

EXCERPT



When Faith Becomes Sight *Opening Your Eyes to God's Presence All Around You*

November 19, 2019 | \$17, 224 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4663-4

"When the sacred and the secular meet we open ourselves to the transcendent power of the Holy One. Beth and David Booram take us to the brink of those moments when our faith becomes sight and we find ourselves transformed by the inherent holiness of each moment of life."

Suzanne and Joseph Stabile, cofounders of Life in the Trinity Ministry

Recognize. Reflect. Respond.

We've written this book out of the harvest of more than four decades of following Christ and a decade's time of offering spiritual direction. We hope you will benefit from the generous framework we offer—one large enough to hold the things that are perplexing, disturbing, and incongruent with reason and rationality. In short, rather than trying to fit God and life into a system of beliefs, this book suggests that we can find God by paying attention to our own lived experience, that we can, as St. Ignatius said, "find God in all things." Not that God *causes all things* but we can discover God present and available to us in the midst of all. To do so, what we need most are eyes to see God.

At first, that statement sounds as though some of us have "it" and others don't. As if some willfully choose blindness over sight. But our observations suggest that most people truly want to know whether God is present and active in their lives. So the lack of seeing is not out of stubborn refusal but rather out of simply not knowing what to look for or not recognizing unfamiliar expressions of the presence and action of God.

The intent of this book is to help you gain assurance that God *is* with you and *is* actively involved in your life and world by growing three capacities: your capacity to *recognize* God, *reflect* on your experience, and *respond* faithfully to God's presence and involvement in your life.

Here's a brief description of what we mean:

Recognize. There are two things that must be true for you to recognize God. God must want to be experienced *and* you must be looking for God. For the divine to be experienced, your encounter will invariably be mediated. In other words, God will come to you through something else: a "burning bush" in nature, an inner quiet prompting, a dream or vision, an evocative Gospel story, a recurring theme, or through some much-needed provision. The medium is not always tangible, but it is *sensory*. In other words, through your human senses, including your emotions, you perceive God through the experience. So, for you to recognize God you must have eyes to see God and expect to see God through a variety of holy, ordinary, and sometimes extraordinary showings.

Not only is learning to recognize God's mediated presence necessary for your assurance, so is a repeated experience of God's presence. When you have an experience, it is never isolated or simply episodic. It is an experience that builds on the past. You recognize an oak tree because you've had a past relationship with oak trees in which you noticed their particularities and logged their appearance in your library of botanical memories. The same happens *when faith becomes sight*. Through repeated noticing of God, your faith is strengthened as you become more adept at identifying Christ's invitations and overtures of love toward you.

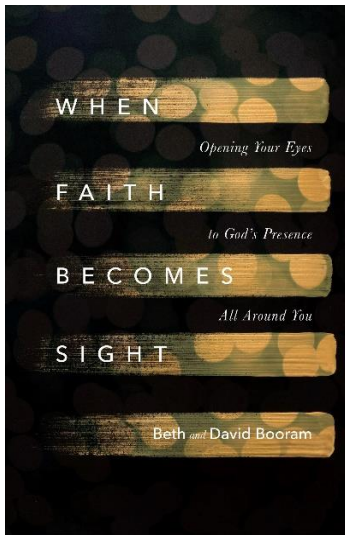
Reflect. Once you gain the skills to track the Spirit's movement in your life, you will learn the value of reflecting on your experience. Reflection takes time. Reflection requires intention. Reflection is what takes the encounter into you, allowing



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"When Faith Becomes Sight is a modern-day Practicing the Presence of God for those of us who aren't vocationally washing dishes in a monastery like Brother Lawrence. . . . Anchored in on-the-ground application and wisdom, When Faith Becomes Sight mines the deep tradition of the historic church and builds a modern spiritual architecture."

Ben Sternke and Matt Tebbe, copastors of The Table, cofounders of Gravity Leadership

it to affect you, to find a place of resonance within you. It's what allows an ordinary event in your life to become deeply personal, spiritual, and transforming. These kinds of experiences deepen your assurance of God's nearness as they become windows through which you see the activity of the divine.

Respond. Not only will you be encouraged throughout this book to learn to recognize God's presence within and all around you and reflect on your experiences, you will also be prompted to notice your response to God in your experiences. We are rarely aware that as we perceive God's initiating presence we also respond to it with some variation of openness or resistance. Paying attention to your response will help you assess if that is how you want to respond. If that is what it means for you to respond faithfully and fully to God's initiatives.

A word about how this book is organized. It's divided into three sections and will invite you to consider your experience of God through three distinct directions of focus: *looking for* certain phenomenon in your experience of life, *looking through* several conscious and unconscious lenses you may have, and *looking within* your own interior life of emotions, sensations, and spiritual movements. May these three vantage points help your faith become sight as you open your eyes more fully to God's presence all around you.

