

I HAVE HEARD, BUT NOW I SEE

Life interruptions, both good and bad, can keep us from missing some of God's biggest blessings. It's not until we consider what He has already done for us through His Word, His Son, *and* through creation, that we can see that God is lovingly trying to catch our attention.

"...Look up or all around you, or down... you cannot escape the intricate craftsmanship of every tree, leaf, insect, bird, flower, wave, raindrop, sunset, grain of sand. We stand before it all without excuse (Rom.1:20). Without an excuse for not wondering, not appreciating, not giving thanks. Jim's book reawakens and reminds us of all this and more...."

Michael Card, singer-songwriter, musician, author.



Peacock Spider Photo: Jurgen Otto

"...Jim Kraft doesn't just inspire awe in us as we read about amazing aspects of creation, he continually turns our eyes to the loving Creator..."

Dr. Stuart Burgess BSc (Eng) PhD CEng FIMechE professor, highest academic rank in British Commonwealth universities.

Jim Kraft, as a designer and Bible believing Christian, draws on God's Word and over 60 specialized scientific and medical resources to show us the intentional design found in God's creation.

The indescribable love and care that God shows us through Creation Design draws us nearer to His heart.



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Endorsements

Dr. Stuart Burgess

SBSc (Eng) PhD CEng FIMechE is professor of engineering design at the University of Bristol (UK). (NB: ‘Professor’ is a title given only to the highest academic rank in British Commonwealth universities.)

Dr. Burgess is the designer/engineer of the NASA Space Station robotic arm and the reflector energy gathering system.

His research interests include bio-inspired design, biomechanics and design in nature. He has worked in industry as a professional designer working on projects for the European Space Agency. He has published over 130 secular papers on the science of design and has been coeditor of the International Journal of Design & Nature. He has lectured at both Cambridge University and Bristol University in the UK. He is also a visiting professor at Liberty University, USA. From 2004 to 2011 he was head of the department of mechanical engineering at Bristol University.

“This insightful book gives a fresh perspective on things we often take for granted. Jim Kraft doesn’t just inspire awe in us as we read about amazing aspects of creation, he continually turns our eyes to the loving Creator. The book encourages the reader to have a deeper appreciation for both the big things and little things in creation.”

Bob Devine

MBI Nature Corner Radio Broadcaster

Faithfully hosted radio program for WCRF Cleveland, Ohio, for over 30 years. Produced 490 episodes of interviews about various wonders of science. Affectionately known as “Uncle Bob.”

“The highest known mountain in the world is 29,035 foot Mount

ii Before the Beginning

Everest located on the borders of Nepal and Tibet. It's the Behemoth of the Himalayas. How old might it be? Moses, that great Jewish Old Testament General writes in the 90th Psalm, verse 2, 'LORD, BEFORE the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God!' Think about that! Before there was anything in the skies above or oceans beneath, The Eternal God was already there. What was our Universe like *Before The Beginning*? Does that sound like a contradiction? Jim Kraft, author of this book, *Before The Beginning* asks, 'Was God bursting forth with excitement at the thought of sharing His Divine understanding and Creation to come with His future image-bearers? When love is demonstrated there needs to be an object of our love, or in this case, God's love.' John 3:16 opens with, 'For God so loved the world. . . .' 'This means you and me! God is sharing what He possesses, Eternal Life, and all that accompanies this privilege.' In *Before The Beginning*, Jim Kraft cites both an abundant amount of Scripture and Scientific examples of both truth and science all around us, showing us that wherever there is a *de-sign*, there demands a *Designer*. What is His Name? Colossians I: 13–17 says the Designer is The Son of God, The Lord Jesus Christ. I highly recommend Jim's book, *Before The Beginning* for exciting, truthful reading."

Gerald Hillier, M.S Physics

Senior Engineer

Siemens Energy Inc.

- 15 years engineering experience in aerospace and aviation with an emphasis on development of processes and materials benefiting the aerospace, military and energy production markets.
- Specialty: Applied Optics, Ceramics and Characterization of Materials using laser spectroscopy.

"This recent work by Jim Kraft treats the Creation of God and the relationship of God to humanity via its perception of creation, as a potential issue in a way most cannot verbalize. Jim gives a logical approach to understanding a complex issue by first acknowledging reverence to the creative genius of God with

many untypical, concrete examples. Second, potential motives of creation, (relative and confined to human understanding), are discussed as a means to discover God's love for humanity with the clear hope of facilitating deeper relationship with the Ultimate Designer, God of the Universe.

When applicable, examples from modern biology, astronomy, and physics are used as supportive evidence of merging creative genius and motive with God's desire for relationship; all of this is in combination with scripture relevance. However, this is not a science text, and the author does not make recurring attempts or claims to convince the reader with empirical evidence or existing counter-arguments. Rather, the reader is urged to view the creation of the universe with open eyes and open heart in an attempt to draw near to its ultimate Designer. The examples need not be put on trial as they are presented to be divinely self-evident. The tone here is not of conflict with science, but of reconciliation. For those simply looking for a re-statement or re-building of their faith, this book provides many examples, relevant, personal ideas, and relevant scriptures."

Ron DiCianni
Author and Painter

Recognized as one of the nations top illustrators. In 1989, he produced the painting that started a revolution . . . *Spiritual Warfare*. No stranger to the book industry, Ron has collaborated on over 50 book projects, is a six-time winner of the Gold Medallion Award for Excellence in Christian Literature and Retailers Choice Book of The Year winner with Randy Alcorn. These projects have generated multiple millions of copies in print and have been translated into languages all over the globe. Some of his work can be viewed at www.TapestryProductions.com.

"A story I heard illustrates the battle written about in this book very well. A group of scientists challenged God to a contest. They felt they could create a human being just as well as He could. So the contest began. God did what He does and created a perfect human being. Embarking on their attempt, they started with the same mud God did, whereupon God interrupted them and said,

“Go get your own mud . . .” That’s the story in a nutshell, isn’t it? God either is or He isn’t. And if He is, our attempts to erase Him, preclude Him or override Him will never work. Someday it will become much clearer than it is right now, but by then it will be too late to recant. This book may help you come to the truth of God before that day, for the truth, dear reader, is that it doesn’t matter what you believe. It’s only matters what is true.”

Kay Kyllonen, Pharm.D., FPPAG,
Neonatal ICU Clinical Pharmacy Specialist

Clinical Pharmacist in Pediatrics, mother of two teenagers.

“I am enjoying this book. I have been reading it with my Bible. I love the integration of Scripture, science (which in its truest form never contradicts the word of God) and concepts of design you use to enliven the reader’s perception of God. I will be recommending it to others as an engaging look at the study of God’s creation. Thanks for giving me the privilege to review your (and His) handiwork.”

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

...God Designed

Jim Kraft

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Preface

The reason for writing this second edition is twofold. America has lost its way. Suicides are up, depression and anxiety is skyrocketing. Psychologists are now seeing an unprecedented rise in narcissism. Something is changing the way we think and interact, causing our society to become a socially inept train wreck. It seems that more and more people are focusing on the negative and have lost their ability to see the big picture. In the late 1990's, human-to-machine-to-human communications took a leap in technology. Not addressing these issues is irresponsible.¹

Something in our society is devaluing human life. Could our new forms of communications be desensitizing us to human interaction—to love?² *Before the Beginning...God Designed* rips through the perspective-blocking lies to help us flawed humans see truth. Then, with God's help, life balance and objectivity can be restored.

