

NO
10 STEPS
EASY TO AN
EASY, SAFE,
STRESS-FREE
JESUS LIFE

~~Where you're always happy~~
~~& always winning~~

HOW THE TOUGHEST CHOICES
LEAD TO THE GREATEST LIFE

JASON MITCHELL

FOREWORD BY KYLE IDLEMAN

It's rare to find someone who can talk about the call of Jesus on our lives in a way that doesn't feel burdensome. Jason Mitchell has attained that balance. In *No Easy Jesus*, you will get the sense that Jason is on the journey of following right along with you. He will challenge you without weighing you down. He will inspire you to take Jesus up on the two-word invitation that he's been extending for centuries: "Follow me." My prayer for you is that you will read these pages and be inspired to follow Jesus with more passion and greater joy.

KYLE IDLEMAN

Author of *Not a Fan* and *Grace Is Greater*

No Easy Jesus offers a spring for the thirsty soul. For anyone struggling with faith, church, or life, this book offers a gritty yet inspiring look at what it means to follow Jesus. You need to read this book.

MARGARET FEINBERG

Author of *Fight Back with Joy*

Nothing great is ever easy. We know this, and yet when it comes to matters of faith, we lose hope when the way is not easy. *No Easy Jesus* helps us reconcile the hurts, fears, and challenges of life with the true fullness of life in Christ. Read this one!

JENNI CATRON

Author of *The 4 Dimensions of Extraordinary Leadership*

No Easy Jesus is a simple book about the hard call to follow Jesus. Through powerful stories and memorable sayings, Jason Mitchell shares the tension between the uncomplicated yet uncompromising invitation that Jesus offers to all of us. It is an easy thing to raise a hand, walk forward in a service, or sign a decision card, but it is a hard thing to follow Jesus every day. However, Jason reminds us that Jesus is right there with us on the journey.

CALEB KALTENBACH

Author of *Messy Grace*

In a style that is both raw and gritty, Jason Mitchell leaves behind the typical hollow slogans we are often fed and instead offers up advice that will lead to true life change. Strikingly transparent and honest, Jason shares from his own personal experiences as well as from the experiences of those he has traveled with through life as a pastor, leader, and friend. Don't let this entertaining book fool you—intertwined in the stories is the challenge to live the life of following Jesus that will bring true transformation.

DAVID ASHCRAFT

Senior pastor, LCBC Church

NO EASY JESUS

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LEAD TO THE GREATEST LIFE

JASON MITCHELL

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FOREWORD

BY KYLE IDLEMAN

HERE'S WHAT I BELIEVE about belief: People can believe they believe something that they may not actually believe.

Do you believe that's true?

Need a few examples?

Let me ask you some questions about what you believe:

- *Do you believe it's important to eat right and exercise?*
- *Do you believe that spending time with your family should be a high priority?*
- *Do you believe that saving money is something you should do?*

I don't need to hand out an official survey to know what percentage of Americans would say they believe those things are important. Almost everyone would say they agree that they hold those beliefs, and yet survey after survey indicates that those beliefs have little bearing on how people actually live.

- *I believe that eating right and exercising are vital, but the appetizers are two-for-one today, and the gym is too far away.*
- *I believe that spending time with my family is most important, but I just accepted a promotion that requires me to work evenings and weekends.*
- *I believe that saving money is necessary, but I just went into more debt to upgrade to a newer vehicle.*

A few years ago, I read an article by a psychiatrist who revealed that some of his patients believed things that had no basis in reality. One patient believed he could fly. Another patient was convinced she had been switched at birth and was actually part of the English royal family. Her belief was so genuine that she had developed a British accent. What stood out to me as I read the article was that the psychiatrist didn't use the word *beliefs* to describe these claims by his patients that had no basis in reality. The word he used was *delusions*. The truth is that beliefs that have no connection to reality, even if they're sincere, aren't beliefs at all; they're delusions.

If the reality of my life doesn't align with what I say I sincerely believe, then I need to step back and honestly ask myself whether I believe what I say I believe. Most of the frustration I have with myself comes when my behavior doesn't line up with my beliefs. That's especially true when it comes to my relationship with Jesus. I know that most Christians believe that they believe in Jesus, but belief is more than just intellectual acknowledgment or mental assent. The

FOREWORD

invitation Jesus offers is for us to *follow* him. Following Jesus is what happens when our lives align with what we say we believe about him.

