

M MARLOW
PUBLISHING



WAYS

TO CHANGE THE
WORLD

MATTHEW MARLOW

5 ways

TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Matthew Marlow

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A NOTE FROM ME!

First off, you rock!

Thank you so much for checking out this book. I really hope it will help you see that it is possible for us to live a better story, and engage the world around us with love, generosity, and hope.

To get the most out of this book, I would just say approach it with an open mind. I believe that each of us are capable of changing the world. But before any of that happens, we've got to be willing to allow God to change us.

So dig in!

Take notes!

And let me know what you think.

Thanks again for being the coolest!

Introduction

**What's this all
about?**

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What is this all about?

That's the question that's been racking my brain lately. This Christianity thing.

It just---I feel like it's missing something.

I don't know. Maybe it's just my experience with church and what I've witnessed people do in the name of God. I just can't help but feel like there's more to it than this. Or maybe it's not that there's more to it as much as there's less to it.

Maybe we've overcomplicated things. Maybe in the midst of our complexities and programs, we've lost what's fundamental to our faith. Maybe we've lost what's central to Christianity.

Maybe we've forgotten about Jesus.

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Not to say that people have actually forgotten about Jesus. Obviously he's what we talk about, what we claim to follow. But it seems like in the midst of programs and performance, we've forgotten how to follow him.

Christianity has become a routine. A default religion for those who want to be spiritual but don't want to change how they live. It's become something entirely foreign from what it began as.

And I think that as I move forward in life and in my own faith, I want to get this right. I don't want to spend my life following a code or creed that doesn't really matter. I want my life to count. And I want to make a difference in the world around me.

I've spent most of my life wondering why I was created. It's like I knew deep within that God had a plan for me, but I just couldn't figure out what it was.

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I think that all of us want to matter. We all want to make a difference, and let our lives count for something. And I believe that's our calling.

To make something beautiful out of this world that's been entrusted to us. And if we really believe the Gospel, and that Jesus is truly making all things new, then we must understand that it is our responsibility to engage the world around us with the love of God.

It's not enough to simply do the right thing out of obligation or guilt. Jesus actually calls us to live differently than the rest of the world so that they can see us and give Him the glory. What if we lived in such a way, so radically, that the people around us asked why?

(And just to be clear, I'm not talking about listening to Christian music or trying not to cuss.)

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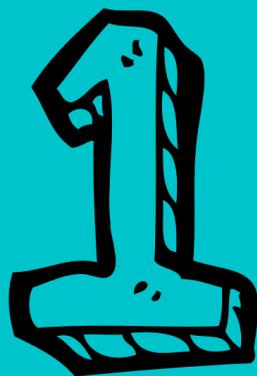
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What if our lives echoed the life of Jesus? What would that look like, and how would it affect the people around us? I'm convinced that when the people of God decide to walk like Jesus walked, and not simply go through the motions, then we'll really begin to see the world change. After all, if this is for real, and God really has chosen to use us to bring change in a world that desperately needs Him, then we should be moved to action. Our lives should echo the life of Jesus as we restore culture, and live for something bigger than ourselves.

You and I are called to bring change. Bottom Line. But first we must be willing to change.

Cut Out

Distractions



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In a world of constant connectivity, you and I have never been more disconnected. We find ourselves entranced by our devices, hoping that they'll fill the void in our souls. But all we find is more noise.

In fact, one of the biggest things that keep us from becoming what we could be are the distractions that surround us. Our world is full of them. We all find ourselves chasing after something. Passionately pursuing whatever it is that promises we don't have to feel so empty.

We fall in love with things that were never designed to satisfy us, and exchange living for a cheap knock off that ultimately leaves us wanting more.

Let's think about it. How many times a day do we mindlessly scroll through Facebook? We can't go 5 minutes without checking our phone to see if someone liked our status, started following us, or retweeted us.

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We find ourselves lost in paperwork, school work, or hobbies. And before long, life has passed us by.

But what would happen if we cut out the distractions? What could happen if we limited our time spent on Facebook, watching Netflix, and playing video games? How much more productive could we be? I believe that if we can learn to cut distractions, we can then start to live a life that has meaning, and actually makes a dent in helping the broken world around us.

Instead of wasting our time on things that ultimately don't matter, what if we spent that same amount of time focusing on how we can end world poverty, or sex slavery?

