



A Day with a Perfect Stranger

By David Gregory

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The conversation continues.

What if a stranger knew you better than you know yourself?

Exasperated by her husband's sudden new obsession with Jesus, Mattie Cominsky views an out-of-town business trip as a welcome opportunity to reflect on their marriage—and to decide if it's time to put an end to this painfully unrewarding relationship.

Aboard the plane, Mattie is relieved to find herself seated next to a passenger who shares her scorn for religion. After she confides her husband's unexpected turn, their conversation soon leads to a fascinating exploration of spirituality, God, and the quest for meaningful connection.

Mattie's skepticism softens under the perceptive insights of this stranger, and she finds herself confronting the unspoken longings of her soul. As his comments touch on personal issues he couldn't possibly know about, she begins to wonder if she's misjudged not only Nick but also the God he now claims to believe in.

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for *A Day with a Perfect Stranger*

“Don’t let David Gregory’s simple writing style fool you: the message shared throughout *A Day with a Perfect Stranger* is profound and the questions he raises are life changing.”

–**Liz Curtis Higgs**, best-selling author of *Bad Girls of the Bible*

“Fasten your seatbelt for another marvelously divine encounter with the *Perfect Stranger*! Once again, Gregory masterfully demonstrates just how passionately and intimately our God loves each one of us. If you are looking for an encouraging faith encounter, the *Perfect Stranger* books are the most palatable and powerful tools of our day.”

–**Shannon Ethridge**, best-selling author of *Every Woman’s Battle* and *Every Woman’s Marriage*

“While I liked *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* very much, I loved *A Day with a Perfect Stranger*. This book has the potential to make people think about what drives them, what keeps them from God, and what will ultimately fulfill them. In a feelings-based and satisfaction-driven society, this is an invaluable tool. People are hungering for the answers to questions Mattie gets to ask. I can't wait to hand it out to friends who do not yet know the Stranger in their midst.”

–**Lisa Tawn Bergren**, best-selling author of *The Begotten*

“Sometimes the simplest books can have the most profound influence, and David Gregory has done such a wonderful job capturing my imagination. Over and over as I read *A Day with a Perfect Stranger* I kept asking myself, what would I say if I ever sipped lattes with Jesus? And at the end of the book, I realized I have that opportunity every day. He’s not only listening, but He’s speaking, too. Anyone who enjoyed *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* will love the sequel.”

–**Rene Gutteridge**, best-selling author of *BOO* and *The Splitting Storm*

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

David Gregory is the author of *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger*, *The Next Level*, *The Last Christian*, and the coauthor of two nonfiction books. After a ten-year business career, he returned to school to study religion, sociology, and communications. He holds Master's degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary and the University of North Texas. He has been a frequent teacher, trainer, and conference speaker since 1996. A native of Texas, he now lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife, Ava, and their four children. Learn more about this book at www.adaywithaperfectstranger.com.

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I NEVER THOUGHT I’d become the kind of woman who would be glad to leave her family. Not that I wanted to abandon them, exactly. I was just glad to get away for a few days. Or longer, in the case of one of them.

Maybe I should have been celebrating instead of escaping. That’s what you do with big news, isn’t it? And we had plenty.

A few weeks earlier my husband, Nick, told me that he had met Jesus. Not the usual “getting saved” kind of

meeting Jesus. I mean, met Jesus. Literally. At a local Italian restaurant.

At first I thought he was joking, of course. He wasn't. Then I thought he had been hallucinating. He had, after all, been putting in seventy-hour weeks at work and getting limited sleep. But he stuck to his story, which left me with—I didn't know what.

All I knew was that my husband was convinced he had dined with Jesus, and he had turned into some kind of Jesus freak. It was bad enough that he had previously disappeared into his work. Now when we were together, God was all he wanted to talk about. That wasn't the "till death do us part" I had planned on. Things had been strained enough between us without bringing God into the mix. It was as if someone had kidnapped the real Nick and replaced him with a religious Nick clone. There we were, plugging along in our marriage, and suddenly Nick, who wouldn't be caught dead in a church parking lot, is best friends with Jesus.