It's rare to find someone who can talk about the call of Jesus on our lives in a way that doesn't feel burdensome. But Jason Mitchell has attained that balance in this book. It might be because he's so honest along the way. Throughout these pages, you will get the sense that Jason is on the journey of following right along with you. He gets personal, baring his soul in incredibly vulnerable ways at times. And it's that vulnerability that gives you the sense that you have a friend sharing his heart with you, cheering you on, saying, "Let's go after the life of Jesus together. I'm running after it, and I want a running partner."

This book will challenge you without weighing you down. It will inspire you to take Jesus up on the two-word invitation he's been extending for centuries: "Follow me." The invitation is to participate in the life of Christ, not to stand by passively and observe. My prayer for you is that you will read these pages and be inspired to follow Jesus with more passion and greater joy.

CHAPTER 1

JESUS ON A SHELF

I BOUGHT MYSELF a coloring book recently.

I can't believe I just told you that, but it's true. It's one of those coloring books that has intricately designed patterns on really nice paper, and it was labeled as an "advanced" coloring book, which helps me feel a little bit better about myself as I tell the story. But to be honest, I'm still kind of embarrassed about it.

It was an impulse purchase, pure and simple, brought on by a sudden fit of inspiration and nostalgia that hit me when I saw my son and daughter sitting at a table together coloring. When I was growing up, I loved coloring, sketching, and filling in the blank spaces on a page. I even won a

coloring contest at Apple Tree Day Care when I was five. (My winning picture was a clown face, precisely executed with an assortment of primary colors.) But as much as I loved coloring when I was a kid, I thought my coloring book-buying days were decades behind me. But then there I was, at some crafty store that smelled like a shoemaker's workshop, spending money on an advanced coloring book—with an advanced marker set to go along with it.

You see, I started thinking about how much fun my wife, our two kids, and I would have together as we sat down by a warm fire every evening—each with a coloring book, laughing the entire time while drinking hot chocolate—and about all the places we could hang our creations around the house.

Of course, none of that ever happened. Instead, I used that advanced coloring book *once* . . . I think. And it has been sitting on one of our shelves—next to some really expensive markers—ever since.

I wish I could say this was the only time something like that has happened, but it's not. Over the years, I've accumulated countless items that have become monuments to passionate endeavors that never quite panned out. My shelves are crammed with books I started reading but never finished. I've become fascinated with certain topics for a moment—one time I really got into bees—only to set them aside and move on to the next thing. I have fishing gear collecting dust in the back corner of my garage. And I don't even want to admit how much money I've spent on other hobbies that never got off the ground.

Maybe you can relate.

Perhaps your garage or attic has become the permanent resting place for barely used golf clubs, a pile of unopened scrapbooking supplies, or a kayak that has rarely seen the water. And every time you walk by that guitar case, that blank canvas, or those gardening tools, you're reminded of what could've been. You're reminded that the passion you once had has faded or no longer exists.

The dust collecting on those things we were once so excited about reveals a fundamental truth about life: Passionate commitment without patient persistence leaves behind a graveyard of unfulfilled dreams.

What happens when the passion we felt early on in our relationship with God gives way to the humdrum of daily life? Where do we turn when the fire that once burned so brightly in our hearts becomes a barely visible ember? Hobbies that we never saw through to completion are one thing. At worst, we've wasted our time and money. But what happens when our faith and our hope get put up on a shelf next to the scrapbooking supplies? The potential consequences are much more severe—a wasted life.

This brings me to a dirty little secret that many of the bravest Christians I know have shared with me. Few dare to speak the words out loud, because it feels as if we're taking a slap at God—and it doesn't make *us* look all that great either. Yet it affects us painfully on the inside every single day.

Here it is: Believing in Jesus has left us disappointed.

Maybe for you it's more than *disappointed*—you feel

disillusioned, maybe even *cheated*. You expected something more from this whole following-Jesus thing. But it hasn't delivered.

At one point in your life, you were thrilled and hopeful about living a life of trusting in Jesus. But over time your experience has failed to live up to your expectations. Somewhere along the line, your relationship with Jesus lost its richness and intimacy.

Maybe you're discouraged because you feel helpless to make some needed changes in your life. Maybe your troubles feel unbearably hard—where is Jesus in all that? Maybe you haven't achieved the great things for God you once dreamed of. Instead, you're left feeling aimless and confused. You've waited—and *waited*—for your faith to make more of a difference. But it hasn't. And so you've begun to think, *This can't be all there is to the Christian life*.

