



The God Of The Mundane

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We've all heard the sermons and read the books: "If you really loved God, you would be radical. You would sell your belongings. You would become a missionary and move to another country." Matthew B. Redmond has preached the gospel of doing more for God, and he wants out. In this collection of essays, he asks a simple question: what about the rest of us? Is there a God for our often-mundane lives?

This is a book about pastors, plumbers, dental hygienists, and stay-at-home moms. It finds grace and mercy in chicken fingers, smiles from strangers, and classic films, and ultimately convicts us of something Matt Redmond has learned himself: there is a God of the mundane, and it's not about what we do for him. It's about what he does for us.

The God Of The Mundane Details

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From Reader Review The God Of The Mundane for online ebook

Jeff Shelnutt says

This was a quick, enjoyable and reflective collection of essays. Without meaning to, I read it in several short sessions in a day. The underlying premise is that God is just as much the God of the ordinary as He is of the extraordinary. The fact is, the vast majority of us live normal, "mundane" lives. We are tempted to wonder where God is in our humdrum workdays and routine schedules.

The author elucidates how the evangelical church, taking its cue from American entertainment culture, tends to emphasize "doing" something great rather than simply being someone who is faithful in the little things. Celebrity pastors, glitzy Bible conferences and the "every Christian is a missionary" mantra inculcates a whole generation of church-going youth to have expectations about life that could very well be vastly different than God's. The reality is, if everyone does something "great" and is someone "special," then the whole idea of greatness and uniqueness loses its meaning.

I guess the author is especially positioned to write these things since he is a former pastor turned banker. He went from working his dream job to the last place he ever wanted to be--a teller's window. Yet he's found that he is still able to minister to the hurting; not from a pulpit, but across a faux-wood desk.

And it does make sense. Man is a fallen creature living in a broken world. Every occupation and calling (including the homemaker, soccer mom, plumber and accountant) presents an opportunity to push back against the effects of sin upon the creation. Loving God and loving your neighbor are to be fleshed out wherever we may find ourselves. My firm belief has always been that eternity will reveal that those who made the greatest impact for the Kingdom were those who went the most unnoticed by men. Jesus said something similar: "The last shall be first." And that, to me, is the message of this book.

Wesley Roth says

"The God of the Mundane" is an excellent short story (72 pages) that points out that God is with us every moment of every day and we can rejoice in that! Even if we feel our lives are "boring" and "regular" and sometimes "mundane", God is with us. As Paul urged his hearers in 1 Thessalonians 4:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:12 to "aspire and live quietly" and "in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly" we should take this message to heart in the age of social media dominance and wanting to out-do and "one-up" others. Highly recommended read for those overwhelmed with life sometimes.

Brian says

Has "radical" Christianity finally reached a place of backlash? If this book is any indication I would say so. Matt looks around the evangelical world and sees a heavy emphasis on experience: mountaintop living and Pentecost every day. But our normal, everyday, mundane experiences dominate our lives, which is why this is ultimately a meditation on the doctrine of vocation.

The doctrine of vocation is simply the theology of the Christian life. In the Middle Ages it was taught that

rejecting the world by withdrawing from it (into monasteries and nunneries), performing spiritual exercises, and vows of poverty, celibacy, et cetera, were the highest forms of good works. Einar Billing, in his book *Our Calling*, noted how "our tendency is to look for our religion in the realm of the extraordinary, rather than the ordinary."

But this book is not "a call to do nothing." Rather, "it is a call to be faithful right where you are, regardless of how mundane that place is." Ultimately it points us to the Gospel and what God has done. So the question becomes, are we lead role in our story and are trying to write God into it, or do we realize that he's graciously written us a supporting role in His story? A grand story of rescue. I think the author would agree with Gene Veith that, "in vocation God is hidden even in the mundane activities of our everyday lives. And this is his glory."

J.E. Jr. says

[Full disclosure: I work as the Publisher for Kalos Press, who published this title.]

As a pastor, I often meet with people who wrestle with questions about their worth before God. Do their lives matter to Him? Does their work have value? Do they need to be a pastor, or missionary, or go to seminary, in order to know God and be important to Him (in their vocation)?

Matt Redmond has written a book for these people — and also a book for pastors like me — who need to be reminded of the value and importance of daily life, even when that daily life is plain. Ordinary. Mundane, even. It's a book for moms and wives, for husbands and fathers, for people single and married. It is for folks who work in a world that has an earthiness to it, not focused only on spiritual matters, but instead seeing the sacredness and spirituality to everyday things and tasks.

