

WHAT LIFE ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



Push Play on the Adventure
God Has for You

PETE HISE
FOREWORD BY BILL HYBELS

“Pete Hise’s passion to help you achieve the dreams God has put inside you is evident from the very first words of *What Life Are You Waiting For?* The wisdom of his life experience and the engaging nature of his personal stories will draw you into stepping confidently into the future God always intended for you.”

STEVEN FURTICK

Lead pastor, Elevation Church; author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Greater*

“As an evangelist and abolitionist, I firmly believe one of the best questions is: ‘What life are you waiting for?’ Too many times we are halted by fear or apathy, when we should really be rising to the occasion and living the life we were intended to live. I love Pete’s passion to seize the moment and experience the fullness God desires for us. So seize the moment and start reading this book NOW!”

CHRISTINE CAINE

Founder of The A21 Campaign and bestselling author of *Undaunted*

“I’m a big believer and living proof of the idea that God is not only a *Giver* of big dreams, but also a *Provider* of the stuff to help us reach those dreams. My good friend Pete Hise has inspired us once again to keep pushing toward following and believing in God to help us achieve those dreams. ”

MAC POWELL

Lead singer of Third Day and solo country artist

“One of the things I fear most in my own life is getting to the end of it, looking back, and seeing all of the things I wished I would have done. In this book Pete destroys the idea that continually saying ‘someday’ will enable us to accomplish immeasurably more than all we could ever ask or imagine. I heard someone say once that ‘someday is a disease that will take your dreams to the grave

with you.’ Reading this book will put an exclamation point on that statement and encourage you to step out in faith and really dive into what Jesus has called you to do.”

PERRY NOBLE

Senior pastor, NewSpring Church; author of *Unleash!* and *Overwhelmed*

“If you feel held back and overpowered by *maybe someday* thoughts like, ‘Maybe someday I’ll live a fuller life, maybe someday I’ll get the big break, maybe someday I’ll start pursuing my calling,’ then you’ve got to read this book. You don’t have to wait for someday. You don’t have to stand on the sidelines. This book will guide you through life-transforming principles that will lead you on a courageous journey to grab a hold of who God has called you to be and live the life you were made for.”

PETE WILSON

Pastor of Cross Point Church and author of *Plan B* and *Let Hope In*

“Pete Hise is one of a kind. Not only is Pete a passionate pastor, he is a superb leader. When I’ve preached at Quest Community Church, it has been nothing short of miraculous. They have created a culture of redemption under his leadership, and they care deeply about helping people meet Jesus and walk with Him as Lord and Savior. When you read *What Life Are You Waiting For?* it’s like you are having coffee with Pete. This book is a tour of the heart of a pastor who wants God’s best for everyone he comes in contact with. The message is simple. Stop waiting and wishing. Start believing God and becoming who He wants you to be. This book is simple yet profound, convicting yet encouraging, and filled with motivational rocket fuel! Get a copy for yourself and everyone you love, because it has the potential to set things in motion that can change the outcome of your life, and your world, for the glory of God!”

DR. CLAYTON KING

President, Crossroads Ministries; teaching pastor, NewSpring Church;
Distinguished Professor of Evangelism, Anderson University

“I love it when people write about what they actually live. Pete Hise is on a quest to create a world without regret—where all of us live the life we were created to live.”

ERWIN RAPHAEL McMANUS

Pastor, Mosaic Church; author of *The Barbarian Way* and *Chasing Daylight*

“Pete Hise is inspiring and infectious! His belief in the life-changing power of God will compel you and challenge you to take the transformational adventure that he believes God has called you to. *What Life Are You Waiting For?* will push you to ask tough questions, grapple with unresolved heart issues and, most importantly, compel you to ‘push play.’”

JENNI CATRON

Church leader and author of *Clout*

“The first time I encountered Pete Hise, my soul was tattooed by this inspiring reality: This man passionately loves Jesus, the Gospel, and people. When you read *What Life Are You Waiting For?* your soul will be tattooed too. You will love Jesus, the Gospel, and people more. Get ready for the adventurous life that awaits you.”

