

the
**NEWNESS
ADVANTAGE**

GRAHAM COOKE

BOOK TWO

Letters from God Series

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LETTER 1

The Lens Through Which You View Life

KEY SCRIPTURES:

Exodus 6:30, 7:1; Acts 9-10; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16;

Ephesians 1:18, 4:2-24, 6:10; Colossians 3:1-3;

Philemon 6; Hebrews 8:13

Beloved,

As the Originator of all things, We have a unique perspective about everything We have created. Our rule of governance is from Heaven to Earth. It is a fixed and unchanging Kingdom outlook that allows people to rise above world events and personal dilemmas and experience the power of truth and faith combining to overcome any obstacle. This is the story of Scripture and Our unique place in the hearts of people.

Our perspective, truth, and faith offer an entirely different way of seeing, thinking, speaking, and acting. It is the way, the truth, and the life of how the Three of Us co-operate in the Kingdom. In making you in Our image, these are the areas of life that We are constantly seeking to address in Our people.

Beloved, the Earth must adjust to Heaven and its spiritual laws: the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to name a few. It follows then that if your relationship with learning is from a world-based, logical, analytical, academic, systematic study, you may experience a disconnect with a Kingdom that works differently. In Heaven We pursue everything through relationship, trust, vision, imagination, creativity, faith, and the truth of Our unchanging nature.

Scripture constantly defines Our delight and willingness to step outside the bounds of man-made laws and conventions to express the wholeness of Heaven in the context of Earth. When you make Us in your image, you disconnect from Our lens and make yourself myopic in the process.

VISION THAT ELEVATES

When I wanted to send an emissary to the house of Cornelius, I chose Peter; a big-hearted, simple, trusting, passionate man who, most importantly for Me, was the only man to ask to step out of the boat when Jesus walked on water. Sure, he felt overwhelmed and sank—but that is *not* the story. The narrative that I was overjoyed to see was a man wanting and attempting to move in the way that is normal to Our lifestyle.

Of course when it came to asking a good Jewish man to go to a gentile house, which was against all the traditions of his faith and culture, I knew this was no small request. Yet I knew that Peter, in all his uncertainty and perplexity, would still do My bidding.

Peter grasping the meaning of the vision of the sheet that was lowered, which contained all kinds of non-kosher animals, combined with My invitation to kill and eat, was going to be challenging. I could not tell him everything up front. I simply cannot take the adventure element out of faith—that is where the joy resides!

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The stress and strain of believing for something out of your reach must become the joy and peace in believing. The way to succeed in faith is to make Us greater than the issue.

Peter was not at that point when he left on his journey, but by the time he arrived at the house of Cornelius, he had opened his heart and was trusting Me in a new way. People change as they travel in faith, not by standing still waiting to understand everything. Peter would come to know that his own history, together with his lens change, would usher in a whole new era for the global gentile community. A new perspective in Peter began the process of elevating a people group, who only knew darkness, to enter the light of redemption.

A NEW LENS CREATES WHOLENESS

Saul, a powerful Pharisee who had completely missed both the coming and the purpose of My coming, was in a blind religious rage persecuting Kingdom people who seemed to him to be manifestly different from his own heritage.

All of his academic study, combined with a religious fervor, gave him a lens that said it was right to persecute and kill those who saw God in a different way. It was only when I showed up in brilliant light while he traveled to Damascus that he was able to come to his senses and start a different journey. Sitting in blindness for three days allowed him the opportunity to think differently and repent of his perspective.

What a wonderful journey We had with the one who would eventually embrace the gentile name Paul! How We enjoyed declaring the reality of the Kingdom and the truth of who We are, how We see things, and the way We like to work with Our people. Paul's lens change was radical and exciting. A judgmental, hate-filled man became the apostle of love and grace.