In spite of the fact that Matt is not in full-time vocational ministry any longer, Matt IS a pastor to all who read his book. He affirms, he strengthens, and he builds them up in the value and delight that God takes in their mundane lives. He challenges and debunks the notion that only the strictly ecclesiastical things matter; he pushes back against pastors and leaders who would tell us that if we are REALLY serious about our faith, we will do something, or be someone, different.

I highly recommend Matt's book to all Christians; you will be renewed and refreshed by both his words and their content.

Cory Saint-Esprit says

Loved the overall message but oftentimes the author didn't make sense or seemed to be speaking in circles. The only thing that kept this from being 2 stars was the last 2 chapters. I would say you could read those and nothing else and get the point of the book. I would much rather stick with a book like "Liturgy of the Ordinary."

Corey says

“But I say, be nobody special. Do your job. Take care of your family. Clean your house. Mow your yard. Read your Bible. Attend worship. Pray. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Love your spouse. Love your kids. Be generous. Laugh with your friends. Drink your wine heartily. Eat your meat lustily. Be honest. Be kind to your waitress. Expect no special treatment. And do it all quietly.”

Andrew says

A helpful reminder of the importance of the ordinary routine tasks in our vocations. A helpful response to the unbalanced view of the Christian life presented by New Calvinism such as authors David Platt and John Piper and an overemphasis on the extraordinary events while overlooking the ordinary means that God uses in His providence. This book was a helpful brief book, however it wasn't as wholistic and helpful as Michael Horton's book, *Ordinary*, which presented a stronger case by also addressing the Means of Grace in contrast to the overemphasis on individualism which often drowns out the importance of the local church.

Todd Wilhelm says

This is the best Christian book I have read in a long time. I wonder if others are as moved as I was, or perhaps it just connects with where I am at?

"For as long as I can remember I had been reading the letters to the churches in the New Testament and missing something. I missed it as a young man wanting to enter vocational ministry, and I missed it as a seminary student. I sadly missed it as a pastor. Sometimes we may miss things because they are hidden. But we seem to always miss much because we see it every day.

I missed the obvious: the Apostles are writing to normal people. Most of them are nameless. They are Jew and Gentile, yes. But they are also not apostles. And most are not pastors. They are carpenters, farmers, traders, sailors, fisherman, shepherds, guards. They are mothers and fathers and children. Compared to the life of an apostle, their lives are probably mundane. These are ordinary men and women believing an extraordinary story. They are not the Apostle Paul, or Peter, or any of the other apostles, who are immortalized in the pages of sacred writ. They are ordinary people who huddled in someone's home, drank their wine, ate their bread, and listened to the Holy Spirit through the words of an Apostle. And then they went home. And they got up the next morning and lived a normal life, probably to the end of their days. And now, poof! They are forgotten.

My guess? Most of them lived out the rest of their lives after coming to faith with the most exciting thing in their lives being when they believed and aligned themselves with Christ and his people. They kept on living where they were and making a living as they did before they believed. They lived normal lives. Only more so. They listened to Paul's teaching, learned from him, and in faith stayed where they were after he left. All of this should have been obvious to me but it wasn't. For years I read and thought and then taught as if Paul was the standard for those I was teaching. “Look at Paul and his singular devotion to Christ,” I would implore them. And then it hit me. The nameless, ordinary believer who listened to Paul and lived faithfully as a farmer, mother, etc., right where they were — they are the standard. The forgotten mundane existence of

those whose names we will never know is the endgame.

It is true Paul says to his readers, “imitate me...” And he says it more than once. In each instance, Paul wants his readers to see that he is an example of what he is asking of them in that particular context. His life is consistent with what he is teaching. He isn't out of step. But he never asks them to stop being who they are. He never challenges them to go anywhere. We don't even get hints that lead us to believe he is making them feel guilty for living in comparative comfort compared to his lack of it. That's weird. And it's weird because this is so common in our pulpits and in conferences held for zealous college students.

So many pastors today, famous ones and otherwise, are asking young people and everyone else if they are willing to give it all and go overseas as a missionary. It's not a bad question to ask. There is no question in my mind that this question needs to be out there. But they — or someone — also needs to ask, “are you willing to be numbered among the nameless believers in history who lived in obscurity? Do you have the courage to be forgotten by everyone but God and the heavenly host? Are you willing to be found only by God as faithful right where you are? Are you willing to have no one write a book about you and what you did in the name of Christ? Are you willing to live and believe — in stark contrast to the world around you — there is a God of the mundane?”