DERWIN L. GRAY

Lead pastor, Transformation Church; author of *Limitless Life*

“God has given Pete a unique ability to inspire us and give us hope for change. This work not only does that—it tells us how! A must-read!”

SHAWN LOVEJOY

Lead pastor, Mountain Lake Church; author of *The Measure of Our Success*

“With scintillating stories and remarkable spiritual insight, Pete Hise puts together a first-class manual for crashing through life’s limits. Live large now. What life are you waiting for?”

MARK ASHTON

Lead pastor, Christ Community Church (Omaha, Nebraska)

“Smart, funny, and challenging, *What Life Are You Waiting For?* will reignite your dreams as Pete Hise invites you on a transformational journey of discovering your full potential in Christ. Through biblical teaching and compelling stories of real life change, Pete shows us how we can do more than just observe life—we can truly live it the way God intended.”

TONY MORGAN

Consultant, leadership coach, author (TonyMorganLive.com)

“What we have here is a modern-day story of a God who is interested in us being a part of His purpose for the world by inviting people to take a radical step, and an ordinary guy who said, ‘Count me in!’ Sounds so simple, but it’s not! Pete lets us walk in his shoes as he wrestled with what his next step might be. The miracle was that he took it, a church was birthed, and a generation is hearing about the God who asked him to take the step in the first place—Jesus! So, what if you took a step?”

DAVID SMITH

Lead pastor, Fairhaven Church (Centerville, Ohio)

“Have you ever read a book and asked yourself, ‘How did the author know my life, my questions, my challenges?’ This is one of *those* books. When you open the pages of *What Life Are You Waiting For?* you won’t just be reading words—you’ll find yourself responding to them personally. I’m grateful for a road map that leads to the life I’ve been waiting for!”

HELEN MUSICK

Transformation Pastor, Quest Community Church; coauthor of *Everyday Object Lessons for Youth Groups*

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FOREWORD

PETE HISE is a force of nature. I have rarely met a more determined man! Which makes me very grateful that he is a dedicated Christ-follower and a fantastic pastor. All of that energy is focused in a God-honoring direction!

I first met Pete after a Willow Creek Leadership Conference. He told me, in a most sincere way, that God had prompted him to start a church. I wished him well. Imagine my surprise a few years later when Pete invited me to come to Quest Community Church and help inspire his congregation to make sacrificial financial gifts so that they could purchase a plot of land and build a permanent home. I will never forget that night. Ten members of his new church stood before an overflow crowd and bore witness to the transforming love of Christ. Such sincerity. So many tears. Flying home that night, I had a sense that God had great things in store for that upstart church.

In 2009 I was invited back to Quest and received the grand tour of their sixteen-acre campus and glistening new

buildings. My heart overflowed with a fatherly kind of pride in Pete and his staff. Their church had far exceeded my expectations.

In coming years you will hear a lot more about Pete Hise and Quest Community Church. I have the feeling he has just laid the foundation for what is going to become a powerful movement for Christ for many years to come. I will be cheering him on from Chicago.

Bill Hybels
December 2013

Chapter 1

WHAT IF?

THE WHOLE CROWD JUMPED to their feet as the wide receiver reversed direction and came flying around the near corner with the football tucked under his right arm. In a full-out sprint he rushed down the field with the entire defense chasing him. Passing the fifty, the forty, the thirty, the twenty, he kept running until only one man had a legitimate shot at tackling him. At the ten-yard line, the defender dove for the wide receiver's feet—and missed. *Touchdown!* An exhilarating fourth-quarter TD for the speedster . . . the first of his career.

