

SEPTEMBER DEAL

AT [REFLECTIONS.ORG/SHOP](https://reflections.org/shop)

ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE TRILOGY

By Kenneth Boa



Offer expires September 30, 2023

An eternal perspective changes everything. An eternal perspective will impact your understanding of your own story in light of God's story, will help you seek God and know Him in each moment of every day, and will put suffering into its proper perspective as you realize that your momentary struggles pale in comparison to the future glory that awaits you with Christ.

SEPTEMBER MATCHING GRANT CAMPAIGN

Reflections Ministries is fully funded by partners like you who believe in the work and ministry that Dr. Ken Boa began so long ago. If you haven't done so already, we invite you to prayerfully consider participating in this year's 2023 Matching Grant Campaign. Throughout September, your gifts will be matched up to \$275,000! So, we invite you to be generous as you invest in eternal significance!

THANK YOU FOR THE WAY YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED YOUR COMMITMENT TO KEN AND HIS MINISTRY BY COMING ALONGSIDE US IN PRAYER AND SUPPORT.

THE PROMISES OF GOD

FORGET ME NOT

Read Luke 12:6-7

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.
7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

The containers vary in size, in kind, in location, and in what they have in them, but most people have a place where they store personal treasures. People use shoeboxes, closets, scrapbooks, and dresser drawers to store precious items that, measured by the world's standards of value, are mere trinkets. These items are made of plastic, cloth, paper, or common metals, but were retained from those pivotal moments in life when something happened that should always be remembered. These minute mementos are our connection to what is truly valuable to us.

And yet even within those treasure chests of our favorite things, there are priorities—some things are more important than others. It's not that we don't care for everything with equal effort—where our shoebox goes, everything goes. But within that collection of valuables, a small cross given to us by a godparent may be a greater treasure than the ticket stub from our first date.

If we think of the earth as God's treasure trove of valued things, we learn from Scripture that there are two categories of importance: first, human beings; second, everything else. Because men and women were created in God's image to have eternal fellowship with Him, we are the most valued part of His earthly creation (Ps. 8:3-8).

Jesus cited the way God cares for the least of His creation to illustrate how very important we are in God's sight. God remembers even tiny sparrows, worth less than a halfpenny apiece in the marketplaces of Jesus' day. In fact, God takes pains to make sure these tiny creatures are fed every day (Matt. 6:26). If not even the hungry cry of a young sparrow escapes God's attention, then He will certainly remember us, who "are more valuable than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7).

As human beings, we are the pinnacle of God's earthly creation. If we are believers in Jesus Christ, we have become children of God, members of God's "forever family." Because of who we are in Jesus Christ, God keeps us close to His heart like a treasure that prompts Him to look back to the cross. Throughout this life and the next, God will never forget His own.

God's Promise:

What He treasures most, He plans to keep forever.

Reflections Ministries
One Piedmont Center, Suite 130 • Atlanta, GA 30305
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



[REFLECTIONS.ORG](https://reflections.org)

SEPTEMBER 2023

REFLECTIONS

A teaching letter encouraging believers to develop a clear mind and a warm heart

FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE

Lord Jesus, You set me free from the yoke of slavery and delivered me from the bondage of the world, the bondage of sin, and the bondage of self so that I could be liberated into newness of life. The more clearly I see myself in Christ, the more free I am from the guilt and pain of the past and from the anxieties of the future. Now that I have been adopted into Your family, You have given me a new identity and a new inheritance. By Your grace, may I learn to live out of the resources You have given so that I will move forward into the new freedom You have given and be less inclined to revert to the bondage of the past. May I become increasingly attracted to what You want for me and less attracted to the lures of the things that formerly ensnared me.

[REFLECTIONS.ORG](https://reflections.org)

Treasuring Time and People

REWRITING YOUR BROKEN STORY,
THE POWER OF AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE
BY KENNETH BOA

Not too long ago, I spoke at a retreat near Baton Rouge. Some of the men at the retreat were people I’ve known for years, and I really treasure the unity of spirit I felt there. Some of us were gathered around talking after the Friday night session, and the conversation was glorious. A friend of mine brought out six rare bottles of wine, among them a 1976 Chateau Lafite Rothschild. When he shared the wine with us, my friend said,

“I want to enjoy it now with my friends rather than die and leave it behind.” I asked him to write down the names of the wines. I wanted to remember them, for the sake of the moment.

