

ADVANCE
READER
SAMPLE

TO SAVE A LIFE

DARE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE COUNT

Develop Friendships That Really Matter

*ANSWER THE QUESTION:
What's Your Life Going to Be About?*

*Touch Lives of Other Teens Who Are
Hurting & Lonely*

*See the Ripple Effect Your Life Can
Have on Others*

TODD HAFFER VICKI KUYPER



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Introduction

Are you up for a dare? Don't panic, you won't be asked to sport a gnome tattoo, down a fist of habanero chiles, or dive into one of the Great Lakes in the dead of winter. What we have in mind is much more difficult—but a lot more meaningful!

First, we're daring you to change the way you see yourself, to look *inside* and learn to love the view. Second, we're daring you to change the way you see others, to look *outside* and make a difference in your world.

The first part of this dare may be the toughest for you. That inward gaze is smudged with expectations, comparisons, and emotional goo. To be honest, you might not even be able to understand what you're seeing unless you risk taking a peek through God's eyes—He's got the goods on the real you, the person He created you to be. He wants you to see the you He sees, to understand that you are here on planet Earth for a reason, a good one.

The second part of this dare is to let the world see the real you by reaching out to others, being an initiator, and shining your light in the lives of your family, friends, and even strangers. Some might say it's risky, and they would be right. You never know when someone will shut you down, even when you're offering friendship and encouragement. But what's a dare without risk?

In the pages of this book, authors Todd Hafer and Vicki Kuyper share their stories and the stories of people they know who have weighed the risks and dared to reach out for more, trusting God and opening their hearts to those around them. We hope their stories grab you, make you think, and challenge you to get into the game of life. That's going to take some courage and willpower, but you're up to it. You're stronger than you think you are and far more awesome than you ever imagined. So come on. Dare to see, and be, the true you.

1

Dare 2 Be
Significant



DID YOU KNOW?

1. You are a superstar.

-Philippians 2:15-16

2. You are rich.

-1 Timothy 6:6

3. God has great plans for you.

-Jeremiah 29:11

4. God remembers every one of your tears.

-Psalm 56:8

5. You make God sing.

-Zephaniah 3:17

Everyone's searching for it, from your longtime BFF to the freshman class clown to the MVP on the varsity basketball team. Even your parents, your annoying older brother Kurt, and great-aunt Edna with the lazy eye are on the lookout for it. As a matter of fact, people have been trying to grab hold of it throughout the course of history. It's a quest worthy of the greatest video game ever played, a treasure hunt that attracts players from every nation and generation. Even if you aren't aware of it, the odds are pretty good that you're searching for it too.

Tyler's searching for it. He's even auditioning for *American Idol*. Unfortunately, Tyler's performance reminds one judge of a toucan in a food processor. But that doesn't discourage Tyler. He's destined to be a star. He's certain of it. He's just got to want it bad enough.

Shawna's searching for it. Just check out her school planner. Her schedule can be summed up in one word—study. To Shawna, any grade below an A is downright cringe-worthy. She's determined to graduate a year early so she can get busy living her real life. Teachers love her. Her parents couldn't be prouder. If only Shawna felt the same way.

Kaitlyn's searching for it. Not that any of her classmates would notice. She's the quiet one, the loner with ink stains on her fingers. Kaitlyn's notebooks are covered with anime and her locker is filled with poetry. The only friends she hangs out with are those she connects with online. MangaBoy16 seems nice—though she's never actually met him. Kaitlyn wonders if maybe it's about time she did.

David's searching for it. He's got just the right swagger, just the right hair gel, and just the right style of clothes. He even has his very own posse. As for having just the right girl on his arm, that's a given. At least for a day or two. The right girl seems to change as often as the cafeteria menu.

How about you? What's your story? Where has your search taken you?

BE THE HERO OF YOUR OWN QUEST

The search we're talking about is the search for significance. Significance is a rather brainiac-sounding word that means "importance" or "meaning." Searching for significance means trying to figure out how you fit into the big picture of life.

This all sounds rather cerebral, doesn't it? You might be thinking it would make a good topic to debate with some philosophy professor who boasts a dusty bust of Plato on his desk. But not so fast. This search for significance is more like an adventure story. It's a daring quest, like Frodo on a journey to destroy the One Ring in *Lord of the Rings*, Link's quest in *The Legend of Zelda*, or Dorothy's search for the Wizard of Oz. It's a quest that can change both you and the course of your life. If you dare, this quest can even change the world.

As any hero knows, before embarking on a quest you need to know what it is you're searching for. It's easy to picture yourself slaying a dragon or lugging home heavy chests of buried treasure. But trying to picture significance, and how you're supposed to grab hold of it, can be tough. Not only does significance mean different things to different people, but what significance looks like to you today may not resemble what it will look like to you in the future.

So, basically what you're searching for is a shape-shifting, time-traveling chameleon. Perfect.

THE SEARCH FOR SIGNIFICANCE ACTUALLY BOILS DOWN TO FINDING THE ANSWERS TO THREE BASIC QUESTIONS: DO I MATTER? AM I LOVED? WHY AM I HERE?

“

**WHO YOU ARE SPEAKS SO LOUDLY
I CAN'T HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.**

-Ralph Waldo Emerson ”

Now, for the good news. (And yes, there's a lot of good news when it comes to discovering how significant you really are.) The good news is that the search for significance actually boils down to finding the answers to three basic questions: Do I matter? Am I loved? Why am I here?

Easier to picture? Hopefully. Easy to answer? Actually, yes. Easy to believe the answers you'll find? Well, let's just say that before you can honestly believe and then take action on the true answers to these three questions, you have to ask a few more questions. After all, *questions* are a crucial part of every quest.

Asking yourself questions can feel a bit weird at first, like you're so desperate or delusional that you've resorted to striking up conversations with yourself. But it's the people who don't question themselves who wind up lost. Checking in with yourself to see how you're doing and what you're really thinking is like checking the map when you're on a journey. It keeps you on the right road. Anytime you begin to wander off, a quick check helps you regain your bearings. It lets you know right where you are in relation to where you want to be. It helps you chart the best route to your destination, even a destination as tricky to locate as significance.

But before you chart the best route toward your destination, you need to know where you are right now. Where has your search for significance led you so far? One way to answer this question is with the help of another question: Who do you idolize?

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Think about it. Who are the people you look up to, young or old, alive or dead? They may be presidents or pop stars, kids at school or astronauts in orbit, rappers, teachers, bloggers, athletes, missionaries, or musicians. They may be part of your family tree or someone you see on TV.

After you have in mind "who" you admire, then it's time to ask yourself "why?" Consider the specific reasons this person is important in your eyes. Are there things about this individual that you wish were true about you? Hold that thought.

