

Greg Wasinski

Where Faith & Real Life Come Together...

*A discovery in finding hope, God and
who we are in every day interactions.*

By Greg Wasinski

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This book is dedicated to my mother Mary Ann. Thank you, Mom, for the gift of faith and every way you offer kindness to others as a child of God.

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Preface

This book is set up to allow you to have time to read and then reflect how each chapter directly relates to your personal situation. The writings are kept on the shorter side in an effort to capture your attention. They are not meant to “beat you over the head” with a personal view, but to allow you to apply it where needed in your life.

The manner in which you would like to reflect on the book in its entirety is your choice. You can read it all the way through at your leisure, use the thirty-one chapters as a devotional for a month or you may simply look at the titles and find the ones which immediately seem to relate to your needs. It really is written in a style to help you encounter faith in a way that is best for you.

Why the Bee?



At the beginning of each chapter, you will notice a “bee” symbol. This bee, as illustrated, is the logo for “Let Me Be...” Ministries (my speaking ministry). It is a simple reminder that each of us is called to *be nothing more than God created us to be*. You may see this bee displayed proudly wherever you hear me give a talk or wherever people have received a take home item from one of my ministry events. It’s my hope the bee will give you a little peace of mind, knowing that as we go through our present days, it is okay simply to slow down and “*just be...*”

Introduction

Before we start, I want you to know wherever you are in your life or faith journey, it's okay. Whatever religious denomination you are, it's okay. Whether you feel you are broken to a point that's not repairable or riding high and thankful for everything you have, it's okay. Whether you bought this book for a good read or are hoping to develop a deeper faith formation, it's okay. If you are not sure why someone gave you this book, it's okay. Or if you are just trying to figure out what God might have in store for your life, it's okay. I am just like you, and throughout my entire life I have experienced *every* one of the thoughts mentioned above during some period. I can honestly say, until I accepted this idea of whatever happened or wherever I was, "It's okay," I really couldn't understand just how blessed and how fortunate I was to be loved in such an unending manner. This book is a journey and not a chronicle, a guide and not a manual, a reflection and not a Gospel. I believe what I write is meant to be shared to allow others to know we are not alone, no matter what.

Allow me to share a little information about myself. I am a convert into ministry after spending 15 years as a corporate executive. I do not have a theology degree, nor am I a religious scholar. I am just a man who finally realized his blessings and responsibility to go deeper into faith to bring about hope through the word of God. I work harder, read more scripture and study deeper now to be educated. The original path I took in life was not a plan to enter into a vocation of service to the Lord. I grew up in a family with strong Catholic roots which carried over from my ancestors' immigration from Poland. I believe it was this type of foundation that eventually brought my wife into our faith the year of our marriage. I have not always been a model Christian and I am sad to say that I even spent a brief period of time away from the church. I am grateful God never stopped searching for me to bring me back. I heard my call to transfer my talents and work in the church because, when I looked back at my life, I could see all the places God was already using me and the amazing difference it would make when I accepted His path for me. He placed people in my life who were willing to show me where I belong and how I could make a difference in my community. I assure you, there are many ups and downs with the life my family has chosen to live as we work to inspire others to be difference makers in the

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world. One thing is for certain though, we have been protected and provided for all along the way by a God who never breaks a promise. Finding faith in real life is the only way I believe we can fully accept life for the blessing it is, regardless of our circumstances or the people we encounter along the way.

In preparing for a national conference, I was asked by the person creating my ad for the program, “If you had to sum up in one line what your message is for the youth and adults you speak to, what would it be?” The answer came very quickly to me, “Where faith and real life come together.” This is the struggle I believe so many children of God deal with continuously. We think there will be lightning bolts and locusts and the brightest shining stars when God is truly at work in our lives. The fact of the matter is, usually it’s a stranger who opens a door, the child who holds our hand or a friend who calls us out of the blue. It becomes our job to see that although faith is grounded in the core of our belief, it only becomes real when we go out and live it. Within the “perfectly imperfect” church, there is a realization that sometimes people can disappoint us and only we can truly control how we become the hands and feet of Christ out in the world. It’s up to us to help build communities that prosper through example and offer a willingness to find God where He is coming to us.

