

THE
GENIUS
OF
ONE

*God's answer for our
fractured world*

GREG HOLDER



FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

What divisions do you see in our world today?

What has been your experience with Christian community?

In your own words, why is unity within the church important?

1

THE WORST NIGHT OF SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE

The Prayer Prayed for Us

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

How has prayer helped you in the midst of trial?

What jumps out at you from Jesus' prayer?

What types of behavior keep Jesus followers from living as one?

2

WHEN SHARKS DANCE

The Example Set before Us

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Why do Christians treat one another like sharks?

How can you “dance” more like a Christian and less like a shark?

Who are the people in your life—maybe even the difficult people—whom God is calling you to love? What can you do to demonstrate love to them?

3

SHEER GENIUS

The Plan Laid for Us

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Why is an aspen stand a good metaphor for Christian community?

When in life have you experienced the benefits of working with others?

What excuses do you make or defenses do you set up to avoid building relationships with those around you?

How have your relationships with other Christ followers strengthened your relationship with Jesus?

4

KEEP ONE EYE ON
THE FISH, THE OTHER
ON THE BEAR

The Challenge Ahead of Us

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

When it comes to evangelism, why are both the “what” and the “how” important? What happens when we concentrate on one at the expense of the other?

Which of the three myths resonate with you? How have you seen these myths inflict harm in your life?

What tools does the evil one use to distract you from what God is calling you to do?

How can you stay focused on Christ and create a healthy culture within your community?

5

A STORY ABOUT GUNS

In the Presence of Humility

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

How have you personally experienced the negative consequences of pride?

What keeps you from celebrating the accomplishments of others?

What habits can you adopt to become a better listener?

Whom has God placed in your life who can help you grow in humility?

6

AT SOME POINT ALL
OF OUR MOVIES STINK

The Hard Work of Collaboration

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

What comes to mind when you hear the words “creative collaboration”?

How well do you respond to constructive criticism?

What steps can you take to become more aware of your blind spots?

Whom is God calling you to invite into the creative process?

7

THE DISCLAIMER

The Hard Work You Do Alone

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

What would it look like to increase your level of productivity?

List habits that will help you become a better worker.

8

LIFE AND DEATH

Grace and Grumbling in Our Words

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

What steps can you take to control your speech?

How is God calling you to use your words to build up others?

Choose one of the practical rules from this chapter. How would incorporating this action into your life improve your relationships?

9

THE COLOR OF
A COBRA'S EYES

The Poison of Gossip

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Why is gossip so destructive?

How would the “speakerphone” principle affect your conversations?

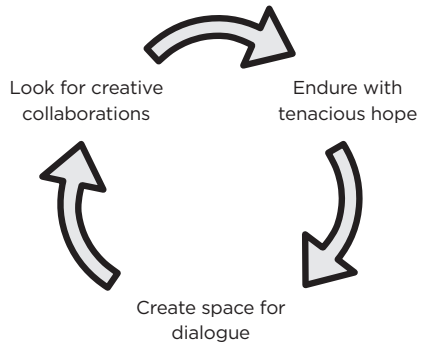
Why is the “different kind of whisper” so important?

How can you use your words to “breathe life” into the people around you?

10

HANG ON TO THAT
RED SHIRT

Entering the Trouble of Another



A FRAMEWORK FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATION

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Whom in your life is God calling you to “struggle alongside?”

Whom do you call when the trials of life hit? Have you made yourself available for others to call you?

Why is it important for Jesus followers to “enter the chaos” of their communities?

How is your local church embodying the Incarnation?
What steps can you take to get involved with that activity?

11

THE JESUS ANSWER

Lessons Learned in Ferguson

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

List some of your own sinful motivations that negatively affect your community. What would it look like to invite God to heal those parts of your life?

What are some unlikely partnerships that you can create?

What next step is God calling you to take?

How can you promote unity within your Christian community and work toward Jesus' prayer for oneness?

12

ANSWERED PRAYER

How the World Could Still Change

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

What tensions currently divide your community?

What would it look like for you to “bridge the gap” and promote reconciliation?

How is Jesus calling you to be an agent of peace?

What messy but necessary conversations do you need to have?