The second reason is timing. Now is the time to read this book. By taking a journey to the beginning of things, you will discover a perspective-restoring remedy that God gave us through His servant Job. This meager attempt to put God back into our country can happen one heart at a time. God reveals himself to man in three ways, through His Word, through His Son, and through Creation.³ *Before the Beginning... God Designed* helps us to consider creation foundations.

A Messenger

I am a communications designer by trade with classes in psychology and marketing. For maintaining objectivity, I have 30 years of taking and leading Bible studies in my local church. I have worked with many start-ups companies, church and parachurch ministries launching their dreams. I introduced three national brands. I have worked with large, blue-chip companies like GE, American Greetings, and Petro Canada which have entrusted me with motivational and promotional

communications—the guy who can mix the research, arts, and a headline to get a message across. However, these are not the experiences that I feel qualify me to write on the subject. In fact, is there really anybody qualified enough to write about transcendent creation origins? The Word/Power of God speaks for itself and underlines the points made throughout this book. My spiritual gift is discernment. One of the aspects of this gift is the ability to ask the right questions at the right time. Many of the marketing personnel of corporations I have worked with have made comments like this one: “No one is asking the needed questions like you are, congrats you have the project.”

Twenty years of my life, I feel, have been in the middle, in between things yet to come, a place to observe, a place to feel the real pains of need and tragic loss. So much so, the desire to thrive has been threatened—where hope has been removed—a frightening place to be. Our family has experienced financial and real estate holdings loss including a farm and business loss. We've dealt with cancer, and raising a child with ADHD. The death of loved ones—life in its difficult areas of change. These types of life events can distort or even break our perspective.

I have also lived out specific chapters in the book, where only hands-on experience can be the real instructor. I have referenced over 60 experts in unique areas in science and research as well as multiple translations of scripture.

Cross-discipline degrees are not offered by colleges to walk you through these life challenges or see life from a creator's viewpoint. I have not only been at the bottom of the barrel, but underneath the barrel with the crawly things as well. With that said, I can say with confidence, that a faith walk with a loving, Creator-God can offer a perspective of another kind.

Tim Mackie, Ph.D. of the Bible Project makes a wonderful observation about man's stewardship of creation in his Science and Faith presentation made in August of 2017.⁴ He states that all humans, male and female are royal stewards of the beauty, meaning, and order of His creation. My hope is that this writing will, in some minute way, assist in this stewardship.

Introduction

If we are so blessed to be able to experience the beauty of God's creation, it is natural to begin to contemplate how and why this world came into existence. I have heard that many recent Christian converts weren't able to see beauty until after their conversion. Something happened within their spirits—a gift bestowed from above—a creation reveal of sorts. What a vast repertoire of gifts our Creator (with a capital C) encompasses! Some people have been granted the skill to paint, or to play music or to design things, but they require tools and inspiration. The new converts were given the ability to simply see things differently.

Think about it—God has the ability to create something from absolutely nothing! There were no bowls of fruit or beautiful seascapes or memorable characters in God's life to serve as His inspiration. When God Creates, He starts with nothing. $(-\infty) + (+\infty) = (\quad)$ The space between the brackets is empty on purpose. I couldn't use the number zero as "0" because that is a number.

In that sense, we're not really Creators of anything (with a capital C)! However, I would say that we are *creators of lesser things*. We take great pride in working with all that God has given us and we try diligently to do the very best we can. He gave us thought generation and creative capabilities. But none of these great creation thoughts can compare with the ideas of God, the Alpha and Omega. We are encouraged to "consider creation" throughout the Bible.

*I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works
and consider what your hands have done.*

Psalm 143: 5

Today, our days are overflowing with commitments and the pres-

tures of everyday living. Unfortunately, a jam-packed and hectic life can burden our hearts and weigh us down, like an over-stuffed suitcase that we drag by our side as we trudge through a busy airport. Daily “busy business” can cause us to miss the blessings and insights that can come through by simply taking a little time to “consider these things.” When we finally do, we can truly begin to see the Master’s handiwork and creative genius.

There is another spirit in the air—and it’s very illusive. Even within the church, something seems to have gone awry, but we’re not quite sure what. Survival instincts seem to be put on the back burner. A sense of valor to protect what is good seems to be missing. Where’s the outcry on societal atrocities? Where’s the contrition and remorse? Large numbers of priests have been found to be molesting children and child sex trafficking is big business—where is the outcry? It appears that a spectator mentality is prevailing as our religious freedoms are slowly being threatened.

Could it be that we are feeling the affects of a society that has removed God? Has God given us or our loved ones over to reprobate minds (a mind without moral compass or beyond hope of salvation). Or, have we unknowingly latched on to idols and have created other gods? Have we distracted ourselves to a point where we can’t even see that there is a problem, a personal need for humility?

In the book of Job, Job lost his perspective. God stepped in and declared who He is. God used creation, reminding Job of creation’s blueprint to adjust Job’s outlook. Perhaps we have lost our perspective too.

When we consider the care and utter brilliance that went into creation—the transcendent, sacrificial love that God has for us—it cannot help but change us.

My initial hope for this book is that it will cause us to look at creation in a new light; that we might see creation as an event which points to God’s complete plan for humanity. I pray that this book will be used as a tool, an actual *agent of change*, which will help you to discover the Creator’s deep passion that was behind it all. That passion is an incredible gift, sent directly from the heart of God to you and me.

Please take note on how I use the word passion. On page 21 there is

a somewhat poetic clarification titled: *The Angst of Passion*.

Why the name?

There are 300 scriptures that communicate that thought precedes actions.¹ John 17: 24 states: "God loved us before the foundations of the world." The book's name, *Before the Beginning...God Designed*, could have had other tags reading: ...*God Loved*, ...*God Authored* or ...*God Engineered*. What all of these tags have in common is that they are all transcendent thought, made complete through action. Merriam-Webster defines transcendent; "exceeding usual limits." Repetition creates emphasis. The 300 scriptures mentioning thought gives heed to the importance of thought.

Dr. Caroline Leaf, Ph.D., Communication Pathology, BSc in Logopedics and Audiology defines the miracle of thought in her work thoroughly. At such a time as this, we can now see the molecular make-up of the brain. She describes the miracle of thought. The time before Genesis is when God designed the 'knitting patterns' of human development, you and me, in our mother's wombs. I am sure much consideration was given to reaching our stubborn hearts as well. God was there, thinking and planning, before the existence of *anything*:

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

John 17: 24

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Psalm 90: 2

When asked about our own ideas about how the world began, it is easy to default to a “just add water and stir” answer: God spoke and it happened. However, when we attempt to think about the planning that went on *before* God spoke the world into existence, the awesome nature of this act can fill us with wonder.

As we work toward understanding our limited creative process, we can apply what we learn to the Biblical picture of God and His works. This can help us better understand His creation. We can begin to recognize the incredible, loving forethought that God put into every divine act described in Genesis. Furthermore, we discover that God is *still* passionate about us. He calls out to us in a very real and tangible way. He desires to show us He is close to us, as a father longs to be with his child. To live and die on this planet without giving credence to the God who created this universe will not only result in missed personal blessings, it will ultimately affect our eternal destiny—a tragic consequence indeed.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 1: 20–21

After God completed planning and designing the universe, creation commenced. By His Word, God spoke all into existence:

Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Genesis 1: 3

In the beginning, therefore, God was central to the abyss of the universe, less the stars, sun, moon, galaxies, and even space as we know

it! The gospel of John opens with the words, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” He is eternal. God’s other attributes include: omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence! Our understanding is limited, but God has no limits. Is it possible to go beyond our current capabilities of understanding in our finite state? Can we push the limits of understanding as we investigate this topic, even when His creative power and genius are inconceivable? If we can gain a stronger sense of God’s identity and learn what His *mission* is, then perhaps the worship that we express back to God may be better focused and more passionate.