After the football game ended, I had a chance to speak with the star receiver who'd just made the game-winning touchdown. He was willing to give me a brief interview

because it turns out that number eight, the rookie wide receiver, is my youngest son, Carson. It was his first year of football, and I went out of my mind when he scored. To my surprise, Carson was pretty cool about the whole experience. As we stood on the sideline after the game, I talked and talked about his scoring play; he drank Gatorade. When I stopped talking and he paused gulping, my eight-year-old asked me a very serious question:

“Dad, do you think I’ll be picked *first* in the NFL draft?”

In my opinion, he could have asked any number of questions that seemed more appropriate: “Do you think I’ll ever score a *second* touchdown?” “Will I be good enough to play in high school?” “Do you think I’ll get the chance to play college ball?” or even “Do you think I’ll ever be forty-eight inches tall?”

But he didn’t. With one TD behind him, Carson asked with absolute seriousness, “Do you think I’ll be taken *first* in the NFL draft?”

There he stood, all fifty-eight pounds of him, with sweaty curls sticking out of his helmet, never doubting for a second that he’d be drafted by the pros someday. He just wondered if he’d be taken first.

Somewhere along the way, we’ve all had NFL-size dreams. Can you remember yours? Most of us can’t, because we didn’t have them for very long. We dreamed big when we were young, but as we grew older, our grand dreams shifted. Instead of becoming an NFL player, the president of the United States like our parents told us we’d be, or the

astronaut our grandparents dreamed we'd be, we started to settle. Eventually, we settled for the "real world": studying for exams, changing diapers, sitting through job reviews, chauffeuring our kids around town, paying bills. Somewhere between elementary school and where we are right now, we traded what *might be* for what *is*.

WE SELL OURSELVES SHORT

Smart money would suggest that when you opened this book and began reading, you probably didn't expect very much from God. Certainly nothing that would fall into the "amazing" category—it's a *book* after all, right? It's not like you're stepping into a pivotal meeting, receiving an offer, or considering a proposal that could change your life. You are just reading a book.

But what if God has more in mind for you as you make your way through these pages?

What if?

As a pastor, I have the privilege of connecting with lots of different people—people like you and me—each with a unique background and story. Frequently our encounters deal with the idea of change. More specifically, we often discuss life change, real transformation. When the idea of a divine "what if" is raised, most people tend to believe that God has the power to transform a human life; they just don't expect that He will do it in *them*.

Here's the typical train of thought: "Is it possible that God

might do something important in some people's lives? Sure, it's possible. But not in me. I'm too ordinary, too flawed. I doubt God would use someone like me to do anything that really matters."

I want to challenge your low expectations of God and compel you to recapture the innocence of your youth, when you may have daydreamed about the great plans of God for your life. Entertain the reality that God has more in store for you than you know. No matter where you come from or what's going on in your life, I hope you'll consider the possibility that you will encounter Him in a very real way through these pages.

A CRACK IN THE DOOR

The Bible says that God knew every single day of your life before one of them came to pass. What if that is really true?

That means He saw this moment coming a long time ago,

What if God
wants to impact
your today so
that it changes
your tomorrow?

well before you could even read one of these words. In fact, Psalm 139:15 says that He saw you in your mother's womb. He saw that moment with the same clarity He sees *this* moment. If God is who the Bible says He is—limitless in power, bound by neither time nor space—then that's no big stretch.

So humor me. Entertain that "what if" for a moment. What if God orchestrated this moment so He could inject

the possibility that He wants to do something substantial in *your* life? What if God wants to impact your today so that it changes your tomorrow?

It's a beautiful premise, isn't it? In the mind and heart of God, you are not an accident. Therefore, maybe you should at least be open to the possibility that God might have something more in mind for you.

I'm banking on it.

Long before I ever typed a single word of this book, I began praying for you. I don't necessarily know your name, but I've prayed that your heart would be open, ready, and available to encounter God Himself.

Here's why: God doesn't need much help.

Do you know what God needs in order to do something phenomenal in your life?

A crack in the door.

A pinch of possibility.

Even the smallest seed of hope.

