



The Door

A novel by Jeff S. Mann

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Written by Jeff S. Mann

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

Thank you for taking time to read this. Let it be known that I did not set out to write a novel, short or long. This originated as a short story which I shared on social media. My purpose was to create thought and initiate conversations. The response, however, was overwhelming and I was encouraged to continue the story.

In writing this, I have drawn from real life experiences and conversations as a both a pastor and a leadership coach. All of the characters in this book, however, are fictitious. I intentionally and carefully chose fictitious names and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

I want to say thank you to two people, without whom this might not have come to fruition. First, I am thankful for my wife, Elizabeth. Without you faithfully staying by my side to listen and help me think, this would not have happened. Also, I want to thank my sister, Debbie Miller, for her encouragement, advice, and help in editing. You always were the smart one in the family, Sis.

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Chapter One The Stranger

It was 11:15 AM. The congregation was halfheartedly singing an old familiar hymn about heaven. Most of them, anyway. About a third were just looking at the hymnal. not singing at all. Those who were singing were just singing memorized words even while they also gazed intently at the page.

As usual, they had started on time, at the insistence of the pastor, who frequently quoted a popular author about doing everything with excellence. They began with a call-to-worship from the choir, which was comprised of a few senior adults and one grandchild. This was followed by a prayer, prayed today by one of the deacons. It was similar to every prayer prayed there over the last 40 years, asking God to bless the "service" and to "lead, guide, and direct us" and concluded with, "in the name of Jesus" with no thought of what that meant.

The pastor had come to the pulpit to welcome everyone, looking over the congregation with the hope that a visitor had happened to drop in. It had been a long time but he was always optimistic. Their numbers had dwindled significantly since Covid and a new face would be a good thing.

The remainder of the service was typed out on a piece of paper and lay in front of him on the pulpit. It was the same format they'd followed for years, but with different hymn numbers and a different sermon title. It was church as usual.

Following his welcome, the worship leader had returned to the pulpit and announced the hymn number they were singing. He sang louder than anyone, hoping to inspire everyone to participate. Just before they began to sing the final verse of the old hymn, there was a rather loud knocking sound that came from the area of the vestibule. The worship leader was startled by the sound and looked up. When he did, everyone turned around to look at the door. As if on cue, again there was knocking. Everyone seemed to realize at once that someone was outside, knocking on the door. The worship leader's first thought was that someone had accidentally locked the door. Unable to hide his irritation because of the interruption, he gruffly said, "Would someone go open the door, please!"

At that moment a stranger, previously unnoticed by anyone, stood up from the back pew and with a soft but clear voice said, "Don't open that door."

At the awareness of his presence, everyone was startled. The pastor rose to his feet and spoke directly to the stranger. "I'm sorry. Who are you?"

"Who I am is not important", said the stranger. "What you need to be concerned with is who it is that is outside that door."

At this, most of the people began shifting uncomfortably, looking at one another. Nothing like this had ever happened before. A deacon near the aisle responded, "Why doesn't he just come on in? The door isn't locked."

"He won't come in unless you open the door," the stranger replied.

"Well, well", the deacon stammered, "Tell us who it is!"

The stranger pointed to the pastor and said, "He knows who it is."

At this, the people turned to look at the pastor who was still standing in the middle of the stage. When he heard the stranger's words, his face turned white and in three uncertain steps he staggered to the pulpit and leaned heavily on it for support.

The worship leader, looking completely perplexed, laid his hymnal down as he stepped aside and said, "Pastor? Who is it? Should we open the door?"

The pastor's sermon notes slipped from his hand as he fell to his knees. He was already weeping as he placed his Bible on the floor and laid his head on it. Heaving with sobs, his groans could be heard all over the building.

Again, the stranger spoke. "Don't open the door." He paused for a second, then continued with, "Unless..."

"Unless, what?" someone exclaimed.

The stranger was silent. After what seemed like a long time, an elderly lady said softly, "Unless we are tired of church as usual."

After another long silence, someone said, "Unless we want God to actually be among us."

A Sunday School teacher said, "We shouldn't open the door unless we are willing to change."

The pastor, still on his knees, struggled to regain his composure. Taking a deep breath, he said, "Folks, we all know who is outside that door. And the reason He's outside is that we've left our first love and we've become lukewarm. I've allowed it but we are all guilty. And I know what we must all do. He will only come in when we invite Him. But it means that we must first repent, give Him first place in everything, and return Him to the center of everything we do."

Every eye was on the pastor now. Through his tears, he scanned the room, pausing to look at every person. Then he continued, "And if we are going to open the door, we must open it individually. Each one of us. He desires a personal fellowship with each of us."

