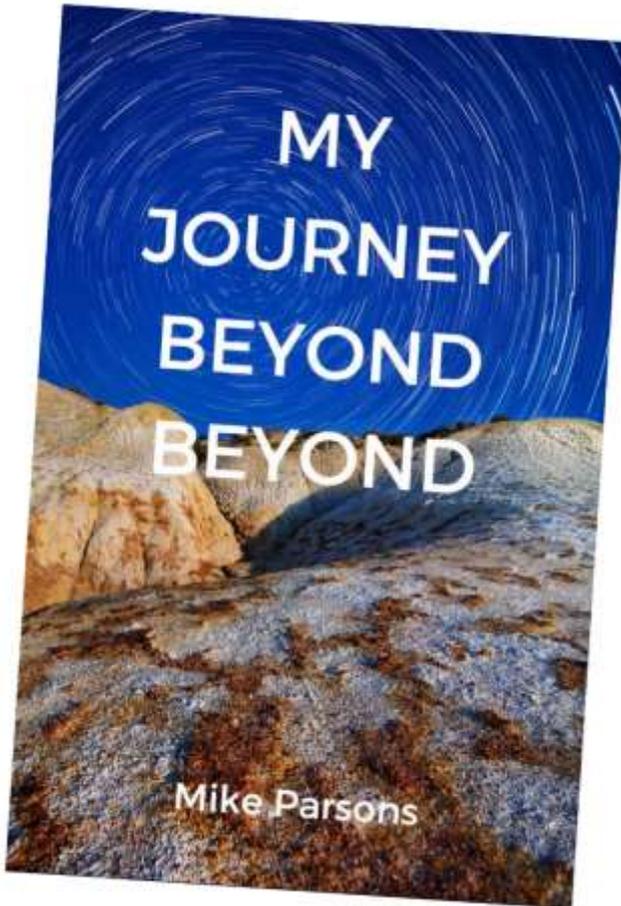


My Journey Beyond Beyond

Mike's testimony of his encounters with God in the heavenly realms is now available [from Amazon](#) and other online and local booksellers worldwide.



Here's an excerpt to whet your appetite!

My Journey Beyond Beyond

Introduction: The Journey Begins

As I ponder where my journey began, I remember as a child dreaming of adventures, quests and exploits of derring-do, and being drawn to films and TV programmes like Robinson Crusoe, Thunderbirds, Stingray, Lawrence of Arabia, Forbidden Planet and Lost in Space. **My first book was H.G. Wells' The Time Machine**, which resonated with the destiny God had agreed with my spirit in the before. That destiny was buried deep within my soul, hidden, but creating that splinter within my mind which sought to break free of the limitations of my mundane existence. I longed to go beyond the small Cornish town that framed my life but films and dreams were my only avenue.

God had wired me to be inquisitive, always curious about how things were made and how they worked. I often took things apart and, **to my mother's dismay, was unable to reassemble them. I loved to try** to fix things that were broken, using my inbuilt ingenuity to solve problems with whatever was at my disposal.

I often went on adventures, sometimes with my friends but mostly on my own, and would come back with some treasure - usually a creature that I had captured to be added to my personal zoo.

Throughout my life, I have resonated with the mind-expanding possibilities of science fiction, Star Wars, Star Trek, the Marvel superhero universe comics and, more recently, films. I was stirred by the adventures of Bilbo Baggins in The Hobbit as it was read to us in junior school and later as I explored the world of Middle-earth in the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

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God had placed within my soul the desire for adventure that longed to be outworked but only began to find expression when I discovered that I was included in God's cosmic plan for the restoration of all things.

That deep-seated inspirational drive was at the heart of my quest for knowledge and a reality that always seemed just beyond my grasp. There was always something at the core of my being that knew there **had to be more than this. “I still haven't found what I'm looking for” are the lyrics of a U2 song that I resonated** with for most of my life. When I first saw the movie The Matrix I discovered that the false and fabricated reality of religion had been pulled over my eyes. I was inspired to find the truth that had been obscured by the religious veil and willing to pay whatever the cost to discover what I had always known but had never been able to see. Thus began the quest for true reality, to discover what my destiny had always been looking for.

