

A Small Book About God

His ways, His dreams, His promises for you

ROY HICKS JR.

A S M A L L B O O K A B O U T G O D

HIS WAYS, HIS DREAMS,
HIS PROMISES...FOR YOU

ROY HICKS JR.



MULTNOMAH
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A WORD FROM KAY HICKS

The title of this book was chosen by my late husband, Roy Hicks Jr., prior to his death in an airplane crash several years ago. He never finished *A Small Book about God*, but this was the title the Lord had impressed upon him before he died.

I am very grateful to Eileen Mason, Evelyn Wheeler, and Jim Thomas for their labors of love in reconstructing this sampling and collection of Roy's sermons. They have taken his powerful delivery style and put it into a written format that captures his anointed spirit and the life-changing impact of his teaching upon our church. A special thanks also to Pastor Steve Overman, Russ Pierson, and Beth Barone.

Roy and I served together in pastoring Faith Center in Eugene, Oregon, for nearly twenty years, during which time it became a Mother Church, birthing more than fifty pioneer churches that are still serving scores of people today.

My thanks to David Kopp, Melody Carlson at Multnomah Publishing, and Faith Center for their editorial support and encouragement in creating this gift to the Body of Christ. My prayer is that this book

will be a blessing to the “larger Church” of Jesus Christ in the same way that Roy helped all of us become “larger people” within the Kingdom.

FOREWORD: A MAN OF INFLUENCE

I loved Roy Hicks Jr. During our adult lives, hardly a day went by that he didn't check to see how I was doing, and then offer a few words of encouragement and love. If you've never met my friend Roy, I'd like to introduce him to you.

The setting was Eugene, Oregon. A desperate and depressed woman had gone to the Ferry Street Bridge to take her life. She related in the local newspaper what saved her; saying that Roy "showed up out of the blue" and talked her out of jumping. She said, "If it wasn't for him, I'd be dead right now."

Roy was always making a difference in the lives of those around him: family, flock, a friend, or someone he'd never met before. Someone from a distance could easily attribute that to Roy's amazing array of personal gifts and abilities. Anyone who walked close to him recognized the remarkable quality of the presence, the love, the wisdom, and the power of Jesus Christ. God had simply chosen to endow Roy's life with a special measure of grace that equipped him for an incredibly broad and influential ministry. He was a pastor, a teacher, a pastor of pastors, and a leader of leaders.

I think you'll discover *A Small Book about God* is something like potato chips. You can't eat just one; and once you start reading, you won't be able to quit. Roy studied the Word with the exegetical precision of a surgeon and practically applied it to people's lives like a world-class tailor chalks, cuts, and stitches a suit for a meticulous personal fit. This anthology of Roy's sermons is a real treasure. Whenever Roy spoke or wrote, it was so personal to me—almost as if he had eavesdropped on my prayers or read my mail.

I'm glad you'll get to know Roy a little as you read. He always touched and exposed the depths of my soul. I hope that within these pages you'll sense an invitation to know Jesus Christ as never before. I also pray that you'll respond. Nothing would delight Roy Hicks Jr. more than that.

RON MEHL
ROY'S FRIEND

PART ONE

A Promise for You

THE PROMISES OF GOD

The promises of God
will surely come to pass.
I'll stand upon His word
and trust and see how faithful
He will be who died for me.
For He exalted His word
above all His name.
The promises of God
will surely come to pass.

ROY HICKS JR.

“I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!”

*God doesn't make all things new by changing the outside.
He wants to remake the substance of our lives.*

One bleak January afternoon, as I left my office to go home, I found myself up against a blustery winter rainstorm. Icy fingers of rain and wind seemed to want to remove my overcoat. But as I stepped off the curb, a strange thing happened. I suddenly thought: “It's spring! Spring is in the air!”

That was such a ridiculous thought I laughed out loud.

As I ran toward my car, I started fumbling for my keys. I mentally kicked myself for not getting them out of my pocket before I left the building. While digging through my pockets, I tried hard to keep some papers dry that I had tucked inside my jacket. But the gusts of rain ruined that plan. At the car, I lost a few more seconds trying to figure out which way to turn the key. By the time I crawled into the car, everything was soaked, and I was frozen.