If that's what you're thinking, here's the good news: You're right.

Jesus held out the promise of “a rich and satisfying life.”¹ But for many of us, the truth is that *rich* and *satisfying* are the last words we would use to describe our current reality. I've felt this way in multiple seasons of my life. And as a pastor, I've heard countless people express the same disappointment to me in different ways.

In listening to story after story of people who have grown disappointed in their faith experience, I've noticed a few common threads: *discouragement*, *frustration*, and *boredom*. Let's see if one of these reasons helps you understand your own situation better.

It's for *Them*

Have you ever seen other Christians step boldly into risk-taking adventures and wondered, *How do they do that?* You hear stories of courage in the face of insurmountable obstacles. You see how these Christians respond with compassion and love, even when they are threatened or their patience is tested. In everything they do, they seem to ooze Jesus. Before long, you become acutely aware of the enormous gap between their intimacy with God and your own.

They must have something I don't have, you tell yourself. *They must know something I don't know*. Before long, disappointment sets in, and you start to believe that a life of deep and abiding faith in God—a life of passionate conviction—is a privilege reserved for someone else.

It's for the spiritually elite.

It's for the pastor.

It's for the ones who grew up in church.

It's for those who haven't made a wreck of their lives.

It's for the ones who have never struggled through addiction or seen the darker side of life.

To be honest, as discouraging as it is, we kind of *like* believing that a deep, abiding, life-altering faith is for the spiritually elite—because if that's true, we're absolved of our responsibility to pursue anything bigger than our present little lives. As Eugene Peterson says, “We are practiced in pleading inadequacy in order to avoid living at the best that God calls us to.”²

Our discouragement in not being as far along as we

think we ought to be leads us to throw our hands in the air and “plead inadequacy.” Instead of pressing in, we bow out; instead of moving forward, we shrink back. We settle for a small, safe life and a small, safe faith, because trusting, risking, and stepping out into bold acts of faith for God are for someone else. We accept the disappointing reality that our lives and our faith will never look like theirs.

If your discouragement doesn't come from everything you're *not* doing, then perhaps it stems from frustration over everything you *are* doing.

That's Just the Way It Is

Tell me if this pattern sounds familiar:

You say something, do something, or think something that you know isn't God's best for you.

You feel a certain level of conviction about it.

You go to God to confess, repent, and renew your resolve.

And then you find yourself doing it all over again the next day—or the next hour.

You try.

You fail.

Try again. Fail again.

Repeat.

If you live in that pattern long enough, it's easy to finally convince yourself that your temptations, struggles, sins, hang-ups, and habits are just the way things are—that nothing will ever change.

Sure, you still believe in Jesus, but you haven't experienced the power you need to move beyond the destructive patterns that seem to have a hold on you. Eventually, you begin to tell yourself, "I can't do anything about it." And if you say that long enough, all those dangerous, life-sucking patterns become *normal*.

When we're confronted with the truth about the habits in our lives that aren't leading us to satisfaction and fulfillment, in our frustration we learn to say, "Yeah, I know, but . . ."

"Yeah, I know it's really hurtful, but that's just how we talk to each other in our family."

"Yeah, I know I don't have a very good relationship with my kids, but putting in all the hours at work is just the way it is."

"Yeah, I know it's not completely honest, but that's just how we deal with people in our business."

"Yeah, I know I'm suffocating in debt, but that's just how I spend money."

We buy into the myth that the current condition of our lives is just the way it is—continuing to believe in Jesus but feeling frustrated with how things have turned out. It's sad how common this situation is.

Yet perhaps even more alarming and pervasive is the number of people who have simply become bored with it all.

Been There, Done That

Recently, at a neighborhood bistro, I had an eye-opening lunch with a friend I hadn't seen for a while. He's a former

college football player, and though I'm not sure how he's managed to swing it, he still looks as if he could go out on the field and dominate, almost two decades after graduation. He's one of the most focused, driven people I've ever met, and he's been successful at just about everything he's ever tried, including his current gig as CEO of an online advertising company. He's married to a great woman, and they have three healthy, active kids. He gave his life to Christ in college, and he has been involved in some type of ministry ever since, usually as a leader.

Everything this guy touches turns to gold. And yet as soon as I saw him enter the restaurant, I sensed that all was not well. Although my friend wasn't exactly slouching, the way he carried himself gave the impression that he was living a much smaller life than his big, athletic frame would suggest.

