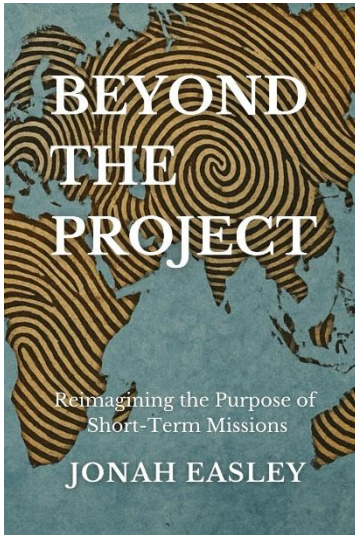
What were their significant contributions?

- Translation project of the Bible into Somali led by Dorothy, aided by her husband and others.
- Considered pioneers of the evangelization of the Somali people.
- In addition to evangelism and church planting, the Modrickers opened clinics and schools.
- In Yemen, Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and finally Somalia, they evangelized and trained Somali nationals who served all over the region of the Somali Peninsula.
- They developed a productive partnership with the Mennonite Mission.
- They pioneered a radio ministry, *The Voice of New Life*, directed to the Somali people, as well as a Bible Correspondence School.
- Following their retirement in Florida, the Modrickers devoted their time and energies to reaching the Somali diaspora in the United States.

What do their lives teach us?

- Their life of faith proved the adage, "It is easier to take much than little; it is easier to stand in a place of audacious trust than in a place of cautious, timid clinging to the shore." They had bold faith in His promises.
- God is not looking for perfect people to be His ambassadors, but He is seeking for men and women whose trust and obedience is complete and final. With such people, He can make much out of little.
- The Modrickers lived out the words of the A. B. Simpson hymn, "To the hardest of places He calls me to go, not thinking of comfort or ease. The world may pronounce me a dreamer, a fool, enough if the Master I please."

***** Church Mission Leadership*****



[Beyond the Project: Reimagining the Purpose of Short-Term Missions](#)

By: Jonah Easley

Jonah Easley, 2025

217 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

*As an Amazon Associate Missio Nexus earns from qualifying purchases.

Summary

What should you do when you come home from a mission trip? You've seen God at work. You are on fire, but are afraid the fire will fade. And yet, you don't know what to do with your thoughts and emotions or how this experience fits into your everyday life. Does something in your life need to change? The book *"Beyond the Project"* by *Jonahs Easley* touches on this post short-term trip confusion and leads the reader through a biblical perspective of what to do next. The author walks through the process of opening our eyes to the needs around us and living as on mission at home just as we do on a short-term trip. He urges the reader to action, following God with simple obedience no matter our geographic location. God then multiplies this obedience to bring the gospel to others. Easley discusses ways to move forward in faith as a response to the need for the gospel at home and around the world, discerning where God is leading. An insightful discussion of fear as a barrier to following God and common misconceptions about missions are also presented. Throughout the book, the author challenges the us with pithy truths, cutting through the clutter of our thoughts and our excuses, helping us to see more clearly what our next steps may be.

Best Illustration

"She started walking through her neighborhood with fresh eyes, no longer just seeing houses but seeing souls. She prayed for her coworkers by name. She invited her neighbors over for coffee, not to check off an evangelism box, but because she cared about where they would spend eternity. She lingered in conversations instead of rushing off. She started asking intentional questions that opened doors for deeper discussions about faith. She'd grown used to scanning her days for opportunities, tuning her ear to the Spirit's whisper, and showing love to people right where she was. And those rhythms continued when she landed. She told me later, 'If God hadn't taught me to be faithful here, I never would've been ready to be faithful there.'" Page 106

Best Idea

"You were created for more than moments of mission—you were made for a lifestyle of being sent. Let this be your guide beyond the project... into a life on mission with God." (Page 10) This understanding of mission requires a change in focus in your relationship with God and your prayer life. For example, "Instead of focusing on what I wanted God to do for me, I began to pray about what He wanted to do through me." (Page 36) It also takes getting rid of misconceptions. "Mission is not for a spiritual elite. The mission is for

the church. The whole church. Every believer. Every background. Every personality type. Every stage of life.” (Page 67)

Best Take Away

“Whether we’re going, sending, praying, or preparing—every believer has a role in God’s mission.” (Page 24) Whether in your home country or abroad, we can all take part in “the unfolding story of God pursuing people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.” (Page 23) “Jesus isn’t looking for spectators who admire His mission from the bleachers. He’s calling participants—men and women who will lace up their shoes, step into the arena, and live like the gospel is true no matter the cost.” (Page 181) “Here’s the key: whatever your next step is, take it. Don’t wait until you feel perfectly ready. You won’t. Don’t assume someone else will go. They might not. Don’t let fear or uncertainty glue your feet to the floor.” (Page 184)

Our Recommendation

This book is designed for those who have returned from a mission trip and are wondering how to process the experience including what needs to change in their life. It is meant for those who are asking important questions about how to follow God whether at home or overseas. The book can be read individually or with a small group as each chapter concludes with thoughtful questions.