What if we cared more about clothing the naked and saving the orphans, than watching Parks and Rec reruns and posting about our bad day at work?

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I'm convinced that we were made for more than we've settled for, and by eliminating some of the things in our lives that distract us, I know we can impact the world around us and make way for a better future.

Think about your life. What are some things that distract you from living a life of meaning? Technology? Hobbies? Addictions? Routine? Make an effort in the coming days to cut out a few of the distractions that keep you from being all you were created to be. Be present and aware of what's happening around you, and ask God to show you what living for him actually looks like.

Simplify Your Life

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We live in a non-stop culture. Constantly moving, never slowing down. For some reason we've tricked ourselves into believing that the busier we are, the more productive we can be. But I've found that just the opposite is true.

It's in our pursuit of the next big thing that we miss what's happening all around us. While we continue to find more and more to do, life simply passes us by.

Life was never intended to be about chasing possessions and status. You and I were not created so we could find meaningless things to satisfy us. We were created with the intention to take this world and make it beautiful. To work with our hands and use our gifts to make the world a better place. We were made to love God passionately and love others well.

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But in the midst of the craziness that surrounds us, it's easy to get lost in trying harder and being better. Instead of focusing on what's important, it's easy to get lost in the everyday business of life.

We're often defined by our possessions and day jobs. Therefore we go and go so we can attain. We work our fingers to the bone so everyone knows who we are, but in the process we lose our souls. We lose the essence of what it means to be alive.

Let's start with our stuff.

Do we really have a need for everything we own? I mean can we even count the number of items in our own home? We tend to complain about not having enough, but I'm willing to bet that if we took the time to step back and look, we'll find that we have so much more than we need. Yet we're never quite satisfied.

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How many people could benefit from the clothes you haven't worn in a year, or the stuff that's been sitting in your garage? It's obvious that if you haven't used it lately, you can probably survive without it. If we simply went through all the clutter, and got rid of it, how would that free us up to love others well?

Cutting out distractions leads us to simplifying our life. When we're not constantly consumed with more, we can find true joy in living on less, giving more, and building relationships that go deeper than the surface.

**Don't Be
Enslaved**



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Slavery comes in different forms. And as much as we like to think we're beyond it, we all have things that control us. We all find ourselves enslaved to various things, trying to escape only to discover we can't, no matter how hard we try.

For some, it's an addiction they just can't seem to function without. And with each passing day it only leaves them more and more worn out and discouraged. For many it may be the opinions of others. They define themselves by what people think.. Labels determine how they live and what they do. Or maybe it's debt. In fact, recent surveys conclude that 80% of Americans find themselves enslaved to debt.

The simple truth is that we're all slaves to something.

We all ache for freedom, but we only know how to look in the wrong places. And while we desire to see the world become a better

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place, we can never truly change anything as long as we're shackled to our missteps, tripping over the same mistakes countless times.

The first step is identifying what it is we're slaves to. The Way of Jesus is one that proclaims freedom and offers hope. And as we follow Him into uncharted waters, He begins to transform us into bringers of freedom, and reveals to us what it is we're enslaved to. In order to offer freedom to those around us, we must first be free ourselves.

Jesus teaches us that it is only through Him that we can be liberated. I don't know about you, but I'd love to escape my past, free from the mistakes I've made that seem to haunt me. And what I find hope in is that Jesus gave everything so that I could experience that freedom. Why would we who are no longer captives to sin still live in it? Why would we still chase after things

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that only leave us wanting more?

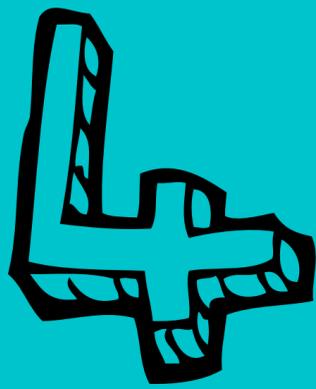
So what are you enslaved to?

It may be debt,
it may be a secret sin.
It may be the approval of others,
or it may be fear.

Whatever it is, God has made a way out.
And He is calling us to a life of freedom in
Him.

