



# Letters from My Father's Murderer: A Journey of Forgiveness

*Laurie A. Coombs*

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**Letters from My Father's Murderer: A Journey of Forgiveness** Laurie A. Coombs

**An extraordinary true story of grace, mercy, and the redemptive power of God** When her father was murdered, Laurie Coombs and her family sought justice--and found it. Yet, despite the swift punishment of the killer, Laurie found herself increasingly full of pain, bitterness, and anger she couldn't control. It was the call to love and forgive her father's murderer that set her, the murderer, and several other inmates on the journey that would truly change their lives forever. This compelling story of transformation will touch the deepest wounds and show how God can redeem what seems unredeemable.

## Letters from My Father's Murderer: A Journey of Forgiveness Details

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Author : Laurie A. Coombs

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**Laurie A. Coombs**

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# **From Reader Review Letters from My Father's Murderer: A Journey of Forgiveness for online ebook**

## **Christy Williams says**

Disclosure this book was provided to me by Litfuse publicity group I have not been compensated in any way these thoughts and opinions' are mine and mine alone.

This book is a must read for anyone struggling with forgiveness. According to Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. I believe this book is a must read for anyone who has gone through something traumatic and needs to come to terms with it. If you don't know how to forgive someone, this book will definitely give you the steps to understand how to forgive and, not only that, but show you the miraculous things that can happen when you do. Not forgiving affects us in so many ways – both physically and mentally – and we know we need to forgive but sometimes it seems impossible. After reading Laurie's book, you will never feel that way again. After all, Laurie is forgiving someone that killed her father.

Laurie's father was killed by a man named Anthony whom she had heard about from her father before when he told her he had threatened suicide. Her father was building a home for Anthony and his wife and he and Anthony's wife got involved. This set Anthony on a path of destruction that would affect both his life and Laurie's, as well as their families. Anthony had claimed to be a Christian but Laurie didn't believe there was a God. However, through all this trauma, she realized that she needed a Savior and gave her life to Christ. When she still was having anxiety and anger issues, she prayed about it and realized that God wanted her to bring Anthony a Bible and she needed to forgive him. This starts the journey of two very unlikely people writing letters to each other and coming to terms with what happened.

Laurie is wanting answers that only Anthony can give her and Anthony realizes things about the situation that he had never come to terms with either. Coombs shares with readers how she came to grips with his death, how she found Jesus and how ultimately, she began corresponding with her father's killer. As readers, we go through her ups, her downs, and everything in between right through to the end. We feel for her, we cry, we laugh, we cheer, and finally we feel somewhat of a resolution once all is said and done. Even if you are not a religious type of person, that's okay as *Letters From My Father's Murderer: A Journey of Forgiveness*, sets on an important mission of showing how we can all forgive– maybe not forget– but learn to cope with the help of perhaps a higher power. Coombs says its best: "Throughout this book, I share many difficult, intimate details about my dad's murder, but this story is not ultimately about the circumstances behind my dad's death." Instead the book is about redemption and a story of two unlikely people willing to put their trust in God, and come together in ways they never expected. I rate this book a 5 stars out of 5 stars.

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## **K.B. Walker says**

This was a very powerful, non-fiction, Christian testimony. It recounts the journey of Laurie, a young agnostic woman devastated by the murder of her beloved father. Many years later, struck down by post traumatic stress, she is drawn to church and then faith. As her life takes on a deeper meaning, she is challenged by God to take a Bible to her Father's murderer in jail. Told with humbling honesty, we also meet Anthony and watch his life transformation, too. Laurie never actually is allowed to take that Bible but

through their correspondence over several years we see the power of obedience to God, love and forgiveness.

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## **Jenifer says**

I recently read *Letters From my Father's Murderer* by Laurie Coombs, and I have to say that it was, ironically, such an inspirational story. While it is not everyday you run into someone who has experienced the murder of one of their parents, the main message from this book runs much deeper. My Bachelor's in Psychology gets the best of me when it comes to deciphering human behavior, especially when it comes to murder. I am always interested to hear the back-story, as rarely is a murder committed by a stranger. That drew me into this book. I really wanted to hear what happened, and understand the meaning behind a willful correspondence between a daughter and her father's murderer. What kept me reading was the powerful message of forgiveness.

