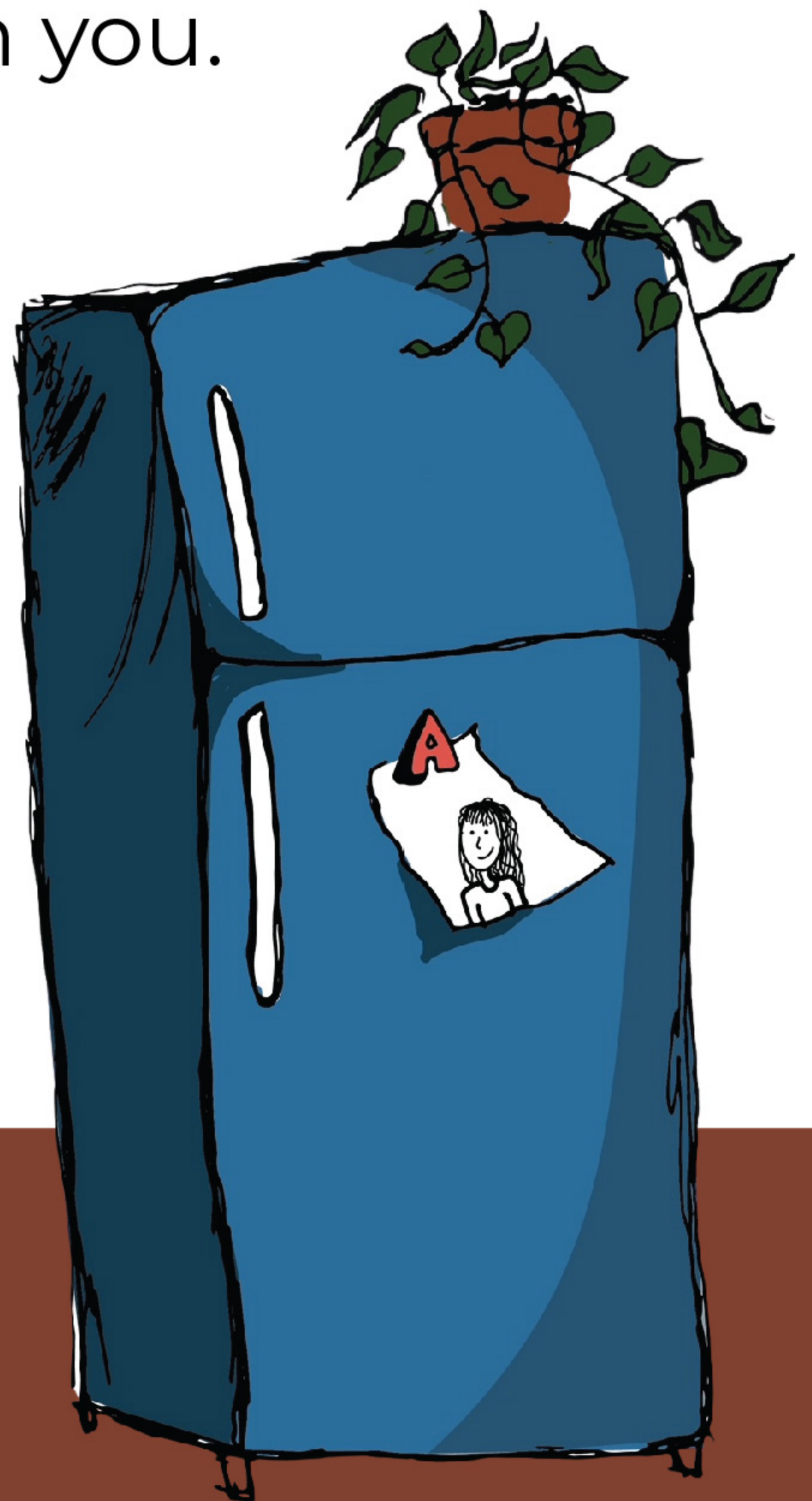


# YOUR PICTURE *Is On* HIS REFRIGERATOR

Trade your archaic view of an angry God for one of a loving Heavenly Dad who delights in you.