Now it's time to check out your *if only*s. Mentally fill in the blanks below. Don't panic. This is not a quiz! The only right answers are honest ones. The statements below are simply a reflection of what you feel is true right now. Tomorrow your answers could change. (Which is why it's so important to keep asking questions!) If you have more than one answer for each blank, that's not a problem. And if you want to jot down your answers in the book, feel free. The deeper you dig, the more you'll discover who and where you are.

If only _____ I would be happy.

If only _____ I would feel loved.

If only _____ people would respect me.

There are as many different *if only*s in this world as there are people. But many share a common theme. Can you relate to any of these *if only*s?

If only ...

... I were an adult and on my own ...

... I were popular ...

... I could lose some weight ...

... I could choose my family ...
... God would answer this one prayer ...
... I'd be happy.

If only ...
... I had a boyfriend/girlfriend ...
... my parents would get back together ...
... I had friends who really cared ...
... I had a dad ...
... God would let me know he's there ...
... I'd feel loved.

If only ...
... I could get on the team ...
... I were really smart ...
... I were famous ...
... I were rich ...
... I could do something amazing ...
... people would respect me.

Your *if onlys* and the people you admire are kind of like the latitude and longitude of where you're searching for significance. They are the X on the map, the place where you're hoping to find the answers to those three big questions: Do I matter? Am I loved? Why am I here? Before you invest any more of your life digging where you are right now, it's a good idea to make sure that X really does mark the right spot.

STORIES FOR THE ROAD

Before you head off on a road trip, it's good to know your traveling companions. You have two for this trip, Todd and Vicki. Right up front, we want to promise we won't hog the seat or snarf all of the Pringles. We'll even let you plug your own playlist into the radio.

As authors, we can try and hide behind the pages of this book. But sooner or later the truth is going to come out. We're old. Not as old as dirt, but older than you. We're not your peers. We're more like your parents. Only cooler. Or so we keep trying to tell ourselves.

Todd is the father of four teens. Vicki is the mom of two "former" teens who kinda slid right into the twenties a few years back. And contrary to what our children may think, both of us actually were teens at one time. Our ages, wardrobe, and techno savvy may differ from yours, but we all have something in common: All of us are searching for significance.

Todd's Story

I grew up as a preacher's kid. Maybe you've heard what they say about preachers' kids: They're either the kindest, most law-abiding citizens you know, or they're raging tornados of trouble.

Guess which one I was.

I was drawn to trouble with electro-magnetic force. Nothing could keep me from it. Not sermons or Sunday school classes or Bible studies, all of which, as a P.K., I was forced to attend every week. Not even the local sheriff drawing his gun and offering to splatter my brains across the wall of his office. (To be honest, my first thought when admiring that gleaming 9-millimeter was, *Hey, if it will get*

me out of having to sit through one more Bible study about the Minor Prophets.)

How did I find myself in the cross-hairs of the local law enforcement officers in the wild, wild Wyoming west? Well, my teen weekends went pretty much like this:

Saturday

1. Spend the day playing whatever sport is in season.
2. Shower and search closet for some hand-me-down clothes that won't get me laughed at.
3. Drive my tan Chrysler Newport (with the chick magnet vinyl turquoise seat covers) to wherever the trouble is for a fun-filled evening of drinking, debauchery, back-alley brawling, and blasting street signs—and the occasional porcupine or raccoon—with a 12-gauge shotgun. For a change of pace, climb up a fire escape and play Spider-Man across the rooftops of downtown businesses—a serious challenge when you're falling-down drunk.

Sunday

1. Sneak into window of downstairs bedroom at approximately 5:30 a.m., thanking God that my parents are such sound sleepers.
2. Shower away the night's sin. Floss, if such an extreme measure is necessary. Apply Dad's Hai Karate after-shave, just to make sure.
3. Stuff clothes deep into the family hamper. Hope that the stench of all those sweaty socks and athletic jerseys will overpower the smell of cigarette smoke—and that other kind of smoke—radiating from my Saturday-night jeans and T-shirt.
4. Be the first one to show up for Sunday school—big

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fake Christian smile firmly etched across my tired, hypocritical face.

Yes, my teen years were a magical time. I once went home with a girl from this bar, the one that was notoriously lax about checking IDs. In the wee hours of the morning I said, "I really must be on my way."

She said if I stayed awhile longer, she'd make me breakfast. "No, I can't," I explained. "I have to go home and get ready for Sunday school."

She laughed and laughed. "You are one funny dude," she said. She thought I was joking.

I wasn't, of course. My double life was a joke. God should have given up on me.

But He didn't.

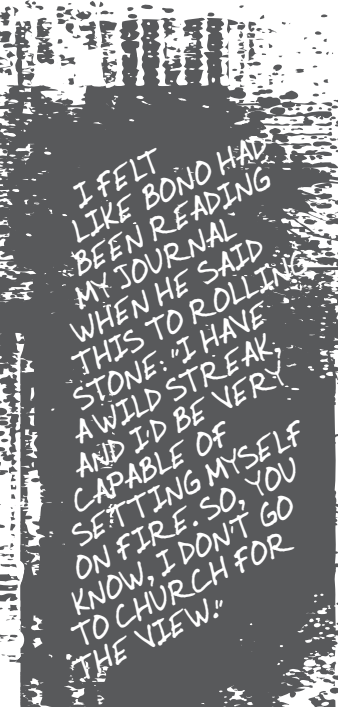
He was with me when I got put on probation and humiliated my family, especially my pastor dad.

He was with me when I violated my probation by jumping into the middle of a fight behind a bar. The police just sent everyone home without taking anyone into custody or even taking our names.

He was with me as I held my mom's hand as she died of cancer in the family living room.

A few years later, when my best friend was killed in an accident, He was with me when I stood alone in a church sanctuary staring at my friend lying in his coffin.

He was with me when a heavy-duty pickup truck T-boned me on an icy in-



terstate. The state trooper told me I was very lucky to be alive. I escaped with a concussion, some bruised ribs, and a strained knee ligament (only slightly more damage than I sustained in the mosh pit at a One Bad Pig concert).

God's amazing patience and love finally won me over. It took years, but I finally understood that God wasn't going to give up on me. In the Bible, Jesus tells a story of a wayward son who leaves his home to live a buck-wild life, like mine, until he is financially, physically, and spiritually bankrupt. He stumbles toward his home, and while he is still a long way off, his father sees him and sprints like a madman toward him, showering him with unconditional love. The father in the story represents God. That got to me. Still does.

Today God is with me as I try to parent my own teenage kids (plus the occasional bonus teen who decides to live with us for a while). He listens to my prayers, especially the one that goes, "Please, please, please don't let any of my kids have teen years like mine!"

