

GOD OF TOMORROW

HOW TO OVERCOME
THE FEARS OF TODAY AND
RENEW YOUR HOPE
FOR THE FUTURE



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PEEK**



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CALEB KALTENBACH
AUTHOR OF *MESSY GRACE*

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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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To Mike Foster, Mark Moore, Jud Wilhite, and Tim Winters—

*You were among the first to really know me. Because of you,
I believe that tomorrow is never devoid of hope. Thank you.*

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**WE DON'T KNOW
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Punched by Tomorrow

It was midmorning on Friday, June 26, 2015, and I was getting ready for the final day of a Christian leadership conference I was attending. I had spent a long week in Cincinnati with friends and ministry colleagues. The days had been filled with meetings and speaking opportunities about my then-upcoming book *Messy Grace*, in which I tell my story of growing up with both parents in same-sex relationships, becoming a follower of Jesus, and learning how to relate to both the LGBTQ community and the Christian community. I was looking forward to a less busy weekend and returning to California to be with my wife and kids.

Then the text alert on my phone went off. I was puzzled by the message. A friend had merely sent this line: “God help us.” I wasn’t sure what his text meant but figured maybe it was some awkward spiritual encouragement.

Remembering I wanted to be on time for the morning’s final main session, I set the phone down, turned the volume off, and finished packing and getting ready. Nearly ready to walk out the door with my suitcase, I picked up my wallet and phone. I noticed my phone was displaying text message after text message. Some of them read as follows:

“What are you going to preach on now?”

“God is still in control.”

“You need to celebrate with people on Sunday!”

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“This is a chance for you to stand up for what’s right.”

There were many other texts, but one let me know exactly what had happened. A pastor friend texted me, “Bro, I sure wish your book was available now.” The Supreme Court had been expected to announce its decision on *Obergefell v. Hodges* (marriage equality). No doubt it had been announced that the court had ruled in favor of same-sex marriage, and thus the wave of text after text.

Just as I was about to check the news, I got a call on my cell phone. It was a number from my home area code, so I answered—I thought it could be my wife or kids using somebody else’s phone. In a glimpse of what was to come this weekend, the call was from a journalist with a Southern California newspaper. “Reverend Kaltenbach, what is your reaction to the Supreme Court ruling?”

I didn’t answer at first. It took me a couple of moments. I hadn’t even seen a news broadcast, read an article, or listened to an interview since the court announcement. The wheels in my mind were still spinning. My mom, her partner (Vera), and my dad had talked about this day for years. They couldn’t wait to celebrate a day like this. But certainly not everyone felt the same. During my week in Cincinnati, I’d had a few conversations with pastors and leaders about the upcoming ruling on marriage equality. Some asked if I believed the Supreme Court would rule in favor of keeping marriage between one man and one woman. My answer to them was simple: “Nope.” This response hadn’t been greeted with universal joy.

As quickly as I could, I ended the call with the journalist, turned off my phone, and headed out of the hotel room to put my luggage in my car. Shortly afterward, as I walked out of the parking garage, I saw that the change in society had already reached downtown Cincinnati. The streets had been lined with rainbow flags during the week, but now there were more. A gay pride parade had been scheduled for downtown later that

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weekend, but with the ruling now public, the celebration had started early. People were dancing on the sidewalks, cheering, hugging, high-fiving, and shouting, “Victory! Victory!” Loud celebratory music was pumping from cars, and a few people were running through the streets. Meanwhile, a couple of people were waving homemade signs of protest on street corners.

When I walked into the convention center, the doors to the main hall opened and people began walking out as I was walking in. Some pastors had their heads down; some were obviously angry; some were expressing their happiness that there was equality in marriage. A variety of emotions filled the crowd leaving the session.

One new acquaintance came up to me as he exited the main session. Earlier in the week, he had been in a workshop I had taught on the church and the LGBTQ community. I remembered that he’d had a series of questions after I taught the workshop. Today he shook my hand and said, “Well, thank you for trying.” What in the world did that even mean? His next comment puzzled me even more: “I don’t know what tomorrow holds.”