God reveals Himself in creation. The 1980 volcanic eruption of Mt. St. Helen’s reveals a narrative worth considering. Isaiah 2 reveals that it is in God’s character to shake the earth in the day of our Lord. The Bible teaches that God is a jealous God. In Deuteronomy, Moses writes,

For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Deuteronomy 4: 2

“The clearest sensation that a human being has when he experiences the holy is an overpowering and overwhelming sense of creatureliness. That is, when we are in the presence of God, we are humbled and become most aware of ourselves as creatures. This is the opposite of Satan's original temptation, "You shall be as gods.”²

R.C. Sproul

This profound statement stems from Psalm 19:1, “The Heavens declare the glory of God.” We should be the generation that gets out of the way of God’s glory.

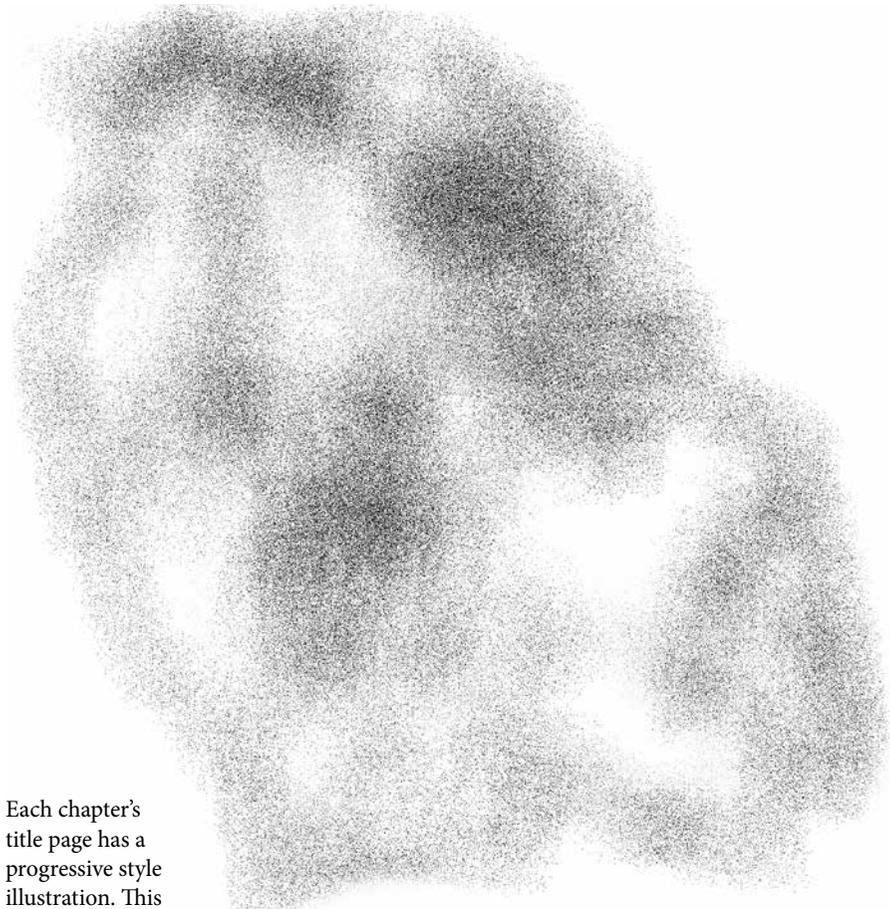
I hope that when you are finished reading this book, you will understand that you are at the very epicenter of God’s passion and that this realization will begin an ardent quest to learn more about our loving Creator. My second hope is that you will be able to look past the

propaganda society is perpetuating, and simply ponder the wonder of creation in its purest sense.

Before the Beginning . . . God Designed weaves together many of life's unanswered questions regarding perplexing events. Finding a connection between the invisible, intangible spiritual realm and the visible, concrete world will help to settle and clarify many of these perplexities. My desire is to demonstrate how art, science and the natural world all work together to reflect the glory and creative genius of the Ultimate Designer—the Lord of the Universe. I pray that this will allow you to develop a deeper relationship and appreciation for our Creator and, in turn, you will be able to see the world around you with fresh new eyes and a renewed sense of peace and wonder!

You may even learn how to engage the creative and visualization process more quickly. I pray you will strive to be curious and to ask deeper questions. You might just come away from this book seeing life from a completely different point of view!

The purity, the wholeness and completeness of heart, mind, body and soul that God intended for us before the beginning is truly something to contemplate. The old can become new again when we come to know God for who He really is: the Planner, the Designer and the magnificent Creator of all things!



Each chapter's title page has a progressive style illustration. This first graphic abstract represents a beginning thought, a twinkle in the Creator's eye.

I What Was He thinking?

I just broke out sobbing as I witnessed teens and some other folks, see something they've never seen before. The one teen gasps for air, he looks left then right, shaking his head in disbelief. He sobs and shouts: "Oh my God it's different, it's different"! Then an older gentleman swinging his arms, bursts out in tears, trying to hold back a childlike joy he never felt before. Another teen exclaims and sobs simultaneously, "Oh my God, is this what the real world looks like?" These color blind people are seeing color for the first time, with

2 Before the Beginning

pecially made glasses. So what's happening here—those who experience this miracle simply cry out in elation? Somehow the core of their being connected the big picture dots instantly. A knee-jerk reaction of gratefulness, expressed by tears, engages as the gift of sight is acknowledged. They're living in a significant moment—their souls somehow knew it as the spirit within them recons with truth.

What was on God's mind when He was creating the gift of sight? What prodded Him to create conscious *beings that could get this kind of message*? What was God thinking about prior to Genesis, prior to all that we see—and don't see: underwater creatures, land animals, underwater plants, plants on the earth, plants that grow in the air, man, woman, the earth, the atmosphere, the planets, gravitational pull, the stars, the sun, the galaxies . . . everything! Why does He produce such heart-touching beauty everywhere? What about the precision found in life-sustaining order? His fingerprint is on every top, bottom and middle layer of existence! His creation begs intrigue and mystery as God displays His touch on all of creation. The story of the color blind seeing for the first time tells us a few things. The first is how much we take for granted. And the second, a heart truth makes it home for the first time.

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Colossians 1: 16

The many mysteries of God are something to ponder. We get a very small grasp of the amount of 'thoughts,' which many are mysteries when we think of the verse:

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.

Psalms 139: 17–18

Why did He create us?

I can imagine a truck load of sand or a satellite view of a huge desert, but to envision an actual number of grains, not so much. However, if the Word of God says it, and it is indeed the final authority, we can bank on that information. In chapter 3, Jason Lisle, Ph.D., Astrophysicist, takes a shot at determining an actual granular count.

Charles Spurgeon, a nineteenth century preacher, commented on God's thoughts: "...the Preserver, the Redeemer, the Father, the Friend, are evermore flowing from the heart of the Lord. Thoughts of our pardon, renewal, upholding, supplying, educating, perfecting, and a thousand more kinds perpetually well up in the mind of the Most High. It should fill us with adoring wonder and reverent surprise."

