

eternal perspectives

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

How to Live Simply and Give Generously

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Coming November 2026: *All God's Creatures*

If We Don't Speak for the Unborn, Who Will?

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All Scripture quoted in Randy's articles are from the English Standard Version (ESV), unless otherwise noted.

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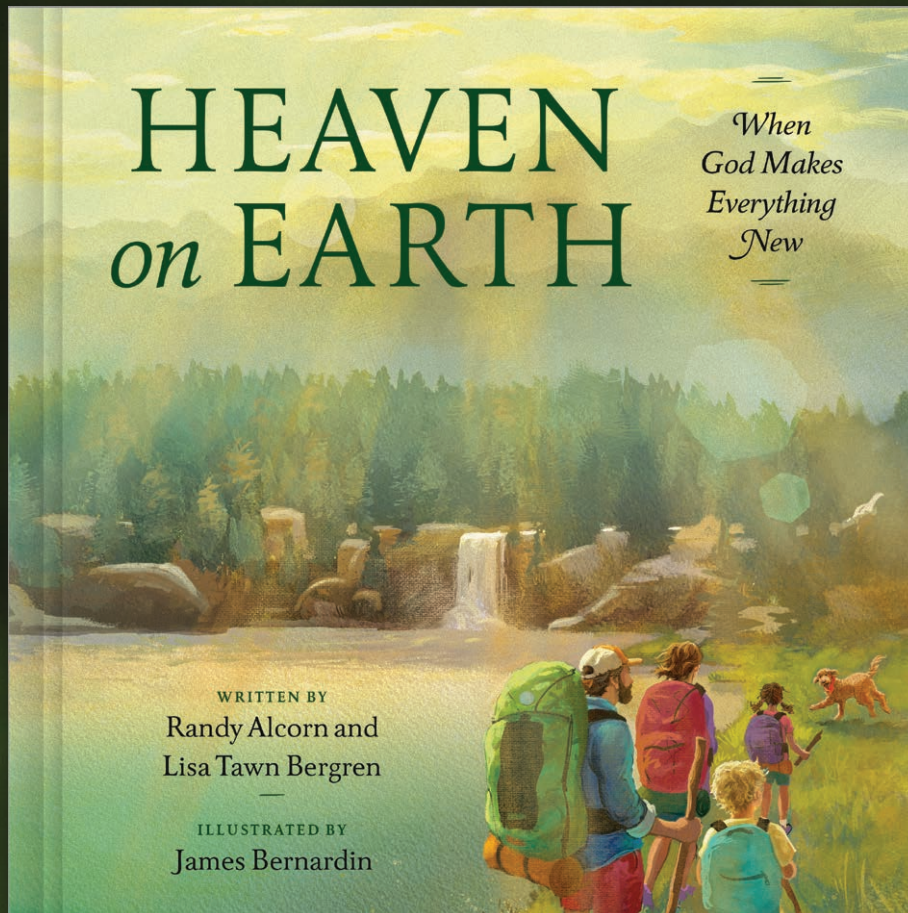
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Available from EPM
after its release on August 11



Trusted voices Randy Alcorn and Lisa Tawn Bergren present a theologically rich, breathtakingly illustrated picture book about what will happen when Jesus makes everything new and God brings Heaven down to earth.

Will our pets be in Heaven? Will Grandma know who I am? What is the difference between Heaven and the New Earth, and why does it matter? Follow two curious kids, their parents, and their beloved goldendoodle as they explore the answers to your questions about the New Earth, guided by the trusted, Bible-based theology that has been a hallmark of Randy Alcorn's ministry for decades.

How to Live **Simply** and Give **Generously**

BY RANDY ALCORN

“Live simply that others may simply live.”

This well-known phrase challenges us to evaluate how we use the resources God has entrusted to us. But it’s important to recognize that simple living doesn’t automatically benefit anyone else. There’s no magic in owning less or spending frugally unless the margin we create is intentionally used to serve others—to feed the hungry, to support missions, and to further God’s kingdom. Simplicity for its own sake—especially when we spend the resulting extra money on ourselves—misses the point.

True simplicity is not just about saying “no” to material things; it’s about saying “yes” to God. It’s about redirecting our resources away from excess and toward eternal impact. The key question is this: How can we live more simply in practical, meaningful ways?

There are countless small shifts we can make. Yet most of us won’t embrace these changes unless we have a deeper reason. Here are six compelling motivations for simple living that go beyond saving money—they call us to live with eternity in mind.

1. We live more simply—and give generously—because this isn’t our true home.

The biggest obstacle to generosity is forgetting that we’re not home yet. Imagine staying in a hotel during an eight-day trip to a foreign country. You’re allowed to earn money and send it back home, but you can’t take any of it with you when

you leave. Would you fill your hotel room with designer furniture and artwork? Of course not! You’d send what you could back to your real home.

That’s the reality for every believer. This world is our temporary residence; the New Earth, where Heaven and Earth are reconciled, is our permanent home. Why invest so heavily in what we can’t keep when we can invest in what will last forever?



2. We live more simply because it shifts our focus back to God.

When Copernicus showed that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the universe, it changed everything. In the same way, living simply and giving generously helps reorient our lives around God, not possessions. We break free from the gravitational pull of materialism and orbit instead around Heaven's values. Giving reminds us that life isn't about accumulating things—it's about surrendering them to God's purposes.

3. We live more simply because we are God's delivery people.

God uses His people to meet the needs of the world. We are His stewards, His delivery drivers. If we forget that everything we've been given ultimately belongs to Him, we'll hoard instead of deliver. Imagine FedEx drivers refusing to drop off packages because they thought the contents were theirs. The whole system would break down!

God blesses us not to increase our standard of living but to increase our standard of giving (2 Corinthians 9:11). We are entrusted with resources so we can pass them on, not stockpile them.

4. We live more simply because eternal rewards far outweigh earthly luxuries.

Choosing a smaller house, selling expensive jewelry, or skipping the latest tech gadget may seem like a sacrifice. But if those choices free up funds for God's work, the return is eternal. Jesus promised that we are storing up treasures in Heaven when we invest in His kingdom. Every time we say "no" to materialism, we say "yes" to eternal joy.