It's not that I object to religion. People can believe whatever they want to. I just didn't grow up religious, hadn't become religious, and didn't marry someone religious. And I wanted it to stay that way.

So getting away from Nick for four days was a relief. What I hated was leaving Sara, my two-year-old.

Granted, I looked forward to the break, as any mother would. But I had never been away from her longer than two nights, and even then I found myself missing her by the second day. And that was with my mom coming down to take care of her. At least I trusted my mom. No telling what might happen with Nick doing the childcare. Not that he was a bad dad, when he was both home and off his cell phone.

But I had to take this trip. A client had built a resort hotel near Tucson and wanted me to design new brochures for it. The manager insisted on giving me a personal tour of the place. She said I needed to experience it firsthand to fully capture its essence. And get a free massage, I hoped. I rarely had to travel for my graphic-arts work, which was fine with me. Most of the business I had developed since we'd moved to Cincinnati was local. Sometimes I went back to Chicago on a job, but I could handle most of my old accounts online. This, however, was my biggest client—had been for six years—and I couldn't exactly say no.

The trip should have been a one-day there-and-back. Two at the max. But since you can't get a nonstop from Cincinnati to Tucson, I booked my flight through Dallas, which meant I had to take two travel days.

I could hardly imagine a less appealing way to spend two days of my life. I don't much like air travel, anyway. I'd rather just throw some stuff in the car and hit the road. In a car no one has you stand in line or searches your purse or forces you to eat dry pretzels for a snack. Nor does anyone pull you aside, have you extend your arms, and run a baton all over your body. Why do I always get singled out? Plus, I didn't feel the best this particular morning. I knew that getting on a plane without any breakfast wasn't a brilliant idea since they don't serve even those tasteless box meals anymore. But I figured I could break down and buy a snack box if I had to.

Before heading out the front door, I wrote a note and left it on the kitchen counter.

Nick,

Sara's pajamas are in the top drawer, if you don't remember. You may not, since you haven't put her to bed this year. Her toothbrush is in the left drawer in her bathroom. I left plenty of juice, oatmeal, and cereal for breakfasts. Plus she likes toast and jelly. There's a macaroni casserole she likes in the fridge and some frozen veggies. After that runs out, she likes Chick-fil-A. Don't forget story time at the library tomorrow at 10:30. You can reach me on my cell if you need me for anything about Sara. Hope you and Jesus have a great time together.

Mattie

I drove myself to the airport. Nick had volunteered to take me, but I declined. Riding by myself was preferable to Nick telling me about his latest discovery in the Bible, which he was now reading voraciously,

or listening to Christian radio, a fate worse than death. I parked and walked into the terminal. The soft music and absence of Jesus talk provided a welcome relief.

Miraculously, I made it through security without any special groping and proceeded to my gate. Once there, I sat with my carry-ons and glanced at my boarding pass. *Oh, great*, I thought. *An E seat, in the middle. Why didn't I make my reservation earlier and get a better seat? Maybe I can switch to an aisle seat near the back of the plane.*

A minute later the agent at the gate picked up her microphone and announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, our flight to Dallas is full. To expedite your departure, please make sure you stow your bags and take your seat as quickly as possible." *Fabulous.*

As they called first-class passengers to board, I remembered something I'd forgotten to tell Nick. I pulled out my phone and dialed his office. He answered.

"Nick, I'm at the airport."

"Hey. How's it going?"

"Look, I forgot to tell you that Laura has Sara with their son Chris until about five thirty. She's taking them swimming at the Y."

"No problem. I'm going to get home a little early and fix something for Sara and me."

"What—you mean cook something?"

"Yeah. I picked up stuff for spaghetti and meatballs at lunch."

"Miracles never cease. Look, I need to go—my row is boarding."

"Call me tonight?"

"I'll see, Nick. I might be pretty tired."

"Well, have a great trip. I love you."

"Yeah. Bye, Nick."

I ended the call, picked up my tote bag and suitcase, and got to the boarding line just as my group was being called. A second later the airline rep started hawking two two-hundred-dollar travel vouchers for anyone willing to take a flight four hours later. No one took them. When the offer went up to three hundred dollars, I stepped forward. *Maybe they'll have an aisle seat on the next flight.*

"When would that get me into Tucson?" I asked.