Then he walked away without even giving me a chance to respond. I didn’t know his name, but I knew that he and a lot of people were in a tailspin on this day. Probably most Christians who are conservative or evangelical or who identify as such saw this as a day when everything in America changed. I can understand that (especially from a political standpoint), but for me everything had changed a while ago. Actually, even before I became a Christian as a teenager, I knew that a major shift in society was taking place. Still, my acquaintance’s fearful words bothered me: *I don’t know what tomorrow holds.*

This book, unlike my last book, is *not* primarily about some Christian attitudes toward people who identify as LGBTQ. The book you’re about to read examines a much wider range of issues we face. More

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importantly, it goes to the heart of what we believe about God, ourselves, and the future.

And let's be honest: it's not just a Supreme Court decision that some evangelical and conservative Christian leaders fear. It's not just a conservative takeover of the government that some progressive Christians worry about. Political, social, cultural, economic, and relational fears across a broad spectrum drive our emotions and frame our outlooks. I've been trying to figure out why the concept of *tomorrow* can be so frightening. I think it's the unknown that drives our fear.

TOMORROW CAN BE A CREEPER

For many people, the concept of *tomorrow* is uncertain, alarming, and even terrifying. I mean, tomorrow is not something you can count on, right? It can be full of surprises. Tomorrow almost seems as if it has multiple personalities; sometimes it brings us good news and other times not-so-good news.

Many nights over the course of my life, I have gone to bed not knowing all the wonderful things tomorrow would bring. My tomorrows have given me the first days of new school years, new friends, an invitation to a high school Bible study that would teach me about Jesus, graduations, an exciting job at a church in Southern California, an introduction to the gorgeous woman who would become my wife, the births of my kids, new adventures, and so on. Even when I have my down periods, I have to admit there have been many good days in my life.

But there have also been many tomorrows that have negatively affected the course of my life. One time when I was two years old, I didn't understand that the next day my parents would decide to divorce. I had no idea as I went to bed one night in December 1996 that I'd wake up to the news that my cousin had been killed in a horrible accident. Not long

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ago, the next day caught me by surprise when I heard that my wife's father had had an aortic dissection and aneurysm. I could go on, but you understand that my tomorrows have been filled with lows as well as highs. So have yours.

And not only do we see uncertainty in tomorrow, but the leaders and writers of the Bible saw it too. Verses such as the following remind us of tomorrow's ambiguity:

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1)

When life is good, enjoy it.
But when life is hard, remember:
God gives good times and hard times,
and no one knows what tomorrow will bring. (Ecclesiastes
7:14, NCV)

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. (James 4:13–14, ESV)

The events of tomorrow were unpredictable for the people in the Bible:

- Abraham would leave his home for an unknown land far away.
- Sarah would laugh at the mere thought of pregnancy.
- Moses would kill an Egyptian, and his life would never be the same.
- Deborah would be named the leader of her people.

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- Samson's girlfriend would betray him, and he would be captured.
- David would have an affair and unleash a chaotic chain of events.
- Elijah would run from a queen after watching God defeat his enemies.
- Esther would muster the courage to expose Haman's evil.
- A woman by a well would meet the God who created her.
- John the Baptist would be thrown into prison.
- Peter would deny Jesus three times.
- Mary Magdalene and the disciples would see the risen Christ.
- An Ethiopian eunuch would hear about the gospel.

All these people were just like you, me, and everyone else who is alive on this planet right now. We're all individuals stuck in the arena of time who experience the progression of life through uncertain days.

The future relentlessly engages us, whether we want it to or not.

Whatever tomorrow brings, the fact that it will deliver something good or bad remains inevitable. The future relentlessly engages us, whether we want it to or not. Today and its status quo might seem solid enough, but as William Shakespeare said, tomorrow is always creeping up on us.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time.¹

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I don't know if anybody has noticed this before, but Bill has a way with words. And he's right about tomorrow's persistence.