**JACK HAWKINS**

*Forward by:*

*Best selling author, Ken Blanchard*

# YOUR PICTURE IS ON HIS REFRIGERATOR

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TRADE YOUR ARCHAIC VIEW OF AN ANGRY  
GOD FOR ONE OF A LOVING HEAVENLY DAD  
WHO DELIGHTS IN YOU

JACK HAWKINS



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Cover art by Sterling Hawkins

Layout design by Maria Connor, My Author Concierge

## ABOUT THE BOOK



When a five year old draws a picture, there is very little artistic ability. The arms don't match, the nose is missing, the legs are just sticks. Despite all these design flaws, the parent of the fledgling artist takes that picture, grabs a magnet, and places it on their refrigerator. The picture doesn't go up because of its color and composition. It takes the place of honor because the parent delights in their child.

Do you know that you have a Heavenly Father who loves you like that? He doesn't value you because you are smarter or better looking than your friends. His delight doesn't come from your talent or skill. He loves you for you. He loves you so much that your picture is on his refrigerator.

So many people grow up with a view of their Heavenly Father as an exacting task master who's love is dependent on how successful they are at eliminating sin from

their life and the amount of good deeds they can perform. Wouldn't you like to trade that archaic view of an angry and demanding God for a loving Heavenly Dad who loves you and delights in you and wants to tuck you into bed at night?

## FOREWORD

My father was my hero. He was a highly decorated military officer, retiring as a rear admiral; a strong businessman; an accomplished athlete as well as the best father I could have ever imagined. He taught me everything I know about having a strong work ethic and dealing with people. He supported me, applauded me, and cheered on my achievements. In many ways, I am who I am because of my dad.

I'll never forget when I won the election for the president of my class in seventh grade. I ran home, excited to tell my dad. He said, "Congratulations, Ken, but now that you are president, your leadership training begins. Being a leader is not about you but about the folks you serve. Your focus should be on serving them, not them serving you."

When I was introduced to Jesus, it was easy for me to embrace God as my Heavenly Father. I already had the greatest example of the greatest dad. Turning my life over to this Heavenly Dad just made sense. Unfortu-

nately, there are a lot of people who don't have an example of a loving Heavenly Father like I did. When many people hear the term "father," they visualize someone who is abusive, overcritical, or disappointed in them.

When my friend Jack gave me a copy of his book, this image of a loving Heavenly Dad, who loved me so much that my artwork was on his refrigerator, resonated with the relationship I had with my own father. If you, like me, had a loving and dear relationship with your earthly father, this book will be a reminder of all of the gifts that father gave you. If, however, you are like my friend Jack, who had a challenging relationship with his father, this book will open your eyes to your loving Heavenly Dad who isn't critical or angry or hypersensitive or hurtful. Psalm 32 reminds us that Father God watches over you with his, "loving eye on you." He sees your victories from heaven and celebrates with you. When you are broken and defeated, he feels your suffering and has compassion for you. He watches over you, not so he can catch you doing something wrong, but so that he can walk with you through life, applauding the right and being present for the difficult.

Whatever your experience has been, I hope this book will introduce you to a loving Heavenly Dad who delights in you, is cheering for you, and has your artwork on his refrigerator.

Ken Blanchard

*New York Times* bestselling author

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Have you ever met one of those awkward people who lived with their parents until they got married? I was that guy. Growing up in a family of dysfunction, I had no idea how to live in a healthy relationship. Fortunately, I married a woman who grew up in the home I always wanted. Gene and Maybritt Ongna raised their daughter, Jilane, in a loving home that always smelled like warm cookies and pot roast. Jilane and I moved into our six-hundred-square-foot apartment after our honeymoon, and I began to learn what it meant to not just live in a house, but in a home. No one has been more influential in my life in helping me exchange my view of an angry and exacting God for a loving Heavenly Dad. Jilane, you are my best friend and ministry partner, and I am constantly in awe of your tremendous gifts and abilities. I just wish you could cook pot roast.

The first message I ever gave in big church was on Psalm 127 and 128 that starts with the line, “Unless the Lord builds the house,” and ends with, “May he live to see his children’s children.” It has been my lifelong dream to exchange the dysfunction I grew up with for function in my family. I’m sure I didn’t do it all right, but despite my familial flaws, I managed to get a front



row seat to see four children come into my house and exceed my every expectation.