The rep looked up the connecting flight. "Ten twentytwo this evening."

Nearly ten thirty. Plus renting a car, then driving out to the hotel. That's almost midnight.

I decided to pass; I'd be too tired the next day.

I got back in line with the last group of boarders, walked down the ramp, and waited interminably while all the people already on the plane decided where to put their stuff. By the time I got to my row, there was room overhead for my suitcase but not my tote bag. I stowed my suitcase and looked at my seating arrangement on the left. The seats on both sides of mine were already occupied. Two guys. *Great. Sandwiched for the next two and a half hours between two men. Why couldn't they have put me between two size 2 women?* The man in the aisle seat stood up to let me by. I squeezed into the middle seat, resigning myself to not having an armrest available to me on either side. Guys always hog those. I leaned down, stuffed my bag under the seat in front of me, and pulled my shoulders inward to squeeze back into my seat. *This is really going to be a fun trip.*

The temperature inside the airplane cabin didn't help. I reached up and opened my air vent. That made things feel a little better. I leaned back and sat, staring forward. *I didn't bring anything to read. What was I thinking? I should have stopped and picked up a novel in the airport. I never do that. It would have been kind of nice just to have something to escape into for a while.*

I glanced through the seat pocket in front of me. *Maybe someone left a magazine in here.* But there wasn't much to choose from: a *SkyMall* catalog selling expensive gadgets that no one needed, instructions on using my seat as a flotation device in case we landed in the Mississippi River, and the monthly airline magazine. I opened the magazine. I started reading an article about living on some Spanish coast. The houses were huge, the beaches white, the water crystal clear, the cliffs spectacular. *Who are they kidding? No real people live*

like this.

Just then my cell phone rang. I squeezed forward, leaned down, searched through my bag, and caught it on the fourth ring. “Hello?”

“Hey, traveler. What’s up?” It was my younger sister, Julie.

“Just got on the plane. Waiting to pull away from the gate.”

“Did you get Sara taken care of, or do you need my help?”

“Well, theoretically she’s taken care of. How Nick actually does with her, we’ll see when I get back.”

“What’s he going to feed her?”

“He told me he’s going to do some cooking.”

I heard laughter on the other end. “Nick? Cook?”

“I know.”

“Has he come back to earth, or is he still in the clouds?”

“Still in the clouds. He’s totally flipped out on this Jesus thing.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I’m not sure.” I hesitated. “I called a lawyer today and set up an appointment for next week.”

“Mattie! You did?”

“I don’t know. Maybe it’s too soon. I just don’t feel like I can take this anymore. I mean, things were already bad enough before Nick got religious. There’s no way we’re going to make it like this.”

“I thought he’d been spending more time with you and Sara lately.”

“Yeah. He has. I’m just not sure I want him to anymore. It’s really confusing.”

“Why don’t you try counseling again?” she asked.

“Maybe a different therapist.”

“What’s the point? I mean, it’s not like the last one did much good. Besides, this is a different issue—not like Nick’s workaholicism. I just don’t see any middle ground on this religion stuff.”

I wanted to tell Julie more, but I heard an overhead announcement.

“I’ve gotta run,” I told her. “They’re telling us to shut off cell phones and all that. Can I call you tonight?”

I’ve got something else to tell you too.”

“I don’t know. I might be out.”

“Julie, for once, don’t go out clubbing. It’s bad news for you.” One of the flight attendants walked by and gave me the eye.

“I’ll call you tonight,” I said. “Be there, okay?”

“Okay.”

I clicked off the phone, put it in my bag, leaned back, and closed my eyes. *I can’t believe Nick and I aren’t even making it to our fourth anniversary.*

The plane taxied to the runway and took off.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shiela Steen:

The experience that you get from *A Day with a Perfect Stranger* is the more deep you excavating the information that hide within the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *A Day with a Perfect Stranger* giving you thrill feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood by anyone who read this because the author of this book is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well.

That makes it easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this specific A Day with a Perfect Stranger instantly.

Irene Gwyn:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a e-book. The book A Day with a Perfect Stranger it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book offers high quality.

Sharon Grace:

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Sunny Lopez:

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