When Laurie's father is murdered, she goes through a very religiously dark time. As time passes, she begins to explore her feelings through God's guidance. She needs closure, and via much thought and prayer, comes to the conclusion that she needs to reach out to her father's murderer to get the full story of what happened the evening of the murder. While there are many obstacles in the road that prevent this from being a smooth journey, Laurie remains steadfast in her faith in God and his example to forgive our enemies. This experience is told through Laurie's perspective, as well as the letters exchanged between her and her father's murderer.

I could barely put this book down! As much as I wanted to find out why her father was murdered, I was equally as drawn to the underlying message of forgiveness, redemption, and most of all, healing by following the path of God. One quote that stuck out to me in this book was "It's not about whether you check the 'Christian' box on a survey, but whether your belief is backed by the power of the living God." (p. 93) I think this spoke to me because I see so many "box checkers" these days, and fewer individuals who actually try to live and behave as God intended. We are encouraged to love our enemies, which seems like such a difficult task. This proves to be the case, as seen when Laurie navigates her own journey of forgiveness. The amount of strength and perseverance Laurie shows throughout her experience is miraculous. I'm so glad that she shared her story the way she did, as I feel it could speak volumes to anyone who reads it. It gives you a very positive impression of forgiveness, and reminds us all that 1-forgiveness allows for our own healing and 2-that forgiveness does not equate to the acceptance of sinful acts.

Disclosure: I was given a complimentary copy of this book to facilitate an honest review. The opinions stated above are my own.

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## **Jalynn Patterson says**

About the Book:

""I believe God is not finished with either of us. Tomorrow is a good day." --Anthony to Laurie"

When her father was murdered, Laurie Coombs sought justice--and found it. His murderer now serves two life sentences with no possibility of parole. Yet, despite the swift punishment of the killer, Laurie found herself increasingly full of pain, bitterness, and anger she couldn't control. After coming to faith, she realized she was being called to seek something infinitely more difficult than justice: forgiveness.

This is an extraordinary true story of grace, mercy, and the redemptive power of God to change lives. The

reader is swept along with Laurie as she undergoes the life-changing transformation of becoming a Christian. As she studies Scripture, seeing God redeeming losses and healing deep wounds time and time again, she starts to understand that her own healing would require her to love her enemy in a real, practical way. Using her incredible correspondence with the man who killed her father, Laurie reveals a compelling journey of transformation, not only in her life, but in the lives of those whom many would call irredeemable.

"Letters from My Father's Murderer" is for any audience--Christian or secular--who

- Craves freedom from the inability to forgive those who've caused them harm
- Wants to hear testimony of God's power in our obedience
- Has experienced pain through other's sin against them
- Needs to know healing is always possible

The real story here is not primarily about murder and its fallout, but rather about redemption and how far it can reach.

#### My Review:

Forgiveness is such a hard topic for us all. It is such a hard feat when coupled with the bitterness that we create in a way to avoid the big F word. Forgiveness shouldn't be hard for any of us when we were created by the one Father that forgives so easily. He granted us grace in our lives so that we would find a way to reach beyond ourselves to grant it to others. Some people say that is just too hard for me. I can't do that because that is like telling my offender that I agree with what you have done to me.

Letters From My Fathers Murderer, is a true story about a young lady that got the justice she sought, but something was still missing. She had the anger, disappointment, hurt, resentment down pat, that was something that wasn't leaving her. She had to find a way to move on from this horrible act, something but what? Soon her life would take another turn, a turn she didn't expect. She walks us through her journey of forgiveness.

This true story will rip your heart out as you walk it with the author. The fact that she could share something so intimate is marvelous all on it's own.