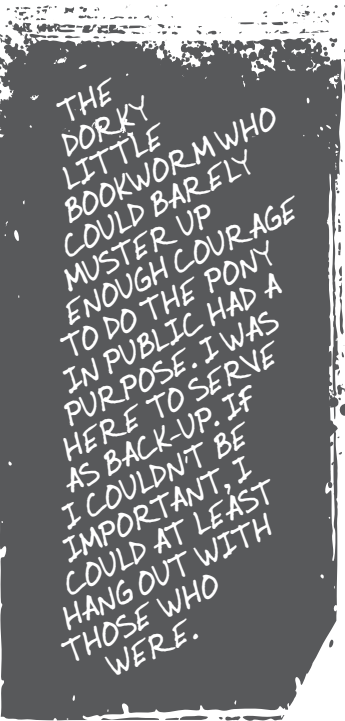
He's my strength when I run out of patience, out of answers, and out of money.

He's the reason I'm writing this book with my longtime bud Vicki in the crazy hope that something in these pages will help you walk in the warm light of God's love. It's a way I'm still learning to walk in myself. I felt like Bono had been reading my journal when he said this to *Rolling Stone*: "I have a wild streak, and I'd be very capable of setting myself on fire. So, you know, I don't go to church for the view."

These days I go to church because I want to. Because I need to. Even on the Sundays when I announce to the family that I'm sleeping in because I've pulled a writing all-nighter, I end up dragging myself to church. Up in heaven, my mom must be laughing her head off.

Church isn't the only place I experience God's love, but the force is strong in that plain white building with the comfy green chairs. Our church has this small prayer room called the catacombs. I like to shut myself in there late at night—at about the same hour I used to go jumping between buildings on Main Street—and pray for my family, my friends, my world. And I squeeze in a plea for God not to give up on me. Each time I leave the catacombs, I think I'm a little closer to this truth: God will stop loving me—stop loving all of us—the same time water stops being wet.

Vicki's Story



THE
DORKY
LITTLE
BOOKWORM WHO
COULD BARELY
MUSTER UP
ENOUGH COURAGE
TO DO THE PONY
IN PUBLIC HAD A
PURPOSE. I WAS
HERE TO SERVE
AS BACK-UP. IF
I COULDN'T BE
IMPORTANT, I
COULD AT LEAST
HANG OUT WITH
THOSE WHO
WERE.

I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area, which was considered Peace Symbol Central back in the '60s. As I was entering my teen years, hippies, beatniks, and flower children were becoming social outcasts. Any guy whose hair touched the top of his collar was considered a radical. The war everyone was talking about was Vietnam, instead of Iraq. LSD was the drug of choice. No one had heard of meth. And music by groups like the Beatles, the Doors, and the Stones was pretty much the center of everything.

To me, music felt like my ticket to the good life. I could sing, I could dance, and I figured with enough lessons I could learn to play whatever instrument I wanted. I chose the drums. My parents chose the clarinet. My parents won.

So, along with playing clarinet in the school band, I also became a go-go dancer. That's like a back-up dancer, only with considerably less rhythm, grace, and skill.

**“ IF YOU ARE NOT GUIDED BY GOD
YOU WILL BE GUIDED BY
SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ELSE. ”**
-Eric Liddell

Back then simply paddling your arms through the air like you were swimming across a pool was considered a dance. It was called—wait for it—“The Swim.” There was also “The Pony” and “The Monkey.” Believe it or not, dances from the ‘60s make disco look cool.

Unfortunately, our group, the Psychedelic Pineapple, had a hard time booking gigs. There wasn’t much demand for five 12-year-old girls who could only perform one song, even if it was “Satisfaction” by the Rolling Stones, which, come to think of it, could pretty much be voted the theme song for the search for significance.

The band folded, but luckily a couple of the girls from the band slid right into that “popular” slot in middle school. They were the *it* girls. I wasn’t one of them, but I was in their orbit. That was enough to make me feel like I was somebody. I mattered. The dorky little bookworm who could barely muster up enough courage to do The Pony in public had a purpose. I was here to serve as back-up. If I couldn’t be important, I could at least hang out with those who were.

Then my family moved. We left the Bay Area and headed one hour north to Santa Rosa. My first day of school felt a bit like my red-carpet premiere. Today everyone would check me out and decide whether I was good enough to be allowed into their inner circle—or at least acknowledged in the hall. I hoped to find some new friends I could dance with in the quad during lunch. To that end, I put on my “grooviest” outfit: a psychedelic neon print mini-dress, white go-go boots, hot pink fishnet stockings, and a leather peace-symbol choker.

The principal walked me into my first class after everyone was already seated. All it took was one glance to know

I was doomed. It seemed like every girl in the class was wearing a turtleneck sweater, plaid or navy skirt, saddle shoes, and a sweet little plastic barrette in her perfectly curled hair. For the guys, not one pair of bell-bottoms, not one tie-dyed tee, not one hair on their heads long enough to touch the collar of their button-down shirts. I couldn't have felt more out of place if they all spoke Ukrainian.

I never wore that outfit again. I gave up clarinet, didn't dance in the quad, and only sang to myself in the shower. If I had any hope of fitting in, obviously I'd have to reinvent myself. So, I did. I traded my love of music and everything "hippie" for invisibility and academics. I was shy in the Bay Area, but I was silent in Santa Rosa. I studied and tried not to make waves. I excelled as a student but failed at something even more important—being myself. At the time, "myself" didn't seem significant enough.

Fast forward way too many years to count—

My kids are grown and my husband is offered a new job. After 21 years in Colorado Springs, we move to Phoenix, Arizona. It's the first day of a new Bible study I've been invited to. Once again, I'm the new kid. This time, even though it was only five years ago, I don't even remember what I was wearing. What I do remember is how everyone else looked: tall, thin, blond, tan—like breathing Barbie dolls.

That song my kids used to listen to on *Sesame Street* started echoing through my head: "One of these things is not like the other." I was that *one* thing. Tall, thin, blond, and tan are not words anyone has ever used to describe me. But this time, instead of wanting to sink into the floor or remake myself into someone else, I realized how excited I was about getting to know these women better, and I was excited about being part of their group. An important part. Not because I was circling the orbit of others who were im-

“

**WE SHOULD HAVE GREAT PEACE
IF WE DID NOT BUSY OURSELVES WITH
WHAT OTHERS SAY AND DO.**

-Thomas à Kempis”

portant, but because together we all had something to teach and something to learn. Love to give and to receive. I was in a room with women who mattered. And I was one of them.