NOTES

PROLOGUE

1. Clay Shirky, “From ‘Why’ to ‘Why Not?’,” *The Guardian*, May 17, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2009/may/18/internet-future>.
2. Dean Williams, *Leadership for a Fractured World: How to Cross Boundaries, Build Bridges, and Lead Change* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2015), 9.
3. David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . And Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).
4. Rob Bell, “*Echad*,” sermon delivered at Mars Hill Bible Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2005.
5. John Ortberg, particularly his chapter “The Wonder of Oneness,” in *Everybody’s Normal Till You Get to Know Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

CHAPTER 1: THE WORST NIGHT OF SOMEONE ELSE’S LIFE

1. Zechariah 9:9.
2. Mark 11:18.
3. For a scholarly discussion of where John 15–17 took place, see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 476–80.
4. John 14:31.
5. John 14:9, author’s paraphrase.
6. John 17:10.
7. John 17:1.
8. John 17:5.
9. John 17:6.
10. Revelation 5:9, emphasis added.
11. John 17:20–23.

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CHAPTER 2: WHEN SHARKS DANCE

1. Scot McKnight, *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2004), 6. If you would like to gain a better appreciation of the Shema, McKnight's book is a good resource.
2. Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin, *To Pray as a Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 144.
3. My faith (and yours) is more informed and thought-out because of such endeavors by theologians. To God be the glory for such men and women and their Scripture-soaked, highly educated brains.
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5. N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006), 118.
6. John 1:3, *The Voice*.
7. Ezekiel 4:12, 15.
8. Ezekiel 37:17.
9. I am sure someone else has made this point and said this very thing. I'm trying to find someone to credit. ☺
10. Galatians 4:4.
11. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.
12. Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 111.
13. 1 John 4:8.
14. Scot McKnight, *One Life: Jesus Calls, We Follow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 150.
15. John 17:21.

CHAPTER 3: SHEER GENIUS

1. Proverbs 3:19.
2. Romans 12:4-5.
3. Michael C. Grant, "The Trembling Giant," *Discover*, October 1, 1993.
4. Leonard Matheson, *Your Faithful Brain: Designed for So Much More!* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2014), 164-65.
5. Psalm 139:13-14.
6. Psalm 139:15.
7. F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 955.

CHAPTER 4: KEEP ONE EYE ON THE FISH, THE OTHER ON THE BEAR

1. Terry Eagleton, quoted in Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 10. This will not be the only reference to this seminal work by Crouch. The ground

he covers is different from the focus of this book. But his thoughts about culture and the opportunities for Christians in our world are essential. Read it. Do something with it. You're welcome.

2. *Merriam Webster's Essential Learner's English Dictionary*, s.v. "culture."
3. Crouch, *Culture Making*, 19. Told you I'd mention this book again.
4. Edgar Schein, "The Concept of Organizational Culture: Why Bother?," *Classics of Organization Theory*, edited by Jay Shafritz and J. Steven Ott (Independence, KY: Cengage Learning, 2011), 355.
5. Matthew 28:19-20.
6. Schein, *Classics of Organization Theory*, 354.
7. Philippians 2:2.
8. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1065.
9. Philippians 2:1 (emphasis added).
10. Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 56.
11. 1 Peter 5:8.

CHAPTER 5: A STORY ABOUT GUNS

1. Romans 12:3.
2. Philippians 2:3.
3. Ortberg, *Everybody's Normal*, 38.
4. Cornelius Plantinga, *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 20.
5. Philippians 2:5.
6. Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 55.
7. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 986.
8. Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Think Like a Freak: The Authors of Freakonomics Offer to Retain Your Brain* (New York: William Morrow, 2014), 19-20.
9. Michael P. Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening: How Learning to Listen Can Improve Relationships*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2009), 144.
10. 1 Timothy 1:14.
11. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Dutton, 2008), 181.
12. *Ibid.*, 181.
13. See F. F. Bruce, *Philippians*, New International Critical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989); and Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

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CHAPTER 6: AT SOME POINT ALL OF OUR MOVIES STINK

1. F. P. Leverett, ed., *A New and Copious Lexicon of the Latin Language* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1896).
2. Ecclesiastes 4:9.
3. Ed Catmull and Amy Wallace, *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration* (New York: Random House, 2014).
4. Ibid., 86.
5. Ibid.
6. Roger von Oech, *A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative*, as quoted in Nancy Beach, *An Hour on Sunday: Creating Moments of Wonder and Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 178.
7. Catmull and Wallace, *Creativity, Inc.*, 90. Emphasis in original.
8. Hebrews 10:24.
9. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 780.
10. Ibid.
11. Hebrews 10:25.
12. Catmull and Wallace, *Creativity, Inc.*, 92.

