

Free Range Faith

Betsy Nelson

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Sometimes you have to leave everything you know in order to find everything you need. Join me in a discovery of the authentic faith of Jesus, without the dogma of Christianity. This book is grouped into themes, but you don't have to start at the beginning and read all the way to the end. Everything was written from late 2012 to early 2014, and in no particular order. Some posts were written while I was in the beginning of the deacon discernment program, while some were written as much as a year after I left church. It is as if I was assembling a jigsaw puzzle without knowing I was doing so. I have done my best to make these pieces fit together as well as possible, even though they were not written with a specific theme in mind at the time. So what is the theme? In part, this book is about what it is like to follow Jesus without following Christianity. I seek to separate the man from the machine. His simple message that we are all loved and forgiven and should do likewise to everyone else should have been enough, but history has proven otherwise. The traditions and rules of the institution that the church has become often take precedent over how we show the love of Jesus to a world that desperately needs it. I propose, like Jesus, that we examine everything we do as members of the Body of Christ and see if we are following the letter of the law or the Spirit of it. I propose that we look closely at how Jesus wanted his Church to be in this world. What should it look like? What should it do? Are there buildings? Or are we to spend our time and money serving together more than worshipping together? Are there ordained ministers? Or are we all ministers by virtue of our baptism? Has the church held people hostage or freed them? Are we to focus on our sin or the fact that Jesus has paid for it? Are we to expect others to live up to our standards, or to love them and serve them as they are? And what if Jesus already has come again, in the hearts of every person who says "Here I am" when he calls? What if Jesus is just like the bread that he gave thanks for, blessed, and broke to distribute to feed the hungry? I believe that Jesus wants all of us to be ministers, regardless of education or gender or anything else. Look at who he chose to be his disciples - the uneducated, the overlooked, the least. I believe that Jesus is sad about anything that divides us, especially us. I propose a new way of looking at, but more importantly, of being, the Church. One without divisions or denominations.



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