

*This exotic potpourri of life-slices vividly projects the truth that our Redeemer God alone can fulfill the desires for intimacy, community, and eternity that He has implanted in us. A top-class read for twenty-somethings, and older stagers too.*

**J. I. PACKER**

Author of *Knowing God*

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*George's edgy-poetic imagery will make you shudder with horror one moment and shiver with delight the next. This book is a convicting punch between the eyeballs in a colorful and conversational tone. Get ready to pack your bags and move out of your comfort zone.*

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Author of *From Blushing Bride to Wedded Wife* and  
*Changing Your World, One Diaper at a Time*

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*This is a marvelous, very well-written book which provides powerful insights into the Christian life. It is, in fact, an extraordinary book by one of the bright young Christian authors. Christian George gives us hope for the future. I predict you'll be hearing much from him as time goes on. I highly recommend this.*

**CHUCK COLSON**

Founder, Prison Fellowship

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*Truly vivid! The pictures painted by what's found on the pages of this delightful book have taken up residence in my heart. I find they make me hunger even more for the kind of life that can only be found in knowing Jesus.*

**MIKE WEAVER**

Lead singer of Big Daddy Weave



sex  
sushi  
& salvation



sex  
sushi  
& salvation

thoughts on intimacy, community, & eternity

CHRISTIAN GEORGE

moody publishers  
chicago

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*For Rebecca,  
my baby back rib*

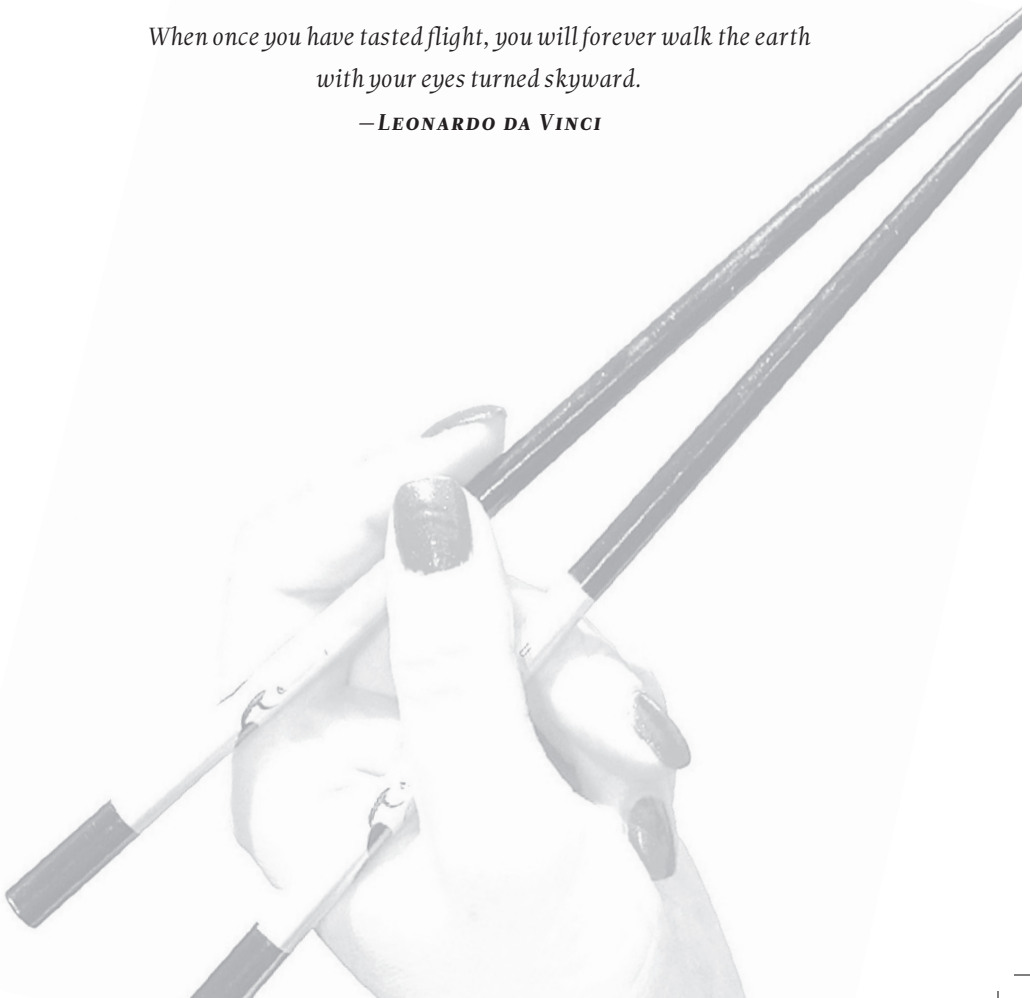


# contents

Introduction: Fasten Your Seat Belts .....	11
1. Russian Sex and Wedding Vows .....	17
2. Naked with God .....	31
3. Who's Your Daddy? .....	45
4. Selling Your Soul on eBay .....	59
5. From Milk to Meat .....	71
6. Hollow Places .....	85
7. Sushi Faith .....	97
8. Blue Enough .....	111
9. A Gory Gospel .....	125
10. Good Hamster Fluffy .....	141
11. Grappling with God .....	151
12. Back to the Future .....	169
Epilogue: Leap of Faith .....	181
Acknowledgments .....	185
Notes .....	186

*When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth  
with your eyes turned skyward.*

**—LEONARDO DA VINCI**





# fasten your seat belts

**IT WAS A** bumpy takeoff—the kind that makes atheists pray like Catholic schoolgirls.

“Please fasten your safety belts,” the flight attendant requested, “and return your seat backs and tray tables to their full upright and locked positions.”

