

I M M E A S U R A B L Y

*more*

Cris is an ordained minister in the Church of England and leads All Hallows Church, Bow, East London which he and his wife planted in 2010. Cris teaches at most of the major British Christian festivals each year and has authored a number of books with the most recent being *The Bible Book by Book* and *Practising Resurrection*.

*"What you have here is a book that scratches an itch, in a gentle yet stirring narrative that challenges and provokes. Cris leads us on a journey to lift our eyes above the horizon, to go on a journey of ever-increasing wonder, to look for a deeper well of the Spirit in our own lives and life of the church. The need to expand our imagination and thirst for a deeper experience with an unfathomable God is communicated beautifully in this book. It is a pathway to more, but not a selfish more! – more of the life we have always dreamed of, a life of depth and an encounter with a God who wants to take us further than we could ever imagine."*

– **Brian Heasley**, National Director of 24-7 Prayer, UK

*"This is a beautiful book by a remarkable leader exploring a magnificent theme. I commend it wholeheartedly to anyone thirsty for more from God."*

– **Pete Greig**, 24-7 Prayer / Emmaus Rd / Alpha International

*"Cris Rogers is one of the church's creative pioneers with a passion to communicate the Christian faith."*

– **Nicky Gumbel**, Alpha

*"God wants to completely blow your mind and lead you into the deeper waters of knowing and experiencing him. Trust me, there is so much more than the life which you are currently settling into. Allow this modern day prophet to take you on a journey to discover the One who cannot be contained. It's time to wake up and surrender to the life awaiting!"*

– **Rob Peabody**, Awaken

*"If God says there's more, it must be true. As Cris shows us, a disappointing experience of Christianity isn't possible, unless you've yet to discover the real thing. I thoroughly enjoyed this book – and it looks really fresh!"*

– **Paul Harcourt**, New Wine Regional Director for London and East, and Vicar of All Saints' Woodford Wells

*"This is a great book. Cris inspires us to throw aside our blinkered view of Christ and open ourselves to the possibility of the impossible. I for one am praying fervently for MORE HOLY SPIRIT."*