Riley, you are one of the smartest people I've ever met. I'll never let you forget the moment you were musing about how you got into Harvard Law School and said out loud, "Well, I guess Grandpa was pretty smart." He was—but not as smart as you.

My wife and I have often said of our daughter Paige that she's Mary Poppins: Practically perfect in every way. It's been a wonder to see the amazing woman, nurse, wife, and mother you have become. Every moment with you is a joy.

My heart is never more full than when I'm sitting in the front row listening to my daughter Sterling sing and play the guitar. You are talented and creative and the funniest Hawkins. That is in print, not only because it's true, but also because I know it will bug your overly competitive brother and sisters.

After the earthquake in Haiti, Jilane felt like God was calling her to go make a difference. Over the course of those forty-plus trips to Haiti, we met and fell in love with a little girl, who from that first moment we saw her, we thought, "There is a Hawkins." Daphlie, you are driven and determined and beautiful, and you never skip leg day. What a pleasure it is to have you in our family.

Not sure you would have signed up to be a part of this family if you knew that I would drag you out in front of an ASU football game with a sign that said, "We need two free tickets. I'll buy you a beer." Tyler, you are an impressive and driven man who loves my

daughter well, and you are a joy to have in our family. And just remember, we did get into the game.

Ilsa, not only are you my son's beautiful wife and adventure buddy, you have become a wise voice in my life. You are always there to walk me through my difficulties and trauma and help me see new ways to peace and growth. What a gift you are to this family.

Finally, I have to acknowledge my lifelong friend, Gayleen Gardner. She was able to take this manuscript of messages and turn them into my dream for a book. You are incredibly creative and gifted, even more so than your husband Gentry is at painting.



Trade your archaic view of an angry and exacting God  
for one of a loving Heavenly Dad who delights in you  
so much that your picture is on his refrigerator.

—Jack Hawkins



## INTRODUCTION



Let me paint a picture for you.

A kindergartener comes home from school with an art project and hands it to his mom. If Mom is being completely honest with herself, she would have to admit she has no idea what the picture is of. So, she wagers a guess. “What is it, Jimmy? Is it a hideous blob monster?” To which Jimmy replies, “No, Mommy, it’s a picture of you.”

No matter how bad that art project is, where does it wind up? Mom takes that picture of her—with snakes for hair and fire coming out of her eyes—and takes a magnet and puts it on the refrigerator. She wants little Jimmy to know that she is proud of him.

I didn’t realize how much my wife and I valued our kids' art like that until recently.

We planted a church twenty-five years ago in San Diego, and this past year we decided to move to Glendale, Arizona. In July. It was 115 degrees the day we moved in.

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Why would any sane person do that? They would not. But we are not claiming to be sane. You see, we fell under the spell of a little tiny human aka our granddaughter. Noa, to be exact. For Noa, we moved. In July. (Did I mention the temperature?)

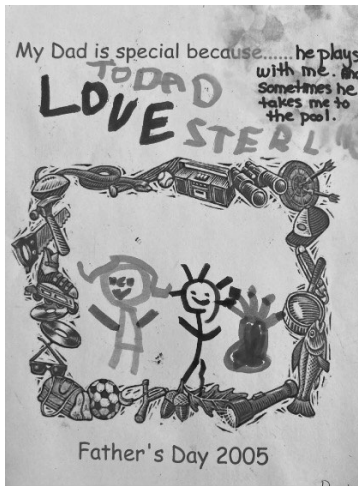
My wife was still unloading boxes six months after our move. Do you know how many boxes we had of our kids' artwork? Seven. Seven boxes marked *Memorabilia*. Let me give you a few of the highlights.

Here's a gem my daughter drew. I don't remember her right arm being that much bigger than her left, but I do remember her having a nose.



In this next one, I'm guessing I'm the one on the left with four total strands of hair and she is the one on the left with pink skin and blue arms.

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This was a poem my wife got for Mother's Day. It got posted in my daughter's classroom. I don't think my wife was too thrilled that the number two characteristic on her list of qualities was "napper."