All of us have to face the reality of tomorrow and the changes it will bring. When we look at the world and see the changes that have occurred and imagine the ones that might happen, fear may enter our souls like cold iron.

WHY TOMORROW MIGHT CAUSE FEAR

Let me make it clear that this book is not about our personal fears for tomorrow, though we have plenty of them—and they are important. You may be worried about the stability of your job, a loved one's health, supporting a friend during her crisis, how to fix your marriage, or many more personal or family problems. I know these life situations weigh heavily on your heart, as they weigh on mine, too. In this book, however, we're focusing more on the large-scale social changes that affect us all. The encouragement this book brings can apply easily to your personal problems, and I hope you'll take it to heart. What I'm particularly trying to address is the widespread issue I see in Christians of all political and theological persuasions who fear tomorrow because of what they see transpiring in society. I don't believe God wants us to have a toxic fear of the future or to get stuck in anxiety (even though the fear of what's happening in society is common and serious).

And in a sense these changes in society *are* personal. Sooner or later, many of them will invade our lives and relationships. They'll affect us individually by altering our moods or influencing us in more direct and tangible ways.

Maybe some of us have coworkers of a different ethnicity who have a dissimilar perspective on society and political beliefs than others do.

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When they encounter people who don't understand their viewpoint, they may think, *I bet they've never been attacked just because of the color of their skin. I'm sure they haven't walked into a clothing store and had to deal with the salespeople eyeing them the whole time. I wonder if they've ever gone into an elevator and noticed the woman in the back grasping her purse tighter just because they got on the elevator.* As we hear our friends talk, we can't help but wonder if some of us are really *that* unaware of the privilege and resources we may have been afforded in childhood.

Or it could be that we begin our day by watching the news and reading articles that reflect the polarization of politics. Later on during the day, we have lunch with a friend who voted for the "other candidate." A voting record hasn't ever been a conversation stopper for us before, but now it seems that our friend becomes more incensed as our talk gravitates toward politics. It's then that we realize how much the enormous gap between political parties has removed the potential for thoughtful dialogue with this friend. Perhaps later that night, as we watch the news channel we agree with, our emotions lean toward dismay as we consider the future of religious freedom, presidential administrations, the implications of various bills Congress might pass, social unrest, and so on.

Those examples of social change are just a start. Unfortunately, a segment in our society has a problem with our culture becoming more multiethnic. Some don't think of racism as a huge problem in America, despite acts of violence and the continual cries of our people. We argue about immigration, the ethics of immigration reform, and the importance of loving refugees, yet somehow we forget that these discussions are more than political platforms; they're about actual people with families, needs, and stories. As the months go on, some see our society drifting further from Judeo-Christian values, while there's an increase in broken

families and teen suicides that reveals society's lack of concern for hurting people. There are a few who seek to put restrictions on some individuals' expressions of faith. Today, people live in fear of terrorists and don't even consider the atrocities committed by some governments and regimes around the world. Political leaders in a few states would count the legalization of marijuana as a victory, but have they really counted the cost of such a move? More than ever, we see a loss of civility in public discourse, the devaluing of honest conversation amid disagreements, and vile social media posts. Our prison population is increasing, shootings are becoming all too familiar, natural resources are under attack, a few politicians on both sides of the aisle are becoming more extreme, and the list could go on and on. At the root of it, for me, is that a growing number of people see a relationship with Jesus as irrelevant.

Wherever you are in your political ideology, theological convictions, and moral beliefs, I'm sure we can agree that today's world isn't the world we grew up in, no matter when or where we grew up. Society has changed. Society will change. And change can be unsettling.

SOCIETY—ALWAYS CHANGING, ALWAYS THE SAME

Change. That word can strike fear into the heart of your average organized, systematic, A-type personality. For some people, the word *change* brings other words with it, such as *upheaval*, *hurt*, *loss*, *move*, *shift*, and similar terms that indicate difficult life transitions.

For others, change is more positive. It can represent newness, progress, innovative ideas, positive emotions, and more. People who like change probably work (or want to work) in an environment where their job description and tasks shift depending on the season.

