

LIVING IN DEPENDENCY & **WONDER**

THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERING
THE DEPTH OF GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU

GRAHAM COOKE

AN INTERACTIVE JOURNAL

BOOK 8
BEING WITH GOD SERIES



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DEDICATION

To walk with God in the high places we must lose our fear. Fear can only be lost in the desert, in the crucible of warfare, inferiority and internal struggle. In the place where only God can shelter you. Only His Comfort works. All is stripped bare and we come to rest in His goodness.

The passion of God that kills our strength now nurtures our weakness into a place of joyful vulnerability. Through the lens of our own inadequacy we begin to get glimpses of His sovereignty and all supremacy. Our hearts and minds are washed in His goodness. Revelation lifts us to the realm of a different reality and peace sets in.

Every obstacle and opposition is an opportunity to rest in the love of the Father. We enter every problem through grace in which we stand. Our wonder grows as we learn the joy of dependency.

I dedicate this book to the following people. Some have taught me personally, others I have observed from near and afar...many I count as friends and fellow children in the Kingdom.

Uncle Sid and Harry Greenwood from Chard, England who pioneered living by faith as a reality to me, not just a concept. Bob and Jean Acheson who exemplified it daily with great joy and simplicity. Arthur Burt who opened up a dimension of the Spirit so profound it shattered my mediocrity; much pain came from

it, but I am glad and grateful. Dee and Maggie, two wonderful elderly ladies who lived by the Spirit and always gave me hope.

Ruth Fazal, composer and concert violinist, and a lover of God and simplicity. Randy Clark, who I once spent 10 days with in a bunker and who gave me more than I gave him; time is still on my side Randy...I'll get you back!

John and Carol Arnott whose sheer delight in the Father is intoxicating. Bill Johnson, who makes me want to fold myself in his suitcase so I can travel with him. I think America is going to have to find a new definition for the word "awesome."

Richard Holcomb who makes me laugh when we're fishing and cry when we're worshiping. Finally to Mike Bickle, a friend who by his passion for Jesus never fails to call up a greater love in my own heart when I am around him.

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Families are the bedrock of life. They supply the love, belief, laughter, determination and focus to enable each member to grow in confidence and take on seemingly impossible things. Wives, sons, daughters and grandchildren become the world that we look through along with our friends.

We work, persevere, build, persist and develop with them in mind. Their love, acceptance and support acts as a catalyst for all that we attempt. They lift us beyond measure into a place in Christ that contains more than we imagine.

Heather, Ben, Seth, Sophie and partners. Theresa, Alexis and Alyssa. Our wonderful grandchildren. All have contributed to the fullness of my ongoing life experience.

The brilliant friends that I have walked with for several decades. The amazing leaders and ministries that have graced my life. The Radiance Community in Santa Barbara, a grand company with whom to explore life and fullness in Jesus!

Finally, to the one in the coffee house who started this journey and the God who sustains it.

INTRODUCTION

My journey of learning the wonder of dependency exploded into a different dimension five years ago with a simple dream. In the dream, I was taken back to a time of great rebellion and disobedience in my life, a time when I wasn't "walking with the Lord," as Christians say. I found myself reliving an awful situation from more than twenty years ago.

As the story of my sin unfolded before my eyes, the most incredible thing happened. It was as if God called a time-out: everything just froze. The whole scene stood still, as if it were in suspended animation.

Suddenly, Jesus stepped into the picture and looked at me. I was shocked—and a bit ashamed—to see Him there in the midst of my sin. But Jesus had a message for me.

"Grae," He said gently, "it wasn't your disobedience or your rebellion that grieved Me. Son, I dealt with those issues on the Cross. What grieved Me is that you never saw what I wanted to be for you. You never understood what I wanted to give you."

Jesus, the Master of everything—including dramatic timing—paused for a few seconds before continuing.