OUR PERSPECTIVE OF YOU CHANGES EVERYTHING

Moses desperately wanted Me to see and relate to him in the same way he saw himself. His expression of exclaimed surprise was funny: “See me as I really am! I cannot speak to Pharaoh.” I knew exactly who Moses was without Me. He needed to understand who he could become *with* Me.

My response to his weakness was to tell him My strength in what I had called him to do: “See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.” I was not inviting him to be the fourth member of the Trinity. I was telling him that with Me, he could walk at an unprecedented level above his opposition, obstacles, and circumstances.

Your perspective of yourself changes your thinking and creates a new language of agreement in faith. A new perspective, a new mindset, and a new language are the key elements of an upgraded identity. When I declare how I see you, I am asking you to look more closely at who you are becoming next.

It is not enough to know yourself in the context of your world experience. That will never be My frame of reference for you. My perspective gives you a context in the Kingdom, which must then override your earthly way of looking at yourself and your circumstances.

People with a natural mindset are always calling Me down into their weakness, rather than seeing that I am elevating them into My strength and power. Once Moses had settled into My way of seeing himself, we could partner in the destruction of all the household gods of Egypt and the liberation of Israel.

“Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” is the only way that you can walk with Me and do the impossible. In our

relationship I want you to get acquainted with Me, again understanding and enjoying all that I have done for you in Christ. As you learn to acknowledge the value, importance, and impact of the new man in Christ within you, then our fellowship together will have significant repercussions in the world.

YOUR LENS IS BEING CONSTANTLY RENEWED

As you are learning to walk with the new lens of the Kingdom, every circumstance provides opportunity to renew your way of perceiving. As you see differently, your mindset will form your new perspective. You will make constant necessary adjustments, turning away from your natural mind as you become more spiritually minded. This is the throne room of the mind of Christ in the new man. In Christ your new man receives the power to focus your mind on things above, not on things on Earth.

When your old man died, the new man replaced him. You are now perpetually hidden in Christ in Me. This means that I relate to you through My Son and you relate to Me from your position in Him. It's perfect! You bypass the world and go straight to Heaven in your lifestyle.

This works best as you get in the rhythm of putting off the old and embracing the new. Most people want new but think old. The natural mind can only change when it sees something different. First put off the old, then you are free to receive the mind of Christ.

It's give and take. Set your mind on desiring a higher way of thinking. As I begin to speak new things, you have a choice. In our relationship your new man partners with Me and allows an earth-bound perception and thinking to be set aside. Then you can explore all the possibilities that are opening up to you with this new lens.

Alternatively, your old man creates a siege mentality that resists newness of life, a new identity, and a different possibility. Your mind becomes a battleground, creating confusion through the old man that does not allow for breakthroughs into a new lifestyle. The stress and strain caused by the old can be very debilitating.

Consequently, the scenario becomes more about alleviating the stress than it does in putting on something new. The old man decides in favor of no change and the tension lifts, giving a false illusion of peace. *Tension does not mean that something is wrong.* It means that something is happening! There can be no movement without tension.

In order to cut your food, you must put tension on the knife. To drink from a cup, your handgrip must create tension or the cup cannot be raised. Beloved, there is always a necessary tension between the old and the new. It tells you that something needs to change and that adjustment is vital.

OUTCOMES

Life lived in the old man changes nothing. Any gain that comes from your own performance will never lift you high enough to see the fullness of My perspective of you. Breakthroughs gained in the same way are seldom permanent. There is no lasting breakthrough without the follow-through of establishing a new lifestyle.

Beloved, you cannot hear truth when you are listening to a distortion. You must come aside like Nicodemus and enquire of Me. This is your moment of transformation. There will be many hundreds of wonderful adjustments, some simple, others that require a higher fellowship with Us.

It's the process of how you engage with Me during the change that makes you rich, not just the outcome of becoming different. All

learning and change are relational. It is where you receive My love, kindness, affection, mercy, and grace.

