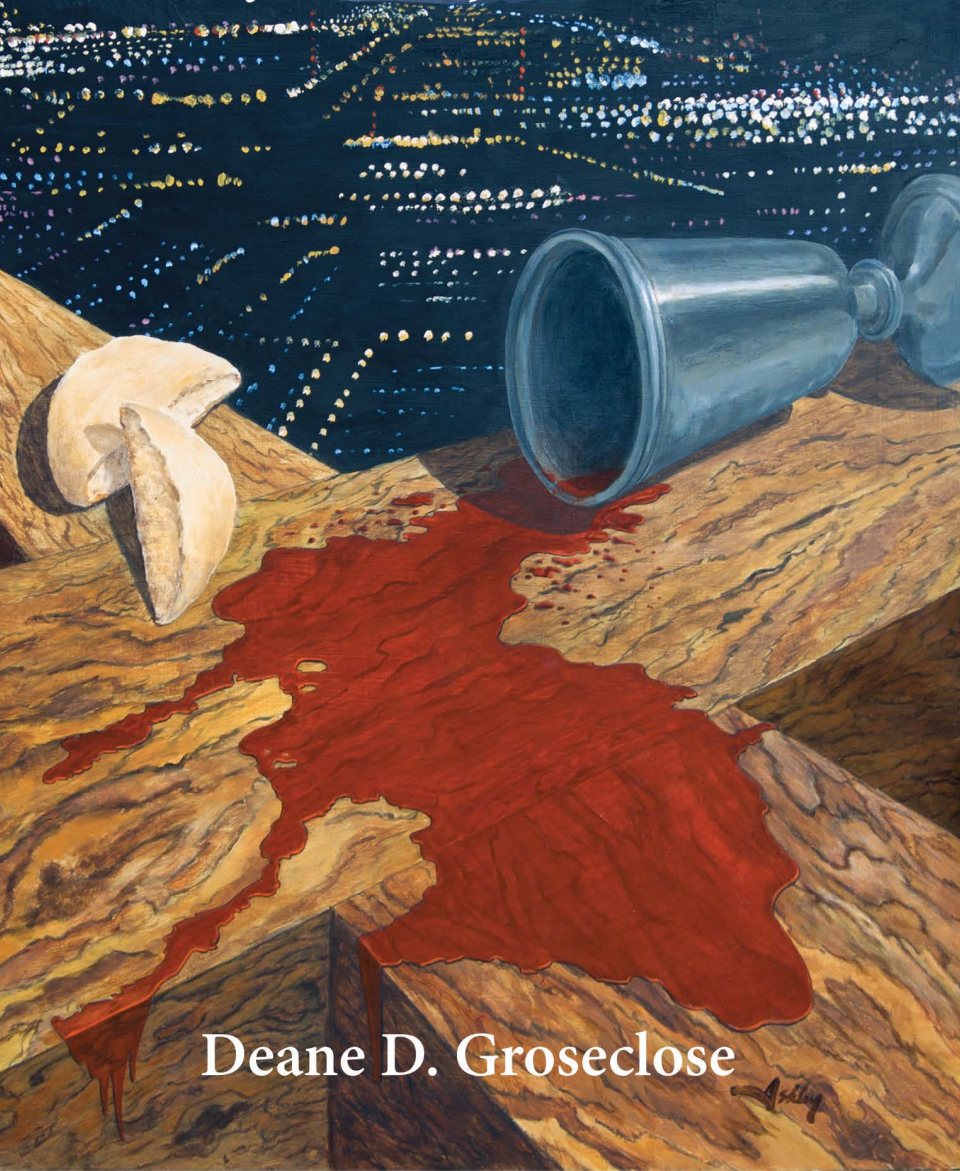


GOD at the CROSSROADS

A Life Journey Devotional



Deane D. Groseclose

Ashey

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Dedication

This book is written to the glory of my Lord and Savior, the lover of my soul, Jesus Christ.