Best Quotes

“They’ll say, ‘That was amazing!’ and then move on, without considering how God might want to use that experience to reshape their entire life. I believe that’s a tragedy. Because missions was never meant to be a one-time event. It’s a way of life for every follower of Jesus. It’s the heartbeat of God from Genesis to Revelation. It’s the call not just for a few—but for all who know Him.” Page 11

“It’s an invitation to move from ‘I went’ to ‘I’m sent.’” Page 11

“How am I supposed to go back to life as usual? You try. You return to class, to work, to church. You slip back into the routine. But it doesn’t fit like it used to. You feel restless. Disrupted. You scroll through social media and wonder why everyone else seems fine, untouched. It’s not that you’re more spiritual or better than anyone—it’s simply that you’ve seen. You’ve tasted the joy of obedience. You’ve felt the heartbreak of the unreached. You’ve witnessed the beauty of the nations worshipping God. And now you can’t unsee it.” Page 18

“We turn a mission project into a memory—something we once did instead of something we’re still part of. We frame it as a story to tell or a spiritual highlight to revisit, instead of letting it be a defining moment that shapes what comes next.” Page 18

“It begins with the heart of God... Because once His heart becomes yours, mission stops being an event—it becomes your identity. And when that happens, you’re no longer just someone who went on a mission project. You become someone who lives on mission—every day, everywhere, always.” Page 22

“And here’s the shocking part: He invites us, broken and sinful people, into it. Not because He needs us, but because He loves us.” Page 24

“And it hits you. God did it. His promise to Abraham wasn’t symbolic poetry—it was literal truth. Every nation. Every tribe. Every people. Every language. Not most of them. Not some of them. All of them.” Page 30

“Then, gathering His followers, He gives the clearest of commands—not to build monuments, not to wait for the

world to come to them, but to go. Go and make disciples of all nations.” Page 30

“The mission was never meant to be a side hobby of the church—it is the church’s identity.” Page 32

“These are the unreached: places where the gospel has not yet taken root. No churches in their community. No Bible in their language. No small group meeting on a Tuesday night. No local pastor. No Sunday school. No one—literally no one—can go to anyone who will explain who Jesus is and what He has done.” Page 32

“Some live surrounded by opportunities to hear the gospel; others live with none. Not ‘few.’ None. Zero access in their lifetime. That gap should do more than get our attention—it should weigh on our hearts. Page 33

“We’re not called to save the world—that’s God’s work. But we are called to be faithful with what we’ve been given: our time, our resources, our prayers, our relationships. We can’t do everything, but we cannot do nothing.” Page 33

“The Great Commission was never meant to fit neatly into the margins of our schedules or our budgets. It’s not about convenience—it’s about obedience. And obedience means fixing our eyes on the places and people still waiting to hear, and then doing whatever it takes to get the gospel there.” Page 35

“Lord, open my eyes to Your heart for all nations. Break my heart for what breaks Yours. Help me see the world as You see it. Give me the courage to respond, even if it’s uncomfortable. Use me to bless others so they may know You. Amen.” Page 38

“He didn’t say, ‘Experience Me in another country and then return to business as usual.’” Page 43

“In China, I had learned what it meant to live on mission—eyes open to God’s presence, heart tuned to His purpose in every moment. But coming back to Georgia, I had to relearn how to live that way in everyday life.” Page 44

“The problem is, we tend to compartmentalize what Jesus never separated. We create categories—times to ‘be on mission’ and times to ‘do life.’ But for Jesus, there was no such division.” Page 44

“The mission field isn’t drawn on a map. It’s drawn in your daily availability. It’s defined by a willingness to say, ‘Yes, Lord,’ in the moment He places an opportunity in front of you. It starts with eyes that are open to see where He’s already working and a heart ready to join Him there.” Page 45

“But when the King who defeated death gives a command—that’s not something you weigh or debate. That’s something you obey. And here’s the charge He gives: ‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...’” Page 46