"So, how have you been feeling lately?" I asked once the food had arrived at the table.

He was silent for a moment, moving his vegetables around with his fork while he thought about his reply. Finally, he shrugged and said, "Bored."

Given all that was going on in his life, and the success he has always enjoyed, I was surprised by his response.

"I always feel as if I'm in the midst of a swirl of energy," he said, "whether it's one of the initiatives I'm launching at work, the role I play as husband and father, or a ministry I'm heading up at church. What nobody knows is that most of the time I'm thinking, *Get me out of here.*"

Though his talent and hard work have delivered the goods

in terms of the kind of success that most of us seek, my friend said he has begun to face the fact that all his achievements and rewards haven't made his life any more satisfying. He isn't happy. Compared to where he thought he would be at this point in his journey of faith, his inner life seems pale and shrunken. And he has little excitement about the future. "I'm busy," he said, "but I'm bored so much of the time."

Fortunately, he has already begun to put his finger on what lies at the root of his disappointment. I know this because he said, "Here's what I can't figure out, Jason. How can I integrate Jesus into my everyday life?"

Jesus had become background music to his heavily scheduled life. My friend had gone on for weeks, then months, then years living his life—believing in Jesus the entire time—but never considering how his faith might affect every aspect of his life. He had put Jesus in the corner of the garage, pulling him out on Sundays and dusting him off for an occasional prayer during times of need. But once his faith became disconnected from his everyday life, it was just a matter of time before he became bored with just believing.

In my experience, boredom is the most common source of disappointment with our faith. It develops when we've lost sight of Jesus' promise that he can transform and revolutionize all aspects of our lives—the way we work, the way we parent, the way we love, the way we think, the way we spend our money, and the way we spend our time. Everything.

Too many of us have been lulled to sleep by the daily grind, never considering what it might look like to allow

Christ into all aspects of our lives—and we have grown bored with it all as a result.

What's Next?

When we're confronted with the disappointment that comes from bowing out, being beaten down, or growing bored with our faith, we're faced with a pressing question: What will we do next? Will we put the life that Jesus offers us up on a shelf, forever haunted by the thought of what might have been? Or is it possible to experience here and now the rich and satisfying life he promised?

Let's just confront this head-on. Let's own up to the secret we've carried around at times. Can we just acknowledge that we go through seasons when we're disappointed and disillusioned about the life of faith? And can we put a stake in the ground declaring that we will not let that stop us from experiencing and becoming all that God desires for us?

If this is where you are (or where someone you care about is), let me repeat: We don't have to settle for disappointment. A rich and satisfying life is not only possible; it's waiting for you to grab hold of it. Although the path toward that kind of life is not the easiest—it will require us to strike out in an unfamiliar direction over difficult terrain—it's the only path that will ever lead to *life* in the fullest sense.

I'll be honest—this issue is personal for me. I'm tired of seeing Christians settle for less. I'm tired of seeing Christians miss out on the life they've been promised because they have

settled for just believing in Jesus and have never considered how Jesus might actually transform their everyday lives.

It's also personal for me because I've had one too many conversations with friends who see nothing compelling about following Jesus. All the Christians they know are beaten down, have bowed out, or have grown bored. Most people I know aren't looking at the lives of Christians and saying, "I gotta get me some of that!" In fact, for many, it's just the opposite.

Covering Up the Stink

My friend Travis stopped going to church years ago. One day when we were talking, I decided to get to the bottom of it.

"Why did you give up on church?" I asked.

"Let me tell you something that I don't think I've ever mentioned before," Travis said. "I can't smell anything. For instance, if you put an apple pie under my nose right now, I'd get nothing."

I've been in enough locker rooms over the years to know that Travis may have been given a gift without knowing it. But I knew that wasn't what he was saying, so I waited for him to connect the dots between his olfactory disability and his decision to abandon church.

"I remember going to a relative's house for Thanksgiving when I was a kid," he said. "When our family walked in, one of the first things my mom or dad would say was, 'It sure smells great in here!' Me, I didn't get even a whiff of the turkey and stuffing, much less the pumpkin pie. But

everyone else seemed to agree about how great it all smelled. So I quickly learned that, if you want to make someone feel good, just say that whatever they're cooking smells great."

I nodded at Travis to keep the story going until it began to make sense.