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Preface

*This is what the Lord says:
“Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16*

Dur lives present us with a myriad of dilemmas, decisions, and choices. Every day it seems we come to some sort of crossroad, so to speak. Too often I have found myself at an intersection where God’s stoplight wants me to use caution, change direction, or literally stop. Rather than waiting for God to give me the green light with His navigational instructions, I ignore His will and go barreling through. Writing this collection of devotionals has been my way of slowing down at those crossroads and listening to God’s will. I have found that I have had to unlearn some of the ways I have always done things in order to receive His better way.

The book’s origin came from an epiphany from the Holy Spirit when I was reading a familiar passage. Paul was recording his prayer over the church at Ephesus, *“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may*

give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." (Ephesians 1:17) I was blown away by three things: that I could actually ask for and receive wisdom and revelation that I did not possess; that the result would be knowing and understanding my unfathomable God more deeply; and that knowing Him in this way would dramatically impact every area of my life. I can testify that not only has all this been proven true, but the Lord continues to shine His light into every crack of my thinking and conduct to challenge me to truly live in Him.

My time immersed in God's Word has become a treasure hunt. Not only is there treasure for each day, but some days the treasure chest is so full that the contents cannot help but spill out. While I have never considered myself a writer, I started writing at the Lord's instruction when the treasure was more than I could contain. Sometimes the message seemed to flow effortlessly. Other times, it was more like a long, painful labor and delivery. Regardless, the message was always dictated by Him, and He used my travail in receiving His wording to instruct me more profoundly. My post-labor joy is being able to share the exquisite richness of the reality of my amazing Savior.

While there is a sequence in the arrangement of the parts, "God's Character," "Finding Hope," and "Living Fulfilled," these devotions don't have to be read sequentially. For instance, we don't need to have a total understanding of

God's character before we can step into a more hopeful place. There are other times God moves dramatically or miraculously in our lives bringing unexpected fulfillment, and an aspect of God's character is revealed in a way we had not previously known. God's path for each person is unique. The important thing is that we embark upon the journey. That is why each devotion will encourage you to record a personal response. We do not want to just be hearers of the word, but we want to do what it says.

Most of these devotionals have more scripture passages than good teachers would recommend. But my hope is that you, the reader, might see a passage in a new way and want to check it out for yourself. I strongly encourage you to follow that lead, as it is the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit promising He has a special jewel just for you. My prayer is that He might bless you like He has blessed me in very personal and practical applications of His eternal Truths. May we be His vessels who *"speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ."* (Ephesians 4:15)

Part One

God's Character

Knowing God's character and heart are foundational to our spiritual growth and navigating life. This sounds like a no-brainer to most Christ-followers. However, because Jesus is both the Son of God and the son of man, we inadvertently put human characteristics on the Devine, forgetting we are created in God's image, not He in ours. In truth, His thoughts and ways are so much higher than ours that we will spend all of eternity learning new and wonderful things of Him. Currently, our best source of information is the totality of scripture, as the Holy Spirit brings revelation and connects the dots. That is why Paul so fervently prayed that the Ephesian Church might have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know Him better. Seeing God as He truly is changes the perspective through which we view *everything*.

Our Help Is In The Name Of The Lord

*Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of
heaven and earth. Psalm 124:8*

This scripture is very familiar to most Christ-followers, and provides a great deal of comfort. When we are being spiritually-minded or meditative, it is very “real.” But the true test comes as we walk through the events of everyday life. Where does our help come from?

Jehoshaphat was a king of Judah when Israel was divided into two kingdoms. Unlike the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat’s heart was committed to the Lord. When he was told that a vast enemy army was marching towards him, he did something totally unprecedented. Instead of calling together his advisors to come up with a plan that would encourage the people in his leadership, he proclaimed a fast throughout Israel, and stood before the assembly praying to the Lord and confessing he didn’t know what to do. Specifically, he confessed who God was: *“Are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand,*

and no one can withstand you...we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." 2 Chronicles 20:6, 12

That prayer and confession loosed God to intervene on Judah's behalf. God spoke assurance and instruction through a Levite who was not a priest – not one that would normally “hear” from God. Jehoshaphat did not judge the messenger, but totally embraced the message. He prostrated himself before the people in worship to God, and appointed singers to march out at the head of the army, praising God for the splendor of His Holiness.