The 2008 presidential election showed us the influence of this word.

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Senator Barack Obama's one-word slogans "Hope" and "Change" left a memorable impression on people's minds. His supporters ate up the idea of the change he would provide. Senator John McCain's supporters, however, automatically used the word *change* to refer to a negative change they feared an Obama administration would bring to the country.

A few years later, when Donald Trump ascended to the presidency, many on both sides of the political aisle decried the changes they saw coming from the White House.

Whatever our personality types, we all respond differently to change in society. The very nature of change forces a reorganization of our lives. As a result, our view of change is often dramatic, whether dramatically optimistic or dramatically worried.

Regardless, we've got to get used to change.

Over the years, I've heard fellow pastors and Christians from all backgrounds lament, "Society is changing" or "Society is getting worse" (however that particular person defines *worse*). Well, of course society is changing! Society always changes. Society is directly affected by the changing world around it, with changes in technology, the global political climate, trends, media, generational priorities, ethnic makeup, and more. Society can and does change for the better or the worse—it depends on how a particular society is structured and what values are woven within the fabric of the culture.

Society always changes . . . but it also stays the same.

Here's what I mean: While society is always shifting, the core foundational issues we struggle with as a society are not new. Fundamentally, there is nothing any present-day society is processing that societies of the past did not work through.

Every trend or event that has occurred in our day is based on a more fundamental human issue that Jesus, Paul, Peter, and other biblical leaders had to address in a different way. Do me a favor before moving to the

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next chapter: read or review the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. You'll quickly discover that even Old Testament leaders had to deal with similar controversies and clashing ideas.

If that doesn't help you feel better, how about the fact that: Jesus, Peter, and other individuals in the Bible had the same societal issues we do in our country, *only worse*? Our society has some major moral and ethical gaps, but we don't face the degree of danger that was prevalent in the first century. While their society and ours have both experienced crumbling marriages, human trafficking, slavery, and so on, the way the early Christians experienced such societal movements was harsher and resulted in the deaths of many Christians.

There is nothing any present-day society is processing that societies of the past did not work through.

In the first century, a majority of Christians lived in the Roman Empire, which was led by a succession of dictators, some of whom were so narcissistic that they believed they were divine. (We'll get into that sorry situation more later.) Meanwhile, the superstition of other religions inside the empire was unbelievable. The ethics and values that Christians held contrasted starkly to those of the Greco-Roman world. This frequently led to misunderstanding, slander, persecution, exile, and, as I just mentioned, death for Christians.

Now, what was it you posted on social media that you thought was an outrage?

There's no comparison between society for first-century Christians, societies in the Old Testament era, and our American society. The closest similarity in today's world might be the society of some countries in the Middle East and the cultural norms Christians have to struggle through.

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Yet when Jesus, Peter, and Paul interacted with people far from God, they didn't get mad at them. They had strong biblical beliefs and strong friendships with various people, even those far from God. All I'm suggesting is that we can and should do the same.

WAYS TO INTERACT WITH SOCIETY

Even though the concerns in our society may not be as new or extreme as we have been assuming, they are present. God put us here in this generation and expects us to represent him faithfully wherever we are. So, what should we do with our anxieties regarding the future? How should we approach a society that frequently changes in ways we don't appreciate?

Option A: Aggressively Fight a Broken Society

Just so you know, I completely understand that we all have different views when it comes to the intersection of Christianity and the trends of society. For instance, some of us feel as though we are in a battle with society because of our faith and, as such, need to stand up for what's right. We reason that if we don't speak up, who will?

If that describes your attitude, let me say that I can relate. As a matter of fact, within the pages of this book, you'll find a lot of support for the concept of boldness. I would even go so far as to say that if we are Christians, we have no choice but to speak up boldly against the wrongs we see. If you think about it, that's probably why Jesus called us to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13–16). The Bible is filled with examples of God sending his people to not only speak firmly but also stand in opposition to the wrong and injustice in the world.