Spencer Cummins says

The God of the Mundane by Matt Redmond (Kalos Press)

Have you ever wanted to call it quits at your job? Have you ever wondered if God even cares for people like you who muster out a living working mundane jobs thinking that no one cares? To these questions comes a mighty rush of fresh air from the pen of Matthew B. Redmond, author of the new book entitled *The God of the Mundane: Reflections on Ordinary Life for Ordinary People*. Redmond narrows in on the focus of the book by writing, “The goal of the book was to comfort Christians where they were – to help people believe the mundane stuff matters” (1). Yet, what I thought was even more insightful was not so much the goal of the book but the audience he had in mind, the stay at home mom and the man stuck in a job making him feel small. Why? More than anything, I've been in that situation and often find myself wishing Monday would not come so quickly. I think Matt speaks for a whole host of men and women who often wonder if their lives matter, their faith makes any difference, and their jobs offer little reward.

In only 72 pages, Matt manages to pinpoint the pervasive problem that believers in Christ wrestle with from all backgrounds. We scrape by the work week looking ahead to the weekend, holding out the hope of what the future might bring. In our spiritual lives, the same future orientation fuels our quest for ‘the gospel of something else entirely’ (49). Matt writes with Mark 1:15 as a backdrop, “This changes everything. No longer is the gospel the promise of something else entirely. It is now the message of now. Now you are redeemed. Now you are living as a member of the Kingdom. You are disciplining your child, taking a bath, paying bills, and cutting grass as a member of the Kingdom of God and of his Christ...We have now the fellowship of the King. Every act is now of Kingdom consequence” (50-51). Any other gospel of the Kingdom that minimizes the mundane events of life is woefully inadequate. Often, though, we strive after spiritual high places in worship songs, devotions, or prayer, forgetting that God is in the midst of our daily routines. By doing the regular activities of life, men and women in union with Christ are pushing back the effects of Adam's fall, showing to the world that God's mighty Spirit is at work even in the disgusting and seemingly insignificant things of life. The gospel of entirely something else is too small to address all the

concerns that a mother and a bank teller has during the week. Yet, the King of the Gospel calls people of all occupations and levels to show forth his glory in the cleaning of toilets and the accounting of taxes.

Lastly, Matt's insistence that we read the story of God in the story of the bible rightly is a healthy stance to rest on. He writes, "Speaking of gardens: the first vocation was Gardener. Yet there are few vocations less-celebrated in our world. The first vocation was not a prophet or preacher,...Here we glimpse the God of the mundane at work: the God of gardeners and farmers, veterinarians and plumbers, landscape designers and zoo-keepers" (25). Who likes to get their fingers dirty all the time? Yet, it was God's concern that Adam and Eve should be caretakers of the Garden of Eden, a special job indeed. We get a glimpse of the societal and cultural significance of Israel's landowners in the Pentateuch as they provided food for their families and also widows, orphans, and the poor. God's mercy is evident in the Genesis story as it is on the cross that Jesus died upon. God redeeming work does not seek to bring us out of obscurity but to provide salvation right in the midst of the ordinary and mundane. We finally see the ultimate way in which God gets his fingers dirty in the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. Not only does he minister to those of lowly positions in society, but proclaims good news for the very people the surrounding culture despises.

Go out and buy this book, in fact, buy more than one copy for your friends, neighbors and co-workers. The message that God is present in the mundane details of life brings great hope and encouragement to believers. With a healthy eye towards the questions that we all face and a keen sense of the Bible's storyline, *The God of the Mundane* is a message of truth in a sea of conflicting messages. With a hearty 'Amen' after each chapter, I was greatly impacted by the message of this book and hope that others will be too.

Thanks to Kalos Press for providing a complimentary review copy in exchange for review

Chris Canuel says

Matthew B. Redmond is a talented writer. I've been a long time follower of his blog, so of course I was thrilled to get my hands on his debut book 'The God Of The Mundane'. I had read the series of blog posts that would eventually lead to the book, and felt even as I was reading those initial posts, that what Matt was saying, the world needed to hear. I'm thankful that Kalos Press felt the same way.

As I said, Matt is a superb writer. Because Matt is such a superb writer, this book is a joy to read. 'The God Of The Mundane' is the type of book that you can read, and get lost in. Once you finish, you'll want to read it again. Because of the content of the book, this is a book you need to read again.

Let me be up front. I don't agree with everything Matt says in this book. I don't agree with how Matt says everything in this book. And that is okay. Matt has indeed accurately diagnosed a huge problem within the Christian church, and the questions he asks are important. His voice is one that needs to be heard in the world of evangelicalism. The conversation that Matt has started is one that needs to continue, and all Christians, and perhaps Pastors in particular need to take note.