Was there a little twinge inside that poked me and whispered, “You’re not pretty enough, young enough, or skinny enough for this group”? You bet. As I mentioned before, we’re all still on this search for significance. At one time I believed appearance was an important part of that equation. I don’t anymore. But I have to be reminded of that fact now and then. I have to remember to ask myself questions like, “Is that funky little whisper in my head what I really believe or is that just what I feel in the heat of this moment?”

Your Story

Now that you’ve heard our stories, it’s time to take a fresh look at yours. As a kid, you knew you were significant. That truth was as ingrained in you as your eye color is in your DNA. As a matter of fact, you pretty much believed the world revolved around you. When you cried, things happened. People fed you and changed you. Maybe they even snuggled you and amused you with games like peek-a-boo.

If you played peek-a-boo as a baby, you discovered you had the ability to make people disappear just by closing your eyes. Open your eyes and *poof!* you could make them reappear. You were one powerful kid. No wonder you were so important.

As a toddler, it began to dawn on you that maybe you weren’t the absolute ruler of everything. You discovered annoying little things like rules, time-outs, and the word “no.” For a while, “no” probably became your favorite word—but only when *you* said it. Never when anyone said it *to* you.

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About this time you also discovered other kids. They weren't here to serve you like adults. Sure, these pint-sized people were fun to play with for a while, but soon enough they wanted to touch your stuff. Sometimes they had the nerve to take whatever it was you were playing with right out of your hands. And what did the adults do? Did they set those little deviants straight? No. They told you to "share." From that point on, your supposed world domination went downhill fast.

As time went by, you met kids who could do things you couldn't. Some were bigger and stronger. Others could swing higher, run faster, maybe even blow bubbles with their own spit. You were no longer convinced that you were the center of the universe. You realized there were other planets in this solar system. Lots of them. And you, well, maybe you were kind of like Pluto. You didn't even rank as a planet anymore.

Now, in your teen years, your brain—and your life—have become much more complex. You have a bigger, clearer picture of the world and your place in it. And you may discover that now you only dream of being Pluto. You realize you are one small person in a world of more than six and a half billion. And that's only the number of people who are alive right now. When you consider your place in history, that number is so big your brain could explode. All you know is that one in a billion, let alone six billion, is not much.

Forget the billions. Just being one in a crowd of students on your school campus or at your church youth group can make you feel small and insignificant. And it's really not about the numbers anyway. It's the ways we human beings place value on ourselves and others that plays a part in the search for significance.

IF GROWING UP WAS THE KEY TO FEELING SIGNIFICANT, WE'D TELL YOU TO SIMPLY HANG IN THERE! IT'LL HAPPEN. BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF ADULTS WHO ARE STILL ASKING THE BIG THREE QUESTIONS: DO I MATTER? AM I LOVED? WHY AM I HERE?

“PURPOSE IS WHAT GIVES LIFE A MEANING ... A DRIFTING BOAT ALWAYS DRIFTS DOWNSTREAM.”
-Charles H. Parkhurst

If growing up was the key to feeling significant, we'd tell you to simply hang in there! It'll happen. But there are plenty of adults who are still asking the Big Three questions: Do I matter? Am I loved? Why am I here?

In the movie *To Save A Life* it's not just Jake, a teen, who is struggling with his own significance, particularly in light of the death of his friend. Jake's father is on that same quest. You can see it in the pressure Jake's father puts on his son, and himself, to work harder to succeed, to make something of his life, to prove that he matters. You can see it in the father's attempt to answer the question "Am I loved?" by seeking affection from a woman other than his wife. Both of these choices have destructive consequences, not only for Jake's father, but for his entire family.

We mentioned this was a daring quest. The stakes are high and people can get hurt along the way. It may be your personal search, but how you go about it will affect you—and everyone around you. That's because there's both an inside and an outside story when it comes to the search for significance.

The inside story is all about what's going on below the surface, in your head and in your heart. It's what you think, feel, and believe to be true. This inside story includes the questions you ask to better understand who you really are. It's the place where the people you admire and your personal *if onlys* are trying to write the storyline of your self-worth. If you let them.

But there's also an outside story. This story is about how what's going on in your head and your heart is reflected in your life—how the way you feel about yourself affects what you say and do. The truth is, you are significant. You may

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not wholly believe it right now, but it's a fact. You cannot choose whether or not you matter, because you do, but you can choose whether you will live your life in a significant way, in a way that makes a positive impact on the world.

You get to choose how your outside story will read. Will it be a courageous tale filled with risks and adventure? Will it include dangerous things like reaching out to others in love? Will it be a story about how you dared to become the person you were created to be?

Or will you play it safe? Do just enough to get by? Choose a "me first" future and hope for the best?

Daring to live a life of significance in a "whatever" world takes guts. But you have the ability to make a wonderful difference in this world, a difference as unique as your very own fingerprint. Friends may discourage you from trying. They may say, "Sit back and relax. You've got your whole adult life to stress over things like purpose and significance." But the story you're writing, both inside and outside, has already begun.

Your teen years don't need to be a holding pattern. Why not use them as a launching pad?

Look at Joan of Arc. At 17 she believed God wanted her to help France defeat England. She led 4,000 men to victory at the Battle of Orleans.

Look at Thomas Edison. He lost his hearing in his early teens. Labeled a "slow learner" at school, Thomas used his deafness to help him focus. He patented 1,093 inventions, an all-time U.S. record, including the phonograph and the incandescent lightbulb.

Look at Carly Abramson. When her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, 12-year-old

DARING
TO LIVE
A LIFE OF
SIGNIFICANCE
IN A "WHATEVER"
WORLD TAKES
GUTS.

Carly made a key ring to cheer her up—then she made 700 more to raise money for breast cancer research. Now 17, Carly is the founder of the Cure Breast Cancer Foundation. She recently raised \$800,000 by organizing a golf tournament and auction.

Battling armies, inventing the first record player, or raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to help find a cure for cancer are all impressive ways of making a positive difference. But you don't have to do something worthy of a story on the evening news to lead a life of significance. Numbers, fanfare, and even the occasional miracle don't make one person more significant than another.

In the Bible, there's a letter to Christians living in an area of Asia Minor known as Galatia. In this letter it says, "Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life" (Galatians 6:4–5 MSG).

It not only takes guts to live a life of significance in a "whatever" world, it takes a plan. How do you "make a careful exploration of who you are" and do "the creative best you can with your own life"? That's what this book is all about. It's here to help you bring your inside story of significance together with your outside story, to help you know for sure that you matter, you're loved, and you have a uniquely wonderful purpose in this world.

But along with guts and a plan, you need one more thing to live a life of significance in a "whatever" world. And it's not the authors of this book—Todd and Vicki. It's the Author of *your* story—God Himself.

Awesome Scriptures to Live By!