## *Introduction*

We had so many boxes of these pictures. And guess what? They aren't all that good. None of them will end up in a museum. Clearly, they are better than the pictures your kids drew (says every parent), but they ain't all that great. But they each ended up on our refrigerator. Why? It wasn't the quality of the pictures that got them up there. It was the relationship. It was the love we had for our kids. We delighted in them.

Most people can understand the delight a human parent has in putting up a little child's artwork. Unfortunately, most people struggle with understanding how God, who's considered our Heavenly Father, could love us like that. If that's you, you are not alone. I get it.

I grew up with a dad that drank. He was not the funny alcoholic portrayed on television sitcoms. He was abusive and violent and hurtful. I would help him around the house, but when I made a mistake, he'd get dialed up emotionally. If I was helping him in the yard and I made a mistake, he'd say, "You jerk." If we were working on the car and I dropped a wrench, he'd say, "You idiot." If I made a mistake painting, he'd say, "You klutz." It's been so long since my childhood that I'm not even sure he used those words specifically, but his actions and his responses made me feel small and worthless.

When my wife Jilane and I were married, we had a huge wedding. Her dad was a pastor, and I was working at a church, so both congregations felt obligated to show up at our wedding. We had over six hundred people attend, and best of all, they were bearing gifts. I was very excited to open them all up, but when we did, I soon realized that these gifts weren't for me, they were

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for Jilane. Crystal this, china that. Nothing cool like power tools or video games. Perhaps the most worthless gift was a two-foot-tall ceramic duck. Its head came off, and you were supposed to put cookies inside. We never had cookies, and if we did, we ate them too fast to put them in the duck, so the duck just sat there in the kitchen of our little one-bedroom apartment taking up counter space. It was lame, but my wife liked it so I agreed to revere the duck.

One day some buddies of mine were hanging out in my kitchen. I had poured myself a drink, and as I reached for my glass, I accidentally hit the duck's head and sent it flying into the air. It hit the wall and landed on the floor and exploded into a million pieces. As soon as it hit the ground, I said, out loud, "You jerk, you idiot, you klutz," and right then I realized that, in my mind, I had become everything my father had predicted I would become. I had no idea how those words affected me until that duck died.

My experience as the child of an alcoholic led to all kinds of misunderstandings about who my Heavenly Father was. I would pray and when God did not answer the way I wanted him to, I would feel as though he was disciplining me punitively for something I did or did not do. If my car broke down or the water heater broke shortly after I had done something stupid, I felt like the dire financial consequences were because I was a disobedient little child and God was sending me to sit in the corner to think about what I had done. It has been decades since I murdered that duck, but I am still learning the meaning of what it means to have a loving Heavenly Dad.

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I am guessing I'm not the only one who has these misunderstandings about God. They sound like this:

“Why would a loving God ask us to fear him?”

“If God loves me so much, why is my life so filled with hard times?”

“If knowing God is so transformational, why am I still struggling with the same habits I did thirty years ago?”

I've spent the last twenty-five years as a pastor trying to answer these misunderstandings for myself and the people at my church. Over the years, I have gained a new perspective. God is no longer screaming at me every time I drop a wrench or paint outside the lines. My Heavenly Dad is loving and gracious and is cheering for me. My picture is on his refrigerator.

Over the years, I have learned to trade my view of my earthly dad for an accurate view of my Heavenly Dad. I have come to realize that every time I approach him with a new question or concern, he answers my questions with care and compassion and leaves me with a greater knowledge of a daddy who loves me. If you need to trade out your old, antiquated view of an angry God waiting to punish you for one of a loving Heavenly Dad who believes in you, this book was written for you.

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## YOUR HEAVENLY DAD IS TRUSTWORTHY



I grew up a Dodgers fan. I had a poster of the 1973 Dodgers team in my room. I remember watching Saturday's game of the week on NBC with Curt Gowdy doing the play by play and Joe Garagiola as the color analyst. I sat there and kept a scoresheet as I watched. Ron Cey was my favorite player so when I was in Little League, I wore his number: 10.

Once a year, the Dodgers had helmet night at Dodger Stadium. Every kid in attendance got a plastic Dodgers helmet. The plastic was so thin that if you got hit in the head with a baseball while you were wearing it, there would probably be more damage done than if you weren't wearing the helmet. But I had to have one so I asked my dad if we could go and he surprisingly said yes.