Most people miss that simple truth and resign themselves to living life as if God can't do much to change things. But here and now, understand once and for all the heart of God: *If you give Me the tiniest margin, I will do something in you that will take your breath away. I have a heart that cares, and I have the power to act in your life so that things are different tomorrow from how they are today.*

Do you know
what God
needs in order
to do something
phenomenal
in your life?
A crack in the
door.

God wants to ignite His power in your life to transform

you. He is very interested in the timeline of that change because He wants it to occur *now*—a watershed event that causes a ripple effect through the rest of your days and years.

FIRSTHAND EVIDENCE

I am not asserting this from secondhand stories, hearsay, and rumors. I have experienced firsthand the power of God to instantaneously change a human life forever—mine. It's like I want to scream for all to hear, "Paul is telling the truth!" when he writes in Ephesians,

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. EPHESIANS 1:11, *THE MESSAGE*

On a snowy night in upstate New York, I was sitting in a church listening to four men in blue leisure suits sing about Jesus, while I harbored thoughts of how much I wanted to kill the friend of mine who had suckered me into being there. There was no forewarning to tip me off about what was going to happen in me before I left.

From a young age, I was constantly in trouble. In fifth grade I had pushed my teacher, Ms. Tulloch, so far over the edge that she had developed a behavioral conduct system that

involved a sheet of paper on the corner of my desk. Every time I got in trouble, she would add a little check mark. The warning was clear: ten marks equaled a parent-teacher conference. She was trying to offer me a fresh start, a chance to begin again.

At the end of the first day, I had thirty-five check marks on that paper.

By the time I was fifteen, I was much older than fifteen. The trouble I was getting into was no longer triggering parent-teacher conferences; it was steering my life toward a darkening trajectory. I viewed women as objects, valued people only as they benefited me, and hung out with friends who aided and abetted my downward spiral.

So when a buddy lured me into that church on November 12, 1982, under the auspices of “attending a concert,” I was furious and freaked out when I realized I was going to hear Christian music. Trapped in the middle of a row, unable to escape, I was forced to endure the four-part gospel harmonies to the bitter end.

As the concert wrapped up, one of the blue-suited men with a mustache stepped forward and started talking to the crowd about Jesus, the Person they had been singing about. He told us of how Jesus had left heaven on an all-out search-and-rescue mission for every person in the world; that He chose death on the cross to forgive our sins, change our hearts, and give us a brand-new start. Except what I heard was “to forgive *your* sins, change *your* heart, and give *you* a brand-new start.”

“Somebody here tonight is in need of a second chance.

You've made a mess of your life and think you've gone too far, but you haven't. If you surrender your life to Jesus, He will take it and receive you—He will give your life a fresh start.” *How did that man know? I'd never even met him before.*

My heart started pounding in my chest: *Is anyone else listening to this?* I looked around the room. The offer couldn't have been any clearer—and it felt like the deal of a lifetime. The God of the Universe loved me, had made a way for me to be forgiven of my considerable rap sheet through the Cross, and wanted to come lead my life out of brokenness into a whole new God-made plan. How could I possibly pass it up?

Before I knew what was happening, I hit the aisle and headed toward the man with the mustache at the front of the church. To this day, I don't know if I was the only one. I just knew that I wasn't going to miss my moment. I walked quickly, sure that someone was going to recognize me and say “Not you, Pete. This isn't for people like you.” But no one did. I made it there safely, and with my head bowed I prayed from the bottom of my heart and asked Jesus to forgive me, to come into my heart, and to lead my life. My heart exploded with the reality of His forgiveness and love.

I left that church a brand-new man! My friend, and those who knew me, were stunned. When they asked why I went down front, I explained that I felt my heart beating out of my chest . . . like the man was speaking directly to me.

Lying in bed that night, I alternated between laughter

and tears. *It is all true. Jesus is true to His word.* I could *feel* the difference immediately: my thoughts were different, my emotions were different, and more than anything, I wanted to tell everyone I knew. I felt like I had been given the cure to a spiritual cancer that had been eating away at my heart my whole life. I had no idea if anyone knew that Jesus was this real, this available, or this able to transform their hearts and lives—but I knew that I would spend the rest of my life telling everyone I could.