– **Virginia Lockett**, UK Churches Team Director, Tearfund

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TO A DEHYDRATED CHURCH, JESUS  
HAS IMMEASURABLY MORE TO OFFER

CRIS ROGERS

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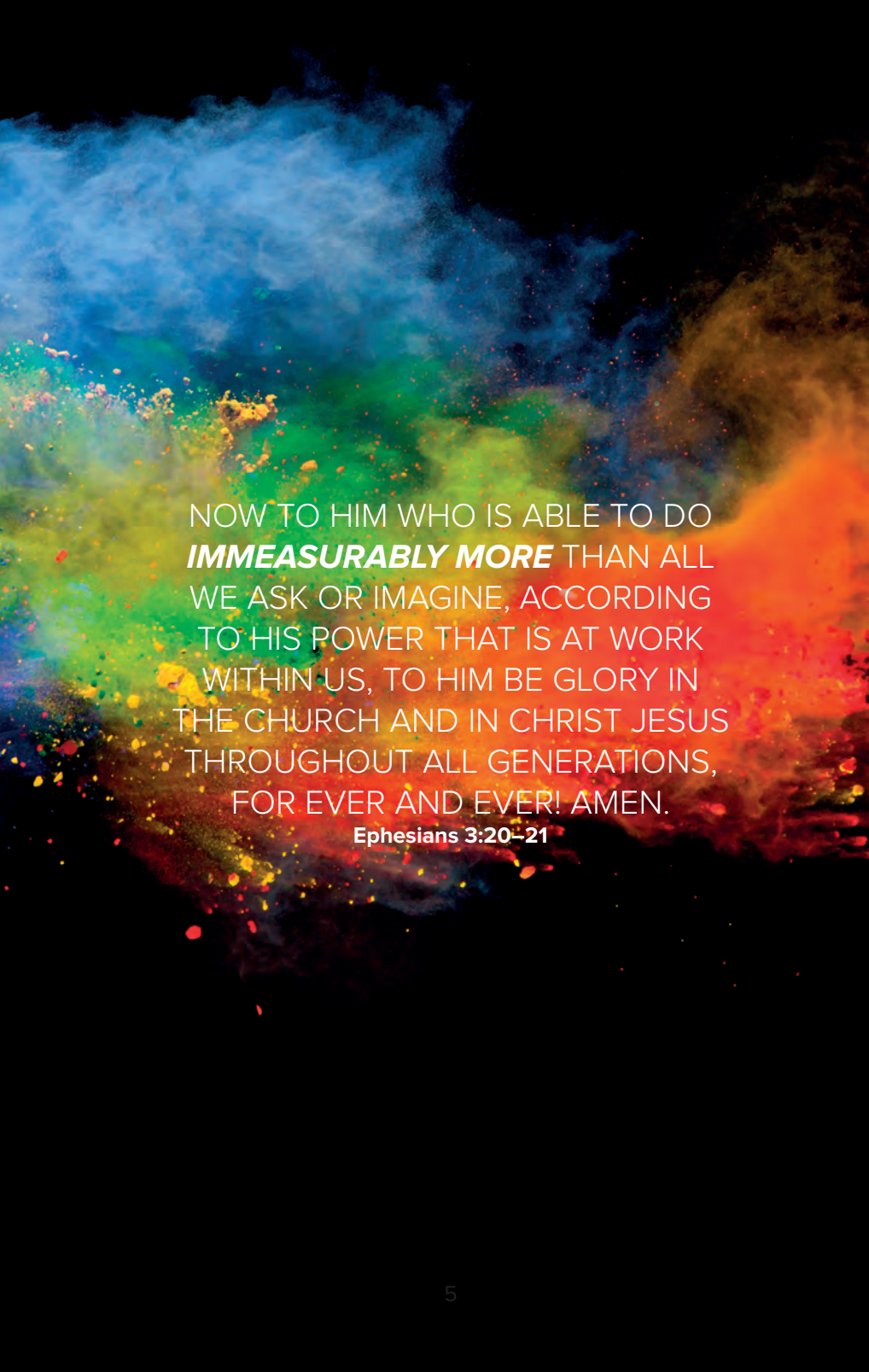
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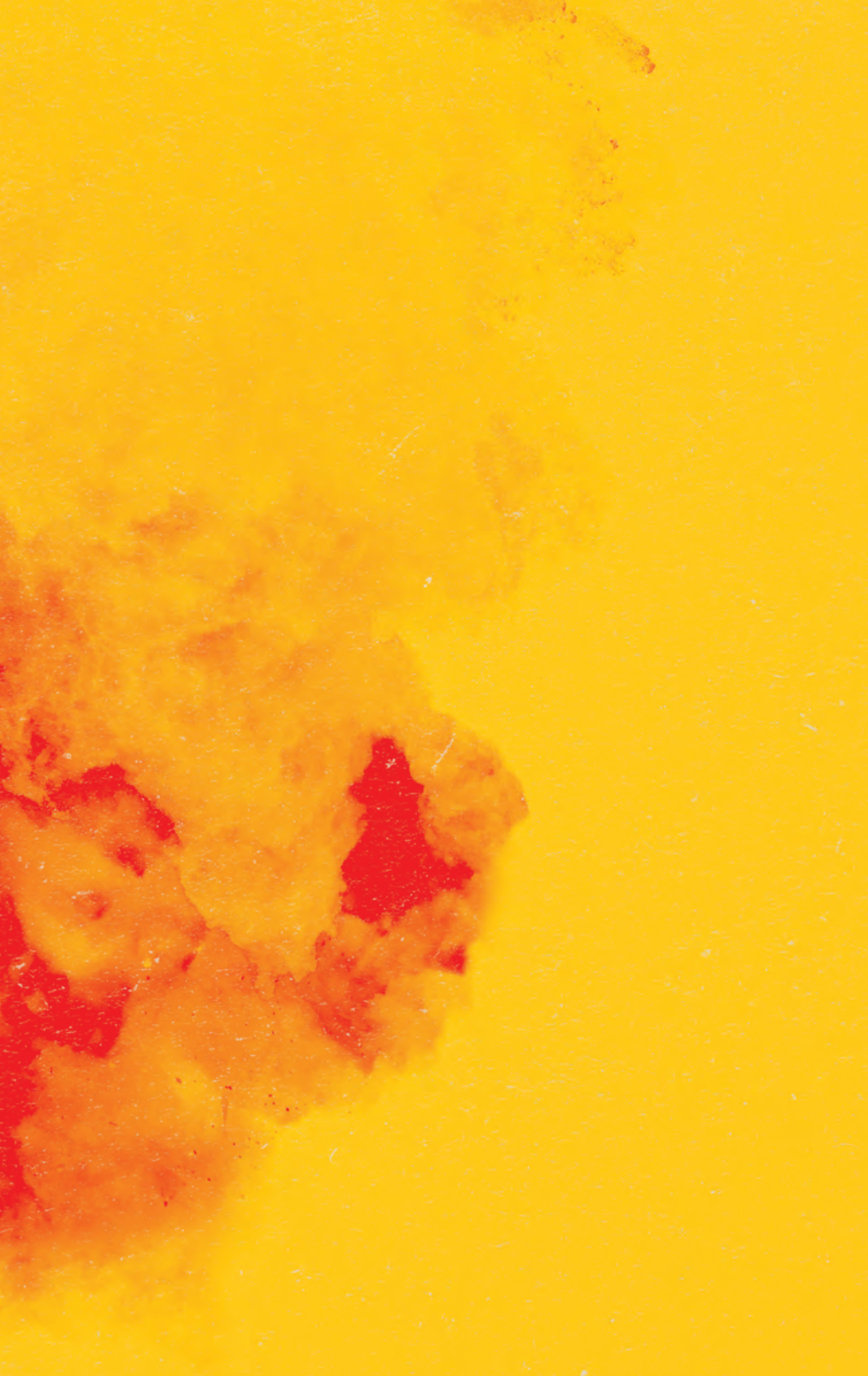
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NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO  
**IMMEASURABLY MORE** THAN ALL  
WE ASK OR IMAGINE, ACCORDING  
TO HIS POWER THAT IS AT WORK  
WITHIN US, TO HIM BE GLORY IN  
THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS  
THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS,  
FOR EVER AND EVER! AMEN.