During a recent presentation for incoming freshman at a high school, I was telling my personal conversion story about how the Lord spoke directly to me while on retreat. One of the students I made eye contact with just blurted out in wide eyed amazement, “He spoke to you!?!?” After a chuckle, I said, “Yes, and before I experienced it, I can pretty much say I would have reacted as you just did and possibly thought the speaker in front of me might be insane.” I went on to explain how His voice is not the thunderous rumbling and bellowing portrayed in some interpretations of the story of creation in the book of Genesis. No, it is a gentle whisper, a compassionate conversation, or for me, just a disappointing or stern, “*Greg!*” The reason we discount His voice is because it’s not what we want. Additionally, what usually happens is we tune God out because in our minds it cannot be real. We feel it doesn’t make logical sense we would be “hearing” the words not through our ears but within the deepest part of our being. When He is trying to get our attention, just know it is heard in our hearts because that is where love lives, where He dwells and where He can always find us.

The beauty of where faith and real life actually come together is that God does meet us where we are. Life happens and many things shape us into the people we are. There doesn’t have to be some tragedy or

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some great loss for our faith to be shaped or for us to become different people. Quite frankly, we need to appreciate the times we can find God without having to run to Him for healing. This book will hopefully help you to see all the interactions that occur daily where God is at work. He is preparing us for great things and holding us when bad things happen. Take time to place your life in His hands and find ways you can connect to the stories written and the ways people are affected in the world around us. Yes, His love is enough on so many days, and it just has to be, in a world where hopes can be often overshadowed by reality; you have the power to change that. Life is about what we relate to and not always the misfortune someone else has had happen to them. Breathe it in, take it in and allow yourself to recognize hope is about much more than personal prayer, it's about everyday living!

Even in the midst of writing this book, I am reminded over and over again it is necessary for faith and real life to come together. I long for extended periods of isolation, the quiet times specifically designated for writing. Yet life does not stop and my family still has demands. So, I continue on and write in small openings of free time or sneak off to get in a

voice recording so the next thought doesn't escape me. There is no perfect time that makes it easy to just

sit and tap away on the keys of my laptop, but since this book is about where faith and real life come together, I guess it's very fitting the manner it's authored falls along the same lines. Sure, sometimes a bit of guilt can creep in when I'm taking time away while the family is off enjoying a moment together watching a movie. But I know in my heart, by doing things to make a better world, God will never take away time He won't give back in the end. In it all, the challenge even to write reminds me our prayers and faithfulness must fit into the reality of our lives because that is how they are answered. We live in a real world with real human needs which God uses to walk with us, providing what is best. When we want to be one with Him, sometimes we are able to get quiet moments, but in the fast pace of life, the only way to true happiness and fulfillment is to find Him in everyday occurrences and living.

I love one of the final scenes in the climax of the movie *Joshua* which has the human version of Christ sitting at the feet of the Pope in the Vatican. When the Pope realizes it is truly Jesus with him, he asks His Lord, "What do you want me to tell them (his people)?" With tender eyes, Joshua looks at him and softly says, "Simply tell them that the story hasn't changed and the message is still the same. Just tell them that I love them." As you read on in this book,

the message is still the same; He loves us. If we live out our lives of faith in that same manner of love and respect, what a better place we will have to walk with each other. Hopefully, we will realize no matter what high or low we face, God is present and no matter what He is there to give nothing but love.

NOTE: Every chapter of this book begins with a title and then two quotes. The first quote is a scripture verse that directly relates to the overall subject of **“FAITH”** highlighted in the chapter. If you already study scripture, use this as the basis to go deeper into your understanding of how it relates to you. If this is all new, allow each particular Bible verse be a start to deepen your own spiritual journey. The second quote in each chapter is an inspirational, **“REAL LIFE”** quote from various people in the world who have offered a positive message in line with the theme of what is about to be read. When we can connect the dots in this manner with all facets of life, we will find where faith and real life become one.

In closing, take one deep breath in of *faith* and exhale one long whisper of *reality*. Close your eyes for thirty seconds and offer a prayer for your heart to be opened and all your reservations to be released. Be open, be God’s, and most importantly, just be...

Chapter 1

Why You Watch the Game...