5. We live simply because the world is in deep spiritual need.

God has entrusted extraordinary wealth to the Church, not merely for our comfort but to

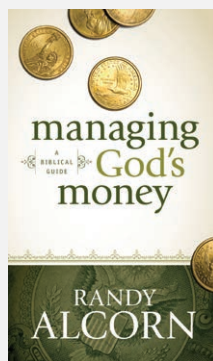
reach the unreached. Billions of people around the world don't know Christ, and many live in cultures without a Christian witness. Sending and supporting missionaries costs money. And that money is already in the Church—it just requires Christians to prioritize their wealth for the sake of the Kingdom.

6. We live simply because the world has urgent physical needs.

In Acts 11, when a famine struck, the early Church responded by giving—each according to their ability. They didn't wait for someone else to act. They saw a need and met it.

This biblical model still applies today. When we live on less than we make, we create margin to help others. If God has blessed us with more than we need, it's so we can share with those who have too little. That's what Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:28. God provides for us not so we can have more but "so that [we] may have something to share with anyone in need."

Living simply isn't about guilt or deprivation—it's about freedom. Freedom to give, to love, and to invest in what truly lasts. When we loosen our grip on earthly things, we open our hands to eternal impact. ■



Managing God's Money lays a biblical foundation for our being the managers of God's assets. It is available from EPM for \$8.00 (retail \$10.99). We offer discounts for larger quantity orders. epm.org/mgm

God Knows What You Really Want, *Not Just What You Think You Want*

BY TREVIN WAX

There's a dramatic moment in Augustine's *Confessions* where, before his conversion, he lies to his mother, Monica, as he leaves North Africa and sets sail for Rome.

No one prayed for Augustine's conversion more than his mother. "Rivers of tears that flowed," he wrote, "day by day bedewed the ground wherever she prayed." Augustine's departure must have seemed like an enormous setback to Monica. How could she keep an eye on him, or influence him, or prod him toward faith if they were no longer together? It made no sense.

Yet looking back, Augustine sees the finger of God in this scene of sadness:

You knew all along, O God, the real reason why I left to seek a different country, but you did not reveal it either to me or to my mother, who bitterly bewailed my departure and followed me to the seashore. She held on to me with all her strength, attempting either to take me back home with her or to come with me, but I deceived her, pretending that I did not want to take leave of a friend until a favorable wind should arise and enable him to set sail. I lied to my mother, my incomparable mother!

The "real reason" he left, Augustine realized later, was so God would bring him into contact with Ambrose, the preacher whose life and words prepared his heart for salvation. At the same time, God was at work in Monica's life, planning her sorrow for her good. She was right to desire her son's conversion, but at times she'd hover over him, unable to see how God might effect his conversion apart from her constant presence. God would make use of this setback for her growth in holiness.

'Real Nub of Her Longing'

Here's how Augustine describes the night before his departure:

That same night I left by stealth; she did not, but remained behind praying and weeping. And what was she begging of you, my God, with such abundant tears? Surely, that you would not allow me to sail away. But in your deep wisdom you acted in her truest interests: you listened to the real nub of her longing and took no heed of what she was asking at this particular moment, for you meant to make me into what she was asking for all the time.

What Monica experienced as the silence of God was actually His grace. The event she thought would foreclose the possibility of her desires being fulfilled was the path God would use to answer her many prayers. When she pleaded with God that night to keep Augustine in Carthage, God said no. He was setting plans in motion to fulfill her deeper wish.

"You were snatching me away," wrote Augustine later, "using my lusts to put an end to them and chastising her too-carnal desire with the scourge of sorrow." God was at work in both these lives, in Augustine for salvation and in Monica for sanctification.

God Knows Your Deeper Desire

God knows what you really want, not just what you think you want.



Augustinus en Monica by Ary Scheffer

Remember that truth on those nights when you moisten the pillow with your tears . . . after months and years have passed in seeming silence, when you've begged God to bring back your prodigal child, or rekindle the heart of your indifferent spouse, or bring healing to a painful church experience, or remove you from a difficult work situation. You make a particular request in a particular moment; perhaps you even appeal to Christ's promise to grant whatever we ask for (John 14:13), but God goes quiet. Or worse, He declines. And now your tears multiply—your yearnings mixed with hurt, confusion, and betrayal.

"Everything is needful that God sends; nothing can be needful that He withholds," wrote John Newton, the 18th-century pastor best known for "Amazing Grace." Tim Keller applied the truth of Newton's words to his own experience of disillusionment when God rejected a heartfelt request: "As I look back, God was saying, 'Son, when a child of mine makes a request, I always give that person what he or she would have asked for if they knew everything I know.'"

"The real nub of her longing" is how Augustine describes his mother's prayer underneath the prayer, the essential petition beneath the depths of surface-level requests.

Prayer Underneath the Prayer

God is a good Father who gives us what we most deeply want. "The real nub of her longing" is how Augustine describes his mother's prayer underneath the prayer, the essential petition beneath the depths of surface-level requests.

Commenting on this passage from *Confessions*, Peter Kreeft writes,

Often, the best way to get what we most deeply want is not to get what we consciously want. God often gives us our most deeply desired end precisely by denying us our asked-for means, or gives us our long-range ends by denying us our short-range means, because He sees clearly, as we do not, the whole providential picture and how best to work out all things for our really best good, while we can only ask for some things for our apparent and immediate good.

God is painting a portrait. Dark strokes are part of the canvas. The Artist knows His subjects better than His subjects know themselves. Trust His hand. Yield to His brush. God often says no to our particular pleadings in order to say yes to our most profound prayers. ■

Trevin Wax is vice president of research and resource development at the North American Mission Board and a visiting professor of theology at Cedarville University. A former missionary to Romania, Trevin is a regular columnist at The Gospel Coalition.