The deliverance and victory God gave went much further than anyone could have imagined. As the singing began, the Lord caused divisions of the enemy army to turn on each other until they had killed themselves. Instead of engaging in battle, Judah's efforts were dedicated to collecting plunder – food, clothing, and things of value — for the next three days. In response, Jehoshaphat led the people in praise for what God had done. Then, the Lord brought additional blessing by placing fear on all the enemies of Israel, so that the nation experienced peace.

While most of us love this story, in our hearts we might think, “That was then, this is now, it's not the same.” We don't really believe God would intervene for us in this way. How stupid would we look to others if we prayed, and nothing

happened? And if we are in a position of leadership, we would *never* confess we didn't know what to do – that is a sign of weakness and erodes confidence. But, if by some miracle we were able to overcome these obstacles to pray, our prayers would be much more specific than Jehoshaphat's. How else would God know what to do if we didn't outline it for Him?

This is precisely why we don't see these types of miracles very often. Our Lord has become the "God in the box" of all our fears and limitations. He never forces Himself on us, but waits patiently for us to ask for His help. When our trust is in Him, and we set no conditions upon Him, we see the ancient God of Jehoshaphat in real-time action as we could never have imagined. What will it take for each of us to break down our boxes so that the Lord can be the infinitely powerful God He really is?


Notes to Self

What is God speaking to me?

What is my action plan?

Part Two

Finding Hope

ur lives sometimes feel so busy, so complicated, and often so acutely painful that it is hard to believe God is near – that He sees, cares, and has answers. Our most common complaint is how a loving God would actually allow *that* to happen (whatever *that* is). Scripture gives us some strong positions to help us stand in hope and trust: God is the rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him; He uses all things together for our good; He loves us with an everlasting love; He will never leave us or forsake us – just to name a few truths. Trusting in His perfect character is vital to being able to find His beauty in our particular ash heap. That attitude adjustment is critical to seeking and procuring His help in our crises. When we actually realize that the God of all creation is for us, what does it matter who is against us? He has it handled.

Joy in the Journey?

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

Many of us sense we were created by God to do something, even if we can't quite put our finger on what it is. We try one thing, then another, then another. It turns out that we have a lot of company. As a young man, Moses felt that same calling, and attempted to step into it by coming to the rescue of two Israelites who were being mistreated by an Egyptian. To his surprise, not only were his actions *not* appreciated, but killing the Egyptian sent him fleeing the wrath of Pharaoh, into the wilderness.

God loves us enough to allow us to fail. Failure inevitably takes us to a wilderness place where we have a choice: to seek God in what went wrong, or to abandon Him like we believe He has abandoned us. Choosing the latter is to believe a lie, because the purpose of the wilderness is to focus us on God. It is only at this place of acknowledging our failures and shortcomings that we are able to learn more of Him – His love, grace, forgiveness and power – and start to grasp who we are in Him.

It took Moses forty years in the desert to completely learn that truth. God had, in fact, created him to be a leader, but nothing like he originally envisioned. Unbelievably, God had ordained Moses to spend another forty years in the desert... only the second time, it was in humble service to God where the Lord Almighty was in charge, and God's power was manifested through Moses.

Most of us would never make it through forty years of a wilderness experience, much less be willing to go back to that difficult place in service. But, if we can grasp what God wants to do in us through the wilderness - leading us into the fulfillment of the purpose and calling for which He created us — there is joy in the pain, and light in the darkness. His name is Jesus.

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Part Three

Living Fulfilled

Without even realizing it, most of us live compartmentalized lives. At best, we do our morning devotional, down breakfast and coffee, then commence with daily activities. But does the Lord go to work with us, or ride along in the school carpool? Does He care about both large and small business decisions and both casual and critical conversations? When we start to realize He wants to be invited to participate in every detail of every day, and that He has a good plan and purpose for everything, the mundane becomes more exciting, and the horrendous becomes less daunting. This is the beginning of partnering with Jesus to discover who He created us to be, along with His ordaining of our gifts and particular assignments. The intimacy that results leads us to the abiding place in Him. This is where our hearts and attitudes are forever changed, and all that we do is not compulsory, but born out of our love for Him.