"One time when I was in middle school," he continued, "I went to a friend's house when his mom was baking cookies. I couldn't smell the aroma, of course, but I remembered how happy it made people to get a compliment on the smell of their cooking. So I tried an experiment. I went up to my friend's mom and said, 'That smells great!' It was a total lie, but she got a big smile on her face and thanked me."

"So . . ." I began.

"So that's why I gave up on church," Travis said. "Every Sunday, I'd watch all the people walking around, saying to each other, 'It smells great in here!' But I knew some of the things that were going on in their lives outside of church. I knew some of their struggles. I knew how they treated their family members during the week. And I knew they couldn't smell a thing."

He went on to tell me about a case of child abuse that had come to light in his former church. Many people had known it was going on, but no one had acknowledged it, much less done anything to stop it. They were too busy walking around talking about how good everything smelled.

Travis saw how detached from reality people were at that church. He saw that their belief in Jesus had little bearing on the way they actually lived their lives. And it turned him off to Jesus altogether.

I couldn't say I blamed him. If that was what the Christian faith was all about, it left a lot to be desired.

Let's be honest: We can either face up to the fact that there are seasons when we are disappointed with our life of faith, or we can keep walking around talking about how great everything smells. But the cost of failing to deal with our disappointment is not merely that we will get stuck in dissatisfaction and fail to fulfill our potential. We may discourage *others* from pursuing Jesus as well.

So if you're living with an aching sense that there has to be more to faith than what you've been experiencing, I'm asking you—actually, I'm begging you—to *take action* to turn things around. Do it before the disappointment, frustration, or boredom gets any worse. You don't have to settle for a small life and a stale faith.

As a pastor, I've seen many people finally get to a place where their faith had grown so cold and stale that they coughed up the secret of their disappointment. But I've also had the privilege of hearing story after story of Christians who moved past just "believing in Jesus" and began to experience the fullness of life in relationship with him.

I've seen men and women who had relegated Jesus to a shelf in the closet establish new habits of faithfulness to him.

I've seen relationships that were tattered and torn be slowly stitched back together.

I've seen worship that had become merely routine get an injection of joy and passion.

I've seen friends who once pushed aside God's calling on

their lives take massive “leaps of obedience” into daring acts of faith.

I’ve seen the monotony of a nine-to-five job replaced by a sense of mission and purpose.

I’ve seen marketplace leaders reorient their perspective on profit.

I’ve seen men and women in the depths of depression find glimpses of life and hope.

I’ve seen the weight of addiction lifted off people’s shoulders and carried away.

I don’t believe that any of these people would ever dream of taking credit for the transformation they’ve experienced. They know that God was working in them through it all. Nor would they claim to have it all together in life. But when they look back at the past, they have the thrill of seeing that, slowly but surely, they have been moving forward toward the kind of life they dreamed of—the satisfying kind that Jesus promised.

They certainly haven’t arrived yet, but they’re moving. They’re making progress.

And I can relate to that.

Proof of Life

If you were to take a look at a certain bookshelf in my office, you would find fourteen notebooks that tell the story of a man desperately searching for a rich and satisfying life in Jesus. They’re the notebooks and sketch pads on which I’ve let my heart bleed over the years. Some of the writing is neat and orderly. Those

are from the good seasons. Other sections, describing struggle, doubt, and failure, are scribbled and almost illegible, as if I were hoping that even God wouldn't be able to read my handwriting. Those pages tell the story of a heart in process.

Just the other day, I pulled them out again to flip through the pages. Here are a few stellar moments I scribbled down over the years:

“We have been fighting more ruthlessly than we have in the past.”

“I lied today.”

“I'm uninspired to love.”

“I'm not long into my fast and I'm already thinking of how to cheat.”

“My soul is drying up.”

“I am tired of people and tired of giving.
I'm especially tired of being tired.”

And that's just the stuff I could bring myself to write down. But peppered throughout the notebooks are also these expressions of emerging life:

“God, whisper into my heart that I'm complete and I have what it takes.”

“Today I've been reminded of grace.”

“My heart feels so alive.”

Two-steps-forward-one-step-back is the choreography that best describes how I've lived out my faith. That's why prayers that express an overwhelming sense of wonder over the experience of God's grace live right next door to prayers begging God for patience and mercy. My faith is not a picture of uninterrupted progress. It's not all up and to the right. *But I'm discovering that it's the only kind of faith worth having.* Because it's the kind of faith that actually transforms us. That works in us. That moves us forward.