Coming November 17

*For everyone who's ever wondered,
"Will there be animals in Heaven and on the New Earth?"*

Whether at home or in the wild, animals bring comfort, joy, fascination, and wonder into our lives. It's only natural, then, to hope the animals we cherish so much on Earth will someday live with us again.

For generations, however, many pastors and scholars have dismissed this idea, believing that Scripture is silent on the matter. And while countless pet-lovers cling to the hope that animals will be in Heaven, their belief is often rooted more in sentiment than in solid biblical teaching.

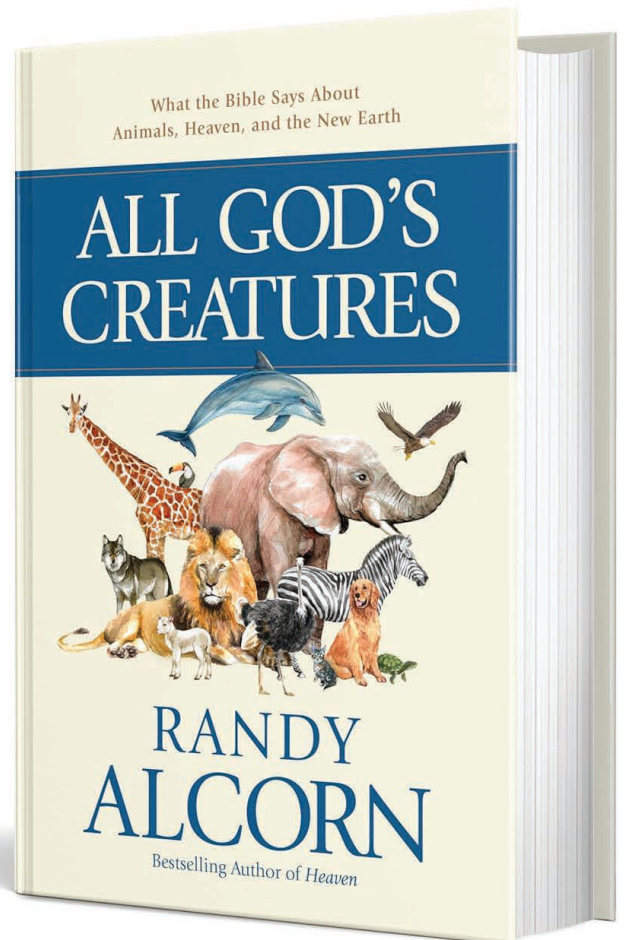
Not anymore.

Now, in the most comprehensive, Scripture-based theology of animals ever written, Randy Alcorn presents a paradigm-shifting vision of God's restorative plan for all His creatures—from Eden to the New Earth.

A captivating blend of rich biblical insight, inspiring stories, and surprising animal facts, *All God's Creatures* thoroughly explores:

- God's love for and delight in every animal He created
- how the destiny of animals and people is intertwined throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation
- why God's design for His creatures is neither secondary nor temporary, but woven into His eternal plan

So, if you've ever wondered whether animals will be in Heaven—or hoped for the possibility of one day being reunited with the pets you love—prepare yourself for an enlightening treat. You'll discover how God's Word tells us much more about animals than many of us have been led to believe.





Wayne Grudem

Ph.D.; Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of Theology and Biblical Studies, Phoenix Seminary; author of *Systematic Theology* and *Bible Doctrine*

In this delightful and fascinating book, Randy Alcorn’s thesis is that in the age to come, God will remove the curse on the natural world—placed after the sin of Adam and Eve—so that animals will be “set free” from their current bondage (Romans 8:21) and will regain the “very good” (Genesis 1:31) nature they had in Eden. Alcorn argues convincingly that many friendly animals will inhabit the New Earth. I hope he is correct in his expectation that God, in his goodness, may even bring back to life our favorite pets. I anticipate that everyone who reads this book will gain a deeper appreciation for the wonderful animal kingdom that God created for our companionship and joy.



Greg Laurie

Pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship, evangelist, host of “A New Beginning” podcast

In *All God's Creatures*, Randy takes the questions people whisper after church and answers them out loud with the full weight of Scripture. Whether you've lost a beloved pet, are wrestling with why God allows animals to suffer, or just want a clearer vision of what eternity will actually look like, this book will point you to the Bible, and to the God who made and cares for every creature.

Some of the Endorsements of *All God's Creatures*



Elyse Fitzpatrick

Author of *Home: How the New Heavens and Earth Satisfy Our Deepest Longings*

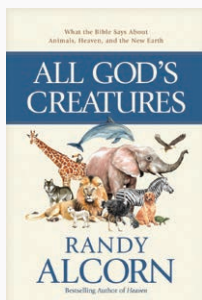
How is it that we think the New Earth, where we will spend eternity, will be devoid of the comfort and joys of those very animals that have taught us and so enriched our lives? Well, no more of that! As you’ll discover from Scripture, God’s creatures will not only be there in eternity, but will also join us in joyful worship of the one who cares even about sparrows.



Douglas Groothuis

Ph.D., research professor of apologetics and Christian worldview at Cornerstone University and Seminary, author of *Christian Apologetics*

Given his previous work, we should expect Randy Alcorn to address every topic he writes on from a biblically grounded, theologically astute, pastorally sensitive, and well-documented perspective. This book is no exception. I have long leaned toward affirming that animals will be part of the new heavens and New Earth, but now I am sure of it, given Randy's argumentation. Despite how many Christians have ignored it, this topic is no small matter for Christian theology or apologetics. Randy has done us a wonderful service with this book.



Preorder your book from EPM

Preorder *All God's Creatures* from Eternal Perspective Ministries for \$20 (retail \$26.99). Preorders will ship by media mail when the book releases this fall. epm.org/allcreatures

When you purchase Randy Alcorn’s books from EPM's store, the profits go directly to support the work of our ministry!



If We Don't Speak for the Unborn, *Who Will?*

BY RANDY ALCORN

IN 1977, I BECAME one of two co-pastors of a rapidly growing new church near Portland, Oregon. It was an exciting time: People were coming to Christ and becoming true disciples. I loved being a pastor and naively pictured myself “just” teaching the Bible without controversy. But God had a different plan.