In the world of bigger and better and more radical Christianity...it's refreshing to read someone who wants to see and talk about the God of the everyday. It's refreshing to see someone who sees the eternal value of every inch of life. It's refreshing to see someone who understands the line between spiritual work and secular work doesn't really exist.

Again, I don't agree with all of the conclusions that Matt comes to...But, I certainly agree with Matt that there is a problem with how we are talking about faith, and how we view faith. True biblical faith isn't one size fits all, and it certainly doesn't look the same for each of us. I'm thankful that Matt has started the conversation, and I pray the conversation continues.

Dominick says

great book on doing simple ordinary things for God.

Lance says

Many of you have seen the classic Seinfeld episode revealing George's colored heritage of Festivus. It is the festival for the "rest of us" complete with the airing of grievances and feats of strength. It was created not by the Seinfeld show but by a father of one of the writers who was fed up with the over commercialization of the holidays. Our Super-Sized world certainly is enough to leave one disillusioned. Even in our churches what is celebrated are the BIG visions, BIG Sundays, BIG acts of faith, but what about the rest of the mundane moments of life? Is God at work in those too, or do we only experience God when the sea is split and I do something radical for God?

Matt Redmond, author of *God of the Mundane*, is turning our gaze away from the over sensationalized Christianity that is so prevalent in our American churches. We are consumed with a drive to be radical, risk taking, dreamers who forget that God is at work redeeming every moment of every day. Most of those moments are filled with driving to and from work, changing diapers, drinking refreshing beverages, and generally not "spiritual" giant activities. So what do we do with ALL of those other moments which are the majority of our existence? Is there a "Christivus" (Christianity for the rest of us)? Redmond very personally and passionately proposes that the gospel and God Himself is at work in all of the moments of our lives not just the few, the proud, the giant moments of the faith.

"We are redeemed from the slavery of thinking our mundane life is not enough."

There can be much guilt heaped on the life of a Christian with so many Super-Sized faith messages. We end up rolling in our obesity and missing the precious moments God has given us each and every day. Redmond asks so many good questions contrasting the Super-Spiritual drive and the everyday moments,

"Really? Is this the normal Christian life? Is God sitting around waiting for each and every believer to do something monumental? Is this the warp and woof of the New Testament? Are the lifestyles of the Apostles the standard for the persons in the pew? Are the first-century believers the standard?

Is this our God?

In the economy of God, do only the times when we are doing something life-changing have any spiritual cache with Him? Does He look over the mundane work of the housewife only to see the missions trip she may go on?

So, I wondered."

We all should wonder and question the call to BIG Christianity in comparison to the call of the gospel. This message is so needed in our oversized church world. There is a Christianity for the rest of us. The gospel does transform every moment of our lives, and Redmond has proclaimed it here. It is a Christivus miracle!

Derek Hale says

Received for Christmas 2016 and read in one day. A short book containing essays pushing back against the notion that the life that God loves is one spent being "radical" for Jesus and doing big, splashy things for the Kingdom.

I especially enjoy Redmond's blog and am a regular reader. I thought this book was a little thin on Scripture. He spent a lot of time assuring people that their mundane tasks (changing diapers, balancing bank drawers, installing plumbing) were meaningful. I wish he would have used a bit more from the Scriptures to flesh out his arguments.

Linda says

"We are not saved from mediocrity and obscurity, the ordinary and the mundane. We are saved in the midst of it. We are not redeemed from the mundane. We are redeemed from the slavery of thinking our mundane life is not enough."

I imagine every sincere Christian who truly loves the Lord has at some time thought about what more they could do or should be doing for the cause of Christ. We read of the lives and deeds of the first century apostles, of martyrs, missionaries, and ministers, and we become inspired to do great things for God. And that's wonderful, as long as we keep a proper perspective and don't think of ourselves as failures if we never do anything that brings us recognition and fame. Because the fact is, very few of us will.

Matthew Redmond believes that too many preachers, including himself, have unintentionally laid guilt trips on their people by exhorting them to go out and do big things for God, to change the world, not to settle for mediocrity but to be radical, to get out of their comfort zones, take risks, make sacrifices, give up everything for the cause of the Gospel. In "The God of the Mundane," Redmond asks the following:

- Is God sitting around waiting for each and every believer to do something monumental?
- Are the lifestyles of the Apostles the standard for the persons in the pew?
- In the economy of God, do only the times when we are doing something life-changing have any spiritual cache with Him?
- Does He look over the mundane work of the housewife only to see the missions trip she may go on?
- Is there a God, who delights in the ordinary existence of the unknown faithful doing unknown work?