CHAPTER 7: THE DISCLAIMER

1. Rob Cross, Reb Rebele, and Adam Grant, “Collaborative Overload,” *Harvard Business Review* (January–February 2016), accessed March 28, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2016/01/collaborative-overload>.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Catmull and Wallace, *Creativity, Inc.*, 86.
5. Cross, Rebele, and Grant, “Collaborative Overload.”
6. Ibid.
7. Henry Cloud, *Necessary Endings: The Employees, Businesses, and Relationships That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Move Forward* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2011), 7.
8. 1 Corinthians 12:21.
9. 1 Corinthians 12:18.

CHAPTER 8: LIFE AND DEATH

1. Rodney Stark’s *Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2006) is a great place to start. The writings and talks of Chuck Colson (see *The Faith: What Christians Believe, Why They Believe It, and Why It Matters* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008]) also give intellectual heft to the claim that good has been advanced by the people of God.

2. ESV.
3. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 615.
4. NLT.
5. Matthew 23:26.
6. James 1:19.
7. John Ortberg, *Now What?: God's Guide to Life for Graduates* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).
8. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), 97–98.
9. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 12.
10. Ortberg, *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, chapter 7.
11. Matthew 18:15.
12. Romans 12:18.

CHAPTER 9: THE COLOR OF A COBRA'S EYES

1. Proverbs 20:19.
2. 1 Timothy 5:13. Translation is from Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 800.
3. Romans 1:29–30.
4. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1098.
5. Genesis 16:13.
6. The first time I heard this word was in Jonah Goldberg, “Schadenfreudtastic,” *The National Review*, September 30, 2011, <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/278819/schadenfreudtastic-jonah-goldberg>.

CHAPTER 10: HANG ON TO THAT RED SHIRT

1. 2 Corinthians 1:3–4.
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3. Horatio G. Spafford, “It Is Well with My Soul,” public domain.
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5. Dallas Willard, *The Allure of Gentleness: Defending the Faith in the Manner of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2015), 160. Emphasis in original.
6. Ben Patterson, *Waiting: Finding Hope When God Seems Silent* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 164.
7. John 20:29.
8. J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 53. As quoted by Matt Perman, “How Can Jesus Be God and Man?” *Desiring God*, October 5, 2006, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-can-jesus-be-god-and-man>.
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12. Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 24.
13. 2 Corinthians 4:11.
14. John Piper, "His Body: The Fullness of Him Who Fills All in All," *Desiring God*, September 20, 1992, <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/his-body-the-fullness-of-him-who-fills-all-in-all>.
15. Michael Gerson, "The Children among Syria's Ruins," *Washington Post*, October 15, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/syrian-children-among-the-ruins/2015/10/15/8d0510de-7360-11e5-8d93-0af317ed58c9_story.html?utm_term=.927ab60a4f99.
16. Ibid.
17. Philippians 4:6.
18. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.

CHAPTER 11: THE JESUS ANSWER

1. Stephen Collinson, "Who Can Heal America?" *CNN*, July 9, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/08/politics/dallas-heal-america-obama-clinton-trump/>.
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3. John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
4. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2016), 106.
5. Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 2007), 58.
6. Ibid.
7. Murray Bowen, cited in Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, 55–56.
8. John 3:19–20.
9. McKnight, *Jesus Creed*, 33.
10. Ibid., 37.
11. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, 62.
12. Ibid., 84.
13. Proverbs 15:1.
14. Friedman, *Failure of Nerve*, 68.
15. David French, "America Is Driving toward the Abyss, and It's Time We Hit the Brakes," *National Review*, July 8, 2016, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/437625/dallas-police-shooting-demands-calm-debate>.

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17. To see those photos, see “Ferguson Awaits Grand Jury Decision,” CBS, November 19, 2014, <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/ferguson-awaits-grand-jury-decision/>.
18. This is a variation on a scenario suggested by Friedman, *Failure of Nerve*, 58.
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20. John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 175.
21. Galatians 6:9.
22. Psalm 34:14.
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24. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 18.

CHAPTER 12: ANSWERED PRAYER

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2. Philippians 3:14.
3. Michael Maschler, Eilon Solan, and Shmuel Zamir, *Game Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 111.
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8. Galatians 3:28.
9. 1 Corinthians 1:12.
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11. 1 Thessalonians 5:11.
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13. Andy Crouch, “Being Culture Makers,” interview with StudentSoul.org, January 2007, accessed March 29, 2017, http://andy-crouch.com/articles/being_culture_makers.
14. Cloud, *Necessary Endings*, 181.