We drove the two hours from my house to Dodger Stadium, and as we pulled into the parking lot, my dad asked if there were any tickets left for the game. The attendant said, "Nope, we are all sold out." My dad was

more annoyed that the parking attendant was going to charge us for parking when there were no tickets than the fact that his son was heartbroken.

My dad made a U-turn and we headed back home. On the way home, we passed a miniature golf course and I asked my dad if we could at least stop there and play. He said no. He did, however, stop at a liquor store.

That disappointment has stuck with me. At that moment, my dad proved to be unreliable. He did not have my best interests at heart. The heartbreak did nothing but distance an already broken relationship.

That heartbreak has had some lasting implications for my relationship with my Heavenly Father. Can I trust him? Will he disappoint me? I hate to admit it, but the answer has too often been yes.

My relationship with God and life is too often unresolved. It's filled with hurt and pain and waiting, and in those moments, God reminds me of my dad on Helmet Night.

There is an awkward space that we all find ourselves living in. It's annoying and frustrating and can be exhausting. Unfortunately for us, we spend the majority of our lives living in this space. Let me see if I can explain it in terms of goal setting. There are three significant moments in goal setting. Two of these moments are good moments, maybe even great moments.

Setting the goal is a great moment. When you set a goal, you are full of hope. You are setting a new course for your life. It's exciting. This is what setting a goal looks like.

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- Brainstorming a new plan of attack.
- Writing out goals on a new iPad.
- Sharing the dream with a friend.
- Buying a new calendar to hang on your wall.
- Buying a new set of workout clothes.
- Setting a goal smells like dry erase markers and a new pair of sneakers.

The end of that relationship goal or work goal or fitness goal might be a failure, but at least you'll have some comfortable clothes to watch television in.

Let's say you succeed. You lose that weight, you get that promotion, that new direction you sent the company in thrives and everyone applauds you. That is another great moment. Here are the earmarks of reaching a goal.

- It's dinner out with coworkers to celebrate the achievement.
- You receive a year-end bonus.
- It's retiring your fat pants.
- For guys, it's finding a reason to walk around with your shirt off.
- It's a celebration lap around Nordstrom.
- The victory celebration smells like Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, or depending on your budget, the steak sandwich at Subway.

Those are both great moments in the goal-setting process. Years ago, my wife and I decided to embark on an adoption journey. We met this beautiful girl on a trip to Haiti and decided to give her a forever home. There

are two Facebook posts that bookend our adoption journey. They show the high sides of goal setting. When we started, my wife posted this:

*Jack announced to our church that we are "expecting" and that we are seeking to adopt. He also asked them to pray as we have LOTS of obstacles. He called it a "high risk pregnancy":) Thinking maybe I need to go on bed rest! Care team, get the meal calendar going!*

I have great memories of that season. We excitedly told our family of our intentions. We have pictures of us signing papers. Adoption is all about signing papers. Think of refinancing your mortgage times one hundred. We had to have papers from the sheriff's department saying we weren't criminals. We had to have fingerprints taken to prove we weren't criminals. We had to undergo a psychological evaluation. Jilane passed with no problem. There were papers to sign, checks to write, people to share with. It was expensive but exciting.

It all culminated in this Facebook post written from Haiti when we went to pick up our daughter.

*Hey, gang We are in Haiti to pick up our daughter. Can you believe it? Amazing. She is out of the orphanage and living with us. We feel so blessed. Today is the first day that we have Daphlie and don't have to give her back.*

In the process of the adoption, we had made many trips to Haiti and they all ended in goodbye. Goodbye was always the hardest part with Daphlie. On getaway

day, she would shut down. Oftentimes she would run and hide in her room so she didn't have to say goodbye. On the day that Facebook post was written, those good-byes were over. From then on, it was a celebration. We celebrated with a meal in a great restaurant in Haiti with our friends. We celebrated when we took Daphlie home. We celebrated when she got to see her room and saw all the clothes friends had bought for her. (Side note: After one year of living in the U.S., she had collected thirty pairs of shoes. It didn't take her long to become fully American!)

There are two great moments with goal setting: Setting the goal and reaching the goal. Unfortunately, most of life is spent in a third place.