The lines of purpose in your lives never grow slack, tightly tied as they are to your future in heaven, kept taut by hope.
-Colossians 1:5 MSG

In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.
-Proverbs 3:6 TLB

Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.
-Galatians 6:5 MSG

Jesus said, "If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face, but if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself."
-Luke 18:14 MSG

No matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of.
-1 Corinthians 12:19 MSG

We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.
-Romans 8:28 NLT

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.
-Romans 12:2 NLT

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we're living for.
-Ephesians 1:11 MSG



2

Dare 2 Be
Different

DID YOU KNOW?

TODAY'S TEENS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A SOLID VALUE SYSTEM

- Teens who watch a lot of sexual content on TV are more than twice as likely to have sex as those whose viewing of sexual content on TV is restricted.
- Almost one in five 18-year-olds have four or more credit cards—with an average balance of \$5,000.
- Almost 50 percent of people under the age of 21 who drink alcohol, binge-drink—meaning they consume five or more drinks in a four-hour period.
- Alcohol is a key factor in the three leading causes of teen death: auto accidents, homicides, and suicides.
- More than four million teens become infected with a STD each year.
- The average age at which teens start taking drugs is 15.

The four most dangerous words in the English language might be:

Just this one time.

That's what Terrence told himself just before he got high the first time. True story: He was at a party and pills were being handed out like Halloween candy. He had resisted them hundreds of times. But those stoned friends of his sure looked happy. And they wanted him to join in the fun. Maybe they knew something he didn't.

Just this one time.

The panic set in about the same time the high did. Terrence recalls, "I immediately started trying to assure myself that things were OK. I was just doing what my friends were doing, and besides, I was smarter than they were. I had better self-control. Sure, being high felt good, but I wasn't going to make a habit of it. Maybe just a few more times and then I'd be done with it.

"But deep inside I knew I was lying to myself. This was just the first step down a long, long road."

For the next several years, Terrence chased the high. The high is elusive, though. At first, it took more and more of the same drug to get the high. Then it took a newer, stronger, pricier drug. A more dangerous drug—and as the drugs got more dangerous, so did those who supplied them.

He wasted thousands of dollars, landed in the hospital, and almost died.

"I found myself doing things I never thought I'd do in a million years," he says, "all for the next high. I became a slave to it. There was no hideous thing I wouldn't do. It only took a few weeks for me to start hating drugs. I hated getting high. But I had to have it."

Terrence's downward spiral was accelerated when he began to see his friends for who they really were. They knew the truth about being hooked. They had known it long before he did. If they really cared about him, why had they pressured him into falling in the same pit they were in? Could it be that getting one more junkie to join their club helped them feel better about themselves?

Those friends, Terrence realized, were using him—just like he was using drugs.

Terrence had considered himself a Christian before the drugs invaded his life, but, as he explains, "I wasn't living it."

"I reached out to God," he says, "and He helped me realize that I needed to do more than just stop doing drugs. I needed to become a new person, to base who I was on God's unconditional love for me through His son, Jesus. Jesus loved me enough to die for me."

Terrence says that God changed him, radically. "I'd say to anybody out there," he notes, "if you have an addiction like I did, don't just stop the behavior. Allow God to change your whole identity. Become someone else, someone who would never do the destructive things the 'old you' did. If your friends, for example, are into drugs, change your friends. I did. And I changed jobs, location, habits, my way of thinking, even the way I talked and dressed. I dumped anything that fed my old ways. My life now is all about who I am in Christ, not who I once was."

Daring to be different isn't always easy. Valuing the things that God values can make you feel locked out of the house where the rockin' party is going on. But living by values that Jesus exemplified will revolutionize your life and probably the lives of those around you.

Today Terrence shares his story with hundreds of kids, some of them lost in the same drug jungle he once stum-

“THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIVES HAVE AS MUCH POWER AS WE CHOOSE TO GIVE THEM.”
-David McNally

bled into. He helps them realize a level of self-worth and purpose that many of them never imagined possible.

Yes, it's amazing what Jesus can do in and through people when they have the guts to live life His way. That's what this book is all about. Daring to be different. Daring to live a life that makes a difference.

But how do you make this kind of life happen? How do you value giving in a world that values getting? How do you value mercy in a world that applauds the killer instinct? How do you find a sense of self-worth when you don't have the flawless face, buff body, or fat bank account of the athletes, rock stars, and movie stars our society celebrates?

It all starts with a little perspective. Something that Terrence lost, before Jesus helped him find it again.

ART VERSUS MESS

Here's something to do the next time you're in an art museum. And, OK, we know what some of you are saying: "There will be no next time I'm in an art museum. In fact, there won't be a first time I'm in an art museum!" Don't be too quick to say that. You might be walking around some city one day when a thunderstorm suddenly erupts, and you realize an art museum is your closest refuge. Or, procuring a brochure from an art museum could be part of your youth group's next scavenger hunt. Honestly, you just never know.

Of course, we know that some of you out there actually like art museums and visit them whenever you can. Whatever the case, here's your museum assignment: Find a large paint-

ing and stand as close to it as those burly museum guards will allow. Get your nose a millimeter from the canvas. (Just try not to sneeze.) Then stare really hard at the painting.

What you'll see, most likely, is an unintelligible mess of paint globs and brushstrokes—a random explosion of color and texture. You won't be able to tell what the painting is supposed to represent. If you didn't know what you were looking at, you might think a clown blew up and splattered all over the canvas.

To understand and appreciate the painting, you'll need to take a few steps back so you can have perspective about what you're seeing, about what the artist was trying to achieve. Then things start to make sense.

You know where we're going with this analogy, right? Art imitates life, and life is all about perspective. Seeing the Big Picture, literally. Perspective is being grateful for the answers you got right on the chemistry test—and not focusing only on those you got wrong. Perspective is appreciating your winning smile, awesome hair, and sparkling eyes rather than freaking out about the three zits on your chin.

Perspective is vital to living a life of significance, a life that makes a difference.

Here's how perspective helps you. It determines how you perceive what happens to you—and around you—throughout your life. More important, it determines how you'll respond to all the stuff that happens. It is nearly impossible to see the Big Picture when your nose is mashed up against it. The actions you take—and decisions you make—in a cloud of confusion, ignorance, or despair will likely be mistakes. So don't act, don't conclude, and don't decide until you've seen things in the light of heavenly love and wisdom. Only in that light can you see clearly.

“THE DOORS WE OPEN AND CLOSE EACH DAY DECIDE THE LIVES WE LIVE.”
-Flor Whittemore

As parents and youth leaders, we have seen many life tragedies, from drug addiction to running away from home to suicide, happen because teens and some adults around them lose their perspective. They can't see or understand what's happening. All they know is they're confused. And it hurts like hell.