A few years later, my wife, Nanci, and I opened our home to a pregnant teenager who had previously had an abortion. We guided her toward placing her child for adoption into a Christian home. Most importantly, this precious young woman came to Jesus. To this day, she remains a dear friend and a courageous spokesperson for unborn children.

That experience changed us, and I began to understand the potential eternal impact of pro-life ministry. At the same time, I was discovering that while I could selectively teach the Bible and stay away from controversial subjects, I could not live the Bible and avoid them.

I read, “Rescue those who are being taken away to death” (Proverbs 24:11) and “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. . . . Defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8–9 NIV). What people are more

poor and needy, more incapable of speaking up for themselves, than unborn children?

Who in our country was stripped of all legal protection for 49 years — and who, even after the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, are still being killed at the rate of over one million per year in states with legal abortion? (Those are surgical abortions, but the most recent count of chemical or “medication” abortions is 642,700 per year, with rates rising annually.)

Who will speak up for them if not us? That question haunted me and Nanci.

A Burden for the Unborn

Francis Schaeffer wrote, “Of all the subjects relating to the erosion of the sanctity of human life, abortion is the keystone. It is the first and crucial issue that has been overwhelming in changing attitudes toward the value of life in general.”

I was profoundly impacted by Schaeffer’s call to defend the unborn and became involved in pro-life education in churches and schools. Our church partnered with Portland’s first (and then only) pregnancy resource center, and I gladly said yes to serving on their board.

“Satan is a master at burying spiritual issues under the label of ‘politics.’”

Meanwhile, my burden for the unborn continued to grow, and I was deeply troubled that babies kept dying year after year. I couldn't escape either the biblical or the historical examples of believers breaking the law to save innocent lives. So, in January 1989, after searching my soul, studying Scripture, praying, and seeking counsel, and knowing it would greatly complicate my life, I began participating in peaceful, nonviolent civil disobedience at abortion clinics. Hundreds of pastors across the country did the same, despite it being so controversial. (I received a call from John Piper, whom I didn't yet know, after he had done the same thing at an abortion clinic.)

What we called “rescuing” was a peaceful and united action in which people placed their bodies in front of the entrances of an abortion clinic and prayed and sang. Because we believed the unborn child is as valuable in God's sight as any born person, our purpose was to prevent access to the clinic and thereby save the lives of children who would otherwise be killed after their mothers entered the building.

One time, a woman from my church told me she had scheduled an abortion, and then the night before she watched us on the news, blocking the clinic doors. She saw me standing there, reading from a Bible. God spoke to her heart, and after thinking it through, she canceled her appointment and had her baby. I would see her and her little boy at church from time to time years later. I remember thinking, “If this makes me a fanatic, it's a label I'm willing to bear!”

I was involved in nine rescues and was arrested seven times, one of which resulted in a few days in jail. I was also sued by a Portland abortion clinic. One court judgment against us was the largest against pro-lifers in history: \$8.2 million.

I believe in paying every debt, but I could not pay people who would use the money to kill

children. As a result, the clinic came to the church to garnish my wages. To prevent the church from either having to pay the clinic or defy a court order, I resigned. It was painful, having been a pastor there from its beginning, but what the abortionists intended for evil, God intended for good, and he has accomplished his purposes (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). Nanci and I began a nonprofit, Eternal Perspective Ministries, so we could pursue the causes closest to our hearts—primarily missions and pro-life work.

One of the many things God did was prompt us to give away 100 percent of my book royalties to support Christ-honoring and people-loving ministries. That practice has continued for 35 years. The thirteen million books that have sold brought Nanci and me a double blessing—the impact of the books themselves and the incomparable joy of seeing millions of dollars invested in gospel ministries, from evangelism to church planting, from Bible translation to feeding the hungry, from providing clean water for poor children to defending and caring for the persecuted. Before she died, one of the last things Nanci said to me was how thankful she was that we'd been able to give to these great causes. She was going to experience treasures in heaven, the greatest of which was to hear Jesus say, “Well done.”

Don't get me wrong: We aren't martyrs or heroes—not even close. Our lives were never in danger, and even if we had lost all our possessions due to the lawsuits (which seemed like a real possibility at the time), others would have helped us. While our sacrifices were tiny compared to those of many believers around the world, the point is that God showed himself faithful. Our daughters and Nanci and I sensed the presence and approval of our Lord Jesus as He walked beside us. We experienced peace and joy that transcended every difficult circumstance and every criticism that

resulted from our choice to rescue the unborn.

For a variety of reasons, it's been many years since I engaged in civil disobedience. But I believe God called me to that method for a season, just as he now calls our ministry to give my book royalties to pro-life causes along with other strategic ministries. I still speak up for the unborn in messages, writings, and personal conversations. This will always be a cause close to my heart, because I believe it is close to God's heart.

The Darkness of Child Killing

People have asked me, "Was it really worth it to protest abortion and make a political statement? Wouldn't it have been better to stay out of such things and continue being a pastor?"

I've never believed that I would have done much good as a pastor if I had said no to the clear leading of Christ in my life. I did not get involved in pro-life work because of politics; I was trying to save lives because the Bible I preached said that's what I should do. It said, "Rescue those who are being taken away to death." It said, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. . . . Defend the rights of the poor and needy." It told me, "Defend the fatherless" (see Psalm 82:3). It said, "Do to your neighbor what you would want him to do for you" (see Matthew 7:12).

I asked myself, "If I were scheduled to be killed at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow, what would I want someone to do for me?" So I did it, peacefully. It's not the main thing I've done, nor is it the most important. It just happened to be the one that got the most attention—especially in my hometown of Portland—and was the most financially costly.

Satan is a master at burying

spiritual issues under the label of "politics." Long before it was ever a political issue, abortion was a moral issue, and one that God has a clear and emphatic position on. It has everything to do with the worth of a human child.