## **LIVING IN THE UNRESOLVED**

It's the space between the goal setting and the goal celebrating. This third area is not nearly as fun. This is what it feels like in the unresolved.

- Long hours of hard work.
- The temptation as you drive past Krispy Kreme.
- Mistakes and failures and setbacks.
- Injuries that put you on the couch so instead of running a marathon you're watching a Star Trek marathon.
- Waiting and waiting and more waiting.
- Self-doubt and second-guessing.
- Worries that wake you up and won't let you go back to sleep.



Here are some of the hurdles we faced in the middle space of our adoption.

- We waited months to get our paperwork signed by the Children's Judge in Haiti, only to realize he misspelled Daphlie and we had to do it again.
- We waited six months for an exit letter that the government adoption agency in Haiti said would take ten days. Then a week after we got it, they took it back and asked us for a form to explain our prior contact with our daughter. After we turned that in, we had to wait another six months.
- There was the phone call we received when our adoption agent told us that I was red flagged for being too old. That was rough. She could have at least told me I didn't look that old.

The waiting lasted four years. Four years of agony and frustration, bureaucracy and pointless delays. In my relationship with my wife, I am the crier. I cry at everything from Disney movies to *Die Hard*. I have never seen my wife cry as much as she cried in those four years.

Living in the unresolved can be agony. This waiting space is a place we are all familiar with. There are all kinds of waiting.

There is the waiting we face after we apply to get into a school. Will we get in? Will they want us?

We dream of falling in love and getting married. Then there is the waiting for Mr. or Mrs. Right. That

waiting includes sifting through losers, answering your mom's questions about your love life, being rejected, creating a dating profile online. Sometimes that search for Mr. Right is so hard it's easy to settle for Mr. Right Now.

After marriage there is the waiting for children. For some that is a long and difficult wait, but even if you have children when you want, the waiting has just begun. There is the waiting for your child to walk and waiting for your child to talk, then waiting for them to stop talking and then waiting to put them in school so you can get your life back. With kids, the waiting never ends. It starts with a dream that your child will grow up and be successful and then the rest of your life is waiting to see if it will happen.

There is the waiting to get a job. After securing that job, there is waiting to get the promotion that will take your career to the next level. Then waiting for that job to bring the personal security you've hoped for.

There is waiting when we start a new business. Will it get off the ground? Will it pay off? Will you meet your financial goals?

Lewis B. Smedes, author of *The Art of Forgiving*, put it like this: "We wait in fear for a happy ending we cannot write. We wait for a not yet that feels like a not ever."

Some of you have never heard of Lewis B. Smedes. Let me give you another theologian that you have probably heard of, rock star Tom Petty. "The waiting is the hardest part."

The hardest part of life is not the goal setting or the

goal achieving. The hardest part is the ability to persevere in the middle. To set the goal and not shrink back.

- To hang in there in the troubled marriage.
- Not giving up on your kid who's pushing his limits.
- To not quit on the friendship even when you get hurt.
- Pursuing the goal in your job even though no one seems to notice.

Unfortunately, too often, in the waiting my mind questions the motives of my Heavenly Father. Are you punishing me for some mistake I made? Will you prove to be reliable and come through for me? Will all this work and pain and struggle result in making a U-turn and heading back home from Dodger Stadium? Over the years, I had to learn the hard lesson that even in the waiting my Heavenly Dad has my best interests at heart.

My go-to verses when it comes to waiting are found in Hebrews 11. This chapter details some of the people in the Bible who have become renowned for their faith. This is how their faith is defined:

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

—Hebrews 11:1

This really is the key to living in the unresolved. It's the belief in what you do not see. You haven't reached it yet, but you are hoping for it. The apostle Paul defined faith like this:

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*Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?*

—Romans 8:24

Did any of you have a mom that made the following statement to you? You were frantically looking for your wallet or your keys and your mom said, “It’s always the last place you look.” Think about that for a moment. *It’s always the last place you look.* Why would you keep looking for what you’ve lost once you’ve already found it? That is the stupidest thing you can say to someone who’s looking for something. (Please don’t tell your mom she’s stupid.) We’ve all heard this phrase, but there is no sense to it regardless of who says it to you.