**"Even though "I am allowed to
do anything," I must not
become a slave to anything."
1 Corinthians 6:12**

Invest in What Matters



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We all want to live a life that counts. Lives that matter. And when we take the time to cut distractions, simplify, and walk in freedom, we can spend time investing in things that actually matter. When our jobs don't own us, our sins don't define us, and fear doesn't cripple us, we're able to invest in people, and build relationships with those we do life alongside.

We can spend time with our family.
Have a date night.
Play with our kids.

Instead of spending our lives on Facebook and Twitter, we can pour into our community. We can invest in those who have no hope. You see, Jesus has given us a pretty huge responsibility. We're called to be bringers of hope. And Hope's name is Jesus.

Did you know that 2,500 children die every single day because of malnutrition and preventable illnesses?

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What would happen if we got our hands dirty, and put our effort into helping stop that? 46 million people are still slaves today. They are being abused, raped, and killed every minute. Yet we find ourselves consumed with trying to be better than those around us. We'll never change the world if we keep living the way we have been.

Let's be change makers.
World shakers.

I don't know everything. But I know this isn't working. We waste our lives because we're so focused on us. Change your focus, and you just might change the world. Jesus calls us to more than safe living and comfort. Cut out the distractions, simplify your life, don't be enslaved, and invest in what really matters. It's that simple. Change will happen when we decide that we've had enough of ordinary, and we lean into the extraordinary.

**Fix Your
Eyes on
Jesus**



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The idea that you and I could even make a dent in what's happening in the world around us seems daunting. The simple truth is that it's scary. It's overwhelming.

But that's exactly what Jesus calls us to do. We were made to engage the world around us with the love of God, and if I'm being honest, sometimes that's very difficult. Sometimes it seems easier to just blend in and allow reality to pass us by. Sometimes I wonder what would happen if I just didn't care anymore. If someone else worried about changing the world. Then my life would be better.

But I'm convinced that you and I were made to live a better story. To show others a better way to live. And naturally it will feel like it's all up to us. But the truth is that it's not. It's not up to us at all.

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In fact, the more and more we keep our eyes firmly fixed in the mirror, the more we find ourselves ill equipped to accomplish anything in our own power.

Instead, Jesus calls us to fix our eyes on Him, as we follow Him into the unknown. It's only when we take our eyes off of us that Jesus shows us who He truly is, and what He wants to accomplish both in us and through us.

As much as I'd like to say that changing the world is as simple as 1,2,3, I can't. It's more of a marathon than a sprint, and at the core of making any change at all, we've got to let God reshape us. Before we can do anything, God must mold us into who He's creating us to be. Once we submit to that, Jesus starts to show us where He's working, and how He wants to use us.



