

CHAZOWN

REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION

*Discover and Pursue
God's Purpose
for Your Life.*

CRAIG
GROESCHEL

New York Times Best-Selling Author

Praise for
Chazown

“It is depressing to consider how many people will go to bed tonight never having thought of how God wanted them to spend the day. As Craig points out, this is a deadly cycle that quickly culminates in a wasted life. *Chazown* reminds us of the brilliance of our God who carefully created us and empowered us for a life of purpose. I pray it rescues many from an eternity of regret and leads them toward the satisfying and meaningful life God intended.”

—FRANCIS CHAN, best-selling author of *Crazy Love*

“Craig Groeschel dreams God-sized dreams. But he’s also one of the most down-to-earth people I know. You can’t get close to him without getting a vision infection. And his church, Life Church, is like a church on steroids. Creativity oozes out of every pore, leaving a trail for churches to follow if they want to impact culture. If you need a dose of vision, pop the *Chazown* pill.”

—MARK BATTERSON, lead pastor of National Community Church, Washington, DC, and best-selling author of *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*, *Wild Goose Chase*, and *Primal*

“Craig Groeschel is a leading voice among the new generation of communicators. He knows how to articulate people’s deeply felt needs, and—even better—to help them identify and pursue their God-given dream with passion and purpose.”

—JOHN MAXWELL, author, speaker, and founder of INJOY Stewardship Services and EQUIP

“Need help hitting the bull’s-eye of life? A better life? A more meaningful and purposeful life? Help is here—in what you hold in your hands right now. Craig Groeschel is a master at opening up life and letting light in. So if you want a clearer, sharper sightline, *Chazown* is the book for you.”

—ROBERT LEWIS, pastor-at-large of Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, and founder of Men’s Fraternity

“Craig Groeschel has been able to lead one of America’s fastest growing churches while still having a life and a healthy, loving family. Now he lets us

in on the secrets of his crystal clear vision and laserlike focus. It's not magic. It's not incredible giftedness. It's Chazown. Let Craig show you the way to discovering God's unique vision and calling for your life and the simple steps of alignment that make God's Chazown your reality."

—LARRY OSBORNE, pastor of North Coast Church, Vista, California

"To know Craig Groeschel is to be overwhelmed with God-sized vision. He's brilliant yet always a learner. Successful yet humble. Confident yet God-dependent. A leader committed to helping others fulfill their purpose on this planet. Craig does not *talk* vision; he embodies it."

—DR. SAMUEL R. CHAND, leadership consultant and president emeritus of Beulah Heights University, Atlanta, Georgia

"Finding significance and meaning in our confused culture is like finding your way on a dark, foggy night. You need light and a seasoned guide to help you. Thankfully, your guide, Craig Groeschel, has provided the lamp in *Chazown*. And the result is a clear vision for life's journey."

—ROBERT V. CUPP, teaching pastor of Fellowship Bible Church, Northwest Arkansas

"Craig Groeschel and Life Church are on the 'bleeding edge' of what the church may look like in the not-too-distant future. I love their vision, passion, creativity, and willingness to share what they are learning. Craig is the kind of leader who creates enthusiastic followers of Christ who believe that the only limits are those of vision."

—GREG SURRATT, pastor of Seacoast Church, South Carolina

"Craig has a fresh catalytic vision of what the church could be... a grace place oozing with creativity, laughter, and innovation! I believe Craig is a leader for the next generation church."

—DAVE GIBBONS, social entrepreneur, World Vision board member, and lead pastor of NewSong Multisites in Bangkok, Los Angeles, Irvine, and North Orange County

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MULTNOMAH

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This updated edition is dedicated to the memory of Darren Currin—Mr. Chazown himself. Nobody loved this material the way Darren did. His Chazown was helping people discover theirs. His commitment to serving as a leader in our Chazown Experiences is greatly missed.

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FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NEW TO THIS WHOLE CHAZOWN THING

I first used the word *chazown* in 2002. I was teaching a series about discovering the power of living out God's purpose in our lives. I was thrilled to find the one word that perfectly captured this meaning, especially since it meant I got to frequently repeat my best throaty, guttural pronunciation in Hebrew. The amazing response I saw in the months following that message series led me to write the first draft of the book you're about to read. In retrospect it seems a natural choice to have written my first book about something I believe in so passionately—helping people to catch a glimpse of the unique vision God has for their lives and then to take steps to live it out. In those days I never could have imagined writing an introduction for the rerelease of this book. Yet here we are. I've learned it's easy to underestimate what God will do in the long term.

Now fifteen years later I see how faithful God has been to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ask, think, or imagine. Since the book's initial publication, more than 25,000 people in our church have sat around tables and shared their past experiences, gifts and talents, and core values at Chazown Experience events. We've also seen countless individuals and churches use the materials and videos for free from our Open Network. Many more have interacted with the content online or, like you, have read this book and worked through the exercises and questions it contains.

The responses have included inspiring stories from people starting businesses, paying down their debts, starting nonprofits, running for office, and

even changing careers to join our church staff. God has used this material to inspire readers to take all kinds of life-changing steps.

