

## Jesus in His Own Words A Layman's Perspective

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## LEGACY ISN'T JUST FOR LATER

By Jenny Abel

*"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." (James 4:13–14)*

The vision for *Recalibrate Your Life* was born out of Ken's ministry to those nearing retirement or recently retired, a season of life when people often search for a deeper sense of meaning and purpose—and take a harder look at those big questions that lurk in the back of all our minds (e.g., What's my purpose? Will anyone remember me when I'm gone?). When I began hearing Ken teach on the concept of recalibrating, I was struck by his statement that, ideally, people of all ages should live with this sort of meaning-infused intentionality; we shouldn't wait until we're older to begin thinking about our impact beyond our lifetime. Our legacy begins now; it accumulates. And only God knows how long each of our accumulations will last—maybe 80 years or more, maybe fewer.

Presumption and procrastination tempt all of us, but this can especially be the case when it comes to considering our mortality. Who wants to think about aging and dying in their 20s or 30s? Yet, unless the subject is forced on us by the onset of adversity or a tragedy, it's easy to reach our 40s or later before we truly begin to plan and act as though we won't live on earth forever.

If we're wise, though, we won't wait for disaster to strike before we heed Scriptures like James 4:13–16. We'll spend our time and resources, and seize opportunities that we can never get back, in a way that "treats things according to their true value," as Ken likes to put it—the eternal as eternal, the temporal and material as fleeting.

As the mother of a one- and three-year-old, I'm often given this piece of advice by parents of older children: *Remember, the days are long, but the years are short.* It's a maxim we all could stand to live by, a reminder of the brevity of life. If we're in the midst of difficulty, that season

can feel like it'll last forever. But in the context of eternity, both earthly pleasure and earthly suffering are fleeting. What really will last are the eternal, unchanging God and His Word, and the people He has made for Himself.

Many of us live harried lives. But whether our days are busy at an office, busy with medical concerns or appointments, or busy with endless meal making and diaper changing at home, we can all benefit from recalibrating regularly so that we keep the "big picture" at the front of our minds at all times—and align our thoughts, priorities, and habits accordingly.

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# RECALIBRATE YOUR LIFE

*Navigating Transitions with Purpose & Hope*

*"Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. You turn man back into dust and say, 'Return, O children of men.' For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. . . . As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away. Who understands the power of Your anger and Your fury, according to the fear that is due You? So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom. . . . O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." —Psalm 90:1–4, 10–12, 14*

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# RECALIBRATING AMIDST LIFE'S CHANGES & STAGES

By Kenneth Boa and Jenny Abel

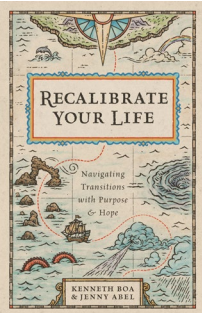
THINK ABOUT A MAJOR LIFE CHANGE or event you have gone through or are anticipating. Maybe it's starting a new job, retiring, launching a business venture, getting married, having a child, becoming a grandparent, or making a cross-country move. Maybe it's less positive, such as grappling with a difficult health diagnosis or grieving the loss of a loved one. We all have seasons and transitions in our lives. Sometimes they occur voluntarily, other times involuntarily. Sometimes changes are obviously for the better, sometimes seemingly for the worse; usually, they're a mixture of the two, as even a grim health diagnosis or deep personal loss can be redeemed for good, prompting a reevaluation of priorities and catalyzing fresh spiritual growth.

In our new book *Recalibrate Your Life: Navigating Transitions with Purpose and Hope*, forthcoming from InterVarsity Press in February, we offer a framework and practical tools for processing life changes and transitions.

"I first began incorporating the concept of recalibrating into my life over two decades ago," Ken Boa says. "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."

Too often, Ken explains, our emotions cloud our thinking, and we get swept away in our new life circumstances. Before we know it, we're off track from where we intended to be, and we hardly know how we got there. Instead, if we take time to intentionally process the **perspective, purpose, and stewardship practices** that God desires for us, then we are much more likely—by God's grace and help—to live and finish well. And we're more likely to become a generational link, with the impact of our faith and actions reverberating into eternity.

Following is an excerpt from the introductory chapter of *Recalibrate Your Life*.



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## JOURNEYING INTO ETERNITY

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 . . . one 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).

Even mature believers tend to have a diminished view of this invisible reality. Consequently, we may grow weary, disillusioned, or 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 . . . instead of pursuing God and his purposes for our lives . . . until we draw our last breath. . . .

### CHANGING SCENERY ALONG THE WAY

During our earthly pilgrimages the landscape of our lives is ever changing. But sometimes the scenery changes more dramatically. Sud-

denly, 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.

Times of change and transition in life—and, even more importantly, our response to them—have a dramatic impact on the course of our journey and how we progress through this life.

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* . . . [which means] *to consciously process where we have been, where we are now, and where we are headed*. . . .

### LIVING WITH AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

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 every day 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 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.



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