



EXCERPT



Recalibrate Your Life Navigating Transitions with Purpose and Hope

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Times of transition, especially in midlife or later life, are ideal moments for recalibrating our priorities and habits. Ken Boa and Jenny Abel give us the practical tools and eternal perspective needed to evaluate our God-given gifts, skills, wisdom, resources, and opportunities in order to live meaningfully now and into the future.

Ask the Big Questions

Those of us who follow Jesus are on a journey, a pilgrimage, to our heavenly home. As we grow older and prepare for our hand-off to the next generation, this metaphor of life as a never-ending journey may be cliché, but it also brings clarity and comfort. We are not alone, others have gone before us, and still others are coming behind us. We participate in one another's journeys. And if we are followers of Jesus, then we are all participating in one Bigger Journey—"some larger way"—that is far better and more glorious than we can even imagine. Hardships and uncertainties may mark our tenancy on earth, but these are brief compared to eternity (1 Peter 5:10), and God is ultimately guiding us toward a destination free of all suffering and full of true pleasure that will never end.

As we look toward this destiny, God is ever seeking to transfer our affections and hopes from the temporal to the eternal, from that which we can see and touch to that which is unseen. We are learning to walk by faith instead of by sight, to see with spiritual eyes instead of worldly eyes (2 Corinthians 5:7, 16).

Many of us largely ignore or have a diminished view of this invisible reality. Consequently, we may grow weary, disillusioned, and sorrowful (often without even realizing why). Especially when we're younger there is the temptation to get distracted—to become caught up in the day-to-day and to assume we have so much of our lives left that we can focus on eternal things *later* (even though none of us knows if there will be a *later*). As we age, there is a temptation to focus more on the past than on the future—to assume our best days are behind us and therefore to walk with "weary feet" (as one version of Bilbo's story goes) instead of pursuing God and his purposes for our lives with "eager feet" until we draw our last breath.

And let's face it, whether young or old, all of us can grow distracted or weary (Isaiah 40:31); at any age we can be tempted to stop "straining forward to what lies ahead" (Philippians 3:13). If our strength is to last and our hearts are to be renewed regularly, it is God who must do it. He is the One to empower us and push us along—to invigorate our activity so that it doesn't become mere busyness and to reinvigorate us when our bodies and minds begin to fail. Only when he is living in and through us are we able to pursue this path called the Christian life (Galatians 2:20).

Changing Scenery Along the Way

During our earthly pilgrimages the landscape of our lives is ever-changing. But sometimes the scenery changes more dramatically. Suddenly, instead of a flat, grassy plain, we find ourselves walking uphill on steep rocks, or maybe it's the other way around—we endure a long winter (emotionally or spiritually) and suddenly we break forth into a colorful springtime. This happened to me (Jenny) several years ago as I went from a long season of infertility to a long-hoped-for season of motherhood—with all its attendant joys and challenges.

What happens when the scenery changes can propel us to new heights in our walks with God—or sink us? We desire to help you navigate these transitions with purpose and hope, and we'll do so through a process we call *recalibrating*.



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Kenneth Boa is the president of Reflections Ministries, Omnibus Media Ministries, and Trinity House Publishers. His many books include *Faith Has Its Reasons*, *Rewriting Your Broken Story*, *Life in the Presence of God*, and *Shaped by Suffering*.

Stop a moment and ponder: What major life transitions have you gone through? (When has the landscape of your life changed, and how?) What changes are you preparing for now or in the midst of? Life transitions are as varied in type as they are in experience. We all go through them differently, just as our life journeys are all different. Here are a few examples:

- graduating from college (or graduate school)
- getting married
- moving
- starting a new job
- having a child
- quitting your job to stay home with your kids or grandkids
- marrying off your last child (becoming an empty nester)
- retiring

Life changes can be voluntary, like most of those just mentioned, or involuntary. The latter types of transitions, though undesirable or uninvited, are just as (if not more) impactful: suffering a major setback, disabling accident, or life-changing health incident—or being close to someone who has:

- getting a divorce
- emerging from an abusive relationship or other trauma
- transitioning from military to civilian life
- losing your job or facing some other career setback or disappointment
- losing a loved one, such as a parent, spouse, child, or sibling
- getting notice from your company that you're being forced to retire
- becoming a full-time caregiver to an ailing spouse or family member

Any of these life events—including many we haven't mentioned—qualify as moments or seasons of transition. During these pivotal times, it is important to *recalibrate*: to consciously process where we have been, where we are now, and where we are headed.

Living with an Eternal Perspective

I (Ken) first became aware of the concept of recalibrating over twenty years ago through my friend Gayle Jackson. I've been doing it ever since and have benefited from the outcomes so much that I incorporate it into my mentoring and teaching. I've found that people who are willing to take the time to recalibrate—to step back and reflect on their lives at arm's length—never regret doing so.



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Jenny Abel is editor and publications development manager for Omnibus Media Ministries. She coauthored *A Guide to Practicing God's Presence* and *Shaped by Suffering* with Kenneth Boa.

At the heart of recalibrating is *seeing our lives from an eternal perspective*. By this we mean not only looking at our lives as they are now or even considering the full span of our relatively brief time on earth but viewing our lives in relation to eternity.

More than head knowledge, this perspective is anchored in the wisdom and truths that God uses to transform us from the inside out. When we espouse and live by an eternal perspective, we will

- align our affections and thoughts with that which God calls valuable
- set our hope on that which endures
- channel our actions and motivation toward the unique purpose and opportunities God places before us every day

Many of us spend significant time cultivating a better perspective on (or insight into) temporal matters: what the stock market will do next, where to move, when to retire, which social groups to join, where to take our next vacation, which job to take, which house to purchase, whether to go forward with a medical procedure, and so on. As we advance in years, we tend to become increasingly aware that these temporal things too easily slip through our fingers. We begin to think more seriously long term—*beyond* this life—and to ask questions like

- Does the work I do everyday matter?
- For what purpose am I storing up all these earthly possessions? Should I be giving more to God and his purposes?
- Am I using my time well, or am I spending too much of it on frivolous pursuits? Should I be serving others more instead?
- Am I prioritizing time with family and others I love, or am I putting them off, presuming I can make up the time for them later?
- Am I ready to die? Or do I have unfinished business on earth?
- Is it possible to face aging, sickness, and death without fear so that they don't haunt me?

Recalibrating helps us answer these big questions. These questions often come to the fore during transitions, though they are the questions we should be asking all along.

—Adapted from chapter one, “Perspective—What Gives Meaning to Life?”



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