ENDING THE CYCLE

When you hear the word *change*, what comes to mind? Maybe you think about it in terms of resolutions or setting goals, trying to positively manage the cycle of wishing and waiting. You know the cycle, right? *Wishing* our circumstances would change and *waiting* for it to happen to us. After all, many of us live as though life owes us something and fate will cause it to come our way if we just wish and wait long enough.

That's not the kind of change I'm talking about.

The kind of transformation that God has in mind has nothing to do with passively waiting. Living life on pause—and neglecting to take action—while thinking that breakthrough change is on the way is just a delusion. Nothing important in life works that way.

Think about it. The unemployed dude who never lifts a finger to type up a résumé or fill out an application, who's just waiting for some company to hear of his legendary skills

and offer a job out of the blue doesn't end up employed. He becomes that guy living in his mom's basement, guzzling Mountain Dew and perfecting his Xbox technique.

The woman who yearns for a group of real friends to do life with but who never chooses to position herself in community with others or take the risk of getting to know new people just becomes that lady with the house full of cats, each named after a celebrity.

Simply put, if you don't take action, nothing changes.

You can't rewind
or replay your
life. You get
one shot.

And that's what this book is about. It is a cry for the end of the cycle of wishing and waiting. The truth is that you and I don't have nine lives to spend waiting for something to change. I don't mean to sound morbid, but the reality is that

you won't get another shot, my friend. You can't rewind or replay your life. You get one shot. What life are you waiting for?

In the early days of our church, Richard, a man in his late sixties, attended often. He enjoyed church, but make no mistake, he was there on his own terms. He hadn't bought into this Christianity thing yet. We'd stay late after services talking through his questions about faith, and after every talk, he'd walk away, saying, "I'm not ready yet, but maybe someday."

That all changed when Richard had a life-threatening heart attack. I remember standing in the emergency room with his family—people we loved—begging God for more

time as Richard was speeding toward an eternity he wasn't ready for.

As the medical team strongly urged family and friends to rush their good-byes, God responded to our prayer and gave us exactly what we'd asked for—more time. Later that week Sharon, a pastor at Quest, and I were visiting Richard in the ICU, and we had one of our now-familiar talks about his faith. Only this time, there was a different sobriety and urgency in our talk. Having nearly died just days earlier, Richard was experiencing a newfound level of spiritual clarity. I asked him if he wanted to give his life to Christ, and he said, "I'd like to . . . but I have so many unanswered questions."

I looked at this man, who seemed to have only days to live, and made this suggestion: "Richard, what if you step out in the faith you *do* have and let Jesus answer your questions once He is in your heart, perhaps even in heaven?"

Richard looked up, alert. "I didn't know you could do that!" he said. "I'm ready!"

And with machines beeping all around us, I led Richard in the most important prayer of his life. In a moment of humble surrender, he gave his life to Christ. The joy and peace that filled that hospital room—and Richard's heart—were unmistakable. I've never quite recovered from that last-minute rescue.

You see, just a few weeks later, Richard went to be with Jesus. He'd spent his whole life saying "maybe someday," and at the last possible moment, he received the life he was made for. He only got to experience that freedom and peace on *this*

side of eternity for a few weeks, but now he lives it fully with Jesus *face-to-face*.

Here's the deal: *Richard didn't have to wait!* And neither do you.

If God stands available and ready to move, then why wouldn't we go for it and join Him in what could turn out to be something more substantial than we ever imagined?