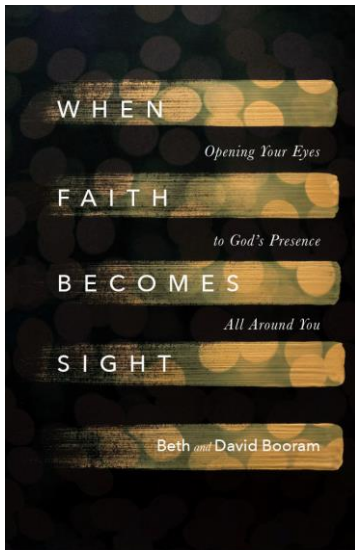
—Adapted from the preface



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Q & A



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How can I more clearly recognize God's nearness and initiative in my life? As spiritual directors, Beth and David Booram have guided many people into deeper awareness of this living, present God at work within their lives. In this book they will help you learn to recognize God in and around you, reflect on your experience, and respond faithfully to God's presence and action in your life.

Do You Recognize God's Presence in Your Life?

Where did the idea come from for *When Faith Becomes Sight*?

Beth and David Booram: Many people today are seeking God, hungry for God and experiencing a crisis of faith. They struggle to recognize ways in which God is present in their lives and involved with them. Why? One reason may be the fact that God shows up in ways they don't expect and don't recognize. In addition, Christians today are skeptical, or don't trust the validity of their own life experience as a means of identifying God's involvement in their lives. We believe that our book will help strengthen our reader's faith as they learn to notice the movement of God in their lives.

What will readers find in this book?

Beth and David: *When Faith Becomes Sight* helps readers recognize God's presence and initiatives in their lives by showing them what to look for, what lens to look through, and how to look within their own heart to discover God's involvement with them.

In every chapter, readers are shown what to look for through the use of stories, creative telling of biblical stories, and vivid dialogue between us and our directees. We show rather than simply tell them how God comes to us and does God's work within us.

What are some key points you hope to convey to readers?

Beth and David:

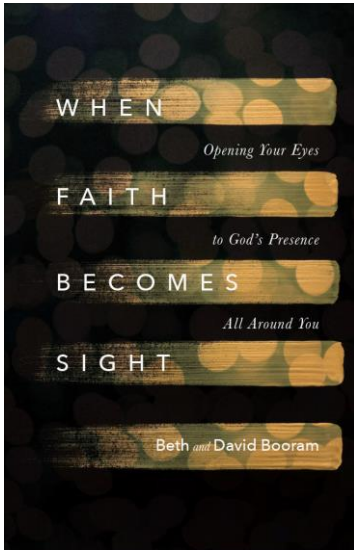
- We are never separated from God's presence nor obscured from God's loving attention.
- God's activity can be identified within the grist of our everyday lives.
- There are some proven markers that help us recognize and respond to God's invitations.
- Faith grows and deepens through repeated experiences of recognizing and responding to God's initiatives.
- Paying attention to the unique features of your story helps you pay attention to God.
- Lack of reflection limits your experience of encountering God and self.
- Spiritual direction helps you identify God's presence and action in your life.
- Contemplative practice supports attentiveness to God and self.



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BIO



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"Beth and David Booram are wise and hospitable guides who use stories from their many years of spiritual direction to show us how to recognize God's presence with us. By calling our attention to the Giver of all life, When Faith Becomes Sight is a life-giving book, one that will undoubtedly transform the lives of all who read it."

C. Christopher Smith, senior editor of The Englewood Review of Books, author of *How the Body of Christ Talks*

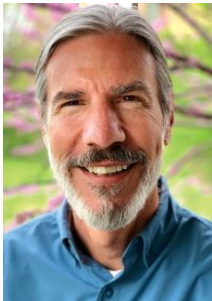
Beth and David Booram



Beth A. Booram is the cofounder and director of Fall Creek Abbey, an urban retreat center in Indianapolis, where she and her husband David lead The School of Spiritual Direction and offer individual and group spiritual direction. She is the coauthor of *Awaken Your Senses* and the author of several books including *Starting Something New*, *Picturing the Face of Jesus*, and *The Wide Open Spaces of God*.

Beth is a deep feeler who loves to think, an extrovert with a penchant for solitude, and an artist who sees the hand of God in even the smallest encounters with creation. She speaks around the country on topics related to spiritual formation and Christian leadership and has been involved for more than thirty years in a variety of ministry roles on the college campus and within the local church.

fallcreekabbey.org



David Booram is the cofounder and director of Fall Creek Abbey, an urban retreat center in Indianapolis, where he and his wife, Beth, lead The School of Spiritual Direction and offer individual and group spiritual direction.

David is the founder of Direction 4 Life Work, through which he is a career counselor. As a counselor, he helps his clients gain clarity, confidence, and forward momentum around their vocation and calling. He also served as the pastor of spiritual formation at Grace Community Church for ten years.

Follow him on Twitter: [@boorambo](https://twitter.com/boorambo)



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