Yet while many Christians have taken brave stands against the marginalization of people, harmful social programs, and the like, there are also examples of Christians who, in their efforts to stand up for truth,

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have actually hurt society. They've at least been perceived as being too aggressive (some are) and lacking empathy for those with opposing views (many do).

**Combateness without
compassion is always going
to be counterproductive.**

Anytime we find ourselves despising or putting down a community, it really means that we have a problem with people, because communities are made up of people. Whether you disagree with and disdain the NRA Second Amendment rights crowd, the scholarly academic crowd, Muslims in your city, Hollywood, the GOP or the DNC, the corporation your spouse works for, illegal immigrants, conservative Christians, citizens of a certain country, the millennial generation, or any other community, any hateful feelings you may have toward these people are opposite of the feelings God has for them. Combateness without compassion is always going to be counterproductive.

Option B: Surrender and Fully Hop On Board with Society

In contrast to the combative Christians, some of us are jaded from adverse attitudes of other people, so we decide that it's better never to bring up controversial social issues. It might be that you've seen your fair share of people turned off by the church because of how Christians have treated them, so you've committed to acting differently. You identify with verses that talk about God's love and you emphasize those verses without mentioning any of the ones that conflict with society's values. It's not that you don't love God and the Bible, but more than likely you've concluded that you'll make a greater impression by staying silent on lightning-rod issues. Along those same lines, someone you love might have adopted a belief

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that was more aligned with a popular trend in society than with God's words. For you, it's been easier to support society's "latest and greatest" than to do anything else. If so, I definitely get where you're coming from (I find myself there sometimes), but that just isn't a beneficial approach. Silence about people's mistakes in the face of their pain doesn't help them—it hurts them.

Basing our values on our favorite celebrity, political leader, author, good friend, or simply the opinion of the majority in the moment assures disappointment. What do we do when society changes again or the person we admire shifts his or her opinion and differs with us on an important issue?

Aligning our views with society's latest slant results in the constant shifting of our views. Because society is always in flux and its values are always changing, it's impossible to have a consistent worldview when we're eager to go along with society. In a few chapters, we'll discuss the necessity of adjusting how we present truth to society, but let me emphasize right now that we should never change our orthodox beliefs to line up with a culture that is constantly changing. Those who measure their convictions against an ever-shifting society will always be adjusting their beliefs. Very rarely does society remain in one place.

As you can see, this approach holds many problems. We need another way.

Option C: Invest in Society with Empathy and Conviction

As opposed to words such as *fight* and *surrender*, the word *invest* paints a picture of people giving of themselves to improve the world around them. It means that you and I don't just write blogs or talk boldly *about* cultural problems; we sacrifice and invest *in* the lives of others in society. For me, *invest* is another way of saying the word *engage*. Engagement encompasses learning about a certain context or group of people to better under-

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stand them. I believe we should invest in and engage people around us; we should be the first ones to initiate a relationship and not wait on others. Developing relationships with people not like us or people who might intimidate us is so necessary. Our differences with people should drive us *to* them, not *from* them.

If you hadn't guessed yet, option C is the view we'll explore in this book. I believe it's the option that makes the most sense.

**Our differences with
people should drive us
to them, not from them.**

When we're afraid of what tomorrow holds for society and respond by fighting against people, surrendering to misguided ideas, or simply showing indifference to growing causes around the world, we're choosing to mistreat and devalue others. Not only is dismissing people never a valid option, but it isn't pleasing to God. Don't go in that direction. Make the better choice.

I hope that by the end of this book you'll see society differently and be fully convinced that any Jesus follower who makes a godly investment in people will make a difference in the world.

JUST YOUR AVERAGE, EVERYDAY WORLD CHANGERS

Two of my favorite people in the whole world are John and Marla. I'm not certain whether they have ever spoken at a conference, written a book, penned an article, blogged, or been guests on a podcast, but I can assure you that you would be inspired if you met them.