The same is true of faith. If you already have something, you don’t hope for it. You have it. Based on these two verses, we know this truth about faith.

**FAITH ONLY EXISTS IN THE ABSENCE OF WHAT YOU HOPE FOR**

Faith is only alive when you are living in the unresolved. That’s the proving ground for faith. It’s when your faith matures. If you already have something, there is no need for hope. You don’t need to leverage your faith. You have it.

The rest of Hebrews 11 gives us examples of people who showed this kind of faith. Put a bookmark in your Bible and read this chapter this week. In the face of dashed hopes and broken dreams, these people did not shrink back. They didn’t give up. They made it through the unresolved times. It would take forever to go

through this list, so let's just look at a couple of these characters in Hebrews 11.

*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.*

—Hebrews 11:8-12

God told Abraham that he was going to make him into a great nation. The nation of Israel would come out of his family. When God told him this, the great nation of Israel consisted of him and his wife Sarah. Twenty-five years later, it was him, his wife, and one son. That's a lot of waiting for a very small nation.

Jump down to verse 22. We find another familiar name.

*By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.*

Joseph's story of his technicolor dream coat was told on Broadway in just short of three hours, but the reso-

lution of his story would take a bit longer. Joseph's brothers were jealous that his dad gave him that beautiful coat so they sold him into slavery, but he rose to become second-in-command of Israel. Do you know how long from the time he was sold to the time he would take his role as second-in-command? Thirteen years. For thirteen years, he was either in slavery or in prison. Joseph spent thirteen years living in the unresolved, enslaved and in prison.

The list continues in verse 32.

*And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets.*

When David was fifteen years old, the prophet Samuel looked at all his older brothers and he chose the youngest child, David, to be the next king of Israel. It would be another fifteen years before David actually took that role. After David was anointed future king, the current king, Saul, became jealous of David. Because of Saul's insecurity he made it his mission to hunt David down and kill him. David would spend the next fifteen years running for his life. Saul used his army to hunt him down so David had to hide in the wilderness, hide in caves, and fake insanity. It was fifteen years living in the unresolved.

Just about every person on the list in Hebrews 11 spent most of their life waiting for the promise. Life is spent living in the unresolved. Don't you hate that?

Honestly, I wish my life was more like an episode of *Full House*. If I lived on *Full House*, Danny Tanner would

be my dad, Uncle Joey would tell me jokes, and all of my issues would be resolved in thirty minutes, including three commercial breaks and a song by Uncle Jesse. Life isn't like that. There is always something unresolved.

Why is it that our Heavenly Father puts us through these extended times of waiting? Why do we have to wander through these long periods of unresolved issues? Theologian and author C.S. Lewis put it like this: "I am sure that God keeps no one waiting unless he sees that it is good for him to wait." God puts us through these extended periods of waiting and hoping and running and hiding in caves for one reason.

## **THE PERIOD OF WAITING AND HOPING IS WHERE GROWTH HAPPENS**

Abraham needed those twenty-five years so his faith could develop. Joseph needed those thirteen years to prepare him to lead a nation through crisis. David needed those fifteen years so that he could learn to rely on God.

Look with me at Psalm 17:

*I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.*

—Psalm 17:6-8

David didn't write that from his palace when he was king. David wrote those beautiful words in his late teens

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when he was running from Saul who was trying to kill him. Life happens in the unresolved. Growth happens in the unresolved. Faith happens in the unresolved. Faith doesn't even exist unless it's unresolved. Let me show you two more verses in Hebrews 11. They say almost exactly the same thing. The idea is so important the author says it twice.

*All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.*

—Hebrews 11:13

*These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

—Hebrews 11:39, 40

All the goals and hopes and dreams that these people were called to and spent years trying to achieve weren't resolved in their lifetime. They were part of a bigger story. It's the story of God on earth. That story won't be resolved until Jesus comes back to earth and makes everything right. In the meantime, it's up to you and me to do our jobs and grow in the unresolved.

Here's the challenge, and you're not going to like it. Learning to live in the unresolved means that you and I have to get good at something we hate: Waiting. Culturally, this is not our strong suit.

