

“Wild Goose Chase”

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Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

The Celtic Christians had a name for the Holy Spirit that has always intrigued me. They called Him An Geadh-Glas, or “the Wild Goose.” I love the imagery and implications. The name hints at the mysterious nature of the Holy Spirit. Much like a wild goose, the Spirit of God cannot be tracked or tamed. An element of danger and an air of unpredictability surround Him.

Most of us will have no idea where we are going most of the time. And I know that is unsettling. But circumstantial uncertainty also goes by another name: Adventure. Instead of following the Spirit, we invite the Spirit to follow us. Instead of serving God's purposes, we want Him to serve our purposes. But too often we take people out of their natural habitat and try to tame them in the name of Christ. We try to remove the risk. We try to remove the danger. We try to remove the struggle. And what we end up with is a caged Christian. We have a primal longing to be uncaged. And the cage opens when we recognize that Jesus didn't die on the cross to keep us safe. Jesus died to make us dangerous.

The first cage is the cage of **responsibility**.

The second cage, the cage of **routine**,

The third cage is the cage of **assumptions**.

The fourth cage is the cage of **guilt**.

The fifth cage is the cage of **failure**.

The sixth and final cage is the cage of **fear**.

When was the last time you asked God to make you dangerous? The Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard believed that boredom is the root of all evil. Here is what I've observed: many, if not most, Christians are bored with their faith. Too many among us end up settling for spiritual mediocrity instead of striving for spiritual maturity. If you read through Scripture, you'll discover that His favorite genre is action-adventure.

But I do want to die doing what I love. I am determined to pursue God-ordained passions until the day I die. Life is too precious to settle for anything less. I'm not convinced that your date of death is the date carved on your tombstone. Most people die long before that.

We start dying when we have nothing worth living for. And we don't really start living until we find something worth dying for. Ironically, discovering something worth dying for is what makes life worth living.

Here is the mistake so many of us make: we start out pursuing a passion and end up settling for a paycheck. "What makes you cry or pound your fist on the table?" In other words, what makes you sad? Or what makes you mad? Supernatural sadness and righteous indignation often reveal our God-ordained passions. If you want to discover your God-ordained passions, then you need to identify what makes you sad, mad, or glad. All of us know or have heard of people who are extremely successful and extremely unhappy. I call them successful failures. What happens is this: the sacred becomes routine.

And we not only forfeit spiritual adventure but we also start losing the joy of our salvation. Because we have a natural tendency to remember what we should forget and forget what we should remember. Altars help us remember what God doesn't want us to forget. They give us a sacred place to go back to. Every once in a while, we need to go back to those sacred places to repent of our sin, renew our covenant with God, and celebrate what God has done. I don't believe in coincidence. I believe in providence. How you start is not nearly as important as how you finish.

I know from experience that you can do the work of God at a pace that destroys the work of God in you. You know what you really need? A stop-doing list! Spiritual maturity has less to do with long-range visions than it does with moment-by-moment sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. One of the greatest dangers we face spiritually is learning how and forgetting why. When I'm in a spiritual slump, nine times out of ten, something sacred has become routine.

It is so easy to get focused on what God wants to do through me that I totally neglect what God wants to do in me. "Who you are isn't the issue; the issue is whose you are!" We ignore verses we cannot comprehend. We avoid verses we do not like. And we rationalize verses that are too radical. He is God most high and God most nigh. Logic questions God. Faith questions assumptions. And at the end of the day, faith is trusting God more than you trust your own assumptions. In the words of André Gide, "People cannot discover new lands until they have the courage to lose sight of the shore." God is at His best when we are at our worst. Jesus says, "You give Me all of your sin. I'll give you all of My righteousness. And we'll call it even."

Sin – Grace = Guilt

Sin + Grace = Gratitude

But I've come to realize that getting where God wants me to go isn't nearly as important as becoming who God wants me to be. The healthiest and holiest people are the people who laugh the most. Instead of playing to win, Saul was playing not to lose. As my friend Craig Groeschel, pastor of LifeChurch.tv, says, "The difference between where you are and where God wants you to be may be the painful decision you refuse to make."

Too many of us live by default instead of by design. I love Eugene Peterson's take on Muir's story. He said the story of John Muir climbing to the top of that storm-whipped Douglas fir is "an icon of Christian spirituality." He called it "a standing rebuke against becoming a mere spectator to life, preferring creature comfort to creator confrontation." Quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death. Set God-sized goals. Pursue God-ordained passions. Go after a dream that is destined to fail without divine intervention.

Don't let fear dictate your decisions. Don't take the easy way out. Don't maintain the status quo. Stop pointing out problems and become part of the solution. Stop repeating the past and start creating the future. Stop playing not to lose and start playing to win. Expand your horizons. Create some margins. Take off your sandals. Find every excuse you can to celebrate everything you can. Live today like it is the first day and the last day of your life. Don't let what's wrong with you keep you from worshiping what's right with God. Burn sinful bridges. Challenge old assumptions. Blaze new trails. Don't stop making mistakes. Don't try to be who you're not. Be yourself. Don't make a living. Make a life. Quit making excuses. Quit playing defense. And quit putting eight-foot ceilings on what God can do. Chase the Goose!