There are Christian books and seminars about waging spiritual warfare with the forces of evil. But perhaps nowhere is this evil more evident than in abortion. We're not dealing here with "one more social/political issue"; this is a unique and focused evil in which Satan has deeply vested interests.

Jesus called Satan a murderer and liar from the beginning (John 8:44). He murders, and he lies to cover his murders. The forces behind child-killing are demonic—abortion is Satan's attempt to kill God in effigy by destroying children created in His image.

When you have stood outside an abortion clinic every week for years, as Nanci did, talking to women who have been lied to and told that an abortion will solve their problems, it changes you.





“ In eternity, we won't regret a single effort we made to speak up for the unborn. ”

When you have held in your hands the remains of an aborted child, as I have, it brands you deep in your heart. When you have seen the world of abortion on the inside, it is, I suppose, like touring a slave ship. You will vomit and cry and never forget it. It will wake you up in the night, and you will find yourself weeping for the innocent. If I do not sound dispassionate about this issue, it's because I am not.

Expect Resistance

Almost no topic is as guaranteed to offend some church members as abortion. I well remember how, at my home church, one of the most pro-life churches I know, certain people would stay home whenever they knew a pastor was going to speak on abortion.

Yet I've also seen people led to Christ at pro-life activities when the gospel is shared. There may be no better opportunity for evangelism than when showing compassionate care for the vulnerable! Every time the lies of Satan the child-killer are exposed—each time a mind is changed, a life is saved, and a woman is spared the horrors of abortion—God is glorified, and a great battle has been won. No wonder Satan hates gospel-centered pro-life ministry, and it's no surprise we face such opposition when we boldly and graciously declare God's truth about the unborn.

Jesus said, “A servant is not greater than his

master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). Followers of Jesus should expect injustice and misrepresentation, including when they speak out on abortion.

One of the greatest enemies of what Eugene Peterson called “a long obedience in the same direction” is the desire to be popular, whether with the world or with the church. Nanci and I had to learn to have thicker skin when it came to people's disapproval about our choices to be involved in pro-life ministry. We discovered that if our eyes were on anyone but Jesus, we weren't going to have the stamina to put up with criticism or outright hostility.

Paul said, “If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). Jesus is the Audience of One. We will stand before His judgment seat, no one else's. On the issue of abortion, and every other one, we should long to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

God Can Use You

I'm thrilled that the pro-life cause has grown and gained greater visibility in the last four decades. When I was on the board of Portland's first pregnancy resource center in the 1980s, I remember trying to convince pastors that this was truly a mission field. At that time, there were

only twelve to fifteen evangelical centers across the whole country. (There were many others sponsored by Catholics.) There are now more than 2,700 pregnancy care centers in the United States and thousands of pro-life organizations here and throughout the world. Many ministries have dozens or even hundreds of volunteers, donating time and supplies and forming the largest grassroots volunteer movement in history.

Even in this world that is at times so dark, I'm optimistic about the opportunity to impact all kinds of people for Christ. I've seen joy and peace in the lives of many women who have experienced forgiveness after their abortions, and many women who, as a result of intervention, spared the lives of their children and have since delighted in their children's children. Someone told me about a woman on her way to have an abortion. In God's providence, the car in front of her had a pro-life bumper sticker, compelling her to turn around, cancel the appointment, and have her precious baby, who brought great joy to her.

If God can use even a bumper sticker to save two lives—a baby from death and a mother from great harm—how might he use your own modest efforts? Even though it's not popular to speak up for the unborn, I encourage you to follow the Lord Jesus wherever he is leading you; then depend upon him to give you more courage to take the next step.

Start by praying regularly for pro-life ministries, churches, mothers, and babies. If the darkness of child-killing is to be overcome, it will require humble and persistent prayer. When we engage in pro-life ministry, our struggle is not "against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). I know firsthand that there can be heaviness involved in pro-life work. But in the midst of the darkest day and hardest call, God is a shelter to our hearts and minds (Proverbs 18:10).

You can also give regular visibility to the issue of abortion in conversations and, if you're a church

leader, from the pulpit. As we speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (Proverbs 31:8–9), it's vitally important that we do so in a Christlike manner, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Consider spearheading a pro-life ministry in your church, or finding one in your area, and donating time, money, supplies, and professional skills. Ask God to show you the unique ways you can contribute, and then give generously. As Jesus taught, your heart will follow your treasure (Matthew 6:19–21). Years ago, my friend used his carpentry skills to remodel the house that became the pregnancy resource center in my hometown. This man, who's as big as an NFL lineman, wouldn't be the first choice to counsel a pregnant woman! But the work of his hands has impacted thousands of women and preborn babies.

In eternity, we won't regret a single effort we made to speak up for the unborn, minister to their mothers, and reach out in Christ's name. When we are with King Jesus in the new heavens and new earth, every sacrifice we make now, big or small, will be obviously and eternally worth it. ■

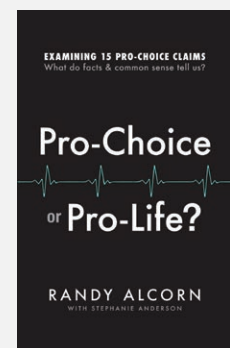
In this thoroughly researched and easy-to-read book, Randy Alcorn examines fifteen major claims of the pro-choice position and shares fact-based, rational responses.

Pro-Choice or Pro-Life

is available for \$3.00

each (retail \$9.99), with price discounts for bulk quantities that make it affordable for churches and pro-life ministries to distribute.