It was a magical four hours in the presence of people I loved, enjoying the goodness of God’s creation, and I will never forget it. But even at the time, I was thinking that this was a gift to my memory, something that I could look back on forever. We want to hold onto these moments, but we know that we cannot even while they’re happening. There’s something about time that makes you want to stop it. You want to hold onto it, and yet it slips through your fingers.

The deep desire to slow the progress of time puts me in mind of Kirk Jones’s film, *Waking Ned Devine*¹. It’s a clever story about a man from a tiny Irish village of about fifty-two inhabitants, all mostly honest Irish country folk living simple lives. Big news hits when they discover that someone from their village has won the lottery. The only problem is that winner Ned Devine lives alone, has no family, and got so excited about winning that he dies smiling with his hand still on the ticket. When his friends Jackie O’Shea and Michael O’Sullivan discover that Ned has perished with his winning ticket, they concoct a quick scheme to keep the winnings from reverting back to the state.

They convince the village to go along with a scheme in which O’Sullivan pretends to be Devine, and it goes off without a hitch when the lottery inspector comes to confirm the winning ticket.

After they believe the inspector has left, the people gather together to remember Devine. The inspector hears singing and enters the church to see what’s going on. O’Shea quickly devises another plan and begins a eulogy to his friend O’Sullivan, who is actually sitting in the front row.

O’Shea has the unique opportunity to give a funeral oration for a man still living:

Michael O’Sullivan was my great friend, but I don’t ever remember telling him that. The words that are spoken at a funeral are spoken too late for the man that is dead. . . . Michael and I grew old together. But at times when we laughed, we grew younger. If he were here now, if he could hear what I say, I’d congratulate him on being a great man and thank him for being a friend.

The words that are spoken at a funeral may indeed be spoken too late for the man that is dead, but they are also words that have been refined by the nature of the event. Death, we might say, has burned away the chaff of trivialities that usually litters our public events. Many of the items that formerly seemed so important—wealth, status, money, fame—are suddenly diminished. What we actually celebrate are all those qualities that enhance our relationships—humor, friendship, generosity of spirit. In a word, love. Precious few eulogies make mention of the deceased’s “great hair,” or impressive collection of cars. But many will make mention of times of laughter that momentarily turned back the hands of the clock. In other words, funerals have a tendency to impose an eternal perspective on us.

One of the more moving explorations of cultivating an eternal perspective in recent years is Marilynne Robinson’s novel, *Gilead*². Set in the fictional town of Gilead, Iowa, the story introduces us to Reverend John Ames, a Congregationalist minister in his twilight years. Though he lost his first wife, through a series of extraordinary circumstances, he remarries late in life. Despite his age, a son is born to Ames and his second wife, Lila. Ames’s health, however, is failing, and the novel takes the form of a series of letters, written by this aging minister to a boy who will grow up in his father’s absence.

As dour as this all may sound, *Gilead* is a radiant celebration of faith, hope, and love. Far from oppressing Ames, his imminent death intensifies his vision of the joys of life. He sees the simplest moments—a teenage boy shaking water from a leaf onto his giggling girlfriend, his young son blowing bubbles in the backyard—for the miracles that they are. In a word, his mortality grants him an eternal perspective, one that is bittersweet to be sure, but one that fills him with inexpressible gratitude nonetheless.

Why do we wait until funerals to speak our love, gratitude and affection? Why do we reserve our best words for people after their death? It doesn’t make sense. What a wonderful thing it would be to visit your own funeral, like Michael O’Sullivan, to sit and listen. An eternal perspective teaches us that relationships can be forever and that time is not to be feared. Funerals are not the time for our words of praise—now is. If we really believe this, we will treat people differently. We will remember how many times the Bible tells us God loves us and wants us to love each other. We will be generous with our words of praise and more cautious with our criticism. We will strive to speak words filled with a divine kindness, spent on people who are God’s eternal treasure.

Citations:

¹ Jones, Kirk, director. *Waking Ned Devine*. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1998.

² Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (New York: Picador, 2004).

One Piedmont Center, Suite 130 • Atlanta, GA 30305
info@kenboa.org

reflections.org