“Disciple-making is not location-dependent. It’s obedience-dependent.” Page 48

“What’s striking is what Jesus didn’t say. He didn’t say, ‘Pick one.’ He didn’t say, ‘Start in Jerusalem and, once you’ve mastered that, move on to Judea, then Samaria, and eventually—maybe—the ends of the earth.’ He said all of them. All at once.” Page 51

“God hasn’t simply allowed me to live here—He has sent me here.” Page 52

“I once heard someone say, ‘If your gospel doesn’t work across the street, don’t try to export it across the

ocean.” Page 53

“God reminded me that the mission doesn’t wait for a plane ticket—it starts with whoever He puts in front of you.” Page 54

“...when you care about the nations, you will start to care more deeply about your neighbors.” Page 56

“ And every morning, you woke up with the same thought: How can I serve today? Who will I get to tell about Jesus today? Now pause. What changed when you got home?” Page 57

“Mission is not seasonal. It’s not a compartment we open for special occasions. It’s the identity of every follower of Jesus, every day, in every place.” Page 58

“Here’s my real life—job, school, kids, errands—and here’s missions, something I fit in when I have the time. But Jesus flips that. He doesn’t want you to fit Him into your life. He calls you to build your life around Him.” Page 61

“What if mission became your normal? ... What if your first thought every morning was, ‘Who am I sent to today?’ instead of ‘What do I have to get done today?’” Page 62

“He told me, ‘I used to think I had to go somewhere to be used by God. Now I realize I just needed to open my eyes.’ And he did. He began praying for his fellow officers. He prayed for the people he arrested. He started seeing past the circumstances to the person, past the badge or the handcuffs to the image of God. His vision shifted to match God’s vision.” Page 62

“You’d hold your time, comfort, and preferences more loosely. You’d stop asking, ‘Is this convenient?’ and start asking, ‘Is this faithful?’” Page 72

“Because living on mission was never meant to be compartmentalized into a week on the calendar, it’s your identity. Your calling. Your daily rhythm. And it’s far too powerful—too urgent—to only live for one week out of the year.” Page 72

“What if you lived every day with the same intentionality, dependence, and courage that you carried on the mission field?” Page 73

“...no one goes to the ends of the earth for Jesus if they won’t obey Him at the end of their driveway.” Page 78

“Mission doesn’t start with a plane ticket. It begins with obedience in the ordinary.” Page 79

“If you don’t live as a witness here, you won’t magically become one there.” Page 79

“Jesus never promised following Him would be safe or easy. He only promised it would be worth it.” Page 82

“We gladly offer ourselves—until God starts asking for something we didn’t plan to give. We sing ‘I surrender all’—until His hand touches our comfort, our career path, our relationships, our security. Then, without even realizing it, we start inching backward... retreating... slipping away from the place where we once promised Him everything.” Page 87

“So maybe the real question isn’t: ‘What’s God’s will for my life?’ Perhaps the real question is: ‘Have I placed my

life on the altar—and left it there?” Page 89

“Mission—real mission—is built on small, consistent acts of obedience.” Page 90

“We say ‘Yes Lord’, but with quiet conditions tucked into the fine print.... ‘Yes... but not if it’s risky.’ ‘I’ll speak up—if I’m sure it will go well.’ ‘I’ll go—if it feels safe...’ Here’s the hard truth. Partial surrender is not surrender at all.” Page 95

“The truth was, I wanted to obey—but only on my terms. And God made it painfully clear: A conditional yes is still a no.” Page 96

“When Jesus calls, He doesn’t say, ‘Follow Me... if it fits your plans.’” Page 99

“A lot of people think they need some special or supernatural calling before they can go on mission... Those moments are the exception, not the rule.” Page 100

“Perhaps the better question is: ‘Am I obeying what I already know?’ But here’s the truth: if we won’t obey Jesus in the small things here, we won’t magically become obedient in the big things there.” Page 100

“Obedience is the soil in which calling grows.” Page 101

“Some people wait. And wait. And wait. They tell themselves they’re holding out for a mystical sign—a voice in the night, a vision in the clouds, a dream so vivid it makes the next step undeniable. They want perfect clarity before they make any movement. But in the process, they stay frozen.” Page 110

“We hear people say things like: ‘I’m not sure I’m called.’ ‘I don’t want to go unless I’m really called.’ ‘I don’t feel called.’ And beneath those statements often lie honest fears and vulnerable questions: What if I get it wrong? What if God asks me to do something too hard? What if I’m not qualified? What if I think I’m called, but I fail?” Page 113