**\*\*Disclosure\*\*** This book was sent to me free of charge for my honest review from Litfuse.

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#### **Caroline says**

Love this book! Highly recommend this book. Powerful true story about forgiveness...a forgiveness which would be impossible without the genuine power and compassion of Jesus. Amazing story that I think Pure Flix should make into a movie! Received this book as a Giveaway from Goodreads and writer Laurie Coombs. Thank you! I'm thinking about buying copies of this book to giveaway to the prison ministry at my church.

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#### **Jeanie says**

Laurie Coombs endured more as a young woman than many do. When she was 15, her parents divorced and, less than a year before her college graduation, her father was murdered. By someone he knew, Anthony, who even admitted to killing him. She would finish college and marry before the trial came to be, and Anthony was given two life sentences.

The week before his murder, Laurie's father shared with her of his new found faith in Jesus. She had turned away from the Lord after her father left, not returning even when their relationship was restored. She knew he seemed happy, different with his new-found faith. It would be several years and two babies, one a miracle, and a horrifying time of darkness and severe anxiety before she began to believe in Jesus as her Lord and Savior. What a challenging, magnificent journey He has led her through! He called Laurie to do what many might have refused to ever do – forgive her father's murderer. Not just forgive him, but to love her enemies. The Lord put on her heart to take him a Bible. Thus began an intensive season of communicating primarily by letter.

Laurie faced obstacles, not the least of which was the reaction of her husband and mother and her father's girlfriend – Anthony's ex-wife – what she needed to do. Travis and Laurie had been together since three years before the murder. He and her father had a good relationship. She endured health challenges and the aftereffects and waiting for approval of visiting rights. Simply writing to him had to have been hard; it would have been easier to get through the impossible red tape to send him a Bible than to write – and receive letters.

Many things she wrote resonated with me, either as a reminder or as the sweet water bubbling up through the Holy Spirit and giving me fuel for another day, especially:

“All through the Bible bad things happen – people sin or something goes wrong – but over and over two words make it okay – ‘but God’” (pg. 55). “...no matter how bad things seem to be, God is the constant.” (pg. 55) Laurie references Joseph in the Old Testament, and Romans 5:8, “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

What amazes me is not just their correspondence, but how God would use their testimonies. There are many things that I admire in Laurie. The passion she had as a new Christian and her walk of obedience through the irritable, tedious, tumultuous challenge to forgive what for many seasoned Christians would be unforgiveable. How many of us would slog through life, miserable, just trying to endure until Jesus came back rather than seeking to forgive as she had?

I also admire that she gives God the glory for His work in the unique ministry He called Laurie to; even the fact of the changes in Anthony and, as a result, other men that he knew in prison had their lives changed, too. The ministry included sharing the reconciliation, redemption, mercy, forgiveness and peace through Christ. I highly recommend this book to Christians in any age or stage of their faith, or whatever their challenge of forgiving, and those who have volunteered in prison ministry groups; it is an open encouragement that obeying God, even when it is hard, is a blessing when we are willing to try it and see.

With a grateful heart, I received a copy of this book through the “For Readers Only” group at The Book Club Network, in exchange for my honest review. All opinions are my own; no monetary compensation was received for this review.

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## **Lisa Johnson says**

Title: Letters from My Father's Murderer

Author: Laurie A. Coombs

Pages: 232

Year: 2015

Publisher: Kregel

My rating is 4 stars out of 5.

As I read the book, I was reminded of the recent tragedy in South Carolina and how the decision of one person can change so many lives in the blink of an eye. I am awed by how Laurie is so transparent in her journey to forgive the man who took her father's life. Her book I am sure doesn't share all that happened, but there is enough to give readers a glimpse into the aftermath of a life taken, and another forever behind bars. Laurie shares how God led her to begin communicating with her father's killer and how she thought if her questions were answered, she would have peace. What Laurie learned and shares is what truly brought her peace. I admire her husband who gave her time to work through the grief, pain and more throughout the years after her father's death.