Here's what else I observed while reading almost two decades' worth of my heart scribbled on paper: *I've changed.* Slowly, for sure. But I've changed. Or maybe I should say that I'm *changing.*

For the last couple of years, my wife, Jenny, and I have spent almost every Wednesday night with a group of friends who are committed to pursuing the life of Christ together. Andy leads our group, and he's one of my best friends.

A few months ago, Andy brought up a subject that I wasn't interested in talking about—mainly because it singled me out in front of the group. So I responded by defending myself.

Andy apparently picked up on my attitude, because he sat up straighter, moved to the edge of the couch, and looked me dead in the eye as he challenged me again.

I mirrored his posture, telling myself, *If he can sit up straight and move to the edge of the couch, so can I.*

The people in the group who valued harmony kept saying ridiculous things like, "Well, you both make really good

points,” but after a while, the chatter from the group and their growing unease faded into the background for me as I zeroed in on Andy’s face. I tried to send him every signal I could think of—both verbal and nonverbal—that I was there to win and he was going to lose.

I dismissed his points.

He dismissed mine.

I spoke loudly.

He spoke louder.

This went on for several minutes, until I looked around and noticed that ten of our closest friends were staring at us in wide-eyed disbelief, wondering if we might actually throw down. It was a real possibility.

But instead of leaving each other with black eyes, Andy and I settled for silence and cold stares.

And thus concluded our Bible study for the evening.

I don’t think we were even out of the driveway before Jenny said, “Hey, do you know you were kind of a jerk tonight?”

Yep. I knew. Which is why I didn’t hesitate to call Andy the next morning to ask his forgiveness and offer him mine. And his gracious response helped mend what had been undone the night before.

I realize that calling a friend to repair a damaged relationship may not seem like a big deal. But for me, it was evidence that I’m growing and changing. Judging from my journal entries, if our argument had occurred even a few years earlier, it might have been days—if ever again—before I talked to

Andy. Although it still isn't easy for me to humble myself in order to ask for forgiveness or to forgive others, I see the need for it more clearly now, and I'm finding that I do it more readily than before.

If you were to read my journal entries in chronological order, you wouldn't find perfection, but progress: evidence that I really am different. This is the kind of forward motion we all can look back on with satisfaction if we're willing to take the right steps now.

It's like looking at photos of yourself from a previous decade. You may wonder who that person is—and who in the world let you leave the house looking like that. And even though you realize it's you in the photo, in another sense it's not you anymore at all. You aren't the same person.

There was a time when it took every ounce of willpower I had not to look at porn. If you had told me back then that there would come a day when such self-control would be easier for me, I'm not sure I would have believed you. All I knew in that season was the struggle. I hadn't yet built up the muscles of self-control. But day after day, as I decided to follow Jesus by honoring women in the way I thought about them, those muscles of self-control gradually strengthened. Early on, it seemed as if I was confronting this challenge every moment of every day. But it's no longer like that. The way I think about women today looks nothing like it did back then. And the same is true in other areas of my life.

The way I think about money has shifted.

I'm not as quick to lash out with my words when I'm offended.

I used to lie about everything. But as much as I'd like to occasionally spin the truth today, honesty tends to well up to the surface.

God only knows how much further I still have to go. I am fully aware of the struggles that still plague my heart—some subtle and some glaringly obvious. But I will not let the reality of how far I still have to go deny the truth that, by God's grace, I've changed and I'm still changing. I certainly don't want to stop now.

The story of my continued progress toward a life that is truly rich and rewarding will be told in journal entries I have yet to write. And I can't wait to find out what two-steps-forward-one-step-back stories those pages will tell.

I want that for you as well. I want you to move past discouragement, frustration, and boredom. I want you to experience life in all its fullness. I want you to blow the doors off small living and follow Jesus into a much bigger life. I want the ember that is still burning inside your heart to be fanned into flame. I want you to experience so much more than Jesus-on-a-shelf.

That's ultimately what this book is about. It's an exploration of the life that Jesus calls us to—a life that goes so much further than just *believing* in him, a life that pushes us into *living* for him. But as the title suggests, there's no easy Jesus here. Let me warn you right up front that a rich and satisfying life involves making some of the toughest choices

you'll ever make in many key areas of your life and your relationships.

This book is not for the faint of heart. But if you grasp the biblical perspective I want to unpack for you, and if you choose to follow it, it will lead you to the greatest life possible.

You can start right now by deciding that your disappointment, frustration, and boredom will not define you. There's more to the life of faith than what you're currently experiencing.

And it's yours for the taking.