Again, there was the sound of knocking. The congregation turned around to look at the door.

No one noticed the stranger was gone.

Chapter Two The Storekeeper

The soft rumble of a motorcycle engine caused John Meyers to look out the front door of his store. The rider pulled up near the front, turned off the engine, and leaned his bike onto its stand. John noted that this was not one of his regular customers, yet somehow seemed familiar. John Meyers set his broom aside and began walking toward the door. The stranger stepped off his bike, took off his helmet, and hung it on one of the mirrors. When he turned around, John Meyers stopped dead in his tracks.

All morning, John had tried to just focus on his work. He'd opened the store an hour earlier than usual this morning. He had not slept at all the night before. After he arrived at the store, he prepared his usual pot of coffee and set about doing the things he did every day. He was hoping to find some comfort in his routine. It didn't work. He could not get his mind off the events of the day before.

The bell at the top of the door rang as the stranger walked in. John Meyers usually greeted his customers with a hearty welcome but this time he just stammered. "Can... can I help you?" he asked.

The stranger looked him directly in the eye and smiled. "You know who I am, don't you?" he asked.

"Yes", John Meyers replied. "You came to our church yesterday." He shifted his feet nervously, looking perplexed. "What do you want?" he asked.

The stranger's face did not change. He replied, "The question is, John, what do *you* want?"

"What do you mean?" John Meyers exclaimed. "I don't want anything!"

"What are you looking for?" The stranger asked.

"I... I... I am not looking for anything. I have all I need", John replied.

"If that's true, John, then why did you lie awake all night?"

"Listen. I don't need anything. I've been a good person. I help people when I can. I go to church every Sunday..."

"Is that enough for Jesus, John?" the stranger interrupted.

"Well, I guess so. He gave us the golden rule and I try to live by that."

"John, you have a Bible under that counter. Would you open it to Matthew 10:25?"

John looked surprised. "Wait a minute!" he exclaimed. "How did you know I didn't sleep last night and how do you know I have a Bible under my counter? Who are you?"

"It's OK, John," the stranger said. "That's not important. What is important is that you know what Jesus expects from you."

John walked behind the counter, leaned over, and retrieved the Bible. He opened it and slowly turned the pages, stopping at Matthew 10:25. He read the words aloud.

"Read it again, John, and this time listen to what He's saying to you." The stranger said.

John Meyers read it again and then just stood there for several long seconds, staring at the text. Then he slowly looked up and refocused on the stranger.

"John, when I came in, you asked me what I want. I want you to understand what Jesus wants. So, what is God saying to you right now, John?"

And with that, the stranger walked out the door.

Chapter 3 The Broker

The desk phone beeped a half second before Gloria's voice was heard through the speaker. "Mr. Burns, there is a gentleman here to see you."

The broker pressed the talk button and replied, "Thank you, Gloria. Send him in."

He closed the file he'd been reviewing and slid it to the corner of his well-organized desk. He stood up and straightened his tie as he walked toward the door. He heard Gloria say, "Right this way, sir."

As she reached the doorway, Gloria stepped aside. Thomas automatically held out his right hand and said, "I'm Thomas Burns..." Then he froze. After an awkward moment, he said, "Gloria, close the door. And hold my calls, please."

Thomas, always the professional, quickly regained his composure and gesturing toward the two leather chairs in front of his desk, said, "Forgive me. Please sit down."

The stranger moved to the nearest one and sat down, laying his motorcycle helmet on the floor beside him. As Thomas walked around him and sat down in the opposite chair, he said, "You were at our church yesterday."

The stranger nodded. "Yes", he said, "I was."

There was silence for several moments as the two men just looked at each other. Thomas broke the silence, saying, "Well. It's always good to have visitors at church. But it was kind of an unusual service."

"It was supposed to be," said the stranger.

At this, Thomas did not know what to say. Again, there were a few seconds of silence. Shifting in his seat, Thomas said, "So how can I help you today? Are you here to talk about investing?"

"You might say that," replied the stranger. "But not how you think."

He continued, "I was watching you in church yesterday. You left by a side door."

Thomas replied, "Yes. Yes, I did. We had plans for lunch and I needed to get home."

The stranger nodded and said, "You did have plans, but is that the real reason you left by a side door?"

Thomas had a troubled look on his face. "What do you mean?", he asked.

The stranger leaned forward. "Why didn't you go out through the main door?" he asked.

"Well... Well..." Thomas paused, then continued, "There were several people at that door. You know, the youth, then some adults. I just went out another way." Thomas' voice trailed off.

"Thomas, you grew up in church, didn't you?" the stranger asked.