If I were God (fortunately I am not), the religious backwater of a small town in the far southwest of the United Kingdom would not have been my choice of place to begin the journey. My destiny and calling were to be a forerunner, therefore hindrances and obstacles often characterised the path I was destined to follow. All this was of God's design, in order hopefully to inspire others that nothing is impossible with a God who often chooses the foolish things of this world.

So my journey was framed by being born and brought up in at least a semi-religious environment. My father was the scarred product of a broken, loveless home and my mother was a nominal non-practising believer whose faith had been side-tracked by marrying him.

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I was sent to Sunday school as soon as I could walk by my mother and was nurtured by my aunt and uncle in the Christian faith. They were sincere loving believers to whom I am grateful for providing an environment where I could explore and question within an (albeit limited) religious framework. During these years my enquiring mind, like a sponge, absorbed by osmosis much of what formed the pillars of "truth" which would become the constructs of my consciousness.

This began my religious indoctrination and the formation of my beliefs about God. The religious programming of my mind obscured my view of who I am by misrepresenting Him in the image of G-O-D, the distant deity who occasionally made an unlikely appearance. If He did show up, the bushes were the best place to hide and cover up to appease the expected inevitable judgment to follow.

I had always believed without question that there was a God but never as a child, despite sitting through hundreds of gospel messages, did I choose to follow Him. That was until I left my comfortable local school environment at the age of 12 to attend a grammar school in another town about ten miles away. Ten miles might seem nothing to you but it was another world to me as I had only ever travelled locally and throughout my entire childhood only had one holiday, which was one night in a bed and breakfast about 100 miles away. Travelling twenty miles every day to school and back opened my eyes to a new vista but revealed people who seemed harder and more world-weary than I had been used to. What was missing from these people who seemed a little darker, less kind and more discontented than those that I was familiar with?

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I questioned what the difference was, where the light was, and drew the conclusion that the missing light was God. That in itself was enough to convince me to pursue that light for myself. So alone in my bedroom in 1970 I prayed a simple prayer where I made a commitment to follow Jesus, the light. There were no real emotions, no fireworks, no flashing lights and no sounds of trumpets heralding that day, nothing that I was able to see, feel or hear. But I now know **that heaven rejoiced that God's dream and desire for my destiny** began another season. I simply believed and now simply I knew; and to be honest I have never doubted to this day.

I now realise that the following scriptures from the Mirror Bible are the truth of my design that was to take me on a 45-year journey to discover its reality. The truth and love of God who I now know is Father, Son and Spirit and the reality of my inheritance in sonship contained within these verses actually led me on a journey of discovery that took me from the left to the right side of my brain, from religion to relationship, from slavery and orphanhood to sonship and from earth to heaven.

He is the architect of our design; his heart dream realized our coming of age in Christ (Ephesians 1:5 MIR).

This is how we fit into God's picture: Christ is the measure of our portion, we are in him, invented and defined in him. God's blueprint intention is on exhibition in us. Everything he accomplishes is inspired by the energy and intent of his affection (Ephesians 1:11 MIR).

He engineered us from the start to fit the mold of sonship and likeness according to the exact blueprint of his design. We see the

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original and intended shape of our lives preserved in his Son; he is the firstborn from the same womb that reveals our genesis. He confirms that we are the invention of God (Romans 8:29 MIR).

On the journey through this book, I will attempt to be nonlinear in my approach by weaving together various threads until the tapestry is complete. I will attempt to follow the various multi-coloured threads from beginning to end to present the wondrous image of the Son which is mirrored in my own sonship. I am an example of God **the great architect's design, revealed through the conversations of Father, Son and Spirit** within the circle of their relationship, a relationship into which we are all now invited.

Some of the threads we will follow to create this tapestry are:

Fatherhood and sonship

Seeing in the spirit

Engaging heaven

Soul and spirit

Unravelling theology

Deconstructing the mind

This is not a theology book but a testimony. I am not trying to explain or defend everything I have experienced. I am not wishing to create some new theology or doctrine from my encounters, so please try to read with an open mind. Do not be offended by what you may not understand; just let your spirit resonate with what it connects with and leave anything else for another day. My hope is that the testimony of my relationship with our heavenly Father will inspire

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you to pursue a deeper relationship with Him as a son (or daughter) yourself.