Redmond's book is not long nor theologically deep; he doesn't present anything especially new or enlightening. But it may serve as a good reminder for the many of us Christians who sometimes feel that we aren't doing enough for God in our day-to-day, ordinary, humdrum lives. Redmond observes,

"Since we cannot see that in our day-in and day-out faithfulness to God, we are accomplishing something, we then begin to re-evaluate our lives. We think: 'I cannot see I have done anything at all with my life.'

Therefore I must do something."

So then we do something – something in our own strength, of our own calling, to fulfill a need for some kind of validation of our spiritual existence. Redmond identifies three stages that such a person may go through:

Stage one: I feel guilty about doing nothing.

Stage two: I must get on with something obviously significant.

Stage three (the worst of all): Now we judge others by this standard.

Like the world, the church can fall into a tendency of judging the success or value of a person by worldly standards of measure, and without realizing it, Christians unintentionally compare the spirituality or faith of people by what they are outwardly and actively doing for God.

As a mom who spent more than 17 years as a stay-at-home mom homeschooling my three children, I certainly went through periods of time during which I felt like I could barely meet the daily challenges of raising and teaching the kids, let alone do something important for the kingdom of God. When my kids were still pretty young, I reluctantly and with some guilt decided to drop out as a leader in our church ladies' Bible study. A wise, older woman counseled me that during that time of my life, my family was my most important ministry, and I often reminded myself of her words over the course of the following years. I've always had a lot of energy and self-motivation and have always been the type of person to get involved in lots of things. As a result, my husband has often had to remind me that sometimes it's okay to say No. Being busy for God and others doesn't necessarily equate with being more spiritual or being effective for His kingdom.

Often we aren't satisfied with being busy for the Lord; we have to make sure other people are aware of just how busy we are.

"In 1 Thessalonians 4:11 (ESV), Paul urges his hearers "to aspire to live quietly." And in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 he encourages them 'in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly'...The mundane life is one where we quietly go about our business. No easy task. Which is why Paul commands it of us."

As Redmond observes, Christians don't seem content with simply going quietly about their business but must find opportunities to "broadcast it so people will look at us, our church, our denomination. Our works..." And He believes this stems from basic, natural pride. Looking back at my experience with the ladies' Bible study, I now wonder if part of the reason I was hesitant to quit my role as a leader is because then I wouldn't be as "important" and would have to take a back seat to someone else's leadership. There's no point in second-guessing my motives now, 20 years later. However, isn't that often how we think as humans? Is that one of the ways that Satan tries to turn something good into a temptation to sin?

On the other hand, "Living quietly is a life so happy with the attention of God, that the attention of the world is not needed, and rarely enjoyed," remarks Redmond. While we should be ready and willing to serve the Lord in whatever way He calls us to, most of us won't be called by Him to do big things that will make a huge, lasting impact on a grand scope. At least not in the way we think of it. Actually, we often make a difference or have an impact in the lives of others in ways we may never know.

"The idea that God can take the seemingly small, mundane task and responsibilities and turn them into something significant, while a strange way of thinking for us, is a common thread divinely woven through the Scriptures."

Obviously God has used and continues to use apostles, pastors, missionaries and evangelists in mighty ways to advance His kingdom. The Bible contains plenty of examples of God using ordinary men and women to carry out His great purposes: Noah, Moses, Joseph, David, Esther, Jonah, Mary, and the eleven apostles. But what of the hundreds and thousands of men and women in both the Old and New Testament who loved and faithfully obeyed God but whose names are probably not even recorded in the Bible? Were they any less spiritual than the names we read in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews?

It's all just a matter of having the proper perspective, an eternal perspective. Consider this and remind yourself of it when you are feeling insignificant:

"The Kingdom of God is at hand. I am part of this kingdom. I am not waiting to be part of it when I die...Everything is part of this life in the Kingdom. Every mundane moment sitting uncomfortably between those of ecstasy, spiritual or otherwise is now worthy of attention. Every act is now of Kingdom consequence. Not just the big ones."

In the past God used plain, ordinary shepherds, businessmen, fishermen, and tent makers; likewise, He uses homemakers and school teachers, bankers and salesmen, construction workers and janitors, doctors and lawyers, whose hearts are set on Him and who are willing to obey and serve Him right where God has placed them, for His glory. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see how the Lord used the ordinary situations in my ordinary life for greater purposes than I will probably ever see in this life!

Debbie Cowman says

Great book. I highly recommend it.
