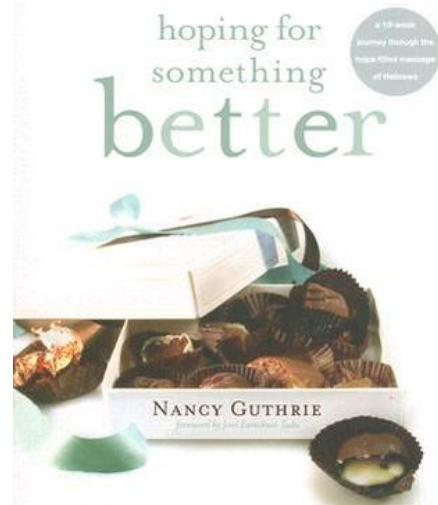


REFUSING TO SETTLE FOR LIFE AS USUAL



Hoping for Something Better: Refusing to Settle for Life as Usual

Nancy Guthrie

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Who wants to merely go through the motions of religion? We long for something authentic--something worth opening our hearts to, filling our minds with, and giving our lives for. We hope for something better than the "churchianity" of our parents and the vague spirituality of our neighbors, something better than guilt-induced, holier-than-thou morality, better than here-and-now, health-and-wealth promises. In her thought-provoking and authentic style, Nancy Guthrie shows that Jesus himself offers the something better we've been looking for, applying the truths of Hebrews to real-life issues such as guilt, shame, disappointment, hardship, unhealthy obsessions, personal ambition, and fear of death.

Hoping for Something Better: Refusing to Settle for Life as Usual Details

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From Reader Review Hoping for Something Better: Refusing to Settle for Life as Usual for online ebook

Bethany says

I hardly feel like I can rate this book, but I could not get into it. It seemed to prattle on about nothing at all without relating to it's readers. I very rarely post reviews like this, but I didn't make it past the 2nd chapter, and I really forced myself to read those chapters.

Emily Dixon says

Theologically light-- writing style, fluffy... need more meat.

Elisabeth says

All Saints 2012 Bible study book. Liked it fine.

Kristen says

Read this as part of a Bible study on Hebrews. The book of Hebrews itself was what I most enjoyed studying (particularly for its encouragement to not drift away, hold fast, and persevere), but this book was a good support to that and offered some helpful examples from the author's personal life.

I particularly liked the comparison of the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament being like daily medicine treating the symptoms of a chronic illness but Christ's sacrifice being the remedy for the root cause of our sin. (pg 101)

The text was relatable and easy to read.

Claudia Callis says

Great study of the book of Hebrews!

Diana says

It's all about Jesus. If you want to go deeper, draw closer and hold tighter onto Jesus, this is the book for you.

Margo Berendsen says

This is an excellent study on the book of Hebrews. It covers the book in depth, and also with a lot of heart, with particular emphasis on hope. I've done a couple studies on Hebrews before, but I had not realized that one of its major themes is hope, perhaps most famously identified in Hebrews 6:19, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

This hope referenced to goes all the way back to the promises God gave to Abraham, that He would bless him, and through him all people would be blessed. Hope is also mentioned immediately before, in Hebrews 6:11 "...to have the full assurance of hope until the end" and in 6:18: "... that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us," and again in 7:19 "...a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God."

Joni Eareckson Tada writes the foreword, saying:

Hebrews provides the hieroglyphics of heaven. It speaks of a better country... a grand cloud of witnesses... a heavenly Jerusalem... and thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly. I liked that kind of talk. It was hopeful. In its pages, I was even able to crack the code behind the whispers of omens of why God had allowed my affliction. In Hebrews I found a home for my aching heart.

The author, Nancy Guthrie, lost not only her infant daughter, Hope, but a couple years later an infant son, Gabriel, to a rare genetic disease. But this mother clung to the hope of the promise in Christ, of blessing in this life but more importantly of the one to come.

In chapter 2, of her daughter, she writes,

When Hope was a couple weeks old, we went to the Christmas program at our church. As we sat in the balcony, enjoying the beauty of the music and pageantry, it hit me: I would never get to enjoy music with Hope. She would never sing the children's choir. We would never sample rich desserts together, explore interesting places, or observe amazing art of architecture. Tears began to drop down my face and onto Hope as I began the process of letting go of the dreams I had for sharing with her all the good things life in the world as to offer.

But I also began to consider what was ahead for Hope. No, she wouldn't enjoy a fine orchestra here with me, but surely the music on the halls of heaven will be finer! As I thought through all the things I would not be able to share with her, I began to consider how much better heaven's version will be.