We don't want this to happen to you.

So what's the secret to keeping your life in perspective no matter what? Start with this: Jesus loves you like crazy—beyond logic, beyond human comprehension, beyond what you deserve. Now, you may have heard “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so” enough times to make you dismiss the message. And you're right, that song is Sunday school stuff, like the VeggieTales DVDs and making sheep out of Elmer's glue and cotton balls.

But you never outgrow the Jesus in that little song. He's not just for kids who still have their baby teeth and can't be trusted with cell phones. He is “By Your Side on the Way to the Crisis Pregnancy Center” Jesus. He's “Holding Your Hand While You Clutch the Bottle of Pills That Could End Your Life” Jesus. He is “I'm Sticking by You Even Though One of Your Parents Is Leaving” Jesus. He is relevant to whatever happens to you, whenever it happens.

The Bible promises you that nothing—not one thing—can separate you from Jesus' love. Addicted to porn? Jesus still loves you. Living mostly just to get high? Jesus still loves you. A chronic liar too terrified to let anyone see the real you? Or jumping from crush to crush in the mad chase to finally find the love and acceptance you hunger for?

TO SAVE A LIFE: DARE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE COUNT

Jesus sees the real you and loves you so much it could blow your mind. You can trust Him completely. He'll stand by your side no matter what. You can share with Him your secret fears, your hidden guilt. He is the most faithful friend you will ever have. You're significant and valuable because His love makes you that way.

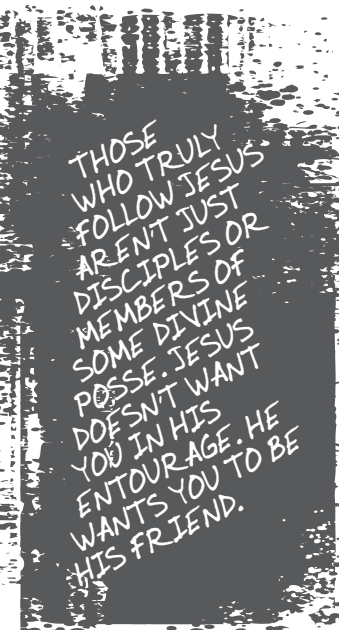
Think about that truth for a minute: Jesus is your friend. You may think of Jesus as your creator, your leader, your teacher, even the almighty Lord of your life. And He is all of those things. But Jesus is also your friend. "I've named you friends," He says (John 15:15 MSG).

This means that "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" isn't just a hymn sung by old people; it's a steel-solid, life-changing truth. Those who truly follow Jesus aren't just disciples or members of some divine posse. Jesus doesn't want you in His entourage. He wants you to be His friend.

Acknowledging this truth will revolutionize your relationship with Jesus and let you live your life with significance, purpose, and joy. Here's how.

First, realizing that Jesus is your friend can make your relationship with Him closer and full of life and energy. Think about it: You might admire a celebrity or your favorite athlete or the recording artist who takes up the most space on your iPod. But how close are you to this person? All the love and admiration are one-way. There's a Grand Canyon separating you. At best, you're part of a faceless army of Twitter-fed followers.

Or it might be a teacher, youth pastor, boss, or coach you admire. But even here,



roles like teacher/student, coach/athlete, or employer/employee block closeness. In fact, teachers and coaches and the like are cautioned against becoming too close to those under their authority.

It's a different story with friends. With friends, you can get as close as you need to. Jesus calls you friend, so there's no professionally mandated distance between the two of you. You can dispense with the formalities and open your heart. Jesus doesn't offer the four-second, firm-grip handshake you might get at a job interview or from your great-uncle at a family reunion. He'll give you a hug. You can scream or cry in His presence. And you don't need to schedule an appointment. As with any true 24/7 friend, His door is always open.

Second, because Jesus is your friend, you can talk to Him about anything. You would approach a teacher or boss only about the stuff within their body of knowledge and scope of influence. You discuss what's "appropriate." For example, you might have a great algebra teacher, someone who really knows her way around a polynomial. But are you going to go to this person for heartfelt advice on how to get along with your parents?

But a true friend cares about all the different aspects of your life. Jesus will listen to your thoughts, opinions, and concerns. No topic is off-limits. Nothing is too big or too small. You can approach Jesus just to tell Him how you feel, just to unburden all the thoughts and worries bouncing around in your head like sneakers in the dryer.

At this point, some of you might be thinking, *Jesus wouldn't want to be friends with someone like me.*

Don't be so sure. Here's what some of Jesus' contemporaries said about Him: "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and 'sinners'" (Matthew 11:19). And

keep in mind that in New Testament days, it wasn't just socially unacceptable to associate with boozehounds, hookers, and tax collectors—many of whom pocketed the money they collected—it was a violation of Jewish law. Those who kept the kind of company Jesus kept were considered law-breakers and social outcasts.

So you're a sinner. Maybe even—*gulp*—an aspiring tax collector! No problem. Jesus still wants to be your friend. He's been making friends with social and moral outcasts for thousands of years. He's really good at it, and He doesn't care what it does to His reputation.

So please don't let guilt over things you have done—or failed to do—make you feel dirty, small, insignificant, or unworthy of Jesus' love, attention, and friendship. Jesus loves you. That love gives you supreme value as a person. That's why He wants you to shed any guilt and self-loathing like dead snakeskin.

But you don't know the things I've done! you still might be protesting. True, we don't. But consider the following examples we do know about:

- The apostle Paul, who wrote a huge chunk of the New Testament, once persecuted Christians. And we don't mean that he dissed them on his blog. He tracked them down and had them killed.
- Jesus' disciple Peter denied he knew Him on the most excruciating night of his Master's life—the night before He was crucified.
- Israel's King David committed adultery and abused his power in a murderous way. Like an Old Testament crime boss, he put out a hit on an innocent man just to cover up his crimes. Yet David wound up being called "a man after God's own heart," and Jesus was born directly from David's bloodline.

- And let's not forget Terrence, who spent years in his self-imposed prison of drugs.

All of these individuals rose above their mistakes.

The once-cowardly Peter was eventually executed for boldly standing up for his faith.

Paul was executed too, his head removed from his body by a Roman sword for becoming one of early Christianity's most courageous and outspoken crusaders. Think he was plagued and paralyzed by guilt? Consider these words he wrote to Christians in Rome back in the first century: "There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death" (Romans 8:1-2 *NLT*).

Terrence's life is now dedicated to saving people who are as lost as he once was, even though telling his story is sometimes painful and embarrassing.

Still think you're too bad a person to have Jesus as your friend and Savior? Have you publicly and defiantly denied Jesus this past week? Presided over the murder of any Christians? Wasted years and thousands of greenbacks on drugs?