God has given us gifts of creativity, the ability to wonder, and the ability to ask some very deep and intriguing questions. How much of ourselves do we invest in our quest for truth when He is orchestrating so much for us? In the book of Matthew, when asked by the Pharisees which commandment of the Law was the greatest, Jesus responds:

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.*

Matthew 22: 37

According to these words, we are to give our all, a "passionate pursuit" in getting to know the Creator, His creation and all things of God! Searching the deeper things of God (profound and bottomless) also takes a work of the Spirit of God, which may or may not *reside* in us.¹ *If* the Spirit resides in us, then understanding will come more easily.

One deep questions is "Why did He create us?" Was God bursting with excitement, wanting to share His creations to come and divine understandings with His children—us? In John 3:16, God is described as a *compassionate* God. God is also beyond generous, sharing not only this earthly life but eternal life and all that accompanies

Passion

Many would agree that ours is a God of passion. Webster defines passion as “an extreme, compelling emotion; an intense emotional drive or excitement; a great anger, rage, fury, enthusiasm, strong love or affection.” A synonym for passion is the word zeal. According to Bible-Gateway.com, this word is in use anywhere from twice to 36 times, depending on the translation (King James, The Message, NIV, Wycliffe, etc). However, the word zeal is seldom used in modern language because it’s an outdated word for modern conversations. Passion, like the word zeal, carries an intensity and depth in its meaning.

Other descriptive terms for the word passion include: “a strong, fervent desire, an ardent affection, enthusiastic devotion to a cause, ideal, or goal and tireless diligence in its furtherance.”¹¹ There cannot be passion without *emotion*. When God said that He wished that “none would perish” there was great conviction and anguish behind those words. When the Lord’s people were praising Jesus as He entered Jerusalem as a king, the Pharisees demanded that His disciples be quiet. Jesus replied that if the disciples kept silent, even the rocks would “cry out.” One assumes that a “cry” contains great emotion, right? But how can rocks have emotion? The Lord personified an inanimate and seemingly useless object and gave it a human characteristic to make a point.

If lowly, useless rocks would cry out to praise the Lord in the Bible, what would other creations of God express? What would the majestic mountains and explosive oceans be saying if they could speak? What utterances of the glorious Creator would the trees and hills whisper? Whatever they would say, I believe their voices would be filled with *passion!*

There is a powerful
God-given trait
that we all
possess which is
a vital attribute
in reaching our
fullest potential.

Because *we* are made in the image of God, He made our minds, hearts and souls *passion and compassion capable*. What an awesome trait, to be hardwired into our very core! No other trait permeates our being as passion does. And when God is behind

the passion (in its truest sense), man can *move mountains*! Please see the last page of this chapter for Dr. Jamie Moran's passion clarification.

When we are impassioned, obstacles and excuses are reduced in size. We find ways to make big things happen. When we discover who God intended us to be—when we discover our purpose—we become focused and driven! Depressive tendencies vanish; excitement, and ultimately, true contentment, can replace it. In the book of John, Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly.” Sadly, although we all possess this great gift, many of us inadvertently suppress it, hide it, or may even experience shame from it. I am afraid

to be passionate at times, for fear of having my hopes and dreams smashed or dampened. Fear often comes from our inner self. It is not of God. Fear is an evil thing when the fear of failure rules our lives and prevents us from reaching our divine purpose.

Most of us have probably never given much thought about the *power* of pas-

sion, or the role that the Holy Spirit plays as we try to navigate the road of life. By yielding to the Holy Spirit, great things can be accomplished. If we are willing to define and let go of other distractions, blessings are sure to follow. Seeking the Lord *fervently* helps us discover all that God has in store for us.

In his book entitled *Primal*, Mark Batterson talks about the raw intensity needed in our approach to God—primal compassion, primal

What would the
majestic mountains
and explosive
oceans be saying if
they could speak?

He made our
minds, hearts
and souls
passion capable.

wonder, primal curiosity and primal energy.¹² Batterson goes on to say that souls are lost because of the lack of passion and enthusiasm—for a believer’s soul.

David was a man after God’s own heart, but David had a dark side. He was capable of first-degree murder. He had lust, not passion, in his heart that drove him to commit adulterous behavior with Bathsheba. David plotted well in advance to have Bathsheba’s husband Uriah killed, to conceal his adulterous

affair. However, David also had a thoughtful and curious side. Reading the words of remorse, David later recorded in the pages of the Bible, we can see that he easily expressed his emotions, attitudes and interests. David took the time to repent. He took the time to praise, worship and think deeply about God. Scholars believe David wrote 73 songs of praise in the book of Psalms.¹³ Many have inspired worship songs that are still being sung in churches today—over 3,000 years later!

Paul, as Saul, murdered scores of Christians, with Zeal! However, one day God struck him with lightning and took his sight away. Finally, after Paul considered the things that Jesus had said to Him,

Why would God overlook such vile behavior and still use mankind in great ways?

When we are impassioned, obstacles and excuses seem to reduce in size.

Paul’s sight was returned to him and he was transformed. Later, Paul led many people to a saving relationship with Jesus as Lord. He was filled with such conviction that he was glad to be imprisoned for his beliefs! He authored several letters that are now part of the New Testament

and continue to inspire many believers through his incredible witness and devotion.

Why would God overlook such vile behavior and still use mankind in great ways? Through these stories, we see how God loves us even when we are buried under mountains of character flaws. He sees our potential! God is showing us that He can use anyone He chooses; even you and me!

*The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.*

*⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰ He does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.*

*¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is His love for those who fear him;*

*¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

*¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him;*

¹⁴ for He knows how we are formed,

*He remembers that
we are dust.*

When God said to
love Him with all of
our heart, mind and
strength, He expected
us do it passionately.

Psalm 103: 8–14

Man was granted the gift of passion by God, but man is obviously influenced by self and the enemy. David lusted after Bathsheba and committed murder.

Saul, a Pharisee under Jewish law, was zealous enough to persecute the early church, even to the point of taking lives. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, and God, Paul and David were transformed. They lived life to the fullest, according to God's will, rather than their own.

God saw this and was pleased.¹⁴ He set David and Paul apart and never left each man's side.

An example of a modern day Godly man of passion, in my opinion is Pastor Greg Locke. He has a small Tennessee based church. However, he has a large and growing social media following. What I love about this man is not only does he know scripture extremely well but fear isn't in his vocabulary. Well at least fear of his fellow man.

When Pastor Locke gets fired up on the fails of mankind, he rips into it with everything he's got. He's not worried about who he is going to offend, or upset. Who might leave the church or quit tithing. His words are spot on and in your face. The passion he exhibits is evident in His calling. I've seen him sob, grieve and in elation, bounce around the alter like a pinball bouncing off rubber bumpers. He is animated, humourous and cutting through the mundane to reach hearts. I am sure there are others and I am happy to take note of them as I become aware.

When a message hits to the core, especially when an audience is not ready to accept the truth, the initial reaction can be upsetting. Locke gets threatened, mocked, laughed at, and criticized. False accusations flow like a river as the ungodly hate when their deeds are exposed. Pastor Locke is an inspiration to me because he is engaged with his God-given talents. It is evident the man loves God. He has been given gifts of charisma and wisdom and he's working it to the glory of our Creator. Another trait is that he listens to the Holy Spirit. Many times he believes he has to stop what he's doing and preach a 3 minute sermon because he knows someone discouraged and/or depressed needs to hear that message immediately. God is indeed raising him up to do an incredible work.

Dr. Jobe Martin, DDS is another example of a passionate Godly man. Dr. Martin has written many resources detailing the handiwork of God in the creation of animals. He communicates the love of God exhibited through the design of God's creation.