Then, out of nowhere, the thought ran through my mind again: “Spring is in the air...” And I laughed again. But this time another thought dawned on me: “Maybe I'm not fantasizing about dry weather and

sunshine. Maybe the Lord is trying to tell me something.”

At home I sat thinking in my office. I began to feel that the Lord truly wanted to show me something new, something fresh in the middle of winter. After a while, I reached for my pencil and started a list.

New covenant. New creature. New song. New name. The phrases kept coming. *“Your mercies are new every morning.” New commandment. New man. Newness of life, and newness of spirit.*

I opened to Revelation 21, where John describes his vision of the new heaven and new earth. In verse five, God speaks out of eternity into time. This is what He says: “Behold, I make all things new.”

As I sat there in my study, still very wet and cold, that proclamation kept ringing in my heart. God was talking out of eternity about a future event—but He was also talking about the present too. About this time and this place.

A NEW KIND OF NEW

God, eternal God, is the One who in every circumstance longs to make new. Our human definition of *new*, however, is so very different from God’s. King David’s approach to transporting the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6) is a good example of how most of us think about *new*.

David wanted to bring the sacred Ark to a permanent home in Jerusalem. He decided the Ark deserved a special ox-drawn cart, not the hand-carried method detailed in the laws of Moses. But David's good intentions quickly turned into a big mistake when the oxen stumbled and the Ark threatened to topple off. As a bystander reached out to steady the Ark, he was struck dead. David wanted to improve on God's plan, but his human perspective of newness was different from God's.

In the everyday circumstances of life, the best choice so often seems to be the new thing—new career, new job, new wife, new car, new home, new city, new start. But our concept of newness goes about as deep as that new car smell—persuasive and delightful, but how long does it last? Invariably, when we want new, we play around with the outside while the inside stays the same.

Yet the outside isn't the problem.

God doesn't make all things new by changing the outside. He wants to remake the substance of our lives. When God summons a soul, it's not a one-time event; He calls us to something new every day. We get all excited about self-improvement, but God doesn't really seem to be in the improvement business. He prefers to get to the core of the problem. He is the God of change. So when God says, “Behold, I make all things new,” think about...*You*.

Think about the person you are. Think about your character or personhood. So you see some room for improvement, some need for propping up here and there? I have tremendous news for you. God is not a fixer. He is a Creator! The One who speaks out of eternity into your specific moment has a very personal message for you: “Behold I make *all* things new.”

*God is not a fixer.
He is a Creator!*

A NEW THING NOW

Many of us who have been through loss or failure treasure Isaiah’s words about newness: “Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43:18–19, NKJV). That day in my study these words came to me with new power and insight.

If God is speaking to you right now about newness, maybe He is gently saying, “Forget the past. Don’t dwell on what’s behind you.”

Or maybe in the midst of your trying circumstances, His word to you is, “I am about to accomplish something completely new.”

Or maybe He is trying to tell you something even

more personal: “Behold, I will do a new thing in you now!” The Lord wants so much for you to see it, to recognize it when it comes.

You might be looking at your situations or relationships and saying to yourself, “Impossible! There is no way anything new can come for me.” Yet, perhaps the Lord is saying to you, “Where there seems to be no way, where there seems to be no resource, I will make a road in the wilderness, or in the desert I will cause rivers to spring up.”

Why am I so certain about the message of newness? Because impossible circumstances and blustery January afternoons don’t change who God is. The God of eternity promises you and me that He is the One—the only One—who is in the business of making everything new.

Four simple instructions out of these two verses can help you to cooperate with the new thing God wants to do in your life.

1. LET GO OF THE OLD

Let’s face it, we get pretty good at digging ourselves into very deep, comfortable holes. We’d rather hide in the easy, or hold tightly to the familiar, than reach for the genuinely new. We don’t really know how to start over because the necessary and the optional, the fresh and the stale, the good and the not-so-good-anymore

are all wound around each other, and around us, down in that comfy hole.

My advice is simple: Let go of it all—the bad *and* the good! I see two sides to letting go—a passive and an active side.