"If you had known what I wanted to be for you, this is how the situation would have turned out," He said, turning my attention back to the scene. The whole dream played out as if I had responded perfectly to God. In that instant, I saw what could have been. I woke up, feeling clean and new inside, and suddenly very aware of the depths of God's love for me.

Since that dream, I have begun to understand the power of our current circumstances to release more of God into our lives. Nothing out there in the world can affect me negatively when I ask God for His perspective and more of His character. It is possible to go into every situation intrigued, excited, and expectant for what God wants to show us.

Earlier in my ministry, God had put me on a journey into the heights of His love. He showed me things about His splendor and glory that I could never have imagined. But now, I am on a journey to discover the depths of His love. This is the true joy of dependency: that we can give thanks to God in every circumstance of our lives. I have meticulously gone through my past—even with its horrible rebellion, sin and abuse—and given thanks to God for every stage of it. I have forgiven anyone who has ever hurt me. I can't think of a single situation I haven't given thanks for.

Everything that God is doing in our lives is intentionally relational. To walk with Him, therefore, we must also be intentionally relational—with Him and with others. God, in His wisdom, allows what He could easily prevent by His power. In everything, He is constant and in charge: sometimes He leads us into situations that are brilliant, and other times, He leads us into things that are difficult. But God's commitment to us never wavers. Every situation in life is about God wanting to give Himself to us.

Right now, our lives could be good, bad, or ugly, but we can be joyful knowing that God has designed our current

circumstances to enable us to see a part of Him that we couldn't see at any other time.

The question we should never ask of God is, "Why?" The why question will never be answered on Earth, because it's the wrong question. The question we must ask is, "What is this for?" We must see what Jesus wants to be for us in every situation. God always wants to be true to His name, to be the "I AM." Whatever is happening in your life right now, I AM is with you.

Together with Jesus, we can walk in the high places of the Spirit, and the low places of the soul, but only if we come to the simple understanding of who I AM truly is.

Galatians 5:22-23 is a Bible passage we have all read many times: it is a staple of Sunday School curriculum and charismatic preachers everywhere. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," the Apostle Paul wrote. The words should prick our consciences but many of us have forgotten what the fruit of the Spirit really means after years of sermons, Christian merchandising, and other uses.

Fortunately for us, God lives by the fruit of the Spirit. Every fiber of His being exudes these fruit. If God didn't exercise self-control, we'd all be dead. If it weren't for His kindness, we'd all be lost. If it weren't for His joy, we'd be heartbroken.

God's life is marked by another quality: generosity. All things have been given freely to us, the Bible says. Whatever we need in life is given to us by the hand of God. When we have a need, God's answer is always "Me." Everything is yes and amen

in Christ. We must catch the extravagant generosity of God and allow His fruit of the Spirit to pervade our lives.

Jesus was passionate about giving us the fruit of the Spirit. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another,” He said in John 13:34. “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full,” He added in John 15:11. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you,” Jesus said in John 14:27.

An amazing relationship exists between God’s total capability and our corresponding weakness. Serving Him isn’t just about recognizing how small we are, but about understanding how huge He is. We live in the tension of it all: He’s big, we’re small; He’s strong, we’re weak—let’s all laugh about it together. The only thing we can do is marvel at how incredible He is. Every situation in life is a journey where God teaches us more about Himself. I don’t think a day goes by where God doesn’t show us more about who He is.

I believe that we are in a season when God wants to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers,” as Malachi prophesied. Because of that, being a good father is high on God’s agenda. He longs to father us into deeper places in the Spirit. We can partner with God in this process of fatherhood: after all, we must become childlike in order for Him to be our Dad. It’s vital for us to be child-like—it’s the only way we can grow in Christian maturity.

Being child-like isn’t a matter of regressing into a lower place in the natural. It’s actually about advancing into a greater

place of life in the Spirit. Our innocence and purity must be recovered for us to live as children in the Father's house. The Kingdom of God belongs to those who can develop and maintain a child-like sense of wonder about God's majesty.