**Ephesians 3:20–21**



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# FOREWORD

In 1952 C. S. Lewis wrote to *The Times* calling for a “Deep Church”, a rediscovery and return to the historic foundations laid by Christ and the Apostles, rather than the superficial thin veneer religion characteristic of much modern Christianity. Two generations on, we still need to heed this prophetic call and return to the deep things of God.

A few years ago we had a family holiday in Normandy.<sup>1</sup> One morning I spent time with the Lord and sensed him say he was going to reveal something significant to me. I recorded this impression in my journal and went into the day expectant. We had a great family day visiting the sublime Mont St Michel, but no divine revelation came. On returning, Tiffany and my sons went to feed the aged giant Koi carp in the pond at the bottom of the garden, and I lay on my bed in the late balmy afternoon, musing on the day and wondering if I had missed the Lord’s promised revelation. Suddenly my wife Tiffany’s voice called out anxiously “Simon, come quick, there’s a fish in trouble.”

I rushed to the end of the garden and there, stuck in the mud in a few inches of water, was a massive orange, black, and silver carp with a girth like a sumo wrestler. Why it had swum into the shallow end I don’t know – perhaps this was a favourite spot and the fish hadn’t reckoned on the abnormally hot weather, coupled with the low rainfall, resulting in the sinking of the water level. The pond was half its usual depth and this noble fish didn’t have enough water. Trying to wriggle back towards safer depths, this fish embedded itself in the sand, gills partly above water, slowly suffocating to death. I climbed into the pond, perched on an exposed stone, and tried to gently nudge the fish with a stick towards deeper water – but this probably only annoyed my fish and ultimately proved futile. I asked Tiffany to fetch a dustbin lid and a watering can and she ran off and quickly returned with them. Pouring the water on the fish offered momentary relief, then I lifted the fish onto the dustbin




lid, carried it to the deep end and lowered it gently in. We held our breath as the fish lay there in the water motionless, fighting for its breath. Then it suddenly seemed to lunge to life; with a swish of its tail and a cocky splash, it found its balance and with a flash of orange, black, and silver turned and swam for the deep end. The family all applauded with delight and relief.

Immediately I sensed the Lord speaking to my mind: “The Church is like that carp: mature, distinguished, and impressive. She has lived long, fought hard, eaten well. But she has been lured out of the deep waters. And she is stuck in the mud and suffocating. Occasional momentary relief from a spiritual watering can will not save her. Her only hope is to get back to the deeps.” This was the revelation God had wanted to tell me – his heart’s concern for his Church in distress, out of her depth, dying in the shallows. That evening my instantly recognizable orange, black, and silver carp was seen playing around in the deep end – but tragically its fellow fish had not learnt from its lesson and my family was gutted when on successive days we returned to find other fish making the same mistake. Without help to hand, they lay dead in the shallow end mud.