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Q&A

Question from a reader:

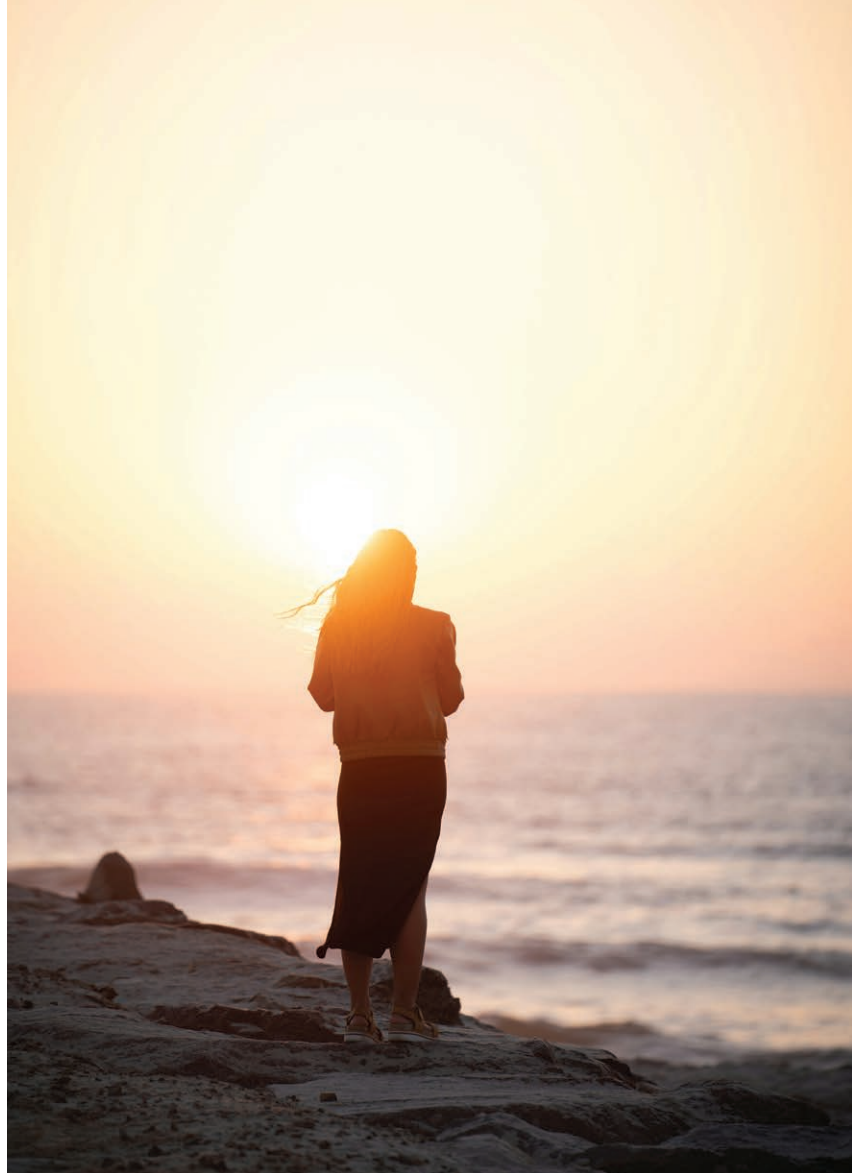
A friend of mine has experienced years of infertility. She and her husband aren't wanting to pursue fertility treatments or adoption, so they're attempting to make peace with never having children. My friend told me that one source of her pain is that she won't have children in Heaven. She knows that Heaven will be one big family, but the thought of eternity feels barren without the possibility of children.

She also recently told me that she knows that in the Old Testament, infertility was one of God's severe punishments. Do you have any wisdom that could comfort her? I'm also struggling with infertility, but I do find some hope knowing that one day I'll meet the baby I miscarried. What can I tell my friend to give her similar hope?

Answer from Heidi McLaughlin, EPM staff:

I can tell that your heart is heavy for your friend's pain, and I'm glad she has you to walk this difficult road with her. I understand that your friend and her husband don't feel at peace with fertility treatments and adoption. Our ministry is aware of the grave ethical concerns that can be part of the fertility industry, so we would certainly urge caution and research in that area. (One resource to explore is thembeforeus.com; they recommend researching restorative reproductive medicine.)

However, I would encourage your friends to pray more about if God might indeed lead them to adopt. Their longing for a child could be a God-given desire not to ignore, and they could be such a blessing to a child who is waiting for a family.



Here is what Gotquestions.org says about the issue of infertility being a punishment:

The barrenness of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel (the mothers of the Israelite nation) is significant in that their ability to finally bear children was a sign of the grace and favor of God. However, infertile couples must not assume that God is withholding His grace and favor, nor should they assume they are being punished in some way. Christian couples must cling to the knowledge that their sins are forgiven in Christ and that the inability to have children is not a punishment from God.

...The mothers of the Israelite nation prayed fervently for conception, so continuing to pray for a child is certainly not out of line. Primarily,

though, we are to pray for God's will for our lives. If His will is for us to have a natural child, we will. If His will is that we adopt, foster-parent, or go childless, then that is what we should accept and commit to gladly doing. We know that God has a divine plan for each of His loved ones. God is the author of life. He allows conception and withholds conception. God is sovereign and possesses all wisdom and knowledge (see Romans 11:33-36). "Every good and perfect gift is from above..." (James 1:17). Knowing and accepting these truths will go a long way to filling the ache in the hearts of an infertile couple.

When we are in Heaven, we can be assured that there will be no sadness whatsoever. We are going to be in the presence of Christ, where there is fullness of joy.

Regarding children in the eternal Heaven, the New Earth, Randy writes:

Isaiah 11:6-9 speaks of an Earth where "the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. . . . The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain."

Since the larger context of Isaiah is concerned with an eternal Kingdom of God on Earth, it seems inappropriate to restrict this passage to a thousand-year kingdom that ends in rebellion and destruction of human beings. The end of sin and the complete righteousness of all Earth's inhabitants won't come until the New Earth. But if Isaiah 11 is speaking of the New Earth, as does its parallel passage in Isaiah 65, who are the infants and young children playing with the animals? Is it possible that children, after they're resurrected on the New Earth, will be at the same level of development as when they died?

If so, these children would presumably be allowed to grow up on the New Earth—a childhood that would be enviable, to say the least! Believing parents, then, would presumably be able to see their children grow up—and likely have a major role in their lives as they do so. Although it's not directly stated and I am therefore speculating, it's possible that parents whose hearts were broken through the death of their children will not only be reunited with them but will also experience the joy of seeing them grow up . . . in a perfect world.