Didn't think so.

And even if you have done something truly terrible, you are in good company. Good, forgiven company. It's time to shake off that guilt and self-loathing and collapse into Jesus' loving, forgiving arms. Let your broken self be loved by the Son of God. It's what Jesus does best. Say you're sorry, and let mercy take care of the rest.

Your sins, whatever they may be, are not bigger than divine love and forgiveness. Not abortion. Not sexual experimentation. Not the secret drinking or drug habit. Not the Internet-porn obsession. Not the cruel streak toward

those younger and weaker than you. Not the lying you can't seem to control.

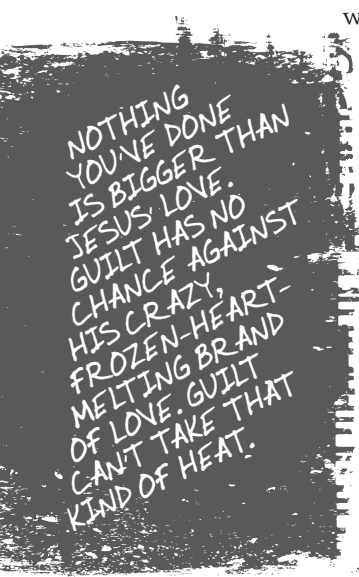
Jesus, in His broken body, absorbed every wrong thing you have ever done and ever will do. The sin is no longer yours. He made it His. The Bible goes so far as to say that Jesus "became sin." Then He died, taking all that sin down with Him. He was buried, but He out-muscled death and rose to life. The sin, however, stayed buried. It's worm chow. You are free from it.

Here's another way to look at this truth: Jesus became dirty to make you clean. He is pure enough, strong enough, tough enough, and loving enough to take on all the world's sins. That means yours too. And He's also capable of carrying every loss, disappointment, wound, or dark and secret fear you bring to Him. That's the kind of friend He is. He can live anywhere and everywhere in the universe, and He wants to live in your heart. All of this should make you feel like you are standing victoriously atop Mount Everest. How's the view?

Nothing you've done is bigger than Jesus' love. Guilt has no chance against His crazy, frozen-heart-melting brand of love. Guilt can't take that kind of heat.

"'Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,' says the Lord, who has compassion on you" (Isaiah 54:10).

Everything you face in life should be evaluated with a clear-eyed sense of perspective, and that all starts with acknowledging Jesus' forever-love for you. You have a heavenly best friend who will guide you and support you



every day of your life. A friend who loves you enough to die for you. That's just what He did. That's where your perspective comes from. That's where your value system comes from. That's where your strength comes from.

Let's go back to our art museum for a moment. Right now your nose might be pressed up against an overwhelming mishmash of colors and textures that make no sense. What you see might even be beyond confusing—downright scary even. But take a few steps back. You are a work of art. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Your life is in the loving hands of a Master Artist. An Artist and Friend who cares about you and has a plan for your life. Watch and learn as He reveals to you more and more of the Big Picture masterpiece He wants your life to be. And as you see portions of the painting come together, hold on to those moments of realization. Let them give you strength when you encounter a new section of your life's canvas—a section that is murky, unfinished, or simply empty.

OK, one more time: Perspective will revolutionize the way you live. So take two giant steps back and use it.

LOVE: LET'S TAKE IT OUTSIDE

If the truths about Jesus' love for you are making you feel better about yourself, more confident that there's a plan for your life, that's a great start. But it's only a start. Jesus' highest hope for you is not that you'll get a big self-satisfied smile every time you look in the mirror. He's got bigger plans for you than that.

He wants you to treat all the love He's given you just like Todd's kids treat creamy peanut butter: He wants you to spread it with wild abandon. He wants you to get *outside*

yourself (even get *over* yourself, if necessary). After all, to quote the great philosopher Julie “Sound of Music” Andrews, “Love isn’t love till you give it away.”

We know this giving stuff isn’t always easy.

OK, it’s hardly ever easy. And we all know why.

Human beings are imperfect. That means no human relationship will ever be perfect either. At least not this side of heaven. So, until we get to Paradise, our interactions with strangers, family, friends, and assorted significant others will be sources of great joy as well as extreme frustration and even deep pain.

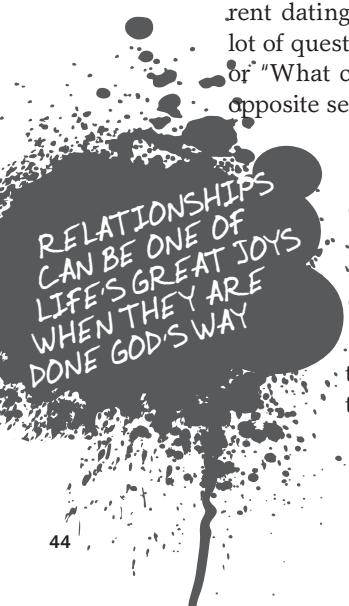
Yes, for most people, dealing with relationships is a constant tug-of-war.

On one end of the rope, there’s this: God created relationships and gave us the perfect model of how they should work. We were meant to love each other, serve each other, and put others’ needs ahead of our own. The way Jesus did.

On the other end is the world’s value system, which is—in a word—selfish. For example, check out any of the current dating reality shows. You’ll hear contestants asked a lot of questions like “What’s your idea of the perfect date?” or “What characteristic do you find most attractive in the opposite sex?” or “Who’s your ideal girl/guy?”

But you’ll spend a lot of hours in front of your TV or computer screen before you ever hear questions like “How do you hope to serve and support your partner in a romantic relationship?” or “What kind of boyfriend (or girlfriend) do you aspire to be?”

Why do questions like these seem out of context? Thank the mantra of the twenty-first century: *All me, all the time* or its cousins *What have*



RELATIONSHIPS
CAN BE ONE OF
LIFE'S GREAT JOYS
WHEN THEY ARE
DONE GOD'S WAY

you done for me lately? and *What about MY needs?*

Think about the last breakup you witnessed (maybe it was your own). From the one doing the breaking up, did you hear reasons like:

"My needs just weren't being met."

"I'm evolving as a person, and _____ wasn't evolving with me."

"I've met someone who connects with me better." (Translation: "I've met someone hotter and/or more popular.")

Have you ever heard someone end a romance by saying, "I'm not bringing enough to this relationship, and I need to step away until I learn how to be less selfish"? The closest thing you'll ever hear to a confession like that is "It's not you, it's me," which everyone knows is code for "It's you! You're just not doing it for me anymore!"

Given all the greed and double-talk that hovers like storm clouds over relationships, is it any wonder that we tend to approach them with suspicious eyes, half-closed hearts, or an "I'm gonna get mine; you're on your own" attitude?