This brought me my own share of tears, but also hope, realizing I'm really not missing out on much with my own daughter, killed in accident at age 8. I will have all of eternity to spend with her in heaven, with our God, sampling things far finer than we yet know here on this earth.

I began to tell myself the truth about death and the reality of life in this world. And fear began to lose its grip on me.

In chapter 3, I underlined this:

What kind of faith is necessary to have real rest in this life? Faith that trusts God wholeheartedly with our lives, faith that leaves behind the desert existence of expecting this world to meet our needs, faith that moves forward with God into the life he is holding out for us.... Deeply trusting God with our lives is what gives rest to our souls.

In chapter 5, I underlined this:

If we just hear truth, but we never write it out or wrestle with it, if we never try to repeat it or explain to someone else, we never really own it.

In chapter 6, an excellent comparison of the old and new covenants is given:

According to the new covenant, everything God demands of us, he also provides for us - freely and forever, through the finished work of Christ on the cross. Through the new covenant, the Spirit of God overcomes our rebellion and resistance so that we can have an internal change of heart toward God. God did not start over with the new covenant but instead brought the old covenant to perfection.

In chapter chapter 7:

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

When you chose to hold on to the hope of your salvation - Jesus himself - it is as if you drive a stake into the ground and hold on for dear life, so that when the winds of adversity or persecution come your way, you can hold steady without falling.... the soil we're digging into is the very word of God - wholly reliable and true. The stake of our hope is dug deep into the soil of God's promise to save completely

Perhaps the greatest truth I've learned in this year's devastating trial:

It is not necessarily great faith or great courage that will get you through this (although that is what others no doubt will see). It is holding on to what you know is true about God and refusing to let go).... To count it all joy when the joy is so deeply hidden may be the greatest challenge of all.

Chapter 9 has probably one of the clearest, most concise list of reasons for why God allows suffering. First of all, suffering isn't punishment. God doesn't punish his followers! (He does discipline them, though like a father disciplines his children... Hebrews 12). "It will either distract our focus from Christ or intensify our focus on him."

How do we know our suffering is not punishment for our sin? Because someone has already been punished for our sin. Isaiah 53:5 "he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him."

If suffering isn't punishment, was it it?

- 1) Some suffering is the natural consequences of our sinful choices and the sinful choices of others. Galatians 6:7-8 A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction."
- 2) Some suffering is the natural result of living in a fallen, broken world.
- 3) Some suffering is the supernatural work of Satan (the book of Job).

Sarah says

I enjoyed this book, although it took me forever to get through it as I had life going on and had other books higher priority. I love that she pointed everyone to Jesus (or taught that that is what Hebrews is doing). That's what really spoke to me. I need to put my focus on Jesus. He is all that matters in everything! It was easy to read, but still very deep. I never had enough time to sit and really take it all in and ponder over it like I wanted. I obviously also had a hard time getting into it as it took me over a year to finally finish.

Angela Bamford says

Very good study of Hebrews- supplemented with Hughes, Wilson and Piper commentary.

Stacy Guillory says

This book gave me a love for the book of Hebrews! It was a great study showing the sufficiency of Jesus. Also an in-depth study for Women. Our group had such a great time getting to know more about Christ and His power and truth!

elisha says

Chapter 2 on fear was one of the best chapters to articulate my own fears that I've ever read.

Favorite quotes:

*It is only after we wrangle with our fear of death and put death in its proper place that we can really begin to live.

*As our confidence in eternal life grows, physical death loses the power to enslave us to fear.

*Jesus has freed you from being a slave to fear. You don't have to be scared to death of death.

Dorothy says

"Best commentary on Hebrews I've ever read." -Brian Salter

Guthrie poignantly reminds me that there is nothing better than Jesus and to seek him with all my life through all my problems, frustrations, and let-downs.

Amy says

As always, Nancy Guthrie delivers a thoughtful exploration of the Word, this time her focus is on the book of Hebrews. I highly recommend ANY of Nancy's studies you can get your hands on. This one will resonate with anyone who has experienced disappointment. (Hello, Humanity, this book is for you, lol!) If you are struggling with understanding God's purpose in suffering, this book will bring the comfort and hope of God's word to your heartbroken soul. Excellent, excellent study.

I opted for the e-book this time, and I won't do that again. It's just too hard to flip from the questions to the chapters, IMHO. It would have been alright for personal study, but for a group study like I was doing, it was inconvenient. Lesson learned!