When I read, it was easy to see how only God could make a way to bring two totally different viewpoints, Laurie's and Tony's, the man who committed the crime, to a place of peace. Readers will see how God is so much bigger than tragedy, pain, anger and more to radically make something good come out of an evil act. Perhaps, like me, as you read you might remember other tragedies where people were killed due to the evil acts of others. I know I thought of those in the South Carolina church who were recently killed by a young man and yet in court each family spokesman got up and forgave that young man. Not only that, some said they were praying for him. What a testimony to the awesomeness of God for them to be able to do that in the depth of grief!

Situations like Laurie Coombs' father or South Carolina bring all of us to a place of seeing the victims as part of what Hebrews 11 calls the "cloud of witnesses". These people reflect to a hurting, broken and sin-filled world that God is indeed on the throne. If we open our hearts, He alone can reach into the depths of our pain, bringing healing, peace and hope.

One last thought about Laurie's book is it shows there is no magic wand; it takes time and hard work to go before the Lord again and again with an open and willing heart to be healed. Not just healed, but to know what the Lord's desire is for those who walk through the fire and come out a different person.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received one or more of the products or services mentioned above for free in the hope that I would mention it on my blog. Regardless, I only recommend products or services I use personally and believe will be good for my readers. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255. "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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## **Carole Jarvis says**

Reviewed at The Power of Words: <http://bit.ly/1gAi2pa>

Letters from My Father's Murderer . . . The title alone demands that I pick this book up. It is certainly a book that will make readers think, a story that boggles the mind when it comes to Christ's command to forgive, and just might leave you rethinking what you thought you knew and understood about forgiveness.

The book's description says that Letters from My Father's Murderer is for any audience, Christian or secular, who

- Craves freedom from the inability to forgive those who've caused them harm
- Wants to hear testimony of God's power in our obedience
- Has experienced pain through other's sin against them
- Needs to know healing is always possible

The murder of Laurie's dad is the framework on which her memoir is based,, but it is all of the above that and more. On one level, it's a story about the effects of murder, what was in Anthony's heart, etc. - but at the heart, this is all about forgiveness, redemption, healing. A testimony to the kind of God we serve and the far-reaching arms of redemption.

Laurie walked away from the church at age fifteen when her parents divorced, and it was such refreshing joy to see a new believer discover the person of Jesus, the difference between "religion" and "relationship" - and to walk beside Laurie on her quest to understand this new faith.

When it comes to Christ's command to forgive, knowing and doing are different things, as most of us have found out, many times over. Through her desire to be obedient to God's leading, Laurie walks the fine line between kindness and friendliness, and silently preaches many sermons through her actions - challenging us at the same time.

I am a person who is inspired by quotes and so many of Laurie's thoughts are highlighted in my copy. Here are just a few . . .

"I believe the battle intensifies once we come to Christ, for with Christ comes a new enemy: Satan."

"They say time heals all wounds, but that's simply not true. Time only dulls the pain. God heals the wounds."

"Anger unresolved turns to bitterness every time."

"Darkness flees in the presence of light, but light cannot go where it's not permitted."

"The thought of God using me to help bring forgiveness and healing to the very one who had harmed me was a beautiful thing."

I am so glad that Laurie shared this experience through Letters from My Father's Murderer and recommend it to all readers.

Thank you to Litfuse Publicity for providing a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Create With Joy says**

When you suffer from a senseless loss, how do you move from a place of anger, bitterness and hatred to a place of renewed faith, hope and forgiveness?

Is it even possible?

Letters From My Father's Murderer is the raw, honest and inspiring story of how one woman comes face to face with the worst that humanity has to offer and - through God's grace - finds a way through the darkness.

If you are dealing with a painful circumstance in your life where you are struggling with forgiveness, Letters From My Father's Murderer will show how God can help you to overcome the most difficult - make that the most impossible - of circumstances.



Honestly written, sensitively presented, and courageously explored, consider this a "must read" book of the year!

To read this review in its entirety, visit [Create With Joy](#).

Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the publisher for review purposes. However, the opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own.

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## **Julie D. says**

This is a book that will not leave my mind. It was one of the most amazing stories I've ever read and, the most amazing thing is, it's all true!

Laurie's father was killed by a man named Anthony whom she had heard about from her father before when he told her he had threatened suicide. Her father was building a home for Anthony and his wife and he and Anthony's wife got involved. This set Anthony on a path of destruction that would affect both his life and Laurie's, as well as their families.

Anthony had claimed to be a Christian but Laurie didn't believe there was a God. However, through all this trauma, she realized that she needed a Savior and gave her life to Christ. When she still was having anxiety and anger issues, she prayed about it and realized that God wanted her to bring Anthony a Bible and she needed to forgive him.

This starts the journey of two very unlikely people writing letters to each other and coming to terms with what happened. Laurie is wanting answers that only Anthony can give her and Anthony realizes things about the situation that he had never come to terms with either.

I really liked how Laurie takes us on this journey of how this affects her and her thoughts and feelings as she is writing the letters to Anthony. She shares from her prayer journal and also shares Scripture regarding this situation.

I believe this book is a must read for anyone who has gone through something traumatic and needs to come terms with it. If you don't know how to forgive someone, this book will definitely give you the steps to understand how to forgive and, not only that, but show you the miraculous things that can happen when you do. Not forgiving affects us in so many ways - both physically and mentally - and we know we need to forgive but sometimes it seems impossible. After reading Laurie's book, you will never feel that way again. After all, Laurie is forgiving someone that killed her father.

I highly, highly recommend this book to everyone! This is a must read for church pastors, leaders, counselors and would be especially good to give to prison libraries. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars.

\*This book was provided to me for my honest review by LitFuse Publicity Group

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## Stacey says

Litfuse Publicity Group requested I read and give an honest assessment of the book, *Letters from My Father's Murderer*, by Laurie Coombs. First let me say that my first choice for something to read is normally fiction. With that being said, this nonfiction story seized my attention from the first chapter. The premise of the story is that Ms. Coombs's father was murdered by a business acquaintance. The unexpected murder and loss causes much grief, and leads Ms. Coombs into a place of darkness and bitterness in her life. My initial response was shock as Ms. Coombs's own weaknesses and failures are revealed. Then, I found myself drawn into the heart of her pain and her cry for healing. With so much bitterness filling her life, it was encouraging to read quotes such as, "Time only dulls the pain. God heals the wounds," and "I was thirsty for truth--and for God," and "But ultimately, forgiveness is not an option. It's a command." As Ms. Coombs writes about her journey toward forgiveness and healing she is charged with the mission to reach out and love her enemy, Anthony, the man who murdered her cherished father. It is an engaging story, full of the uncertainty and challenge that life often brings whether one is ready for it or not. It is about the power of forgiveness; a gift only God can provide for those who have the courage to seek it. Finally it is about the power of love that can transform hearts, even that of a murderer, into the image of Christ. Whether you have faced a similar situation or simply struggling with grief and loss, or seek to give forgiveness or in dire need of forgiveness, you'll find powerful words of faith and encouragement to help you along your own journey.

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## Julia says

*Letters From My Father's Murderer* by Laurie A Coombs is an amazing and powerful book and I was blessed to receive a copy.

Wow what a book! Powerful, awesome and with the potential to be life changing if we let God into our lives and our hearts, as Laurie did.

Laurie's father was murdered in 2000. She was in her early twenties and had a strong father/daughter relationship, and was naturally devastated. Laurie struggled through the next ten years during which time she became a Christian, having walked away from God aged fifteen. Laurie felt God tell her to give Antony (her father's murderer) a Bible. Laurie was denied visitation rights but began a correspondence with Antony. She details this journey in her book.

Within *Letters From My Father's Murderer* there is brutal honesty from both Laurie and Antony. There is despair, anger, hurt, sadness, and there is courage and God's love. Without God the correspondence between Laurie and Antony could not have happened. Antony was a Christian when he murdered Laurie's father, and clearly had a huge lapse in his focus.