*Immeasurably More* is a call and a map back to the deep end – its author understands the church’s need for depth and direction out from the shallows into authentic Christianity. This book is not a sharp prod with a religious stick, nor a momentary shower with a spiritual watering can; it is a biblically grounded, Christ centred and practically applied guide to live fully and fruitfully for Jesus. *Immeasurably More* is a serious call to glorious discipleship. There is nothing new here – we don’t need it, because quite frankly the old is better – nothing fluffy, nothing faddish, nothing hyped. This is simply vintage Christian living, reminding us of our foundations, directing us along old paths, challenging us to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of us, and inspiring us in the great adventure of faith.

Rev Simon Ponsonby

Pastor of Theology, St Aldates, Oxford, author of *God Is For Us*



THE WORLD IS PERISHING FOR LACK  
OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD  
AND THE CHURCH IS FAMISHING  
FOR WANT OF HIS PRESENCE.

**A. W. Tozer**

# INTRODUCTION: THE BEGINNING...

## HERE

We start our journey on a beach. As we watch the waves breaking on the shore, we realize that there is so much more before us. There is life under the surface of the sea, there is life beyond the limit of the horizon, and there is life hidden above the clouds in the sky; there is so much more than we can see, taste, or imagine. Sadly, we have limited ourselves to the beach and we behave as though this beach is all we have. And it is true that there is a great deal for us to appreciate in this present moment and place, much that we still haven't valued or experienced right here in the familiar, but that doesn't stop us from exploring the great unknown out there.

The God of the Scriptures is the God who has placed us on the beach, but He offers us so much more than just the sand we stand on. The sea rolls open before us, and beyond that there is more than we could ever imagine. We are invited to experience the more with God, and not just to be content with the place we're inhabiting right now. To set out on an open-sea adventure where we will travel to indescribable lands and receive gifts we never knew even existed. The God of the Scriptures is a God of adventures, including gigantic fish, shipwrecks, giants, and campfires.

So here we are. We have a church that God has graciously given us to enjoy. But the church has in too many cases become satisfied with the small beach and the little bit of sea open before us. We have become too content. I don't want to leave behind a church that is content with merely half an adventure; I want to travel with a church that is daring to go for all the immeasurably more that God has shown and still will show us.

## THERE

We are “here” and God wants us to be willing to go “there” with Him; to venture deeper into the sea He has made for us to swim, surf, and sail in.

I think the truth is we need rattling. Our cages are too easy and we are comfortable with what we think we know. We are content with what we have. This stems from our love of safety: we feel secure in our buildings with our nicely polished church leaders.

But Jesus came to rattle the religious.

And, boy, do we still need to be rattled!

## RATTLING THE RELIGIOUS

God didn't give us the church to be settled and staid; He gave us the church to be weird, a peculiar people, a holy nation. He wants us to be odd – and happy about it. This is a book about rattling the religious, becoming weird because *His* weird Spirit is in us, encouraging the weary, and digging deep into the wells that have sustained the church for many centuries.

So we stand on the beach and we have a decision to make. Do we carry on as we are, or do we jump into the sea of more, which our Father has created and ordained for us?

Do we sit back and enjoy the view, or do we run forward into the broad vista of more?

## DEHYDRATION

Disclaimer: I'm not a sports fan. I wouldn't want you to think the following metaphor has been used because of my love of sport. I've tried running a few times but I've come to the conclusion that it's just not for me. I cycle and walk; you might catch me running up stairs, but you will never find me running for recreation. However, despite that, a few years ago I decided that I would try running as a way of keeping fit during Lent. Rather than forty days of prayer and exercise, it became forty days of prayer and excuses. Lent was early

that year and the mornings were still dark, so I decided that I could run undercover without anyone catching me. It backfired slightly, as what I would describe as my early mornings turned out to be other people's late afternoons. Nevertheless, I ran for the whole of one week.

As I said, it wasn't for me.

I started the week by jumping out of bed and heading out for a run before my morning shower. I didn't drink anything before, during, or after my run. I just ran. Within a few days I started to feel achy, dizzy, tired, headachy, and lethargic. This wasn't just because I'd done some exercise; I was becoming dehydrated. I had never felt like this before and it was a strange feeling.

I sometimes think that the church seems like this. Could it be that the church is dehydrated after years of running the race and having failed to tap into the living water and passing by the water points around the track without realizing?

It's been my feeling that some of us are running on low; we have become achy, dizzy, and lethargic. Not lethargic about the message or the beauty of this good news, but lethargic in the race itself. We are done in, on our knees, with dry mouth and parched lips. But this isn't where we have to be and it's certainly not where God wants us to be.