If Randy's conjecture is correct, is it possible your friend could have the joy of caring for and helping raise children who are growing up on the New Earth? We do know that what God has for us in eternity will be wonderful beyond comprehension, and our deepest desires will be completely fulfilled.

Ultimately, we all have painful losses that we have to grapple with while living on this sin-stained earth under the Curse. I have found the most comfort comes when I simply surrender my will to God. We live by faith, and

that means trusting that God is who He says He is. We must trust that even when we don't get what we want here on Earth, that God is still good and worthy of our praise and trust. When we surrender to that, something amazing happens, and we're able to turn our pain into praise.

I pray that your friend is able to get to that place no matter what her story ends up being. Jesus is worth following even when we don't understand His ways!

May the God of all comfort be near to both your friend and to you. ■

When we surrender to trusting God's ways, something amazing happens, and we're able to turn our pain into praise.

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Nanci Alcorn Memorial Fund

100% of donations will be given in honor of Randy's wife Nanci to ministries she loved: ministry in Cuba, persecuted Christians (with special concern for Nigeria), and the Logos Hope Ship (Operation Mobilization).



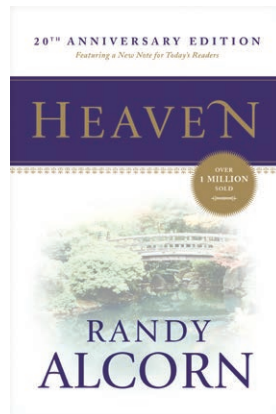
Do you follow EPM on Instagram?

Find us at [@randyalcorn_epm](https://www.instagram.com/randyalcorn_epm) where we post quotes from Randy and others related to having an eternal perspective.

Letters to Eternal Perspective Ministries about *Heaven*

"I finally read it, Dad!"

My father was a retired pastor. For years, he tried to get me to read various books. *Heaven* was one of those books. I've never been a reader until I retired myself. He died a few years ago. When my mom passed away, we cleaned out the house. I kept several of the books he had. I recognized *Heaven* right away. It took me a couple of years to finally read it. I just finished. It has changed my life. You were right, I wanted to go to heaven but thought it might be a bit boring. Not anymore. I can't wait to see my dad and tell him I finally read it. Thanks so much for opening my eyes to what's in store.



Longing for home

I bought the audio book for a dear friend (who was dying from ALS) when he could no longer turn the pages. It gave him so much comfort, and he longed for his heavenly home!

Encouraged by what's to come

Read your book years ago, and it totally transformed my view of Heaven. I'm so excited to go! I bought one for every family member. It is my second favorite book besides the Bible. Now my father-in-law is dealing with a really quick and aggressive cancer, and he bought a digital copy of the book so he could listen to it and be encouraged for what's to come!



Tara-Leigh Cobble Shares How God Is Using "The Bible Recap" to Change the Face of Biblical Literacy

BY LEAH K. KLETT

For years, conversations about the decline of biblical literacy and waning church attendance have dominated discussions among faith leaders—but Tara-Leigh Cobble’s podcast “The Bible Recap” has transformed the way people engage with Scripture, proving that hunger for the Word of God is far from dead.

“The Bible Recap” podcast has consistently ranked at the top of Apple’s charts—at times surpassing even cultural juggernaut Joe Rogan’s podcast—drawing millions of listeners each month. Her book series, study guides and children’s materials are consistently among Amazon’s top 100 books. As of December 2024, sales of *The Bible Recap* books had nearly doubled compared to the previous year.

"It has blown me away," Cobble told *The Christian Post*. "This is a tool that has helped individuals, churches, people, come closer to the Lord, and the reason it's selling well is because those people won't stop talking about it. They will not stop talking about how God has used it in their lives and in their hearts. Marriages have been transformed. People have turned back from suicide. Children have come to Christ.

"It's just incredible what the Lord is doing through this and in individual hearts and lives," she added. "When our hearts and lives are transformed, we don't shut up about it. We just keep talking, and we want to tell everybody. And so, the people that are hearing — it's whetting their appetite. What I see happening is an awakening within the Church that is piquing the curiosity outside the Church."

The podcaster revealed she recently received an email from a Jewish woman who came to Christ through "The Bible Recap." "She wanted to start [the podcast] and see what I had to say about the Old Testament. She kept going, and she met Jesus. The Lord is using this tool in the Church to spark a fire outside the Church," she said.

Cobble shared how her own journey with Scripture was far from effortless. Despite growing up in the church, she struggled to read through the Bible until a pastor friend guided her through it, answering questions along the way.

After completing it on her own multiple times, she realized something crucial: people weren't failing to read the Bible because of a lack of desire

or time; it was a comprehension problem.

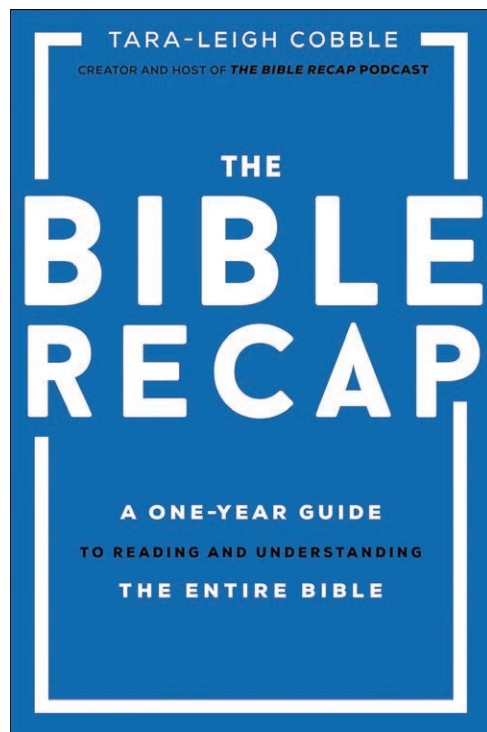
"I found that when I tried to encourage other people to do it, they would have the same thing happen to them as happened to me," she explained. "The one time that it worked was the time I helped a girl personally, answering her questions along the way. That's what sparked 'The Bible Recap.' I wanted to help remove barriers for people who wanted to read, understand and love God's Word."

