FreshFiction Book Club
Reader Discussion, *Who and What Is God?* by Eva Peck

The God I Was Afraid Of: How Who and What Is God? *Changed the Way I See Him*

Readers share what the book stirred in them.

Introduction

When we shared Eva Peck's answers to our readers' questions, something unexpected happened. Several readers went back to *Who and What Is God?* and read it again. When they finished, they started writing.

So we asked a simple question: *"What changed in you while reading this book?"*

What came back was not what we expected. It was not theology. It was fear — and freedom. Readers share what the book stirred in them below.

Reader One

I came to this book with a lot of baggage about God. I grew up hearing about a God who was watching for me to mess up. Eva's point that our negative ideas about God may be human perception rather than God Himself hit me hard. I had never separated those two things before. I keep going back to that line. It's like she gave me permission to question something I had carried for thirty years.

Reader Two

I was taught that questioning God was a sin. Not doubt, questioning. You accepted, you obeyed, you didn't ask why. So I spent decades holding questions I was not allowed to ask.

The part of the book that undid me was where Eva says the Bible is not the "Word of God" in every particular, that it has been humanly influenced. I had felt that for years and never said it. She said it gently, and she said it clearly, and she said it with love for the Bible, not against it.

I remember putting the book down and thinking: *Someone finally said it.* That was the moment I stopped feeling alone in my own faith.

Reader Three

I have spent my whole life trying to be good enough. For my parents, for my teachers, for God. I thought love was something you earned and could lose. I read the book's second

question, about seeing ourselves as deeply loved rather than constantly earning approval, and I had to stop.

I did not realize how tired I was until I read that. Tired of performing. Tired of hoping I'd done enough. Eva writes that we are not servants trying to earn wages — we are family. Already loved. Already accepted. Already provided for.

I have read that page four times. I still don't fully believe it. But I want to.

Reader Four

I want to be honest, because I think honesty is more useful than agreement. I read this book and I was changed, but not entirely convinced.

The idea of God as a loving Father moved me. But I kept thinking about suffering. About people who pray and don't get relief. About the Old Testament passages that still feel cruel. Eva addresses the law of cause and effect, and mercy, and second chances — and I found that helpful. But I still have questions.

I say this as someone who loved the book. The fact that it made me wrestle is not a flaw. It is the highest compliment I can give a book about God. It did not give me easy answers. It gave me a bigger question, and a God I am not afraid to bring that question to.

Reader Five

I did not know I was allowed to stop being afraid of God until I read this book.

That is the whole of what I want to say. I was raised in fear, I lived in fear, and I carried that fear into every prayer, every church service, every quiet moment. Eva's book showed me a God who longs for a relationship with me, not a God who tolerates me.

The servants-to-family shift is the heart of it for me. I am not a servant hoping for approval. I am a child who is already loved. I have started praying differently. Less asking. More gratitude. Less fear. More trust.

I am not the same person I was before I read this. I don't say that lightly.

Reader Six

The change was not dramatic for me. It was quiet. But it was real.

I used to pray like I was submitting a request to someone who might reject it. Now I pray like I am talking to a Father who already knows and already cares. That sounds small. It is not

small. What shifted was not my beliefs, it was my posture. I stopped bracing. I stopped waiting for the correction. I started resting in the love she describes. And I noticed something: I am kinder to other people now. It is hard to fear people when you are no longer afraid of God. I do not know how a short book did that. But it did.

Reader Seven

I have read all the comments above. I want to say something simply.

This book gave me something I did not have before — a picture of God I am not afraid of. That is not a small thing. I have carried fear of God for most of my life. I did not know it could be put down.

I am glad I read it. I will be recommending it. And I hope it reaches further than it has so far. Because if it changed me, it can change someone else.

Reader Reviews

After the discussion, four readers left reviews for *Who and What Is God?* Their words are below.

Review One

I almost didn't finish this book. Not because it was hard to read, because it was hard to face.

I grew up with a God I was scared of. Hell was real, punishment was real, and I spent most of my life trying to stay on the right side of a God who always seemed one mistake away from giving up on me. I didn't even realize how much that shaped me until I read Eva's book.

She doesn't attack anyone's faith. She just asks a simple question: what if the God you're afraid of is not the God who is actually there? That question undid me. I had to put the book down twice and just sit with it.

The chapter on servants versus family is the one I keep coming back to. I have been a servant my whole life, trying, earning, hoping. Eva says we are family. Already loved. Already accepted. I don't fully believe it yet, but I want to. And that's more than I could say a month ago.

If you've ever been afraid of God, read this. It might do for you what it did for me.

Review Two

I was raised in a church where questioning was a sin. You accepted, you obeyed, you didn't ask why. So I spent thirty years holding questions I was not allowed to ask. Eva's

book gave me permission to ask them.

She says something I had felt for years but never dared to say: that the Bible has been humanly influenced, that it is not the "Word of God" in every particular. She says it gently, and she says it with love for the Bible, not against it. That mattered to me. I didn't want to lose my faith. I wanted to understand it better.

This book didn't take my faith away. It gave it room to breathe. I finished it and felt something I hadn't felt in years: peace.

If you have questions you've been afraid to ask, this book will not scold you. It will sit with you.

Review Three

I have spent my whole life trying to be good enough. For my parents, for my teachers, for God. I thought love was something you earned and could lose. That is how I was raised, and it is how I prayed.

Eva's second question in this book, about seeing ourselves as deeply loved rather than constantly earning approval, stopped me cold. I read that page four times. I didn't realize how tired I was until I read it. Tired of performing. Tired of hoping I'd done enough.

She writes that we are not servants trying to earn wages, we are family. Already loved. Already provided for. I still don't fully believe it. But I want to. And wanting to is a start.

This is a short book. It took me three weeks to read because I kept stopping. I recommend it to anyone who is tired of trying to earn something that was always a gift.

Review Four

I want to be honest, because honesty is more useful than agreement. I read this book and I was changed, but not entirely convinced. The idea of God as a loving Father moved me. But I kept thinking about suffering. About people who pray and don't get relief. About the Old Testament passages that still feel cruel. Eva addresses the law of cause and effect, and mercy, and second chances, and I found that helpful. But I still have questions.

I say this as someone who loved the book. The fact that it made me wrestle is not a flaw. It is the highest compliment I can give a book about God. It did not give me easy answers. It gave me a bigger question, and a God I am not afraid to bring that question to.

Four stars only because I wanted more. I hope there is a follow-up. I will be reading her other books.