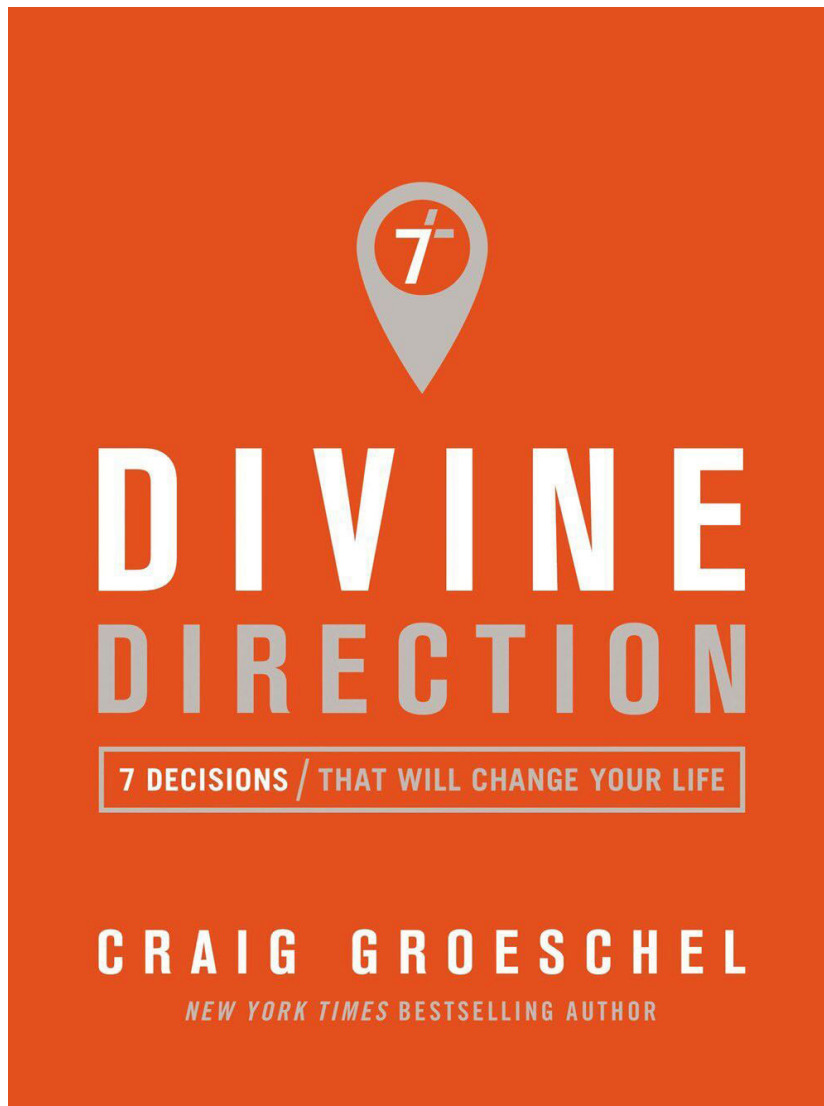


## cover feature



### NEW BOOK BY CRAIG GROESCHEL ON SEVEN SURPRISINGLY SMALL DECISIONS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

#### CHRISTIAN ART DISTRIBUTORS

New York Times bestselling author and pastor Craig Groeschel challenges readers to make seven small decisions in his new book, *Divine Direction*. Groeschel believes it's the small decisions that lead to significant change. Big decisions are important but what builds a meaningful life is stacking hundreds and hundreds of small decisions.

In *Divine Direction*, Groeschel shares story after story of how small decisions led to big changes. Choosing the right thing over the wrong thing led to meeting his wife. Starting one discipline created positive momentum that helps in all areas of life instead of just one.

"If you want to take aim at the story God wants to tell, you have to make small, life-changing choices and then act on them daily," writes Groeschel. "Each decision should move you closer to becoming all that God made you to be, to turn your life in the direction of a story you'll be happy to share. When you start making one divine decision after an-

other, you'll see your story emerge, the one that God wants to tell through you. And with his help, you'll use the powerful freedom he's given you to transform your life."

**The seven decisions Groeschel asks each reader to consider are:**

- Start something small that you can build to something bigger
- Stop one thing that's pointing you in the wrong direction
- Stay and stick it out when it would be easier to leave
- Go take a step of faith and follow God's leading
- Serve the people around you and put their needs first
- Connect with someone who will change your story
- Trust God with whatever you've been holding back



### Book Excerpt:

If you could take a step back and look at your life, you'd see that every decision matters, even the little ones. Many of our daily choices happen invisibly, almost by default, like what we eat for breakfast, the friends we hang out with, or hopping onto social media every time we have a spare moment.

The decisions we make today determine the stories we tell about our lives tomorrow. Every day, all day, we make one small choice after another. And these choices just keep accumulating, each one woven into the rest, forming the tapestry that is our life story.

If you want to take aim at the story you want to tell, you have to make small, life-changing choices and then act on them daily. The best decision you can make is always the next one. Each decision should move you closer to becoming all that God made you to be, to turn your life in the direction of a story you'll be happy to share.

Making deliberate, godly decisions will lead you through a life full of joy and purpose. When you start making one divine decision after another, you'll see your story emerge, the one that God wants to tell through you. And with his help, you'll use the powerful freedom he's given you to transform your life.

## 1. Start

Behind every great story there's always another story. Rarely does success come without time, discipline, and hard work. Successful people often joke that they spent years becoming an overnight success. What many don't realize is that it's the things no one sees that result in the things everyone wants. It's the faithfulness to do mundane things well, to develop productive habits, and to remain faithful that eventually leads to success.