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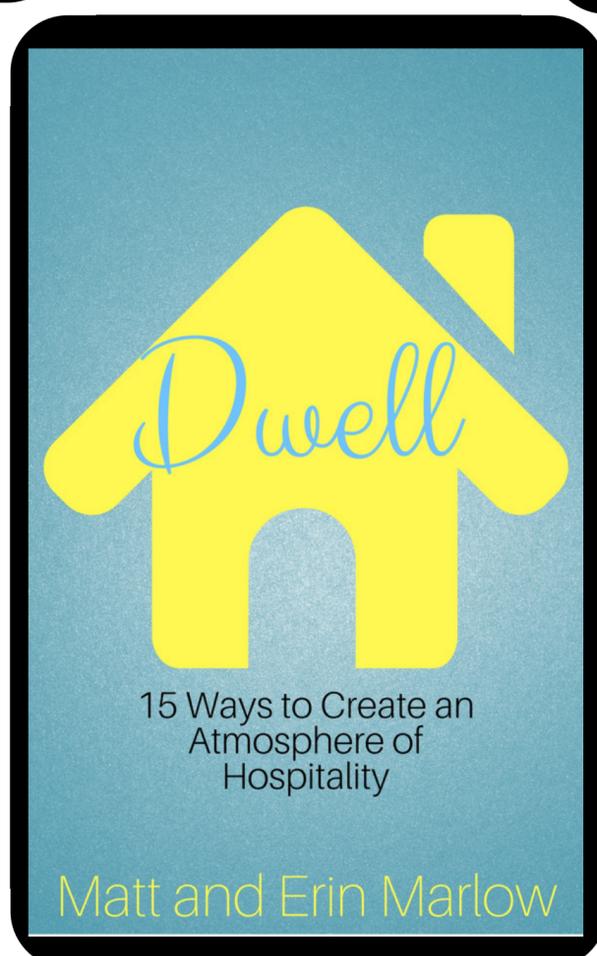
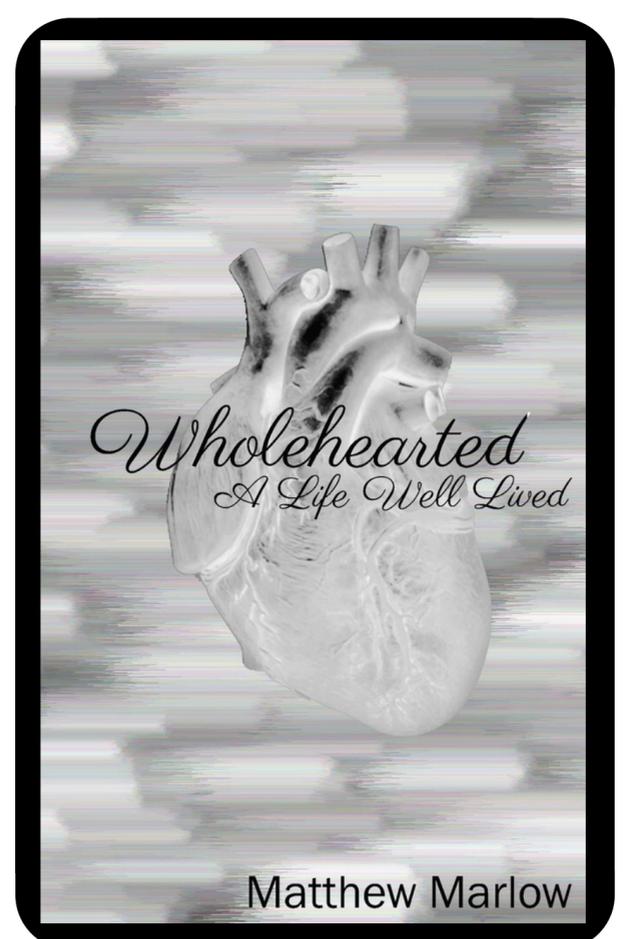
So my challenge to you as we wrap this book up is this: stop looking in the mirror, and start looking to the cross. It's there we find everything we need to do everything we've been called to do. I know you want to make this world a better place; so do I. But before we can do anything of value, God must change us.

I guess it's so easy to get lost in the idea of doing some big thing that impacts people. We all want that in one way or another. But stop and let Jesus change you. That's the key that makes everything else happen. The truth is we all have a chance to live a better story, and that starts today.

What are you waiting for?

OTHER RESOURCES

For those of you who want to check out more of what me and my wife Erin have to offer, here are a few of the resources we've created to help you live a better story. We hope they encourage you!

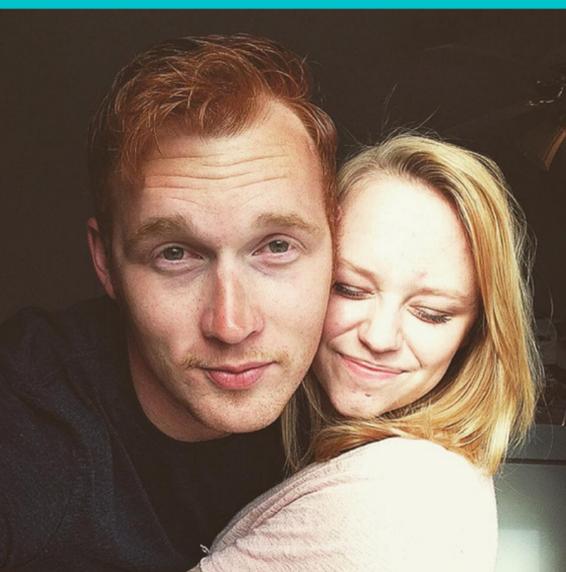


FIND AT
MATTANDERINMARLOW.COM

Have You ever wanted to Change the world?

In this short ebook, I want to show you what I believe is essential to living a life of purpose and meaning.

The truth is we all have an opportunity to make our mark on the world, the only question is how?



Matt and his wife Erin currently live in Raleigh NC, where they write books, take pictures, and make art. They loves Jesus and good coffee.