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Van Eman's "Disruptive discipleship: The power of breaking routine to kickstart Your faith" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Van Eman, S. (2017). *Disruptive discipleship: The power of breaking routine to kickstart Your faith*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. 218 pp. \$16.00. ISBN 978083084508

Disruptive Discipleship is the second book authored by Sam Van Eman. His work with college students and through the Coalition for Christian Outreach provided the background and motivation.

This book is aimed at those wanting an intentional experience to mature in faith. A pastor of a church in which I was involved once said of a church, “If you are not growing, then you are dying.” I think that saying applies equally to individuals in their walk of faith. I assert that the author of this book would agree as the book’s introduction is titled, “We Can’t Not Change.”

Rather than waiting for the inevitable interruptions and disruption of life, Van Eman suggests that one of the best approaches to a stagnant faith or ‘stuck in a rut’ life is to purposefully consider breaking normal to jumpstart faith growth.

Experiential design forms the theoretical framework for ‘connecting what we do with why – turning activities into meaningful experiences’ (p. 6).

Van Eman’s thesis, regardless of age or stage in life is:

Disciples are students and followers of Jesus, which means we study his ways and then grow in them. We don’t have to wait for life to bring us opportunities to mature. We can exercise our God-given ability to take initiative to pursue growth in faith, hope, and love, particularly in experiences that put these three to the test (pp. 6-7).

‘Growth on purpose’ is the premise to develop greater faith, hope, and love.

The book’s first three chapters are rich in examples and stories, opportunities for personal assessment, and the presentation of three experience-based approaches to grow in discipleship. Intentional or deliberate experiences can prepare one for life’s future challenges. The practice of incremental spiritual growth yields perseverance.

Chapters 4 through 6 discuss the impact of experiential discipleship on developing the spiritual fruit of faith, hope, and love. Chapters 7 through 9 focus on application for life whether feeling stuck, underutilized, or in transition. These chapters aim to transfer meaning and lessons from experience through reflection. Van Eman's premise, "Disrupting routine on purpose today builds in us resiliency for unplanned disruptions tomorrow" (p. 172).

Scripture verses and examples of Jesus' disciples are interspersed throughout. A small group study guide is included and a list of additional resources.

Erica Young Reitz has a similar work specifically for recent graduates, *After College: Navigating Transitions, Relationships and Faith*. Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life* is perhaps the quintessential book of which Van Eman's seems an extension for individuals or small group use.

Reviewer

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