True Confessions

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. Lamentations 3:40

How many times have we defended ourselves with this phrase, “But I’m basically a good person...”? It happens when we get ticketed for speeding, or we’ve been caught in a lie, or we failed to do something another person was counting on us to do – any time we’ve messed up. We’ve all done it. We instinctively compare ourselves to others so that our behavior becomes relative, and our offenses not so bad.

The problem is that somewhere along the way we start believing in our own goodness. Proof comes in kind words or actions extended for someone else, financial assistance to others in need, volunteering our time/talents in the community – any number of acts we consider altruistic. Often, our list of good deeds comes straight from the Bible: Feeding the poor, spreading the gospel of Christ, practicing forgiveness, leading Bible Studies, and much more. Unfortunately, we slide into creating our own righteousness through the “good” things we do.

A tragic aspect of this slide is that we don't see it. It is not the sudden jolt of falling off a slippery rock. It is more like dancing in one spot, never realizing we have moved until we stop dancing and check our bearings. And that is the key - we must be diligent about checking our bearings.

To the degree we consider ourselves righteous, we do not need - nor do we truly appreciate - Jesus' sacrifice of suffering in our place. God proved through the Israelites that no one could be counted righteous through obedience to the law - all failed. In the New Testament, Paul repeats, "*There is no one righteous, no, not one,*" (Romans 3:12). No one can achieve the holiness that is God's very Nature. The distance between us and God is a bar set too high for any human to cross. Only God could make the way and span the chasm, covering the base and unholy with Himself, so that we would not instantly perish in the atmosphere of holiness.

Since we are so prone to deceiving ourselves about our goodness and operating in our own righteousness, how do we know when we are doing it? Here are just a few flags:

Our world revolves around us.

We must be in control/dictate/manage our circumstances and lives.

We believe in the importance of our ideas and opinions, and believe others should also.

We make judgments about the intentions and/or behavior of others.

We take offense, and have trouble forgiving offenses committed against us.

We treat complete strangers with more consideration than our own families.

What we do or say behind closed doors is different from what we do in public.

More... *(each of us must ask God to show us, because we will lie to ourselves)*

Jesus, please open our eyes to all the ways we deceive ourselves about being good. We confess these things before You now, asking Your forgiveness for the actions and the self-righteous attitudes. Help us never lose sight of Your purity, holiness, and tremendous sacrifice, so that You alone are always the Lord our Righteousness.

Notes to Self

What is God speaking to me?

What is my action plan?

GOD at the CROSSROADS

A Life Journey Devotional

Should I send my kids to public school, or home-school them with my own family's values? Should we attend the church mission trip or take the kids to their soccer tournament? Should I go out with my co-workers after work or go home to make dinner for my husband? Every day our lives are full of choices, from the mundane "what's for dinner" to the more life altering decisions of taking a new job or moving to a new city. Deane Groseclose learned years ago that it's impossible to make these decisions alone. At each crossroads we come to, if we face those decisions with God by our side, we are much better equipped to do what's right for ourselves, our family, and our future.

The devotionals published in "God at the Crossroads" reflect Deane's own personal relationship with God, and her need for His instruction and help navigating the choices and struggles of daily life. Through her own study, she hopes to pass on inspiration to others who are yearning for guidance in daily living and especially for a deeper relationship with Christ.

This book contains 100 devotionals to help guide you through daily meditation and spiritual practice. They are grouped into three categories, starting with God's Character. Learning about who God is and how He has been a part of human history provides a foundation for our faith. The second part contains devotionals centered around Finding Hope. Even when we might be in a dark time, through scripture and faith in Christ we can find a way to move forward. The third part, Living Fulfilled, contains devotionals that address the issues to arise during daily life and helps the reader find God in all things.



Deane Groseclose is a spiritual counselor with Cross-Purpose Ministries, specializing in marriage & family work and personal growth issues. She and husband Tom have 30 years' experience working with couples and individuals in the Winston-Salem, NC area, as well as nationally through virtual technology. Deane ministered eight years on a church staff and has launched marriage and family ministries in two churches. She has served as a board member and spokesperson for the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, with numerous public appearances, including The 700 Club, Golden Eagle Broadcasting (ORU), and the national Trinity Broadcasting Network.

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