"The Bible Recap" launched in January 2019, and just 17 days later, Cobble started receiving emails from publishers eager to turn the content into a book. Though she was working 100-hour weeks to complete the podcast, she recognized the demand and released *The Bible Recap* book in 2020. The response, she said, was overwhelming.

"We found that people who had done the podcast and then picked up the book wanted more resources," she said. "They wanted a study guide, a discussion guide — ways to deepen their understanding. Then we started hearing from parents who told us, 'My kid listens to 'The Bible Recap' with me every day.' That's when we knew we needed a children's line."

Today, Cobble and her team have created Bible study materials covering eight books of the Bible, with plans to publish 40 by 2033. Additionally, *The Bible Recap Kids' Devotional* has surged in popularity, ranking just outside Amazon's top 100.

The success of the Bible-themed materials flies in the face of conventional wisdom that biblical literacy is fading. "I led a Bible study of about 1,200 women, and my prayer was that a quarter of them would do 'The Bible Recap' with me," Cobble recalled. "My prayer was that 300 people would read the Bible with me."



The demand for "The Bible Recap" suggests a growing interest in Scripture, particularly among younger generations: "Kids are reading through the Bible at age five and will have read it 20-plus times by adulthood if they keep going," she said.

Cobble said she has also observed a shift in how people consume the Bible. "A lot of the younger viewers prefer YouTube, and so that has been an outlet for them," she noted.

More significantly, she challenged the notion that reading Scripture must be done with one's eyes.

"I primarily read the Bible with my ears; I listen to the Bible," she said. "For the bulk of human history, the way people consumed Scripture was by hearing it. There was one copy of the scrolls in the whole synagogue, not everyone could read. The printing press hadn't been invented. People were poor, and so, they couldn't afford books, even when they did exist. So for much of human history, Scripture has been taken in through our ears."

That shift has had a measurable impact. In 2024 alone, "The Bible Recap" plan on the YouVersion Bible app saw 3.9 million users, many of whom listened to the Bible rather than reading it.

"A lot of us are auditory learners, and this is a really helpful tool now that we have technology like the Bible app, the Dwell Bible app and lots of

other places where you can have the Bible read to you instead of reading it with your eyes," she said.

Another unexpected consequence of "The Bible Recap" has been its role in reconnecting people with the church, she said.

"People who are de-churched, who are struggling in any way with the capital C Church, or their particularly lower case c church, this is a soft place for them to land," she said. "What better place for them to land than in Scripture? Because if they stick with it, they're going to see how much God values the Church. They're going to see what the Church should look like. They're going to see just God's vision for that and how the Church has always been really messy."

"Everybody's flawed, but it helps give us a little bit of an understanding of how to lean in amidst the broken people of the Church, of which I am one and you are one, and they are one. There is a space where this is being used as a tool to pull people back into the Church."

While many faith-based initiatives focus on application-based teaching, Cobble said she aims to keep her approach simple.

"The Bible Recap' is not a self-help thing," she stressed. "The Bible is not self-help. The Bible is, 'You are helpless and you need a Savior.' So what we do in 'The Bible Recap is,' we don't end with an

"We're looking for, 'What does God love? What does He hate? What motivates Him to do what He does?' Every day, we end with pointing to the joy of knowing the person of God."



application point. We don't end with, 'How are you going to go and be a better Christian? How are you going to get your life together and pull yourself up by your bootstraps?'

"We end every day with what we call the 'God shot,' the snapshot of God and His character. We're looking for, 'What does He love? What does He hate? What motivates Him to do what He does?' Every day, we end with pointing to the joy of knowing the person of God."

For those who find the idea of reading the entire Bible intimidating, Cobble offered encouragement. "It is overwhelming," she acknowledged, "but it's on average, about 12 minutes of reading per day. And if you're a slow reader ... or if you can't read, or if you are dyslexic, or have any other learning challenge, you can have it read to you."

Most importantly, she emphasized grace. "You're going to do this imperfectly. ... It's OK to miss a day, just don't miss two days. Pick up, lean back in and start where you left off. Every day that you're in God's Word, you're right on time."

As "The Bible Recap" continues to grow, Cobble said she's focused on her singular mission: helping people know and love God's Word.

"I'm going to be reading the Word of God every day till I'm in the ground," she said. "If I already know it all, that's going to be boring. But if there's still more for me to learn about God and discover about who He is, it's going to be a continual treasure hunt for me, and I love it. I love it when I learn something new.

"For me, this has been really humbling and encouraging, and just has drawn me closer to the Lord through it all in ways that bring me more and more joy," she added. "We end every day with, 'He's where the joy is.' My joy has increased every year, every day that I'm in the Word. Learning, drawing near to Him—you can't help but be transformed by that." ■

Leah M. Klett is a reporter for The Christian Post, christianpost.com. Article used with permission.



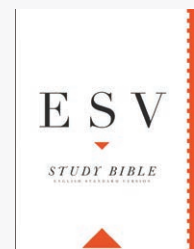
Randy and Tara-Leigh at a conference in February 2026

Learn more about Tara-Leigh and The Bible Recap at thebiblerecap.com

Bible study resources Randy recommends

Logos Bible Software is an incredible resource I use nearly daily at home and in study. It's totally portable, so I use it on my tablet and cell phone too. As the pastor preaches a passage, I check the meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words in the biblical text. It's an unbelievably helpful tool, particularly if you take the time to learn how to use it. (See logos.com/randy for a free 60-day trial.)

The ESV Study Bible is an immense help to those hungry for God-breathed Scripture, and who desire to handle accurately the Word of Truth. The study aids don't push you away from the text, but pull you into it, and the comments frequently cite other Scriptures, making the Bible its own interpreter.



If you've never watched John Piper's **Look at the Book** series, I highly encourage you to check them out. (See desiringgod.org/labs)



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