

there has to be more than this

REFLECTIONS ON
SEEKING GOD

“Kind of scary to think what I could do if I
wasn’t standing in God’s way. If my room was
not these four walls, but this city, this country,
or this world.”

— KEITH TURLEY

Something More... an introduction

“God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.”

—GENESIS 1:5

What is the purpose of this day/night cycle God created for me? It seems most days I wake up with a song or thought coursing through my head, probably from something that happened during my week, or an idea I wasn't done thinking about. Then I get into my readings in the morning at my computer—more things to think about. Some of these bits of information may not look like much on the surface, but there has to be more to them.

What do they mean? That song? Those words? That scripture? That conversation? That seemingly random quote? The key for me is to take the time to stop and reflect on why God may have created that encounter. There must be a reason, and my days are filled with finding reasons. It probably isn't His reason, but these reflections enable me to process things. So I challenge myself to find Him in expected and unexpected places. Ours is a God who wants to reveal Himself.

A number of years ago I started taking those thoughts and reflections and putting them into a written journal. On occasion I would share these with close friends. Then my friends wanted me to e-mail these thoughts so they could start their days in a similar way—even sharing them with their friends; so began an e-mail list. One day a friend said I should make a book. Really? Me?

What you hold here is that vision. It is but a collection of some of my journal entries. No dates. No years. Just thoughts. I've edited them a bit to take out specific references to a day and

time so that they might make better sense in a book format. You may also notice that some entries have less writing than others. This is partly because some days I had more to say, but also because some days I wanted to leave more room for the reader to reflect without me putting my own thoughts out there. I encourage you to use the space on the pages to write your own thoughts.

At the end of the book there are two additional sections. The first is a list of sources where you can find the quotes I have referenced. That was a fun and exciting list to compile because I found many books I want to read later. The second list is an index of Scripture verses I have included and the corresponding page where you can find them in this book. I hope you enjoy those tools.

This book's main purpose, and why I feel the Spirit moved me to put it together, is to encourage readers to reflect—first by example, then by inspiration and blank space. This book is to help you to stop and listen with wonder to the world around you, to ask questions, and to look for answers. To make connections. To realize that God is in everything, but sometimes we have to be willing to stop and wonder.

—KEITH TURLEY

—WWW.OURWONDERROOM.COM

Rescuing Me

"I know His grace, and I have seen how far His arms will reach to rescue me."

—"FOR THE GLORY OF CHRIST" BY NEWSONG

When I pulled the words above out of a devotion I was just going to leave it at that. Then I went and read Isaiah 50. Wow! In particular though, I am drawn back to the rhetorical questions in verse two. How many times have I tried to find my own way in the darkness?

"When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Was my arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst. I clothe the sky with darkness and make sackcloth its covering."

—ISAIAH 50:2-3

I love this scripture. Every time I get in a mess—and I get in messes often—I should remember that God's hand is not short. He can reach me. No matter how far I get behind or how confused or how desperate I get, He can rescue me.

No Bounds

I have not heard these words before, but I think they may have just crawled in among my top ten poems.

*“One takes a risk when one invites the Lord
Whether to dine, or talk the afternoon
Away, for always the unexpected soon
Turns up: a woman breaks her precious nard,
A sinner does the task you should assume,
A leper who is cleansed must show his proof:
Suddenly you see your very roof remove
And a cripple clutters up your living-room.*

*There's no telling what to expect when Christ walks in the door.
The table set for four must often be enlarged, and decorum
Thrown to the winds.
It's His voice that calls them,
And it's no use to bolt and bar the door:
His kingdom knows no bounds of roof, of wall or floor.”*

—MARCELLA M. HOLLOWAY

“None of us has gotten where we are solely by pulling ourselves up from our own bootstraps. We got here because somebody bent down and helped us.”

—THURGOOD MARSHALL

I am not sure that Marshall was thinking of Him, but maybe he was. That is a thought that I often have. May it never be my assumption that someone’s words are devoid of His hand. God has and will use people along my journey that are not believers. One of my roles should not be to judge the worthiness of others to help me grow closer to God.

“In the faces of men and women I see God.”

—WALT WHITMAN

The GRASS

“A grass-blade's no easier to make than an oak.”

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

I don't think I've ever thought about it that way. It does make me think differently if I stop and contemplate some of the simpler things in life as much as I do the things that seem larger and grandiose. Everything exists because He created it.

Same Family

Late one night I started reading Hebrews in bed. It is a book I often hear references to. I stopped that first night at the end of Chapter three, but I found myself returning to one verse in particular:

“Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”

—HEBREWS 2:11

Boy, is that wonderful news these ears can never tire of hearing. Then, when I got to reading my devotions this morning there were these lyrics from a song that jumped out at me.