Anne Fisher, in *Fortune Magazine*, spoke about our



reluctance to wait. The symptoms of our pace sound like this: “Eating lunch at your desk while also checking emails and talking on the phone is one symptom. So is doing something else while on conference calls, or even while brushing your teeth. We all find ourselves multi-tasking now and then, but what about habitually interrupting someone who is talking, or always getting frustrated in a checkout line or in traffic, even when it’s moving along smoothly? When microwaving something for thirty seconds, do you feel the urge to find something else to do while you wait? If one or more of these sounds all too familiar, you probably have a bad case of a malady that psychologists have dubbed ‘hurry sickness.’ A sure sign is repeatedly pushing the door-close button on an elevator.”

God has a different plan for us than this frantic hurry we find ourselves in so often. He says over and over and over that we need to be willing to wait.

*Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*

—Psalm 27:14

*The eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.*

—Psalm 33:18

*Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land.*

—Psalm 37:34

*Your Picture is on His Refrigerator*

*I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.*

–Psalm 40:1

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

–Psalm 130:5, 6

*Those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.*

–Isaiah 40:31

I have a feeling that there are some people reading this whose issue goes beyond slow drivers and bad waitresses. You're tired of waiting, and there is one person you hold specifically responsible. It's your Heavenly Father. You want answers.

- You want to know what to do in your marriage.
- You are frustrated with how difficult parenting is and you want to know if it's worth it.
- You want to know if you should stay in your current job or step out.
- You want to know if you'll be able to retire.

We want instant results in areas of our life that may take decades.

We want to see results in our kids' lives. I have three

children in their twenties, the youngest now 21. I'm still waiting to see progress in areas I've prayed for my whole life. We want to see growth in our spouse. The things they struggle with are ingrained. It can be years to see movement.

We want to know that our job has purpose. We won't really know if we've made the impact we want in our business and the people we work with for literally decades. Our lives are spent waiting. That's why God tells us over and over to wait patiently. I found the following quote from F.B. Meyer, a Baptist pastor and evangelist, which spoke to me:

“God has his set times. It is not for us to know them. Indeed, we cannot know them. We must wait for them.

If God had told Abraham that he must wait all those years until he pressed the promised child to his bosom, his heart would have failed him. So in gracious love, the length of the weary years was hidden. And only as they were nearly spent and there were only a few more months to wait, God told him, according to the time of life, “Sarah shall have a son.” If God told you on the front end how long you would wait to find the fulfillment of your desire or pleasure or dream, you'd lose heart. You'd grow weary in well doing. So would I. But he doesn't. He just says, “Wait. I keep my word. I'm in no hurry. In the process of time I'm developing you to be ready for the promise.”

People gave us a lot of advice when we were in our four-year battle to adopt our daughter. A close friend made this profound statement: “I know you have to do a lot of waiting, and it's hard, but think about this. Who do you want to be when your daughter gets

here? Do you want to be anxious, worried, and stressed, or do you want to be calm, relaxed, and full of faith?"

Now, let me ask you a question: Who do you want to be when the hoping is over? Who do you want to be when you get that job or find the love of your life?

- I want to have a deeper trust that God is going to come through.
- I want to not jump to disastrous conclusions.
- I want to bring calm to my unresolved situation.
- I want to learn to be grateful on this day.
- I want to develop a half-full attitude.

My guess is that, at this moment, you are living in the unresolved. Right now, there's an issue that is bothering you as you drive home, pursues you when you have a quiet moment, and wakes you up in the middle of the night. Where do you want to be when your situation is resolved? God challenges us to wait on him. He wants us to trust that he has our best interests at heart. He knows that if we pray to him, run to him with our problems, and stay the course that we will grow and mature. He promises peace and purpose. He knows that life is lived in the unresolved.

It has taken me a lifetime to learn that waiting in the unresolved is not my dad's way of punishing me. I've learned that the journey isn't a dead-end leading to a U-turn because he's unreliable. Even if I never make it to Helmet night, the lessons along the way have been invaluable.

## THINK ABOUT IT

1. What is a goal that you have set for yourself recently?
2. What is an accomplishment that you are proud of?
3. In what areas of your life are you living in the unresolved?
4. Who do you want to be when the waiting is over?
5. What lessons do you think God is trying to teach you in the space between goal setting and goal achieving?