Paul and David
were transformed
and lived their
lives *passionately*
in a new way.

Dr. Martin talks simply about animals with unique characteristics. He pushes us beyond traditional thinking about such things.

Dr. Martin is standing up to a culture steeped into a scientific account of earth's origins. To do this it takes courage, fortitude and passion.

There are many animals that challenge man intellectually, some directly and some indirectly. Dr. Martin covers several more in his material. When we focus on the animals with characteristics that are inherently designed with a message, lesson, example or a practical observation, we are blessed with new insight. It becomes strongly apparent that a great 'dad-like' God a 'dad-like' designer—is intimately behind all that we see! Recognition of this intimacy brings glory to God. Chapter seven highlights nine animals that are very complex in design, yet simply amazing.

The late Steve Irwin, crocodile hunter and wildlife warrior exhibited an extreme passion working with animals. A interview with Steve's wife revealed that when Steve was with animals, nothing else mattered! He was focused, in love and steeped in mission. For Irwin, crocodiles represented dinosaurs that were not extinct but left for us to discover, study and wonder about. Steve wanted to preserve and protect crocs as well as many other animals.¹⁶ Irwin's family didn't sweat the small stuff. It was in their genes to get dirty, wet and engaged. Animals can be dirty, wet and very exciting! Steve's example of engagement with creation remains an inspiration to me.

When we look at God's creations, considering the lilies, it can take our worship to a deeper level, because we begin to think about the fact that there is a loving and caring God behind it all.

God designed us. He can use us, even though we are weak and far from perfect. He intentionally designed us this way in order to accomplish His will. He can love us through our unique design. We are a part of His story. We are called to live life *passionately*! When God said to love Him with all of our heart, mind and strength, He expected us to do it passionately. Passion is the greater good over suffering and sacrifice.

The Angst of Passion

The word passion is full of angst because it has the power to defeat the enemy's work. Attempting to describe the creating power of God is daunting to say the least. However, having phrasing that brings us part way there, can help to communicate what He has done and is doing for us. My best shot at describing the creating power of God is this:

The Holy Spirit engaged is passion. This passion births life, hope and purpose. It can heal the original wound inflicted in the Garden. The Holy Spirit is like a fire: He brings God's presence, God's power, and God's purity together. Passion is not lust or love making but can create life. Passion is not selfish ambition but a pursuit of restoration. Passion is not stagnant or will-less, it engages and rescues. Passion is not a spectator but it watches with care, it watches you.

God demonstrated His love to us through creation. Like many words, the meaning of passion can change depending on it's context. There are two particular over-riding views that will dictate its context: God's point of view or man's point of view.

First: God is omniscient, all knowing and outside of time.

He knew that His free agents, Adam and Eve, would choose wrongly in the Garden. Did the sin of disobedience, which caused separation from God, create a wound that needed healing? Yes, the relationship was broken. Man was now on his own, no longer walking side-by-side with God, and left to self-manage, until God would bring a way

The word passion is full of angst because it has the power to defeat the enemy's work.

of restoration. **Before the beginning, God was thinking about restoration.**

God uses creation to reveal Himself to man. Creation makes us wonder, it is intriguing, always revealing something new

and astounding. It offers life-sustaining perfection interwoven with symbiosis, all passionately created for us to look to Him. Creation unveils the bigness of God and His love and passion for us.

Second: From man's viewpoint, God's instructions to us are clear. We are to love God with all our heart, mind and strength. We have an evil adversary who has one objective—stop the restoration. The enemy will use all kinds of unthinkable snares. Present and generational curses will confound and cripple, leaving us for physical and spiritual death. Satan's demonic ranks are focused in their mission. Should we yield, unspeakable torments are certain. Sober thinking will conclude that a fight for life is at hand. A reckoning, of personal weakness will need to take place. A need for knee and heart bowing humility.¹⁷

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

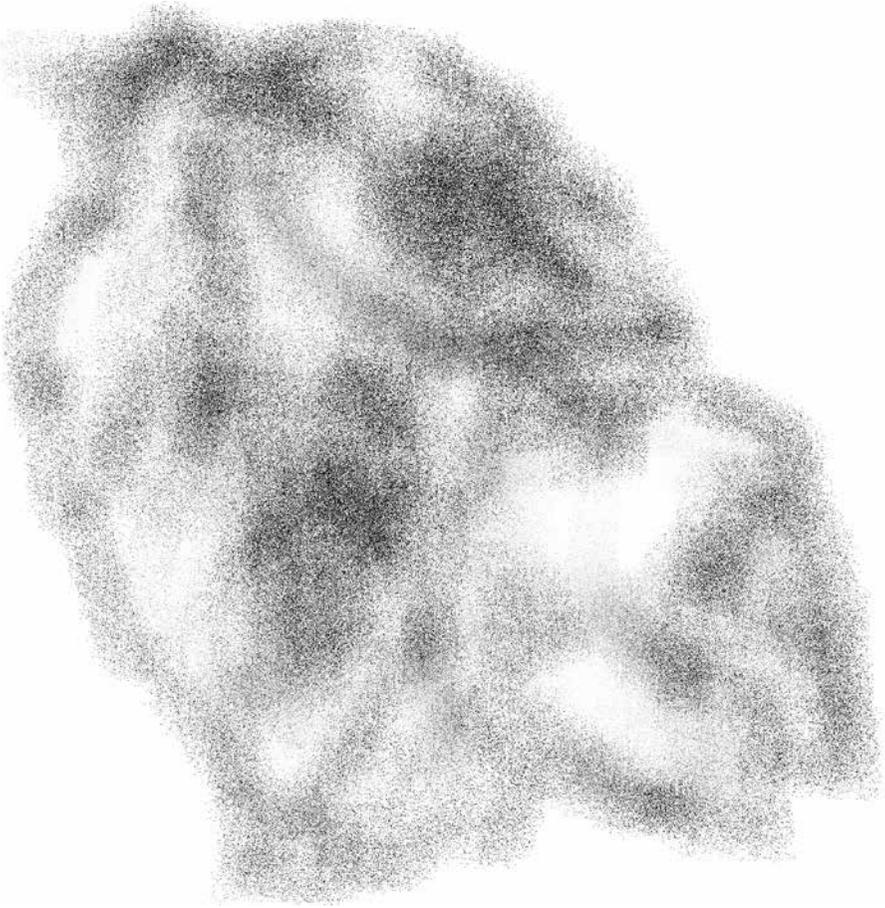
Romans 7: 15:

This fight of a lifetime will have to emerge from a place within, where spirit and soul reside. The power source of the Holy Spirit will drive the fight. Once the will is infused with divine energy, the resulting passion, will put the King of kings *first* in our surrendered live's. It takes inspired infused passion for authentic transformation to take place.

*As the deer pants for the water brooks, So
my soul pants for You, O God..*

Psalms 42: 1

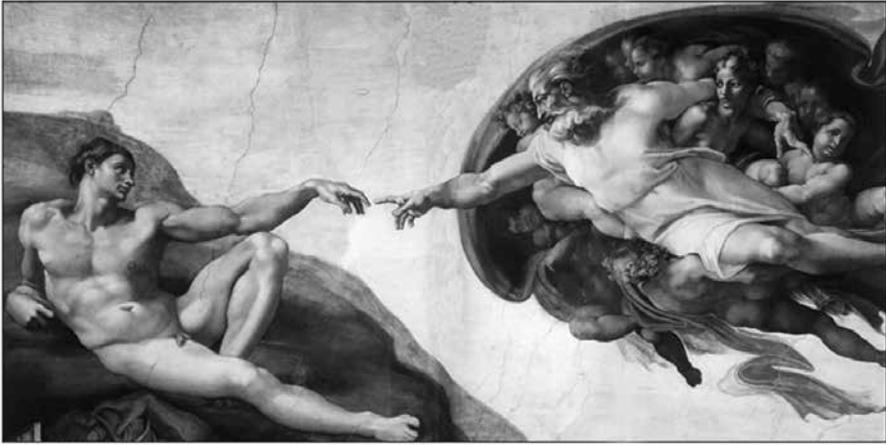
Creation unveils the
bigness of God and
His love and passion
for us.