I got to meet them when my family and I lived in the Dallas–Fort Worth area. I was pastoring a church near Plano that had a lot of promise,

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but the congregation didn't reflect the demographics of families living around the church. The congregation's average age was older and its makeup mostly Caucasian among a community that was becoming more multiethnic. So a couple of months after I came on staff, I challenged the small groups in the church to engage in some kind of outreach to their immediate community.

Many groups did some fantastic outreaches, but John and Marla's group was the most mesmerizing to me. This couple's daughter taught in a local public high school and had told them about a young student who had just had a baby. She shared how much this girl loved school but was struggling to balance her roles as a young mother and a high school student. She was losing her fight to complete her education, and that broke their hearts. Even more sobering was the knowledge that without her getting a diploma, the future for this young family would look even bleaker.

John and Marla could have looked down on a girl who had irresponsibly engaged in sex before marriage. They could have ignored the hard times she was going through with her baby. But instead they saw a chance to make a difference, and they decided to do something for her and for similar young moms and their infants.

Within a couple of weeks, the small group hosted a baby shower for teen moms in the area. The idea was simple: provide a safe harbor where these girls could come together and have some fun and find encouragement and love. The group decorated the lobby of the church, gathered other volunteers, and had some of the best Texas barbecue catered. They passed out much-needed gifts of baby gear. While they had only a few moms attend this first event, these moms were forever changed because of the love they saw from this group of people.

Not long after that baby shower, John and Marla asked me if they could do this kind of event regularly. "By all means!" I responded. Just

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watching their excitement and passion for God and people inspired me. I couldn't wait to see how God would use this idea.

Over the next months, word spread and the events grew. The first Tuesday of each month became a time the girls planned for and told others about. In addition to a baby shower once a year (many of the girls had never had one), they did games, karaoke, crafts, and other fun things teens enjoy. As the number of volunteers grew, so did the number of ideas for how to make these teen moms and their extended families feel special. John and Marla even got volunteers to play basketball with the babies' fathers at each event.

As people volunteered to help, some would ask questions such as, "Shouldn't we talk to these young ladies about life so they don't get pregnant again?" I'm sure the question was well intended, but it also showed a lack of understanding and empathy.

I loved how John answered one such question. As I listened in, he said, "As we get to know these young ladies, we have opportunities to talk to them about faith and life. But we have to remember they have already had their babies; the question now is, how are we going to respond? They chose life and we should celebrate their decision by coming alongside and loving them. Many of the girls have already faced rejection, in some cases from their own church. A decision to come to our church, where they could be judged again, is scary. But because they realized they needed help, they attended our church. And isn't that what we're here for—to help and love them?"

I was thrilled to see someone respond to a vulnerable segment of our community with such empathy and conviction. We need more of these ideas to engage our neighborhoods, cities, and society.

Today, that ministry is called Blessing Teen Parents. They have been helping teen moms since 2010. Each year, the number of moms attending their monthly events has grown. Many of these moms end up asking

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questions about faith, trusting Jesus, and even attending church. John and Marla, along with their amazing volunteers, have shown teen moms in their area the importance of staying in school, how to love their kids, and the power of acceptance, and they have even provided scholarships for college.

They're not fretting about the future; they're influencing it. They're not bemoaning a trend; they're engaging those who are part of the trend. They're just your average, everyday world changers!

FREE FROM FEAR, FREE TO LOVE

Now let me go back to where I started this chapter. The interaction with my new acquaintance in Cincinnati—the one who said he didn't know what tomorrow holds—plagued me. It wasn't so much his words in the moment but the mind-set lying behind his words that bothered me. And I know he's not the only one to have such a mind-set. Far from it. For many Christians (myself sometimes included), when something happens in society that we consider to be wrong or unjust, we can feel a sense of doom and hopelessness. It paralyzes us. It may even bring out the worst in us.

I'm not saying we shouldn't express grief or disappointment when our society heads in directions we disagree with, whether those directions are labeled *liberal* or *conservative* or something else. We should. Everyone has fears. If you've had any leadership responsibilities that included making tough decisions, you'll agree with what I've heard many Christian leaders say: "Fear is a constant companion in leadership." However, I'd like to amend that statement by saying, "Fear is a constant companion in life." However, we shouldn't let fear control us. We're in trouble when toxic fear begins to dictate our thinking and actions. I've seen this toxic fear in so many people, including my Cincinnati acquaintance.