Happily I obeyed. Then I looked out the airplane window as we began to move. Seventy, eighty, ninety miles an hour. We passed the point of no return, the runway was running out, and the only way back down was up. *God, have mercy.*

“I wish they would give us more peanuts,” the man grumbled beside me. His lips were oily from the peanut package, but he continued stuffing his mouth. This guy was nervous.

“Not a fan of flying?” I asked, sliding my peanuts onto his tray.

He shook his head. “They say it’s more dangerous to drive, but I’d

rather die in a car crash than a plane crash.”

He had a point.

The man consumed the poor nuts. They didn't have a snowball's chance of survival on a hot Alabama afternoon. I tried not to gag, but the urge was overwhelming. Perhaps the *Sky Mall* magazine would take my mind off the salty genocide.

It worked. There were gadgets and gizmos galore! Revolving tie racks, virtual-reality headsets, and pens that did anything and everything but write. The watches were altimeters, the sunglasses were radios, and the only thing longer than the glow-in-the-dark Slip 'n Slide was the triple-digit price tag plastered to its picture. There was even a machine to warm a roll of toilet paper before using it. *Nice.*

Suddenly, the plane jolted. It wasn't a small quiver of the wings; it was a three-second plunge into the depths. My soul sank into my stomach as I clinched the sides of my seat. “OK, God, I'm sorry for my sins.”

*Bump. Bump. Bump.*

The man beside me was beside himself. He had finished eating my peanuts and was looking for something else to devour. I scooted closer to the window to resume my reading.

Another drop in altitude.

Luggage bins burst open, and white clouds absorbed the wing outside. I wanted to drop to my knees in prayer but wasn't about to unbuckle the seat belt. Babies screamed, children cried, and even the flight attendants were wide-eyed. I bit my lip and continued flipping through the *Sky Mall* magazine. *Look at that! An indoor/outdoor s'more maker fully equipped with marshmallows, chocolate bars, sterno, and . . .*

*Bump. Bump. Bump.*

I cringed. “OK, God, when I was six, I poured blue ink all over my parents' brand-new carpet. Instead of telling them, I emptied a

bucket of white paint over the stains. And when I was twelve, I almost burned down our house by throwing an aerosol deodorant can into the fireplace. God, give this turbulence a Tums and land us safely on the ground!”

To my left, a woman immersed herself in a romance novel. I stole a glimpse. “Ronan wrapped his rippled arms around her waist and pulled her close. Helga trembled with lust. But she knew she could never love a Viking.”

I pulled my eyes away from the book. Ancient Chinese monks believed that people only have a certain number of breaths to breathe in a lifetime. Once those breaths are used, the person dies. That’s one reason they practiced meditation and other arts that slow the lungs down to increase the life span. I tried breathing slowly, but it didn’t work because I was distracted by the woman beside me and her rapidly increasing breath.

“Helga felt her lips betray her as she snuggled against the warm marble of Ronan’s chest.”

The seat belt sign flashed, but I jumped up and darted to the bathroom. Anything to get away from Ronan’s rippled body. The bathroom smelled of rotten eggs. Soap was smeared across the makeshift sink, and the last person didn’t bother to flush. I ended up losing my footing, crashing against the mirror, and waiting for the turbulence to quit before I returned to my seat.

Yet this was my life. Turbulence was a frequent phenomenon for a dorky kid like me in middle school. My voice was cracking, my hormones raging, and life was a cloud I never thought would pass. Pre-algebra ate my lunch, biology molested my GPA, and a persistent cough shattered my dreams of staying in shape. Art interested me, but I always feared the artist’s outcome—living from painting to painting, driving a rainbow-colored Volkswagen, and dying from exposure to

oils. On top of it all I had to get braces, which made my mouth a talking chain-link fence.

Closing my eyes, I opened the bathroom door and walked to my seat. My faithful *Sky Mall* magazine greeted me with hot-dog-bun-toasting technology and swinging hammocks. And yet, somehow these things did not satisfy me. I continued flipping the pages, trying to suck bits of comfort from the pictures, but eventually I had to stop. Did I really think that neon popcorn makers and alien coffee mugs could bring me peace? Could portable DVD players calm my nerves?

Turbulence has a way of reminding us what really matters in life. There I was, soaring at four hundred miles an hour through rainstorms and rolling thunder in a plane that was susceptible to lightning strikes and engine malfunction. Did I really think that *Sky Mall* magazine could mask my misery? What happens when life gets bumpy? When the letter reads, “I want out of this relationship.” When the doctor says, “There’s nothing else I can do for you.” What then? Can salty peanuts prevent our pain? It’s simple to say we’re Christians when exams are easy, bills are paid, and all seems right in the world. But when the storms twist our exclamation points into question marks, we discover that there’s more to life than computerized slippers and sexy ring tones. We discover that the world revolves around something greater than ourselves.

Since humans are made in the image of God, we have three basic passions—intimacy, community, and eternity. We burn for them, save for them, pay for them, and pray for them. But only the God who fulfills these desires within Himself can perfectly fulfill them in us. This is a book about sex, sushi, and salvation—a book of snapshots—the ups and downs, the failures and fortunes, the smiles and trials. In these chapters, I retrace my travels around the world, from pagan temples in Greece to Transylvanian mountains in Romania. I confess

my lust and love, my struggle with truth, and my quest for Christ.

Fasten your seat belt. It's going to be a wild ride. And along the way we just might discover that the God who satisfies us with Himself joins us for the journey.