Alongside those exciting highlights, I've seen something that is equally inspiring. Just as we see in the stories of the lesser known among God's people in the Bible, I've seen people joyfully embrace their calling to unglamorous Chazowns. Sometimes finding your God-given purpose means a dramatic life change; more often though it means choosing a life full of sacrifice, trial, and even hardship. I've read testimonies of people who remained faithfully committed to God's quiet purpose for them, tirelessly relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to give them the strength not to give up day after day, month after month, year after year. While it's been a difficult road, they've found a deeper sense of purpose and meaning than they could have ever imagined.

For all the stories we've heard about people putting down this book and quitting their jobs to pursue an untapped passion, we've heard as many stories of those who obey God's plan to stick it out in jobs that aren't their passion so they have the margin to volunteer each week.

For every new ministry started, there are stay-at-home parents steadfastly dedicating decades to the ministry under their own roofs.

For every bold entrepreneur, there's a brave encourager.

And for everyone who makes a 180-degree career change, others go through the whole process only to be affirmed that God's purpose for them is exactly what they're already doing.

No matter where we find ourselves on the spectrum of public perception, our Chazown is beautiful when it leads us squarely to the center of God's will for our lives.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS WHOLE CHAZOWN THING

If you feel as if you've been banging your head against this concept for a long time and just can't get any kind of purpose statement out, you're not alone.

Or wait, maybe you are and that's part of the problem.

Another life-changing word that starts with a *c* is *community*. If God's vision for your life just won't come into focus, I encourage you to go through

this book with a friend or a group. Change the reflection questions into discussion questions. We're better together.

If you feel as if you know what God wants you to do but you haven't taken any real steps toward it, you're not alone. But maybe you have the same problem I just mentioned. You need community. You need accountability. The Christian life simply cannot be lived out in isolation. Like children on elementary school field trips, get a buddy. Set up regular check-ins where you talk about the steps you're taking—or not—and why.

If you started living out that purpose statement you wrote long ago in a burst of inspiration, you may be back because you feel oddly out of sync. Maybe you've noticed vision is a much more slippery thing than you once thought. What you believe your Chazown to be may have shifted over time.

Is that a crisis? I don't think so.

My Chazown today isn't a word-for-word match with what I wrote down at the beginning of my journey. When I first knew God had placed a calling on my life, there is no way I could've seen the exact life I would be living now. I've refined some talents, uncovered some undeveloped gifts, had many years of new experiences, and even seen strong new values emerge.

So did God change His mind? Did He have a change of plans?

Nope.

Scripture clearly affirms the unchanging nature of God. Romans 11:29 is pretty straightforward: "for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." So what is it then?

Is it me? Has my perspective changed?

I think so.

Stick with me. Maybe a vision from God is more like photographs of a mountain. My family has spent many vacations in the Rocky Mountains. If I took photos of the same mountain from different vantage points, all of them might be well composed, but they wouldn't look anything alike. A wide shot from the plains below, another from the foothills, a blurry snapshot while I was hiking up the incline, dark images surrounded by underbrush, sunny clearings with a lens flare, and a spectacular panorama from the summit would show completely different versions of the same mountain.

Many well-lived Chazowns can shift views and perspectives just as that

mountain does. If you are reading this book again, you're now able to appreciate a new, possibly broader, point of view. Maybe you've already spent a few years pursuing that Chazown you first glimpsed. The moment you finally reach the summit of your mountain, what then? The view reveals that mountain was only one peak in a glorious mountain chain with many more peaks and valleys you couldn't have seen before. Living your purpose isn't a destination; it's a faith-filled adventure following Jesus.

No matter what's happened since the first time you wondered about your Chazown, God will be faithful to show you each next step. You just have to commit to keep moving onward and upward toward His purpose for your life. I'm comforted by Psalm 119:105, which says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." You will likely find that your hike toward following Jesus reveals your Chazown more by flashlight than floodlight—one step at a time.

PART 1

SEEING CLEAR
TO THE END

Why you need a new kind of vision

YOUR FINAL CHAPTER

Most people take a long time to die.
(This is no way to start a book, you say.)

But think about it. There are those few who go suddenly. Accidents. Heart attacks. Gang shootings. A soapy slip off the edge of the tub. But for you, chances are that at the end of your life, you will die in bed. Waiting.

And while you wait, you will very likely have days, weeks, even years to think, to look back on your life.

Imagine yourself there, lying in bed and reflecting. Reading back through the chapters of your life story.

What did my life add up to?

Did I really matter?

What did I live for?

Who will remember me?

What will they say about me when I'm gone?

Why was it important that I existed?

So many questions. So much time. Will you lie there with no regrets? Some regrets? Nothing but regrets?

Imagine.

Or not. I mean, you'll probably have time to think about it when you get to that bed. So you could just wait. (Millions do.) See what comes. Wait until the final pages of your life story to see how it reads to you then.

Imagine yourself there,
lying in bed and reflecting.

But that's no way to end the story of your life.

Here's one more thing to think about: the decisions you are making today are actually making the bed you will lie in while you wait to die.

Which is why I wrote this book. To help you see your life differently, to see it the way your Creator saw it before you were born. And to live it with purpose and passion.

Starting now.