The implications for Me are wonderful! I love your process. It is where our joint story merge together as I take you on the journey into My Presence, fullness, and abundance. I love to use all of your life situations as your training ground. I love to teach you how to walk with Me. I cherish those moments when you open your heart as you learn to let go and trust. My affection for you is huge! I treasure the lens by which you learn to see Me, My kingdom, and your place in it.

Everything begins by seeing something. *Are you ready for a lens change?*

INTRODUCTION TO DEEPENING YOUR RESPONSE

The questions in “Deepening Your Response” are a catalyst to your growth—not a quiz. God pursues everything through relationship, trust, vision, imagination, creativity, faith, and His unchanging nature. The questions here are designed to do the same, so they are worded as if God were asking them.

Before You Start:

- Get a journal or small notebook.
- Review Preparing for a Divine Conversation on page 13.
- Start with any question that captivates you. Allow Him to set the pace and order.
- Your first thoughts are an “X” that marks the spot. Return to these questions periodically to dig deeper.
- Your responses should be as expansive as what you are discovering in God.

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- Spend as long as you like on any question. Completion is not the goal. Discovering the joy of the journey is. Experience God's delight in being with you in these questions.
- Life is a process, so you will return to these questions again and again—hopefully at a higher level each time. If your learning does not become your lifestyle in Jesus, enjoy cycling through the questions again.
- Embrace the opportunities for relational encounter with Him. They will become your Evidences of Transformation.
- Record your responses in any way that works for you. Love the learning. This is your journey and story with God.

DEEPENING MY RESPONSE TO LETTER 1

“We have a unique perspective about everything We have created.”

1. What unique parts of your life do you think I am celebrating?
2. What would change for you if you joined Me?
3. What areas of your life are you comparing to other people's that I am not? Make a list.
4. For each of those on your list, ask Me how I'm celebrating you instead. Write that down, too.

“Beloved, the Earth must adjust to Heaven and its spiritual laws: the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to name a few.”

A key part of your newness advantage is having New Testament laws! Consider the law of love. According to 1 Corinthians 13, I am legally bound to always be patient with you, always kind,

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to think no evil, to bear, to believe, and to hope all things. To never fail!

1. Think of a current circumstance in which you would like to feel more confident. Based on this law, how am I thinking about you in that situation?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 as My promise of who I will be for you. In what ways is My perfect law of love overcoming any fears or uncertainties inside your heart?

“Moses desperately wanted Me to see and relate to him in the same way he saw himself.... I knew exactly who Moses was without Me. He needed to understand who he could become with Me.”

When was the last time you tried to explain to Me who you were not—or why the circumstances were too hard? See yourself standing with Me in those same circumstances.

1. What is My response to your weakness?
2. Write a short description of who you see yourself to be with Me in this situation now.

“Most people want new but think old. The natural mind can only change when it sees something different. First put off the old, then you are free enough to receive the mind of Christ.”

1. Describe one new thing you are seeing differently.
2. What old thought will you choose to set aside to make room for it?
3. How do you think I respond to tension between your old and new thoughts?

“It’s the process of how you engage with Me during the change that makes you rich, not just the outcome of becoming different. All learning and change are relational. It is where you receive My love, kindness, affection, mercy, and grace.”

1. Describe how this way of learning is different than an academic course of study.
2. What riches are you looking to find with Me along the way?
3. What is the outcome you are hoping for in our relationship? In your development?

“I love to use all of your life situations as your training ground.”

1. Where have I created training grounds in your life?
2. What do you suspect that am I training you in?
3. Who do I want to be for you on this practice ground that I couldn’t be at any other time?
4. Who are you excited to become through these experiences?

INVITATION TO RESPOND

Are You Ready for a Lens Change?

I’ve written you a letter, now I’d love to have one from you. I adore your process. It is where our joint stories merge together as I take you on the journey into My Presence, fullness, and abundance.

What do you want to see more clearly about Me? About yourself?