*“I wanna be Your hands
I wanna be Your feet
I’ll go where You send me.”*

—“HANDS AND FEET” BY AUDIO ADRENALINE

What a way to look forward to a day. Knowing that I, being of Christ’s family, am His hands and feet. There is another song, by Casting Crowns, that has the line something like, “If we are the body, why aren’t these feet walking; why aren’t these hands reaching?” Good questions.

Notes

Sourcing quotations was a fun part of this book for me. What I tried to do to the best of my ability (with help from internet sources such as Google Books) was to locate the original source OR a source which would be one I would want to read further. Please accept my informal MLA style. I have first included the page in my book where the quote appears, followed by the author of the quote, then the source or suggested reading.

- 7 Chuang Tzu. Quoted in *Another Word A Day*. Anu Garg. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2005. p 173.
- 8 Sara Groves, "The One Thing I Know." *The Other Side of Something*. 2004. CD.
- 9 Newsong. "For The Glory of Christ." *More Life*. 2003. CD.
- 10 Virginia Wolf. *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories*. Harcourt, Inc. 1972. p 15.
- 11 Alec R. Vidler. *Essays in Liberality*, SCM Press, 1957, p. 27
- 12 William J. Johnson. Quoted in *The Intensified Life*. Lekesha R. Barnett. Xulon Press. 2008. p 157.
- 13 Artur Schnabel. Quoted in *Theology, Music, and Time*. Jeremy Begbie. Cambridge University Press. 2000. p49.
- 14 Marcella M. Holloway. Quoted in *Divine Inspiration: The Life of Jesus in World Poetry*. Robert Atwan, George Dardess, Peggy Rosenthal, eds., Oxford University Press US, 1998, p. 118
- 15 John Newton. *The Amazing Works of John Newton*. Bridge-Logos. 2009. p 339.
- 16 Jonathan Swift. Quoted in *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*. Barbara Brown Taylor. HarperCollins Publishers. 2010. p 99.
- 17 Thurgood Marshall. Quoted in *Leadership Moments: Turning Points That Changed Lives and Organizations*. Arthur L. Jue. Trafford Publishing. 2006.
- 17 Walt Whitman. *Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass*. Walt Whitman. Penguin Books. 1986. p xxiii.

Scripture Verses

The scriptures quoted in this book are from the NIV version unless otherwise noted. They are listed below by the order they appear in the Bible, not by the order they appear in this book. That way, if you have a particular scripture you'd like to look for in this book then it should be easier for you to find.

Genesis 1:14-15	108	Matthew 18:2-4	96
Genesis 3:10.....	42	Matthew 19:26.....	105, 116
Genesis 11:9.....	71	Matthew 24:4.....	10
Exodus 15:11	103	Matthew 25:21.....	101
Exodus 34:10	3	Mark 5:31	118
Deuteronomy 4:25:31.....	37	Mark 13:37	147
Deuteronomy 31:6.....	8	Luke 2:19.....	151
Joshua 24:15	149	Luke 6:21	113
2 Samuel 22:2-4.....	20	Luke 8:15.....	106
Job 12:9	112	Luke 16:10.....	124
Pslam 23:1-4.....	7	Luke 18:13.....	143
Psalms 18:30	133	Luke 19:39-40.....	120
Psalms 27:8	57	Luke 24:25, 32.....	84
Psalms 34:9	50	John 1:11-13	29
Psalms 46:10	vii	John 14:9-10.....	132
Psalms 91:1-2	95	John 14:12	128
Ecclesiastes 2:24-26.....	64	John 15:1-2.....	90
Isaiah 50:2-3	9	John 21:25	145
Isaiah 61:10-11	136	Romans 3:23.....	99
Daniel 3:19-23.....	98	Romans 5:1-5.....	33
Matthew 5:10-12	36	Romans 5:10-12.....	36
Matthew 7:7.....	6	Romans 8:28.....	81
Matthew 8:20.....	111	Romans 12:1-2.....	44
Matthew 6:28.....	85	Romans 12:2.....	111
Matthew 9:22.....	118	Romans 12:18.....	137
Matthew 14:23.....	16	Romans 12:20.....	138

About the Author

Keith Turley is a spirited writer through his blog and e-mails. His most recent degree is from Western Washington University in the area of Elementary Education, with a focus on Children's Literature. Many of the reflections in this book come from the period when he was completing his teacher certification. Keith is involved in many different community and church efforts to help readers and writers of all ages grow. Keith's mission in life is to encourage others to grow in their relationship with God.

You can read Keith's devotional e-mails online at www.ourwonderroom.com. Sign up for his weekly devotionals at www.ourwonderroom.com. You can also read fictional pieces by Keith at his other blog, www.katurley.com.