Beyond Slavery to Sonship

I want to share my personal journey with you of how my relationship with God as Father was restored and how He began to father me.

My journey to sonship begins with my own father. In some ways it mirrors the story of Adam and his Father God. I was to discover on my journey that God as Father has always been there longing for me to return to a walking relationship with Him. Notice I said walking relationship not working relationship. When the Father walked with His son Adam in the gardens it was for fellowship, sharing heart to heart and mind to mind. Adam walked with the Father in the garden that He had created for him and also in the Father's personal garden in the heavenlies which earth was supposed to reflect. I myself later had the joy and privilege of treading in those long forgotten footprints... **but I am getting ahead of myself.**

The loving Father

The Father's heart and true nature are expressed in the parable of the prodigal son (or a more accurate title would be "the loving father"). The father in the story represents our heavenly Father and is the only biblical occasion where God runs. This story would become so meaningful to me when God was revealed to me as Father, a truth which had been so obscured by the earthly relationship with my own father.

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Then he said, “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, ‘Father, I want right now what’s coming to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. It wasn’t long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

“That brought him to his senses. He said, ‘All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I’m going back to my father. I’ll say to him, Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.’ He got right up and went home to his father.

“When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: ‘Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.’

“But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, ‘Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! We’re going to have a wonderful time! My son is here – given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!’ And they began to have a wonderful time” (Luke 15:11-24 TM).

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You may have had a father who was a good reflection of God to you, but most people do not. Our own upbringing often becomes the biggest obstacle and hindrance to our knowing that God is actually a father. I can honestly say that the thought never occurred to me. I **was totally blinded to that truth. God was 'Jesus' or 'Lord' and that** is both how I saw Him and addressed Him in the monologues which were my prayers. God was never the Holy Spirit either but that story is another thread to follow.

My earthly father

My father was a distant man who showed very little emotion towards me. What emotions I saw him express were towards animals rather than people: animals are one of the safer options if you suffer from being rejected like he did. He was abandoned by his own father at the age of 6 and as the product of a broken home he himself never had a role model of fatherhood. That is an explanation of why he was the way he was in our non-relationship. I never blamed him or had any bitterness towards him but it still had a devastating effect on my relationship with God, my wife and family, and in fact all my relationships. He probably felt rejected and abandoned and most likely made judgments which later came upon him. From my experience of the generational issues and familiar spirits which I have had to deal with in my life, he must have had needs and emotional pain. He started with emotional and spiritual disadvantages and, because he never found a way to overcome them, therefore I did too.

I cannot remember a conversation with him of any consequence, or remember him ever telling me he loved me or showing me any physical affection. I cannot remember any verbal affirmation, encouragement or any support from him of any kind throughout my

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childhood. He never came to watch any of my school activities or sports or showed any real interest in me as a person. I now see how this neglect scarred and distorted my self-image and destroyed any notion of sonship. There was never any physical or verbal abuse but I was deprived emotionally which had equally serious effects that I could not see.

He was a builder by trade and a good provider for the family but to all intents and purposes he was an absent father. That absence became even more obvious when he withdrew even further into the distance of his own world as a result of the first of several affairs. Eventually he disappeared altogether when I was a teenager and the family history of divorce repeated itself. If it were not for my uncle George who was a kind, loving and godly man there would have been no glimmer of what a father could be.

Looking back, our boxer dog Bonzo was the object of my father's affection and also created in me a love for animals. I loved that dog, who was a companion from birth until he died when I was thirteen. That was the only time I ever saw my father cry. I love all animals except cats and that too has its roots in the non-relationship with my father. Later in life, when I became more aware of the negative effects that an emotionally absent father can have, I remembered a stray cat called Ricki which inserted itself into our family. I remember my father lavishing the affection I was never given on that cat and although not aware of the fact at the time I became acutely jealous of it; so much so that when I was alone in the house I would dropkick it out of the door, hoping my cruelty would drive it away. My deep inner need to be loved by a father overruled my loving nature towards animals and that outworked towards that cat. I have

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since asked for and received forgiveness but I still don't like cats so I guess there is still some restoration to be done.