2

God's Heart in Communication With Man's Heart

Michelangelo's painting of God's hand reaching to touch man's hand is quite astonishing, especially once you learn about one other element of the painting. In the background, behind God, there is a slightly camouflaged shape of a brain! According to the guide at the Sistene Chapel, this is believed to represent the mind of God. Michelangelo's talent (like that of Beethoven, Bach and others) was so unique and beautiful that it has been difficult to fully credit him alone as the beginning and end of



Michelangelo's, *The Creation of Adam*, fresco painting.

his work. These artists works have been widely recognized as divinely inspired.

The Word of God is inspired. If the Bible, is not *your* final authority, or at least highly respected in your mind's eye, then this chapter's title "God's Heart in Communication With Man's Heart" weakens greatly in its significance. If you are not sure about authenticity, then take it "on faith" that just maybe, its origin is God's heart, then the words will have a much greater chance to reach the core of your being.

We are His children and He longs for us. Those of us who are parents know the love we feel toward our children. We long for them. We enjoy the wonderful feeling of holding our children in our arms. They ride perfectly on our forearms as newborns. A toddler sits neatly on a mother's hip; the fit is perfect!

The bond between parents and children is so precious. God desires this same intimate bond with us! When parents see their own characteristics (such as dad's sense of humor or mom's compassion towards others) in their own children, these parent-child connections are good for the soul. When God sees the spirit of His own attributes reflected in His children, He is pleased. Scripture addressed the depth of God's longing for this in the book of James:

He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us.

James 4: 5

Can you imagine having this as a design challenge? In His desire to make a brain capable of feeling connected, God met and surpassed His goal! Wow! Our brains are designed to “feel connected” to our loving Father and that is such a wonderful thing!

As I mentioned earlier, we were designed with feelings and emotions as a central core of our being. Some argue that our emotions are what separate us from the animal kingdom; that they are what make us “human.” But many animal lovers will disagree with that reasoning. We can probably agree on a few things about this aspect of who we are: Feelings complicate life. They can be fickle and mislead us at times. When someone speaks to us about certain things, emotions can be difficult to read. We sort out the feelings of others by picking up on things like facial expressions, body language and voice tone. There are also clues to understanding God's heart.

In His desire to make a brain capable of feeling connected, God certainly met His goal!

The bond between parents and children is so precious. God desires this same intimate bond with us!

We see hundreds of references to man's heart in the Bible. Yet, it is somewhat amazing that there are few references to God's heart. Only 26 of 598 references to heart in the Old Testament allude to God's heart.¹ However, we are continually encouraged to *know* God. The book of Psalms advises that we come to know Him through His law, commands, statutes, precepts and



4

God's Creation: Get the Message

When we visit new places, like the local zoo, aquarium, or local park, we can miss the handiwork of God if we are not looking for it. This chapter will provide keys to catch God's vision in creation. If you see God's vision, you have experienced an epiphany—a peek into Heaven!

James 3: 17 states, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." The next time you experience

furniture and fabrics from a Chinese restaurant to a Mexican restaurant! She didn't see a thing! The term for this "limited view" is called *Change Blindness*. It refers to a blindness (or veiling) that occurs when our attention is focused so intently on one thing that we neglect to notice everything else around us.

Blindness (or veiling) occurs when our attention is focused so intently on one thing that we neglect to notice everything else around us.

The National Geographic team set up another scenario with a hotel clerk registering hotel guests. Upon the arrival of each new guest, the crew had the hotel clerks swap themselves out with another clerk waiting below the counter. After a kind greeting to the hotel guest, the clerk went down under the counter to get some-

thing and then another clerk would come up and finish the task. None of the guests saw the new clerk because they were so focused on signing in. National Geographic conducted many similar scenarios demonstrating how veiling occurs when we are "hyper-focused." Few seem to be immune to this phenomenon!

I suggest that these same findings can be applied to our ability to see the things of God. The simple truths of understanding that can't be seen from one perspective can be revealed when our perspective changes. The Bible reminds us that, in Christ, all things become new. Sometimes this idea can encompass that which was once hidden and later becomes visible. Although we may begin to see the intangible truths, a narrow focus can inadvertently keep us from seeing the bigger picture that is being unveiled right before our eyes! The

The enemy is highly skilled at the craft of distraction: Beware of his "slight of *mind*" deceptions.

enemy is highly skilled at the craft of distraction: Beware of his slight of *mind* deceptions.

The traps of the enemy are usually quite invisible and each one is set with a distinct motive in mind.

Enemy of Distraction

Almost as passionately as God pursues us, the enemy of God chases us, as well. Scripture teaches us Satan sets traps for us.

And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

II Timothy 2: 26

Not only is the enemy constantly setting snares for us, but the traps of the enemy are usually invisible and each one is set with a distinct motive in mind. The Bible teaches that the enemy who was struck down from Heaven, roams the earth seeking whom to devour. Satan knows his time on earth is short and our time on this earth is about making a choice. If Satan can distract us long enough, he believes he can drag another soul with him into the realm of eternal suffering. If we can't see the handiwork of God in creation, the enemy is succeeding in distracting us.

I believe the devil is sardonically laughing at us because we are so easily distracted. Many can't get past the first commandment "thou shall have no other gods before Me." If these distractions take all of our time, and we are not pursuing God, we are losing the battle.

A sad tragedy is that we can be distracted from pursuing our *own* story and the epic adventure yet to be written.

A sad tragedy is that we can be distracted from pursuing our *own* story and the epic adventure yet to be written! We wind up settling for watching other people's stories, factual or fictional. Sometimes our total social life revolves around what we'll see on TV next week. Moreover, as a nation, we seem especially interested in the "reality" shows about others. These shows depict dilemmas that we couldn't possibly imagine. We all have used distractions to pass the time or recuperate from a hard day at work or a challenging day taking care of our families. Our own lives can become so exhausting or unbearable that a distraction gets our minds off of our troubles for bit . . . before you know it, three hours have floated by, and we've been robbed of sleep, time with our family, or (more importantly) time we could have spent in God's presence.

Many people lose hours a day immersed in entertainment! Hollywood keeps cranking out epic dramas, which are not only entertaining, but have tremendous emotional appeal as well. We are strapped into a seat on a roller coaster ride that can thrill us beyond belief. It's quite a rush to experience great adventures without having to suffer any consequences or risk a thing—all for the price of admission!

Even today's authors will quote favorite movie scenes to help get a point across. It's so easy to do, especially when we have Hollywood investing millions in just a single action scene that communicates ideas so vividly. Why is so much energy being put into capturing our attention? Money of course! However, many writers, actors, producers and directors believe movies also offer meaning and purpose to the lives of their viewers.

