

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Spirituality/Religion

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Yesterday's Intentions

Somewhere, sometime, in everybody's life, I think there's a point where everything just stops. Gravity pauses, motion ceases; the world quits moving around you while you ponder the question: "How did I get here from there?" I'm not talking about taking a wrong turn on the wrong street during the wrong time at Mardi Grads, but rather that seemingly frozen moment of introspection and self-examination where you recall some original purpose and direction for your life that you once held closely. You contemplate the circuitous road your life has traveled, attempting to unravel the threads of cause and effect that led to today; this week; this subsequently evolved purpose; ergo: this juncture in life where yesterday's intentions and today's outcomes collide.

I had this exact moment recently. Oh, time didn't really freeze. The world didn't suddenly pause in its rotation. Motion kept on, well, motioning. But my whole life seemingly stopped. I could still hear my granddaughter playing the piano in the other room. The early fall breeze tufted through an open door, softly teasing my tactile sensations with cool tendrils—at the same time coyly and masterfully blending with promising whiffs emanating from cooking food in the kitchen.

You may ask what invasive and thoughtless query brought me to this moment. What imposing probe of such magnitudal significance initiated this paramnesiatic reverie? It was brought on by an innocent bystander. Well, actually, not a bystander and possibly not quite so innocent. You see, I was doing a radio interview and the host asked me a loaded question: "Why did you write this book?" A rather harmless and perhaps ambiguous question, given the circumstances. He was, you might say, the interrogator and I the hapless interrogee. Reaching deftly, albeit shallowly, into my repertoire of pat answers, I gave a plausible reply—one that would placate my tormentor while evoking nods and lauds from the vulnerable listener.

My answer wasn't a fabrication by any stretch—it was basically honest—even though it was a shallow rejoinder after all. The listener deserved better and my inquisitor as well. Sometimes the question “Why?” isn't something that can be answered in a twelve-minute interview. But, like for me, sometimes the answer to the question “Why?” confronts you at a much later time, when you've already moved on, forgotten the whole discussion. By then you are in a different frame of mind, enjoying the moment, drifting in the momentum of time itself, and BAM!, the moment of reckoning hits and the confluence of thoughts and intents, circumstances, and emotions suddenly weave into a fabulous tapestry of understanding.

So, forgive my shortcomings and ask again “Why?” Grant me one more opportunity to respond with true depth and meaning and I will tell you the whole truth this time. The truth is that every single moment of my life has brought me to write this book. There was not one inconsequential happenstance in all of my life that did not influence this writing. Perhaps the real question is not “Why did I write this book?” The better question may be: Was I true to myself and to you or did I seek to beguile you with some kind of philosophical pandering to social struggles for the sake of selling my book, my ideas, my personal agendas? Most importantly, was I; am I, being true to the God of this universe who formed me from the dust of the earth?

The truth is that one of my greatest loves in life has been to study the Scriptures and learn about cultures and customs of biblical times. Every time I exit my studies I am hardly able to contain the anticipation of sharing what I discovered with others. The truth unfolds in my book by way of the countless numbers of individuals I've taught as an ordained minister, missionary, Sunday school teacher, biblical Greek researcher, men's ministry, and Bible study leader. The truth unfolds by way of ministering to the hurting through biblical counseling, marriage counseling, ministries for the grieving, and years of hosting radio shows because, in touching so many lives I am discovering myself touched back by every one of them as I endeavor to reach even more lives through writing.

Don't get me wrong: I know that experience is no guarantee for truth, but experience is one awesome teacher when tempered by truth! Through this I have found that the truth of God's Word cannot be broken. The problem for many who are lost or hurting is that they are driven

away from truth in the Bible by Christians whose lives appear hypocritical. Sometimes the world seems more forgiving and accepting than the church. The paramount question for the Christian individual, like myself for example, is: When my path crosses the paths of others, are they moved toward God and His truth where healing and hope can be found, or are they moved away from God and His truth? Are others criticized by my judgments, my postures, my comments, or are they encouraged to look again (or perhaps for the first time) to God, who loves them so deeply, for hope and answers to the struggles they are facing in their own journey.

But all this loquaciousness is skirting the issue at hand—so let's cut to the chase. Why on God's green earth should you or would you read my book? Perhaps my writing style appeals to you and you are enamored by the plot and structure. Good enough reason for you maybe, but not good enough for me. In the end, does my book impact your life? Does it cause some fundamental yet profound change in your heart? On the surface, when you ask me "why should I read your book", I'll tell you that One Man One Woman speaks about God's immeasurable love for humankind and how He, God, makes that love known to all. But, deep in your soul, does this book alliterate that truth?

Now allow me to ask you a personal question or two: How has your life turned out so far? How did you get here—to this moment in your life—from there, where good intentions and future hopes originally blossomed long before intentions and outcomes collided? With this in mind, I invite you to take to heart the words found in the Bible and elaborated upon in my book and use it all to cultivate godliness and goodness with the Creator of the heavens and earth, in your own intimate relationship with your spouse, and in relation to others whose journeys intersect with your own.