I could tell you about people, real people. Friends of mine at Quest Community Church that I have the privilege of serving who decided to take action now and believe God; people who have chosen to live out the divine "what if" for their lives. I could tell you about:

- Scott, a successful businessman who traded the emptiness of wealth to serve those in extreme poverty in India.
- Cecily, a former stripper who found redemption in Christ and now helps pastors from across the nation reach people who are far from God.
- John, a thriving football coach who overcame his guilt when he humbled himself and received forgiveness and now lives in awe as all three of his children have followed in his footsteps.
- Craig, a former atheist who is now a church elder helping people find the hope of Christ for themselves.
- Dani, a timid girl from the country who never thought she'd make much of a difference, who left behind the safe, small life she knew. She's now a

woman who's eager to make an impact and influence scores and scores of people.

- Todd, an attorney and former drug addict on the verge of suicide, who now spends his life leading a recovery ministry helping others find sobriety and significance.
- Clay and Rachel, a couple whose marriage was destroyed in the wake of an affair, who now lead a thriving marriage ministry.

The goal, over the course of our journey together, is to invite God to move and then follow Him into a Transformation Adventure; that He would help us overcome the cycle of wishing and waiting, and finally make war against all the things that keep us complacently locked out of being who God created us to be.

IT'S TIME FOR A CULTURE SHIFT

I am a lifelong, die-hard Dallas Cowboys fan. My earliest memories of sports are of cheering on “Captain Comeback” Roger Staubach as he led the 'Boys to one fourth-quarter victory after another.

In recent years my team has not enjoyed the same success as it did in the seventies, eighties, and nineties. In fact, since the glory days of Emmitt Smith, Michael Irvin, and Troy Aikman, Dallas has been extremely mediocre. (You have no idea how painful it is to type that sentence.) My oldest son,

Corey, recently reminded me that during his lifetime, our team (yes, I'm raising Cowboys fans) has won only *one* play-off game. One!

But here's the reality for every true fan: even after a decade of subpar football, each season begins with the general expectation that the Dallas Cowboys could go all the way to the Super Bowl. Every fall, scores of experts and countless fans (including every male under my roof) discuss how this will be "the year" that America's Team returns to its former glory.

Why? What is it that makes us believe year after year? I think I know. Over the last fifty years the Cowboys have created a *culture of winning*. Regardless of the score or their current record, the Cowboys carry with them the lingering possibility of a comeback, a resurrection, a stunning turnaround resulting in a breathtaking victory.

There are few things in life more compelling than a culture of winning. Just ask people who've barely survived a culture of losing. I remember watching an interview with legendary Detroit Lions running back Barry Sanders. Sanders is one of the best to have ever played the game. In July 1999, to everyone's surprise, he retired from the NFL. His legs were still strong, and he was closing in on Walter Payton's rushing title. So why did he hang up his cleats? He couldn't take it any longer. Not the hits, but the losing! During his thirteen-year career, the Lions only had three winning seasons. Barry walked away, not because he couldn't play, but because he couldn't face one

more losing effort. Throughout the entire interview I couldn't get over the look of sadness and disappointment in Sanders's eyes.

What about you?

What do you see in your eyes when you look in the mirror? What have you walked away from? Is a culture of losing keeping you off the field? Have you grown so accustomed in your life to settling for the cycle of wishing and waiting that you're being robbed of your childlike innocence and audacity?

That can change today.

With God's help, you can decide, "I'm not waiting anymore. I'm getting off the merry-go-round of wishing and waiting. I'm going to trust God and step into His new territory for my life. I'm not going to waste my one and only life settling or living neck-deep in a culture of losing. I am not going to wait to take action in some next life that is never going to come. I'm going to dare to dream, to believe that God might indeed have more for me than I can see right now."

If that's you, then let's move out together into a brave new world of action within the Transformation Adventure that God has prepared for your life.

What if there is an NFL-size dream just waiting to be resurrected in you?

GETTING TRACTION



REWIND

Through God's power, you can break the cycle of wishing and waiting and step into your Transformation Adventure.



DOWNLOAD

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. EPHESIANS 1:11, THE MESSAGE



PUSH PLAY

Identify the places that are "on pause" in your life and invite God to give you courage for the journey ahead.