On the flip side, some people feel that Hollywood is nothing but a pit of evil; the devil's playground, creating toxic thought and toxic thinking. Yes, when the content is destructive or meaningless, the enemy can enjoy lowering our morals, graying out what is right and wrong, encouraging the masses to become comfortable with sinful behavior and so on. Again, what's our response? Do we just sit and take it in, or do we take the time to communicate with our children about what the devil is truly doing here.²

Dr. Near'rot™ Zombie Doctor™

My wife and I, like many, use entertainment and our electronic devices as a reality escape. Yes, our life pains were mind numbing and unsolvable. The frustration levels, unbearable. So our escape quietly turned into an addiction. Why do I call it an addiction? Because it became a default, a pattern that the fruit of the time spent was zero—nada. It's embarrassing to write about, as the hours wasted are shameful. I didn't shake myself out of this. It was through an inspired dream that I realized my Zombie-like state. I share it with you in hopes it will assist you in making life-balance a priority.

The dreams that I recollect best are the ones that address a soul pain of sorts. This particular dream introduced me to a super hero like action figure. His packaging came consisting of a large box with a see through window on the front. Inside was a plastic figure looking

...I was the
one needing a
Zombie Doctor.

a little like Doc from the movie, *Back to the Future*. He had the wild hair, lab coat and even a stethoscope. When I read the packaging headline: *Dr. Near'rot™, Zombie Doctor™*, I laughed out loud and woke myself up!

I just had to figure the dream out. I ordered an action figure, clothes and even found a plastic head on ebay with wild white hair that I could modify. I came up with a logo, and made a visual prototype. So after all that, it occurred to me that I was the one needing Dr. Near'rot, Zombie Doctor. This is perhaps the best explanation of what happens to people becoming distracted by their entertainment and electronic devices. Interested in a fun cure for the common Zombie in your life? See page #217.

God painstakingly inspired man to compose a Holy blueprint, a guide, a love letter that we can count on. When we are distracted and don't read the Bible, all we have is man's limited wisdom. We gather what we can in the eighty or so years we are given, but it just cannot be compared to the wisdom and omniscience of an eternal God.

God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

Acts 10: 34–35

PC²

In a *60 Minute* segment about the life of Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, the question about his belief in God was raised. The biographer, Walter Isaacson, responded saying that Steve reflected his belief in the design of his devices. The words “on” and “off,” and on-off switches are not found on any of his products. The biographer stated that Steve did this because he was hoping that there is an afterlife. Either Steve feared the nothingness of “off” or he didn’t know his destiny well enough to offer a stance or a position. Maybe he felt that this information was simply none of our business. Even so, Steve will be remembered for his genius. After all, that’s why we desired to know his perspective on life’s biggest question. I know that if hell (a place of incredible torment) was my destiny after death, I would want to pursue my beliefs to a place of safety. I would certainly give the subject of afterlife some very serious thought. Did Steve hold a belief that when life is turned “off,” or when one dies, that’s it—lights out? Could someone as bright and intellectual as Steve Jobs truly believe there is nothing more? Perhaps. Anyone can be deceived, especially those that seem the brightest. Along with great intellect can often come great pride. Of course for the believer, our answer is a resounding “NO!” Beyond a shadow of a doubt, there is so much more. Through God, our story has meaning, purpose and most of all, we have *everlasting* life!

If we don’t make up our minds regarding what we believe, the world may decide for us. It’s so easy to just follow the crowd, to

If we don’t make
up our minds
regarding what we
believe, the world
may decide for us.

similar way, opportunities in our own lives will keep passing us by. If we let long lines or the lack of cotton candy get us upset in the carnival of life, we can be left with a drained countenance. God teaches us to manage our thoughts. He does this because He knows that we can!

It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.

Matthew 15: 11

Opportunities in our own lives will keep passing us by if we focus on the negative.

At times I find myself behaving similar to these children. But, through the Holy Spirit, I can recognize or *see* the sinful behavior that I need to reject. Indeed the slight of mind tricks of the enemy go far beyond our desires for

cotton candy. What do *you* “see” now?

Hardwired, Rooted In

What we see moves to our thought life. Dr. Caroline Leaf states: “Our own thoughts perform surgery on our brains with more precision than any neurosurgeon can. 75% to 95% of the illnesses that plague us today are a direct result of our thought life.” Dr. Leaf is a cognitive neuroscientist with a PhD in Communication Pathology and a BSc in Logopedics and Audiology, specializing in metacognitive and cognitive neuropsychology.

“75% to 95% of the illnesses that plague us today are a direct result of our thought life.”

Dr. Caroline Leaf, cognitive neuroscientist

Dr. Leaf is currently raising awareness on What we think about affects us physically and emotionally. It’s an epidemic of toxic emo-

tions. Posted on her website November 25, 2018: <https://drleaf.com/about/toxic-thoughts/> is information on the havoc negative or toxic thoughts have on our bodies.

Unveiling, or when it comes to discussing our thought life, sin and trash removal. Once you begin to see truth, you are seeing things as God intended them to be seen. This is not as easy task as each veil can be considered a layer. E.g.: Youth are contending with faux norms—virtual living via games, esports, and a plethora of fantasy experiences. Who wouldn't want to take a light saber while donning virtual real-

Once you begin to see truth, you are seeing things as God intended them to be seen.

ity goggles, and joust with Darth Vader? If the time is not managed, these faux realities become dangerous safe places. And, as real social settings become more awkward, the “pretend offering” becomes more inviting.

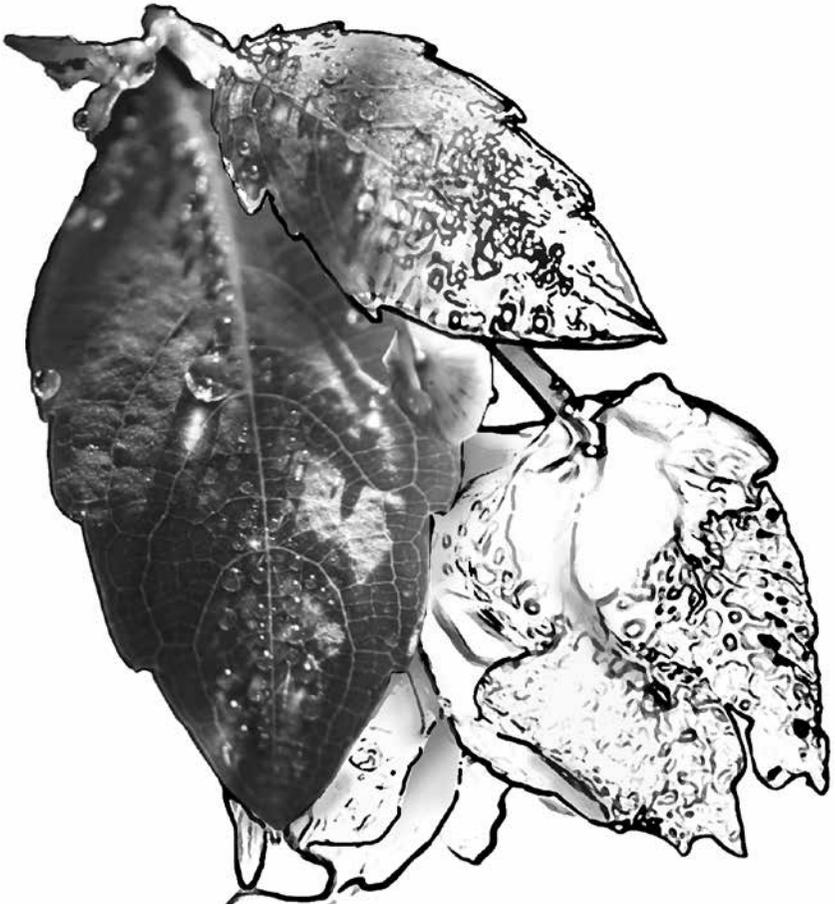
As fast as we peel back the layers, new ones are coming into play fast and hard. This is where having a clear and balanced baseline for living is essential.

