

Foreword

An inherent busyness seems to be hopelessly attached to life. You hit the ground running and never look back. Sometime between hitting the snooze button for the last time and before you actually sit up, perhaps you voice a simple prayer. While the prayer may be more out of duty than passion, you may have a few moments when you experience a surge of God's power, like Peter did in Matthew 14 when he stepped out on the water. Then your feet hit the floor, you take a few steps, and you begin to sink like a stone in the craziness of the everyday.

Suddenly you're in a panic and just as you're about to go under, you take notice of the only One who can save you. You cry out and immediately a hand reaches out to grab you.

You are saved. Not by the wind or the waves. Not by anyone in the boat behind you. No, you are rescued by the outstretched hand of Jesus Christ. You end up in the place you should have been to begin with—in his grasp.

It's easy to wonder how Peter could have been so weak in his faith. After all, he had the Son of God bidding him to come, telling him it was safe to take that first step onto the sea. Even though one step onto the water may have been sufficient for you and me to feel God's power, Jesus allowed more than that. Matthew says Peter *walked*, which by definition

means he took more than one step. The issue wasn't the lack of power available to Peter; it was the lack of Peter's own focus, his own intent. If Peter had taken an intentional walk that day, his eyes would have never left the King of kings and he wouldn't have found his knees at fish level.

We would do well to start out every single day with an intentional walk for that is what pleases God. To have our attention and efforts focused on one thing; God's power is what helps us walk on top of the water and gives us a hand to grab when we falter. We will always be aware of the waves around us and the water below, but we must never take our eyes off the Savior who forever stands before us.

I have met such an intentional man and am even privileged to call him friend. Hugh Poland is one who pursues his walk, his ministry, and his life in an intensely intentional way. If that intent were to bring attention and honor to himself rather than to God, I would tell you to deposit this book into the nearest receptacle and run for your life. But Hugh is a man of compassion, conviction, and integrity, so I encourage you to take an intentional walk through every last one of these pages.

Baseball fans will be encouraged, entertained, and motivated with stories of some of the all-time greats of the game. And if that weren't enough, Hugh uses his passion for the game and his commitment to the Lord to weave each story into a devotion that will challenge you to a deeper more passionate relationship with Christ.

The truths contained in this book will give you the feel of having the ball in your glove, the bat in your hands, and the dirt beneath your spikes. More importantly though is that you will be left wanting to score the winning run. It's time to play ball, and the manager has just signaled for an intentional walk. "Ball four!"...take your base.

—Kent Bottenfield
Christian recording artist and
former Major League Baseball pitcher