If I could have that encounter again, I'd speak up before my friend

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walked away. I'd resurrect a phrase that's been used in some form by many Christian leaders: "We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds tomorrow." My Cincinnati friend and all the rest of us need to have a robust trust that God is still in control, has a plan, and is working out his plan in the midst of what's happening today and what's coming tomorrow. Such faith in God will calm some of our fears—and that's great, right? But the faith we'll be discussing in this book can do more than just calm our fears. By the time you turn the final page of the book, I want you to have faith that focuses on the mission God has given you as his representative in the world. Because how you view tomorrow affects how you live today.

Let me give you a preview of the message I'm going to be repeating and elaborating on throughout the course of this book. It's a simple idea but nonetheless one we can easily forget in the heat of society's tensions. We have to burn this idea into our very souls. I believe that this truth is what Jesus would have you remember, as opposed to regretting the past and fearing the present or future.

The God of Tomorrow Principle

*Since tomorrow belongs to God, we can
graciously offer hope to people today.*

I'm going to discuss each of the key parts of the God of Tomorrow principle in the chapters of this book. If we really think deeper about the elements of this axiom, we can charge tomorrow with hope instead of being dragged into it kicking and screaming. This principle will help us to better invest in society by engaging people, no matter who they are, where they're from, or what they believe.

Ultimately, I hope you'll be inspired to make a difference in the

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world by investing in the relationships you already have and building new ones. Why emphasize relationships? Because relationships are where you and I live. Our relationships are the context of our lives. No matter how introverted or extroverted we might be, we're still relational beings. God created us to relate to one another all the days of our lives. We should boldly and graciously engage and invest our faith in our relationships, regardless of whether we disagree with someone else on politics, ethics, or who should have won the award for best picture.

I can guarantee you this: if the way we invest in the people around us improves, it won't be long before we start changing the world, one relationship at a time. However, that will never happen if we allow fear to compromise the difference we could make.

It's time we turn our attention to something more powerful than our fears of tomorrow. We need a perspective that's greater than any anxiety we may face. The good news for us is that there is something more powerful than the worst fears that linger in our heads. Actually, let me say that differently: there is *someone* greater than our worst fears, and that someone deserves the priority in our perspectives.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What changes do you see in society that cause you fear?
Why do they cause you fear?
2. How do you interact with society? Option A, B, or C? Do you think you're interacting with society in the right way?
Why or why not?
3. Have you seen any of your family, friends, or acquaintances do extraordinary things? What did they do?

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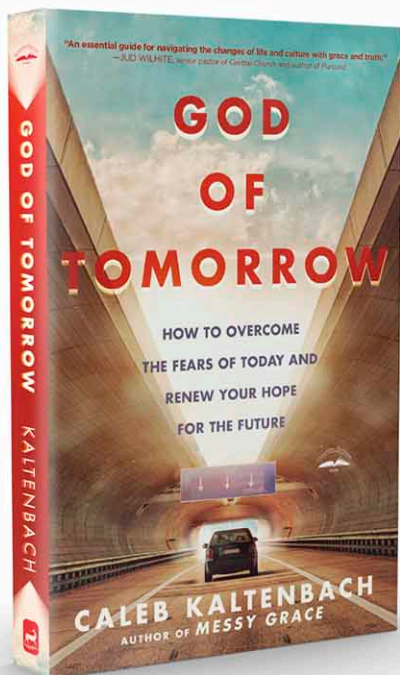
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4. The God of Tomorrow principle is, *Since tomorrow belongs to God, we can graciously offer hope to people today.* Do you believe this is true? Is this statement reflected in how you live your life?
5. Spend some time in prayer before moving on to the next chapter. Ask God to open your heart to what he might want you to learn, affirm, or stop or start doing as you consider the intersection of your faith and society.

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