Many in our culture are believing wrong is right and right is wrong. God knew this would happen.

“Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;...”

Isaiah 5: 20

The Word of God is the baseline. The Word of God is life's filter. In the Lord's prayer it states, “Give us this day our daily bread.” The Word is the bread of life and we are to take it in daily. The first Psalm tells us to “meditate on it day and night.” The passage also reassures what will happen if we do this, “He is like a tree planted by streams of water, whatever he does, prospers.” When our lives get uprooted via truth, getting replanted by living water will do great things.



10

Obstacles That Keep Us from God's Passion

Unverified Information

This century has been dubbed the “information age.” This brings blessings and responsibilities. The Internet brings our lives into hyper-speed: we now have virtual interactions with one another and immediate access to an overwhelming plethora of information. This dynamic allows technology and innovation of every sort to enter an exponential state of growth. Within the realms of invention and discovery, this can be very

Other people groups include; “digital natives” and “digital immigrants” terms are used by our educators. The digital native and the digital immigrant instructors are under pressure to entertain, or to liven up their subject matter. There is constant pressure to make the information easier to grasp for the young “digital natives.” Educating today has certainly become a real challenge.

Dr. David A. Sousa, an international educational consultant and author of *How the Brain Learns*, states that some children who are currently labeled “learning disabled” may be more accurately described as “schooling disabled.” Sousa adds that, “Sometimes, these students are struggling to learn in an environment that is inadvertently designed to frustrate their efforts. Just changing our instructional approach may be enough to move these students to the ranks of successful learners.”

There seems to be constant pressure to make the information easier to grasp for the young “digital natives.”

Not “still” as a couch potato, but resting in His control of life’s details...

Teachers of biblical concepts would do well to do the same. It could be fun! Incorporating visual creativity into Bible presentations is a great way to engage these “digital natives”. By including the creative and biblical arts in your teaching, you can really help communicate the best message on the planet! A real help to instructors is given in the next chapter

as a generational transformer. They offer free, dramatic and colorful animations in high resolution on hundreds of Biblical topics.



11

Transformers

People tend to resist change. Good or bad, change can be difficult. Good changes such as starting your dream job or the arrival of that baby you've wanted for so long, can be both exhilarating and terrifying. On the other hand, change that involves loss can be doubly difficult, even devastating. Death, separation from a loved one, changes in health, loss of a job, home, or any disruption in the status quo can have tremendous impact on our faith and outlook. Change affects all of us,

all the time. It's not a matter of *if*; it's a matter of *when* change will affect us.¹ Facing it head-on can be difficult. In fact, many of us refuse to do so! We easily find ways to practice avoidance. It's only natural!

In the movie *Transformers*, the producers, directors and designers go over the top in creating transformations. The 3D software technology, creativity and immense

amount of patience combined, make these highly detailed transitions possible. The cars, trucks and newly invented beasts, literally turn themselves inside out several times (in explicit and exaggerated detail) as they reconfigure into a new shape. You see the inner stainless steel me-

Change affects all of us all the time. It's not a matter of *if*; it's a matter of *when* change will affect us.

chanics, gears, hydraulics, cylinders, cables, bearings, connectors and pulleys—and that's just what is recognizable! The movie is based on Hasbro's Transformer toys.

However, these transformers are not toys. The figures convert to Godzilla-sized, armed and armored, jet-packed robots. Your mind cannot grasp the amount of detail that unfolds right before your eyes! The computer-generated graphics are very realistic. It's hard not to buy into this virtual reality *as* reality! All the radically moving parts end up tucking neatly together in each final transition. According to *Animation World Network*, it took 38 hours for ILM (Industrial Light and Magic) to render just one frame of movement in this movie.

You know what you are seeing on the silver screen isn't real, but you buy into it anyway! The changes we witness on screen do not carry any tragic impact for us, unlike real life. It's great escapism! Seldom do we have a way to escape from the changes life brings. Our instinctive fear of the unknown can paralyze us and keep us from experiencing the great adventures that God has in store for us.

God created the concept of change before the beginning. God scripted changes throughout the silver screen of life. He knows our insecure



12

Hope in the Passion Creator

In his observations of conception, Alexander Tstiaris brings attention to a molecular communication. Alexander states, “when a fertilized egg burrows and connects itself to the side of uterine wall, cell to cell communications commence. ‘I am here to stay; plant me.’ The estrogen and progesterone cells hear this call and respond!” The cells have been quiet for many years in the women’s life until this call. The cells were programmed and designed to respond upon the call from the fertilized egg.¹

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Author Biography



Jim Kraft grew up in Willoughby, Ohio—a suburb of Cleveland. Jim earned his diploma from the Cleveland-based Cooper School of Art & Design and graduated with honors. He took marketing and psychology courses at Lakeland Community College. He also assisted Campus Crusade for Christ and Samaritan's Purse with promotions.

After freelancing for a few art studios and ad agencies, he was hired by a Cleveland ad agency as a designer and art director. For most of his career, Jim has been an independent design consultant creating on and off-line communications for major corporations like GE Lighting, Petro Canada, American Greetings, BF Goodrich, Allstate Insurance, Carlton Cards, Honeywell, Holiday Inn, and Dutch Boy. He has also done work for regional organizations like Parkside Church, Friends Church-Willoughby Hills. His national brands include: EZPOLE Flagpoles; SwissTech Micro tools, BrailleWorks and Maple Valley

Sugarbush & Farm. He has performed marketing communication services for over 80 church, Para-church and secular organizations.

Jim and his wife Tammy reside in Chardon, Ohio and have two children. Jim has taught marriage enrichment and biblical creation. Their daughter has a doctorate in Physical Therapy and graduated from Duke University. Their son recently graduated from Willoughby South High School. Tammy is setting up Parent Cafe's in three counties. She is using her Family and Child Development BA from The University of Akron to increase parenting skills while helping to reduce child neglect and child abuse.

The heart of it.

Man can create great works that capture man's attention and cause wonder and appreciation. We call these men and women "Masters," and their creations—masterpieces. However, these masterpieces do not compare with God's masterpieces. He is Life's Master Designer. One of God's masterpieces is within each of us. It is our hearts. He authored, designed and engineered our hearts with two distinct purposes. One purpose is to power our bodies and the other is to possess a heart capable of emotion, passion, sadness, joy, anger and, above all else, love.

Unfortunately, tumultuous times can skew our perspective and affect the condition of our hearts. The problem is, our senses can be so deadened that we can't recognize that there is a heart/soul issue that needs a loving touch from Heaven. Whether young or old, we can begin to *devalue* the miracle of who we were meant to be. *Before the Beginning...* God Designed addresses the emotional, physical and spiritual fallout of a lost perspective, the bigness of God, and offers the healing and enduring hope of *God's perspective* through His *Word*, His *Son*, and *Creation*. Our hearts are God's masterpieces.

They are so important to Him that He tells us that "above all else, guard your hearts." When we guard our hearts, knowing and owning His Word, we can more easily grasp our Creator's heart.

A Spirit filled heart connects us to God. If that connection renews us, we become more like Christ. We slowly begin to understand the incredible love and passion that God has for us.

Who else would be better to address *heart issues than* the Artist, Author, Designer and finisher of our hearts?