The passive side has to do with surrender: “I’ll drop it. I’ll let it be taken out of my hand. I refuse to hang on to it.” God wants to do a new thing, but He can’t as long as you tenaciously hang on to the past. Identify what is stale and stagnant in your life. Yes, it was a good thing when it first began, but even good things become spoiled, worn out, and weak. Resign from it. Leave it behind. Let go of it. So many old things in our lives will fall away of their own accord if we’ll only unclench our grip, open our hands—and keep them open.

But some old things must be forcibly ejected. In 2 Corinthians 4:2, Paul talks about actively letting go when he writes: “I have renounced the hidden things of shame.” The mind naturally jumps to heinous sins—robbery, murder, or some sexual sin. But Paul is talking here mostly about a dishonest way of living—a lifestyle based on manipulation and selfishness, those unseen motives of the heart. These attitudes and behaviors are never going to leave just because you open the door.

Action is required—yours! Let go of the old. Better yet, kick it out!

Paul’s word *renounce* implies more than just saying no. In Greek, “to renounce” has legal implications. It means to say no *again* to something that you’ve already said no to, forbidding access to something you have previously forbidden. Renouncing might sound like this: “Years ago I said I wouldn’t have that in my life, and I kicked it out. Now, as I’m living my life, minding my own business, it shows up again. Maybe it’s an area of vulnerability or a weakness in my character, or possibly it’s just the cycle of life that has brought it around again. But that thing that I said no to before is standing right here! It has stolen in again—or wants to. Right now, I must deal with it again. I see it for what it is, and I say no. I meant no before, and I mean it again—*No!*”

To renounce, as Paul uses the word, is to be willing to say no the second time. This is actively letting go.

You have made a strong commitment to Jesus, but I encourage you to look at what’s thriving—or threatening to thrive—around the edges of your life. Some unwanted “weeds” you’ve already said no to are there again. Renounce them. Say no the second time. If you want to be in that place where God can do His lovely work of newness in your life, then get rid of the old. Something better, something new, cannot happen until you do.

*If you want to be in that place where
God can do His lovely work of newness in your life,
then get rid of the old.*

2. GET READY

The second simple instruction is not profound, but it's important: *Get ready*. Peter's spin on this would be, "Gird up the loins of your mind." I would expand his advice in these ways: Get ready to run. Get ready to move. Get ready to change location. Get ready to adjust...

Be ready now!

Some can relate to what it is like to watch a young son or daughter learn to compete in sports. Kids can be more interested in having a good time than in winning. I remember when my son Jeff was learning to guard his man in basketball. He would look around to see how his buddy was doing or look over to see if his parents were watching. At those times, he wasn't taking the game very seriously. Sometimes as he was moving down the court, I'd yell at him, "Get your man!" or, "Get in position now!"

Some of us play the game of life the way our kids play sports. We're not taking the game very seriously. And when the ball is thrown—if we even see the ball—we're sometimes just not ready.

I want to candidly and lovingly say to you, "Get

your head in the game. Be ready! Where's your man? Get in position—the ball is coming your way. Wake up, sister! Wake up, brother! Come on now!"

God says these kinds of words to us because He loves us, not because He wants to say things that will hurt us or throw our game off. God doesn't want to bench you. He wants you to get your head in the game.

Do you want to receive the new thing God has for you? Do you want to make sure it doesn't pass you by? Then get ready!

3. DO THE POSSIBLE

Remember the woman who thought, *If I can just touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made well* (see Luke 8:41–56)? Luke's account, interestingly enough, implies that she was saying over and over, "If I can just touch the hem of His garment...If I can just touch the hem of His garment..."

She did the possible—and received healing. That healing, of course, was something she could never have done for herself. But she accepted the responsibility for the possible and left it up to Jesus to accomplish the impossible.

Remember the four men who wanted to bring their crippled friend to Jesus? They tore open a hole in the roof to get him to the Lord—an extraordinary but

very possible action. Who did the healing? Jesus. He forgave the crippled man, then healed him—and the man got up and walked away. His friends took responsibility for the possible. Jesus took care of the impossible. That's a law of life.