Hope for healing

Even with God as our Father we may still feel like an orphan if our earthly father was not there for us physically or emotionally. Our past experiences will affect our present and our future if they are not dealt with and healed. The good news is that we can all be set free and restored to know our true identity as children of God, if we recognise that the God-shaped hole in us can only be filled with a relationship with God himself as a loving Father. We may have tried to fill the emptiness and pain of the rejection we have in our emotions with substitute relationships or painkillers of various description or prescription.

Some of the things the world offers us are other relationships, success, money, power, position, and work. We try to use these things to fill the hole but they often make the pain worse. We can self-medicate with many things to ease the pain and take the edge off our emptiness: alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, pornography, exercise, food, shopping etc. These things all offer us false hope and often leave us broken, damaged, hurting, angry, rejected and addicted. We can end up feeling empty, hollow, hopeless and disillusioned with life **and still not finding the answers to the questions we don't even know we are asking.**

We all have our own personal stories. You may have never have known a father or mother or you may have had many substitute fathers. You may have feelings of anger, bitterness and resentment towards your parents. You may have rationalised your life and have

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no surface emotions. My journey was to discover that there is hope for healing, reconciliation and restoration of relationships. That hope is Jesus the second Adam, who came to recover all that was lost by the first Adam and restores our relationship with the Father. Most of us are still in that process of learning what it is to be fathered correctly.

Substitute

My inner need drew me towards other objects which could meet my immediate need for love and affection. From an early age I tried to use relationships with women as a substitute to fill the hole in my emotions. For others it is relationships with men because they are looking for a father replacement. Those relationships with women caused more damage, hurt, pain and rejection but I needed them to fill the emptiness of my inner emotional needs.

I said 'objects' because my view of women had been perverted and distorted by the images I saw when discovering my father's stash of pornography when I was about 10 years old. I now realise that pornography creates a false image of women which becomes the object of our desire for love. All my brokenness was projected onto images which offered a temporary fix but required no intimacy or actual relationship. Pornography warped my understanding of real relationships but fuelled my need for affection and drove me to seek relationships with girls during my teenage years. Those relationships began just after my salvation aged 12, and were a constant source of guilt, shame and condemnation but none of that could overcome the drive of my inner needs. I had a number of relationships which were only a temporary solution but I always felt better about life and myself while I was in one. Many of those relationships lasted several

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months as I tried selfishly to maintain them. The need for love often produces damage in the form of broken hearts and I caused as well as suffered that pain. The effects of that damage would be debilitating throughout my life until I was able to deal with them, and it adversely affected my relationship with God, my wife and my children.

“Daddy, I love you”

I remember a moment in my life where I was disarmed by my one year old daughter Hannah. Hannah could talk before she could walk and she toddled up to me one day when I was sitting in my lounge watching TV, looked me right in the eyes, and said **“Daddy, I love you”**. Determined not to be like my dad, I had told her that I loved her many times, but now I froze as if transfixed, caught in a reality which was not mine. I could not speak. I could not respond as she looked lovingly at me. I was shocked at my own reaction and this was God's provocation to admit that I needed help. Asking for help was something I rarely or ever did. I was extremely self-sufficient, independent and very capable of problem-solving but I had my own mechanisms for emotions: I mentally packaged them neatly away, **filed in my mind under ‘dealt with’, ‘forgiven and forgotten’**.

You see, I did not do emotion. I was a real chip off my father's block - something I would have hated to admit. I was thick-skinned, rarely affected by anything anyone did or said, and I saw this as a real strength so I defended it. In fact it was a strong defence mechanism which had protected me from further hurt but had become a prison in which I was trapped. Eventually, in order to get at my father wounds, the layers that had been built up needed to be removed.

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This experience with my daughter shocked me enough to ask for help. God used my own family to challenge me to deal with the things in my heart. Those things that had protected and guarded me **had also locked me up so that I could not feel God's love. We have to** overcome the obstacles in our life that will stop us from experiencing intimacy...

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