The Lord didn't intend for us to live in such a backward-relationship economy. He doesn't want us to try to take as much as we can from others while giving as little as we can get away with. You know all that stuff you just read about how much Jesus loves you and how that love gives you value and significance? He loves everyone else that way too.

That's why a romance, friendship, or family relationship built on a me-first value system is going to go bust every time. (The same is true of teammates, bandmates, and roommates.)

What's more, people are going to get hurt. On the other hand, relationships can be one of life's great joys when they are done God's way. If we, with open and generous hearts, love

each other, serve each other, and put our selfish agenda last on the list, we reap big hefty truckloads of love and joy in return.

Yeah, this sounds like a paradox. But if you're going to follow Jesus, you gotta get used to living in paradox. The smallest seed becomes a huge tree. Be willing to be last in line and get upgraded to the front. Give stuff away like there's no tomorrow and you get it back with eye-popping interest, but clutch your stuff with a kung-fu grip and it'll wither, die, and slip through your fingers. Serve people humbly and you'll become their leader.

What does the paragraph above have to do with your relationships with your parents, sibs, friends, and romantic interests? Everything. Here's the great paradox: Most people approach relationships like a basketball game. They keep score, because they want to win. (That's their idea of a successful relationship—one that lets them rack up more points than the other person.) But—keeping score is death to relationships.

Think about it: if you keep track of how many favors you do for your significant other versus how many he or she does for you or who spent the most money on Valentine's Day, where does that get you? If you're dishing out more than you're taking in, you'll be frustrated, suspicious, maybe even hurt. Your crush spends less money on gifts; does that mean he or she loves you less? Does that mean there's a lack of commitment to your relationship?

This bizarre-o game can work the other way too. Maybe you're the one who's behind on the relationship scoreboard. You don't always respond to every email or text message. You occasionally fail to Facebook. Your last couple of gifts have been rather small and inexpensive (because you can't find a decent part-time job). To some of your friends, it might look like you're "winning." But you discover that

**“SUCCESS IS NOT IN NEVER
FALLING, BUT IN RISING
EVERY TIME YOU FALL.”**
-Confucius

when it comes to relationships, even when you win, you lose. You feel guilty that the scales are unbalanced. You wonder if your love interest is keeping track of this stuff, just like you are. You worry what kind of conclusions and judgments are being made about you as a result.

See how exhausting this whole thing can be? So turn off the relationship scoreboards. Stop asking yourself, “Am I winning?” Start asking questions like these:

“What can I bring to the table in all of my relationships?”

“What needs do those around me have, and how can I meet those needs?”

“What can I do to delight the people in my life, especially those who need a dose of encouragement right now?”

“How can I surprise people, honor people, show them Jesus’ love?”

This value system, the one Jesus modeled perfectly, will set you free. Free from the prison of keeping score. Free from jealousy. Free from greed. Free from all the stuff that sucks the life out of relationships and the people in them. It will turn you loose to be the kind of friend, son, daughter, sibling, boyfriend, girlfriend—whatever—that people drop to their knees and thank God for.

Wouldn’t you like to play the relationship game Jesus’ way, not the world’s way? If so, it’s your turn to serve.

THE NEXT BIG WHATEVER?

We’ve packed this section of *To Save A Life* with encouragement and affirmation in our effort to help you

feel significant and loved. But we can't wrap things up without spilling a little ink about the people who feel a little too significant, those who feel really, really loved, because they really, really love themselves. If this sounds like someone you know (or even a bit like you), here's some more of that p-word: perspective.

Jesus loves every one of us, but that doesn't make any of us the ultimate Rock Star All-Being/No. 1 Media Icon/Hot-tie Master of All I Survey.

Jesus wants us all to be one thing: faithful. Faithful to Him and to the good works He has planned for us.

You might be hearing a lot of "Get paid!" "Get famous!" "Get sexed!" We want to tell you, respectfully, "Get real."

Of all the people reading this book, none is likely to become world-famous. (And fame is likely to continue to evade your friendly authors too, just as it has since before you were born.) This doesn't mean that none of us should have ambition or aspire to greatness in our chosen endeavors. It just means keeping the right kind of greatness in perspective. Ask *yourself* these questions:

"Does God want to give me a famous face?"

"Does God want to make me a pop idol?"

"Does God want to pimp my ride?"

Or ...

"Does God want to save my eternal soul and lovingly guide my life?"

Here's our sincere hope for you: You will do great things. Maybe not the kind of great that brings worldwide fame, but great nonetheless. It's the kind of greatness that happens when the Creator and one of His creations work to-

WHEN
YOU
DARE TO BE
DIFFERENT
BY SERVING
OTHERS, YOU
CREATE A
LEGACY.

gether in harmony. You can have a great impact on the lives around you. And think about it, even if that's just *one* life, wouldn't you rather truly rock one person's world than have a momentary, soon-forgotten influence on thousands?

And here's something to remember: When you deeply impact someone, that person is then able to reach out to others, passing on the love you have generously shared. When you dare to be different by serving others, you create a legacy. You don't have to be famous, funny, or flush with cash to do that—just faithful.

Mother Teresa said, "Every day we are called to do small things with great love." So, today, do that small favor, that small random act of kindness. It could be as low-key as putting your spare change in the donation box at your favorite coffee shop or letting someone else have that primo parking place at the multiplex. It might be a quick encouraging text to your friend who's discouraged at the moment. Whatever your "small thing" gesture is, it can be big, if it's done out of love.

Awesome Scriptures to Live By!

A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

-Luke 12:15

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you.

-Romans 15:7

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

-Romans 12:2

If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness.

-Isaiah 58:10

Serve one another in love.

-Galatians 5:13

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have.

-Hebrews 13:5 NASB

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

-Micah 6:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

-1 John 4:8

What Is Your Life Going To Be About?

What would you do if you believed that your life was significant? How would you act if you knew, *really knew*, that you were unconditionally loved, totally accepted, and completely forgiven? How would that impact your friendships and relationships with others?

Based on the inspiring movie for teens, best-selling authors Todd Hafer and Vicki Kuyper have written *To Save A Life: Dare to Make Your Life Count*. They've faced the above questions in their own lives, and now want to share what they've found with you. Here are some of the encouraging and life-changing insights that you will discover in this book:

- How you can develop friendships that really matter
- The ripple effect your life can have on others
- How God can "fill the hole in your soul"
- The courage to cross social boundaries and befriend others
- Learning to treat others the way God treats you
- Touching the lives of other teens who are hurting and lonely
- Understanding how your life can make an eternal difference
- Remembering that happiness comes from giving not receiving

Won't you come along on this grand adventure of discovery? The experience could save your life ... and the lives of others, too!