Laurie questioned why anyone could murder her Dad. She asked God. She asked Antony. She asked herself. Laurie had to be prepared to face the truth of the answer. She prayed to see the whole situation through God's eyes and without bias. Only with God beside her could Laurie have made that journey.

Laurie is an ordinary person with an extraordinary faith. She does life with God because it would be too hard without Him. God asks Laurie to do things that definitely require a partnership with Him. On our own we are weak, but with God we are strong. With God what seems impossible becomes possible. With God we are able to feel calm in a storm.

Laurie showed herself willing to follow God and to trust the way that He was leading. She had to obey His words even though it felt counter intuitive. Antony too had to open himself up to God. Both the murderer and the victim's daughter had to learn to trust each other.

This book is their journey. This book is a powerful testimony of an awesome God who will make a way when there seems like there is no way. This book will change your life if you learn to trust God as Laurie

did.

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### **Maureen Timerman says**

As I read this book, I kept asking myself how I would react, and I would sin. The book opens and we glimpse a family that was broken and trying to put parts back together. The main focus of the book is about a man, called Anthony, and his jealousy that ends in murder, and steals this man from his family.

We walk with Laurie and her journey to forgiveness, but a strong emphasis is on her walk of faith. I could see God working in her life and struggles, and watched her grow in her Spiritual life as this journey of the letters progressed. As we read the letters we see how Anthony tries to rationalize his actions, and how Laurie deals with this.

A very sad story, and yet God's hand is here, and through the letters we travel to the experience of true forgiveness.

I received this book through Litfuse Publicity Book Tours, and was not required to give a positive review.

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### **W. Whalin says**

#### **Worth Reading with Some Concerns**

The title and subtitle for this book caught my attention. I wanted to know the details of this story and the author's journey and discovery of forgiveness. Great storytelling is what pulls readers into books.

Unfortunately the opening of this book (Preface, Introduction and the start of Chapter 1) needed more editorial work (storytelling). The result is a book difficult to get into and a somewhat boring beginning for the reader. Many readers will stop after these opening pages and never complete the book.

I'm grateful that I persisted and ultimately learned Coombs experiences. I loved her transparency in the pages of this book. For example, "I supposed it was bound to happen, though. Anger unresolved turns to bitterness. But my anger was not unresolved by choice. I wanted to heal. In fact, I had tried to will myself into a place of healing for close to a decade. At the time of the murder, I did my best to allow myself to grieve, to feel my emotions. After that, I tried to stay positive and let time do its work. But despite my best efforts, I could not heal myself. No measure of time or positive thinking or choosing to forget my past would ever bring true healing. During the precious nine years I had effectively and unintentionally buried my anger and my pain. But it doesn't take a genius to realize that unresolved feelings rise to the surface sooner or later." (Page 52)

No matter what your situation, you can gain a great deal of insights for your personal from how Coombs handled the relationships as well as the Scripture inside the pages of this book. My "concerns" are for the lack of editorial assistance from the publisher for the beginning of this book—and finally the inclusion of the unnecessary postscript photos. I point out these concerns so hopefully a later edition will improve this book. It has the type of content which should help many—if they can keep reading through those first 25 pages.

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## **Charity Andrews says**

This book is a BEAUTIFUL message of forgiveness. As the title suggests, Laurie's father was murdered. As she began to know Jesus and grow closer to Him, she started to realize that He was asking her to forgive her father's murderer. Thus began a long journey of communication. Through many tears and open, raw wounds, Laurie was able to find peace and bring glory to God.

As she shares with us the letters that passed back and forth between them, she also shares her heart and her emotions as each one shows up at her door. It is such a tragic, but beautiful story! God shines through in every ounce of it and that is what is so beautiful. Please pick up a copy! (Link is in the pic above)

Thank you, Litfuse, for this great book! As always, this is my honest opinion. Here's to many more!!

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