“You’ve already been called to follow Him, to love others, to serve, to go, and to make disciples. The real question isn’t if you’re called. The real question is where and how God wants you to live that out in this season.” Page 115

“That’s what calling looks like in real life: following Jesus in faith and obedience, trusting Him to clarify the next step as you walk with Him. Some people do have dramatic moments of clarity—I don’t deny that. But for many, clarity emerges over time—through community, discipleship, prayer, and serving faithfully where they are.” Page 115

“So if you’ve ever felt paralyzed because you haven’t experienced that big ‘I’m called’ moment, pause and breathe. You’re not falling behind. You’re not broken. And you’re certainly not less spiritual...” Page 116

“Calling often works that way. It begins with a flicker—a burden you can’t shake, a quiet nudge that lingers. Then come the shaping moments: relationships, even challenges that prepare you in ways you might not see at the time. But as the months—or even years—pass, a pattern emerges: doors begin to open, familiar truths keep surfacing from different voices, and you hear that gentle, persistent whisper of the Spirit, ‘This is the way. Walk in it.’” Page 131

“Because calling often looks ...more like surrender than certainty. ...more like availability than achievement. ...more like ‘I can’t not do this’ than ‘God told me exactly what to do.’” Page 133

“When it comes to God’s mission, not everyone is called to the same role—but everyone is called to some role.” Page 134

“The truth is, God doesn’t waste anything. Not your spiritual gifts. Not your skills, education, or natural abilities. Not your past jobs or your unique background. Not even your failures, your pain, or seasons you thought were detours... All of it is preparation—sometimes for something far bigger than you ever pictured.” Page 137

“...we rarely name fear for what it is. Instead, we dress it up in spiritual language. We say things like, ‘I’m just praying for clarity...’ ‘I don’t think now’s the right season...’ ‘I’m still waiting for confirmation...’” Page 146

“Will fear set the course for my life? Or will I let Jesus lead me—no matter where He takes me? Because here’s the truth: courage isn’t the absence of fear. It’s obedience in spite of it.” Page 148

“Fear has never been a disqualifier in God’s story. If anything, it’s evidence that you’re standing on the edge of something significant.” Page 148

“And faithfulness isn’t the absence of fear—it’s the choice to move forward in spite of it. It’s taking the next step, not because the path feels safe, but because the One leading you is trustworthy.” Page 150

“If fear is standing in your way, the answer isn’t to run from it or pretend it’s not there. Drag it into the light. Name it. Talk about it with trusted friends who will speak truth into your life. Lay it at the feet of Jesus, even if you have to do it over and over again.” Page 153

“Jesus didn’t call you because it would be easy. He called you because He is worthy.” Page 153

“I began to pray a dangerous prayer: ‘God, take me to a place where I’m desperate for You to show up every day. A place without the gospel. A place where if You don’t move, nothing will happen.’” Page 154

“Following Jesus costs something. And the first thing it costs is control.” Page 158

“But when Jesus puts His finger on something in your life—when He says, ‘Let go of that,’—it’s not because He’s cruel. It’s because He loves you too much to let lesser things keep you from Him.” Page 159

“That’s the key difference between Paul and the rich young ruler. The ruler wanted to add Jesus to his already comfortable life. Paul gave up everything else so Jesus could be his life.” Page 161

“In each story, faith didn’t mean the absence of fear. It meant choosing to believe that God’s power and promises were greater than whatever stood in their way.” Page 170

“People who understand that their availability matters more than their ability. People who know they may not be the most qualified, but they are willing.” Page 185

“We want God to hand us a neat, laminated plan with bullet points, timelines, and milestones—so we can evaluate it, pray about it (for just a little longer), and then decide if we’re comfortable moving forward. But God rarely works that way.” Page 189

“And the God who calls has never once failed a person who followed Him in faith. He’s not about to make you the first.” Page 192

“That’s a sobering reminder that much of what we strive for—possessions, accomplishments, comfort, control—will one day fade, rot, or disappear.” Page 194

“The purpose of your existence isn’t to expand your influence so your name is remembered, but to let God use your life, your gifts, your time, and your resources to extend His reign in the hearts of people who have yet to know Him.” Page 197

“...what’s the next step you already know to take? Don’t overcomplicate it. Don’t wait until it feels perfect. Don’t get stuck trying to polish the plan until it gleams. Start.” Page 202

“We don’t go in our ability—we go in His. And that changes everything.” Page 210

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