This book isn't going to make you feel exhausted or demand lots from you. God has done all the hard work; that's the Good News! We are now in the position of responding to His hard work and receiving all that He has for us.

## MORE

Ephesians 3:20 says: *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more..."*

Jesus is the God who is able to do immeasurably more. Some translations say the "God of above and beyond" (HCSB); others have "exceeding abundantly above" (KJV) or "infinitely more" (NLT),

## IMMEASURABLY MORE

and *The Message* reads: “far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams”.

But we are masters at restricting Jesus. We box Him in. We say, “This is how He works.” In response to all our attempts to define, understand, and control Him, Jesus reminds us that He has “*immeasurably more*” to offer His church.

How often do we feel that we are at the end of our energy? Not only physically and emotionally, but also spiritually? Some of us have been running this race for so long that we have become dangerously dehydrated.

Jesus is calling all of us into a *radically empowered life* that we couldn’t ever achieve in our own strength. Jesus tells His church that there is immeasurably more on offer than just a religious life, a good life, or a moral life. There is more to offer our families and friends, more to offer our neighbourhoods.

Jesus offers us an immeasurably more powerful and beautiful life.

To a dehydrated church, Jesus announces... MORE is always on offer.

God has more for us to **receive**,  
More for us to **become**,  
And **further** for us to go.

THE WORD WITHOUT THE SPIRIT,  
YOU DRY UP, THE SPIRIT WITHOUT  
THE WORD, YOU BLOW UP...  
BUT THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT  
TOGETHER – YOU GROW UP.

**David Watson**

## INTRODUCTION

Jesus longs for His church not to be fed merely on pithy statements, inspiring tweets, or encouraging sermons. There are some churches that have almost written the Holy Spirit out of the creed. We (don't) believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Bible. Trust me; I'm a Bible teacher! Jesus longs for us to be more *empowered* by His Holy Spirit.

"Empowered" is an interesting word. We think of it as meaning being given physical power, but in fact it refers to being authorized, inspired, and enabled. Jesus wants His church to be authorized to do the work of His kingdom, inspired to dream bigger dreams, and enabled to do this work not under our own steam but under His.

So where do we go from here? How do we leave the land of dehydration for an adventure across open seas, caught up with all that God has to offer us?

Well, for me, that adventure starts with getting **HIGHER**, then **CLOSER**, plummeting **DEEPER**, broadening into **WIDER**, and then being equipped **FURTHER**.

**QUESTION:** What in life has left you exhausted?

**QUESTION:** What aspects of faith or church have brought you to the point of dehydration? Are you able to pinpoint the things lacking or weighing heavily on you that have worn you down?



### **Immeasurably Deeper: Small-Group Study**

Each chapter concludes with a small-group Bible study consisting of a passage and questions. Whether or not you come up with the “right answers” isn’t the point. The hope is that each study will help you and a small group of friends to pause and spend just a little more time on the themes of the chapter.



HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST  
DECREASE.

**John 3:30 (ESV)**

## A Higher Story

A real story about a person called Mark

I grew up in Whitechapel, East London, with a longing to fit in and make the most of all that life had to offer. I wanted it all, and didn't care who got in my way. I had this deep yearning to seek money, nice women, nice cars, nice clothes. All of this I wanted as quickly and easily as possible, with the least amount of work on my part. The easiest ways of obtaining all this led me into a life of crime. Craving people to know and like me, all I wanted was to be treated like a celebrity everywhere I went.

This desire led me into gambling, which led on to taking drugs. All I did was seek out the wrong people. I didn't care about good people; I wanted nothing to do with them. I couldn't get anything from them.

What controlled me was what people thought of me; I wanted everyone to like me and think of me as successful. I had to have the best cars and clothes, and without them I felt quite hollow. I thought I was so smart that I could wriggle my way out of anything. When I was first offered a drug I thought it wasn't going to be a big deal. The first time you're offered a drug it isn't by a stranger but by a pal. It's friends who will tell you it's a good idea, and I believed them; the crazy thing is, they thought they were doing me a favour.

It's been my experience that people don't believe in God until something goes wrong, and then it's God's fault. I was in a miserable place of my own choosing, alone and wishing I was dead. I remember screaming up at God to get me out of there. I ended up going to a friend of mine who runs a Christian treatment centre in Bristol, and everything changed when I looked up.

I discovered that I had been so focused on myself that I hadn't realized God was even there. All I could see was what was right in front of me, but when I started to look up higher and higher I realized just how powerful God really was. When I chose to look up I saw something other than myself, and He was just what I needed.