Graham Cooke

LIVING IN DEPENDENCY
& **WONDER**

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

The gathered crowd was buzzing with a mix of excitement and skepticism. The enthusiastic ones were still talking about the incredible number of healings they had just seen performed. So many people had been healed that the crowd was clamoring just to touch the Nazarene carpenter who had made it all happen. What would He do next? Could He be the long-awaited Messiah, sent by God to deliver His chosen people from the iron grip of the Romans? There hadn't been this level of excitement in Israel since John the Baptist's first sermons by the river Jordan.

The skeptics were a little calmer in their assessment. The healings were nice, but perhaps the crowd had just given into emotionalism. After all, they had seen a lot of so-called messiahs come and go, and nothing had ever changed. The Romans still ruled. What did this Man have that those other failed deliverers didn't? Did Israel need another John the Baptist, stirring up outrageous hopes of freedom and victory that were sure to be dashed?

In the midst of it all, Jesus Christ climbed a small hill and began to speak. This Sermon on the Mount, as history would call it, was a world-changing moment. Luke 6:27-36 chronicles Jesus' words:

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray

for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Jesus' message that day, 2,000 years ago, can be boiled down into a simple phrase: "Love those who are incapable of loving you." It was an odd thing for a deliverer to preach. Be the first to love, the first to bless, the first to give. Give to anyone who asks. Give as a way of life.

Jesus wasn't concerned with earthly empires or people's perspectives of what a Messiah should look like. He was on a mission to deliver a statement about the nature of God and the nature of His Kingdom.

Nothing has changed since that Sermon on the Mount. Jesus still deliberately and mischievously takes all of our fears

“BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL,
FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.”
JESUS CHRIST

of being used, abused, and taken for granted, and makes us a promise: *“Love your enemies, do good, and*

lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.” When we depend on God—and no one else—to validate and reward us, our joy will be complete.

INNOCENCE IN THE KINGDOM

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“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” Jesus said in His Sermon. What an intriguing comment! From it, we can safely say that a lack of innocence detracts from our ability to see God. Innocence. Purity. Child-likeness. Wonder. These are the attributes that we must walk in if we hope to see God’s majesty. These are the things that must grow in our hearts for us to be mighty men and women in the Spirit. Innocence is at the root of who we are meant to be, and must remain at the heart of who we are. Innocence must be the quality we possess when we finish our earthly walk with God. Imagine entering Heaven with a higher level of innocence and wonder than when we started our journey with Him!

This is exactly what we are called to do as Christians, as the Apostle Peter made clear in 1 Peter 3:8-17:

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For,

*“He who would love life
And see good days,
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips from speaking deceit.
Let him turn away from evil and do good;
Let him seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their prayers;
But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”*

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

This entire passage is about the role of innocence and purity in a Christian's life. Peter outlined exactly what innocence looks like: being harmonious with others, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, humble in spirit, not returning evil for evil, and not trading insult for insult. We were called to be a blessing to others.

Many people live without thinking. They could put the whole of their philosophy of being on a pinhead and still have room enough for two angels to waltz.

What comes out of our mouths in non-control situations is always the unconquered part of our nature. Concepts such as love, agreement, compassion and humility can only be birthed through the head and the heart combining. This is the heart of meditation. We give ourselves a phenomenal chance of success when head and heart work through the issues of life and arrive at a way of seeing, speaking and being before the crises of life may happen. Such mental and emotional activity creates values.

Values are the road map of our spirituality. Our objective is to avoid retaliation, sarcasm, anger, bitterness and resentment. These reactions are soulish and keep us tied to the flesh. A value is a predetermined way of thinking that guides our words and actions in the heat of the moment. Spiritual people are ready for life in all its forms. They are not caught napping. They train themselves in Godliness by combining head and heart with the fruit of the Spirit. The best way to manifest love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control is by thoughtful passion.

We are our own best case study. Examining the history of our relationships is incredibly important. Thinking back through the times of our disappointments, arguments and differences of opinion is crucial to development. In hindsight what would we change about what we said or did? How would we change it?