Funny how easily we reverse that law, especially in our marriage relationships. We attempt the impossible when we try to change another person or when we fight against a reality that is going to exist whether we want it to or not. In the process, we can nearly kill our relationship—or our spouse! What's possible then? We can always choose to say something nice, send a card, make a call. We can pray. We can encourage. These possible things—and there are countless more—make way for the impossible to happen.

Imagine that you meet the blind man in Jerusalem soon after Jesus has smeared mud over his eyes. He walks by you, feeling his way through the streets and alleyways. You can hear him muttering, “I need to go to the pool of Siloam. I need to go to the pool...”

Just then, you notice a helpful bystander rush up to the blind man, “Hey, you with the mud on your face,” he says, “I have a jar of water right here. Let me help you wash off.”

That's when you hear the blind man say *with conviction in every ounce of his body*, “No, no, no thank you! Jesus told me to go to the pool of Siloam and

wash it off. That's exactly what I'm going to do!"

The blind man with mud on his face walks awkwardly, even foolishly on, toward the pool of Siloam. He is accomplishing the possible, that's all. But he is on his way to receiving something new and impossible from God—the miracle of sight.

Read the Gospels. It's there again and again and again. Do the possible. When you sense Him instructing you, stay away from everything else. Do the possible thing He asks you to do. Let go of everything else.

And as the impossible begins to take place, accept and recognize it as God's work, not yours. Look for ways to cooperate with what He is doing.

4. MOVE WITH THE NEW

Even after God has spoken a guiding word or given us a promise, we may easily miss the thing when it finally begins to happen. We know He's going to do it. We set ourselves to pray and wait. But when God begins to “birth” that promise into reality, we often miss all the signs.

Meet Elijah. In 1 Kings, chapter 18, God tells the prophet Elijah that He is about to reveal His power to the rebellious King Ahab (1 Kings 18:1–46). First, God sends fire from heaven to destroy the prophets and the priests of Baal—right before Ahab's eyes. Then in answer to Elijah's prayer, God sends a rainstorm to

end a terrible three-year drought. But watch how the story unfolds—while Elijah prays for rain, his servant goes up on the hill seven times looking for approaching clouds. Nothing. Not even a wisp—until the seventh time.

The servant comes back from his seventh trip to tell Elijah, “Master, there is a cloud there, but I tell you it’s only the size of a man’s hand.”

Elijah’s response is very instructive. “Get up,” he tells his weary servant. “Go tell King Ahab he’d better get back to the palace. There’s a deluge coming.”

All of that from “a cloud the size of a man’s hand.” Did you catch it? That moment of recognition where you know. Like Elijah, you seize it in faith. “That’s it,” you say, “and I’m going to move with it.”

The moment of recognition—when you realize that God is doing something new—can be the point of releasing what He is trying to do, or it can be the opposite. The releasing, or the hindering, always starts in the same place—your mouth! Remember that the psalmist says, “I lay my hand over my mouth so I will not transgress.” He understood that life and death are in the power of what we say, especially at those first stages of newness.

Is there a new thing happening in your marriage? Protect and bless it by carefully chosen words. Do you see a small beginning (perhaps just “a cloud the size of

a man's hand") in your personal life today? Get ready, take a possible step. Is something new developing in your little nine-year-old, or that sixteen-year-old? Move with it.

Birthings are moments of both promise and vulnerability. God is trying to prosper and bless you. By your words—and by your decision to move with Him—you can be a part of bringing His miracles into being.

Just step off the curb of your life, roll your collar up against the freezing rain—and let go with a laugh. Spring is in the air, and at this very moment the God of new things is summoning you to your destiny.

LORD, DO A NEW THING IN ME

Lord Jesus, You are the God of the impossible who says, “Behold I make all things new.”

I trust you, Lord, to make my deaf ears hear. To make my blind eyes see. I see the old, but in my life I want the new.

By Your great power, enable me to open wide to receive Your spring in the middle of my winter, O God of new beginnings. Amen.



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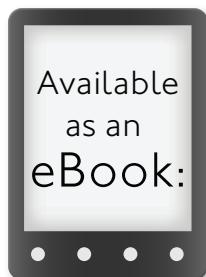
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