FAITH: *"I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose."
~1Corinthians 1:10*

REAL LIFE: *"When you turn to God, you discover He has been facing you all the time." ~Zig Ziglar*



A while back I had a conversation with some people who were discussing why they don't attend a worship service or mass regularly. It was interesting because none of them seemed to be angry with organized religion, and from what I surmised they weren't distant for any reason other than plain old

apathy. In their eyes (and in their words, not mine), they had no particular need to praise God in a place of worship; nothing awful was happening at that particular moment requiring a need for extra support. A busy lifestyle with career, kids' events and other obligations left them working hard to have the life they were entitled to have, so why go? I had to think about this for a moment because for a period in my life, I was the person who was offering the same type of misguided rationale of why I didn't need to go to church.

I asked them a simple question. "Do you watch sports?" They replied, "Yes." I followed that up with, "Okay, well, do you root for a particular team and if so, why would you do that?" Without allowing them to answer verbally, because their heads were already nodding, I began to offer them a correlation between faith communities and various forms of sporting entertainment which defines some of the things driving us to watch the game. We really don't need to watch the game to be a sports fan, nor is it the only way to find out whether our team is the best or not. We can simply tell who is best by the outcome of the final score and see the stats at the conclusion of the match. So realistically, we have to conclude, that isn't the whole story of why you watch the game.

Part of the reason we watch the game is to be entertained. When we physically go to games to cheer on our team in person, we want to feel we've given them a little boost to push them to victory. Likewise, we might watch the game on TV with a bunch of other fans so we can be part of a group, otherwise known as a community. Within this small community of fellow fans, we are able to share our joys when our team comes out on top and sorrow, or even tears, when there is a loss during a time when we felt so optimistic. (I'm from Cleveland, so let's not go there). Upon laying out the reasons why we gather to be part of sporting events, I followed it all up with, "It sounds a lot like church to me."

Bringing it full circle, when supporting our fellow men and women, faith is no different than why you watch the game. We don't have to worship or go to a church building for mass to say we believe. Life still goes on and we just know God is there and will clean up our messes as needed. It's our understanding He won't do bad things to us because we were taught somewhere along the way He is ever loving and forgives the unforgivable. But just like why you watch the game, allow me to explain why you need to attend church.

Just as a young athlete will watch a player to learn

techniques and see first-hand how to be the best, we go to church to learn and be inspired. All of God's work and His stories are being laid out in front of us so we can understand why we have to go through trials or setbacks. He shows us how we should appreciate the good times of each and every victory that is granted. When we are part of a faith community, we share an unbreakable bond only this type of unity can offer and only a "me" type of mentality can destroy. We must journey together for so many reasons but especially for the times when the outcome is not as we saw it, but as God wants it. In the game, we are entertained. It takes our minds off reality. In worship, we are reassured that reality has an ultimate purpose and we are never left alone. Those people in the seats next to us, and those who attend faith based community events, are there to be our own personal fan base. They cheer us on with what we believe when we have nothing left to give ourselves. Matthew 18:20 reminds us, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* It is made so easy for us; all we need to do is seek out others and offer support.

So I will tell you "why you watch the game." It's because you are hopeful and you believe your team can always win no matter what. God calls you to be on His team; with Him each week because He believes in

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you the very same way. His promise says, “*At the end of the day I will never let you lose.*” However, it isn’t always enough just to be a good person. Remember, the reason you might attend isn’t always because of what you need at that moment, but what others around you might need from your living example.

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Why do you “watch the game” of sports, life and faith?

What is a role that is so important for you to play in your own community?

Today I will...

About the Author

Greg Wasinski is a Christian inspirational speaker, author and founder of “Let Me Be...” Ministries. He is one of the most dynamic and sincere presenters of faith today. His call into ministry came as an ambitious business executive struggling for lifelong fulfillment. Greg heard a different plan from God to move his talents to communicate in the direction of sharing words of faith filled encouragement. In turn, he became committed to use his creativity, passion, conviction and wide array of professional gifts as instruments, connecting others to faith and the positive examples in the world around them. His goals remain to nurture those around him with positive influence in order to be the “difference makers” who can change the world.

Greg was creator and host of the talk radio show “Who Will I be Tomorrow?” and continues to serve his own community as an educator, coach, retreat leader, keynote speaker, bible study lecturer and event emcee.

To book Greg for your community as a keynote speaker, workshop presenter, retreat leader or for staff and community team building experiences, visit his web site www.GregWasinski.com or contact him via email at gw@wasinski.com. A wide array of programs and talk topics are available, including evenings of reflection and multi-day missions centered on the book “Where Faith & Real Life Come Together...”

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