Old Testament prophet Daniel is a great example of this. Whether you know a lot or a little about Daniel, when you hear his name, you probably think, Oh, yeah . . . Daniel in the lions' den. Any kid who grew up attending Sunday school or visiting vacation Bible school has heard the amazing story of Daniel surviving the night in a cave filled with hungry felines.

Let me refresh your memory, and then we'll go back to the part many overlook. King Darius was the reigning king of Persia. As his kingdom grew, he appointed 120 satraps (similar to our present-day state governors) to handle regional matters and help govern the people. The king then chose three administrators to oversee those 120 satraps. Daniel was one of the chosen leaders. Over time, by consistently serving the king with an excellent spirit, Daniel stood out among all the other satraps and administrators. Eventually the king decided to place Daniel in charge of the entire kingdom. So Daniel was an overnight success, right? Actually, nothing could be farther from the truth. Don't forget, there's a story behind every story. Why was Daniel successful? Why was he favored above others? Why did the king respect him so much? Promote him so quickly? Believe in his leadership? Why did God look favorably on Daniel? Why did God close the mouths of the meat-eating lions?

We find our answers in a part of Daniel's story that many people skim over. His divine favor was the result of one small decision he made at some point in his life. We don't know when Daniel made this decision or why. We don't know whether someone helped him or he decided it on his own. All we know is that Daniel made one decision, starting one habit that changed his story.

## 2. Stop

Determining whether our choices will take us in the right direction is important. But sometimes we are already headed in a direction we know is the wrong one, moving farther away from the story we want to tell. When this happens, we need to pause not only to consider the consequences but also to choose to stop traveling in the wrong direction. The word repentance literally means to change course, to stop walking in one direction and return to God and his path for us.

There's a great example of stopping to reconsider a better course of action in the Old Testament. In Exodus 18, Moses knew something had to change or he was going to fall apart trying to manage all the demands on his life. After successfully leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, Moses became responsible for hearing all of the Israelites' problems and handing down judgments. He kept this up, all day every day, until he was spent. Finally, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, came to offer him some tough love: "What you

are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice" (Ex. 18:17-19).

Can you relate? Are you juggling so many chainsaws that it feels impossible to keep going, but also impossible to stop? What keeps you in this situation? What are you doing today that's not good for your story? Do you have some habit, a mindset, an addiction, an attitude, a thought process, something in your life that's hijacking the story you want to tell?

Sometimes, the best decision we can make when feeling overwhelmed or facing a high-stakes dilemma is simply to stop. Take a time-out. Hit pause. Sleep on it. Think it over. Get some godly wisdom from people you trust.

### 3. Stay

If you haven't already, you will someday find yourself at a crossroads, a place where you have to make a difficult decision about your life's direction. "Should I stay the course when it would be easier to go another way?" Or maybe a better question you should ask is this: What does God want you to want?

One of my favorite stories about staying comes from one of my best friends, Bobby Gruenewald. Bobby started and sold two technology companies before he ever graduated from college. Obviously this guy is crazy smart. Bobby started volunteering for our church in his midtwenties, and we eventually hired him. Although his contribution to Life Church was extraordinary, he didn't feel like he was making a difference. So Bobby considered quitting and going back into business.

Truthfully, it would have been easier for him. As a pastor, he still had a lot to learn. Business is second nature to him. But by the grace of God, he decided to stay. And among his many important contributions as a Directional Leader for Life Church, Bobby came up with the You Version Bible App, an idea that has done more for Bible distribution than any idea since the printing press. So if you are tempted to walk away, make sure to seek God, because you never know what he might do if you have the courage to stay.

### 4. Go

Where is God leading you to go? What is he calling you to do? Does he want you to lead others spiritually, maybe even start a small group? Maybe you're afraid nobody will come. Maybe you're worried you're not good enough, that you don't know enough to do something like that. You don't even know what you'd talk about. But here's the thing: if you don't try, you will never know what might have happened.

I know what it feels like to start asking yourself questions. "God, I'm afraid. I need details! What's going to happen? What you're asking me to do sounds hard." And God may answer, "First of all, I don't give my children a spirit of fear, so that's not coming from me. You don't need details. You need faith. And yes, it will be hard. But I didn't call you to an



easy life. I called you to a faith-filled life. Put your trust in me. Let me handle the details. I'm pretty good at them."

If God is calling you to go, you're going to have to leave where you are. And you sure don't want to miss out on what he's doing. Years from now, you could be looking back on this time in your life and realize, "That was the day my story changed. I wasn't sure what I was doing, but I decided it was what God wanted, and now I'm a part of this great community of believers. I had no idea how different our lives would be." Ultimately, we know that our stories don't have to end when we leave this life. When we experience the grace of God through Christ, we can live forever serving and enjoying God in heaven. And while I don't know for sure, that's when I think the stories our lives tell will be taken to a whole new level. Because our stories are not just our stories.

Our stories are part of an even bigger story. When you stand at the fork in the road, have the faith and courage to choose the hard path over the easy one when the hard one is right. The choice is yours. The time is now. Start. Stop. Stay. Go. To step into your divine direction. 📖

#### Fast Facts:

New York Times bestselling author Craig Groeschel is the founding and senior pastor of Life.Church, a pacesetter multicampus church and creators of the popular and free YouVersion Bible App. He is the author of several books, including *Fight*, *Altar Ego*, *Soul Detox*, *Weird*, *The Christian Atheist* and *It*. Craig, his wife, Amy, and their six children live in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Divine Direction is available from C.U.M Books and other leading bookstores. Shop online at [cumbooks.co.za](http://cumbooks.co.za)