"Yes, I did." Thomas quickly replied.

The stranger continued, "You're always at church, whenever something's going on, you're there, aren't you?"

Thomas straightened up. "Yes. I think it is what the Lord wants us to do."

"Thomas, let me ask you another question." the stranger said. "What is a disciple of Jesus Christ?"

Surprised, Thomas halted a moment, then replied, "I think a disciple is someone who follows Jesus."

The stranger continued to press. "So, what does that look like?"

"Uh, uh... Well..." Thomas paused, processing the question, then replied, "You have to go to church. I suppose you should read your Bible and pray...". He then quickly added, "You have to be a good person."

The stranger again leaned forward. "In Luke's gospel, chapter 14, Jesus tells us there is a cost to becoming one of His disciples. Are you familiar with Mark chapter 10 and the wealthy young man who came to Jesus asking questions?"

"Funny, you should ask about that. Our pastor preached from that text a week ago." Thomas replied.

"That young man was a good person, wasn't He?" the stranger asked.

"Yes, I suppose he was," Thomas answered. "He said he had kept all the commandments Jesus mentioned."

"But even though he'd been a good person, Jesus wasn't satisfied, was He, Thomas?" the stranger asked.

Thomas reached up and loosened his collar. As he leaned back in his chair, a small bead of perspiration appeared on his upper lip.

The stranger reached over and lightly tapped Thomas on the knee, and softly asked, "What did Jesus say to him, Thomas?"

Thomas suddenly became aware that his heart was pounding. Tears began to roll down his cheek. He knew what Jesus had said. And he knew what he needed to do. He leaned forward and buried his face in his hands and began to weep.

The stranger said, "He's still knocking, Thomas."

When Thomas looked up, the chair was empty.

Chapter 4 The Teacher

The bell ending the 3rd period was a welcome sound to Ms. Tillman. All morning long she'd been looking forward to 4th period which was her free period. As the children filed out of the room, Ms. Tillman locked eyes for a brief moment with Clair Watkins and they smiled at each other. "See you after lunch, Clair," Ms. Tillman said.

On most days, Abby Tillman spent her free period eating lunch and reviewing her lesson plans for the afternoon. Today, however, she had something else in mind. When the last child left the room, her teacher's aide, Donna, followed them, closing the door behind her. From a side drawer, Abby removed her lunch and placed it on the desk. Then she opened the middle drawer and picked up her Bible. She laid it in the center of her desk and just looked at it for a few moments, reflecting on the events of the day before. The sun seemed to be shining brighter today than ever before.

That sunshine, she realized, was coming from inside her. She smiled again, remembering how Claire had hung around after school last Friday and invited her to come to church. She wanted her to sit with her family. The fact that Claire was a great student, combined with the sincerity of her invitation, caused Abby to uncharacteristically agree. Today she was glad she did.

Abby had begun reading her Bible on Sunday afternoon. And this morning she even woke up an hour earlier than usual and spent more time reading while she had her morning coffee. Pulling up the ribbon in her Bible, she opened it to where she had stopped reading this morning in John chapter 8. The words she read said, *"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed, "If you abide in My word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

She sat back and pondered Jesus' words. Her thoughts, however, were interrupted by a knock on her door. "Come in," she responded.

The door opened and a stranger stepped into the doorway. "Hello, Ms. Tillman." he said, "You had a great day, yesterday, didn't you?"

Abby could not hide her surprise. "How did you... How do you know what happened yesterday?"

"I was there," the stranger replied. "You were near the front with the Watkins family."

"Yes, I was. But..." Abby paused, realizing that this must be the stranger who had spoken from the back of the church.

The stranger said, "You opened the door."

Abby beamed. "I did!" she said.

"And everything seems new today, doesn't it?" he continued.

"Why, yes, it does!" Abby smiled yet again, remembering that one of the children had asked her what was different about her today, and another child had asked her what the song was that she was humming while they were reading. She hadn't even realized that she was humming. It was the tune of the last song sung at church the day before. The chorus was replaying over and over in her head: "Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe..."

"Yes, today is different. I'm different. Everything is... I can't explain it", she exclaimed. "And I can't get enough of the Bible!"

The stranger smiled and said, "Abby, healthy sheep are hungry sheep. Newborn lambs are always hungry."

"Sheep?" Abby questioned. "Keep reading," he laughed. "You'll understand it in a couple more chapters. For now, just know that you are a new creation. A child of God. What did you just read in John 8?"

Again surprised, Abby replied, "That a disciple abides in His word." Then she continued, "I want to be a disciple. Where do I start?"

"You've already started, Abby. Stay in His word and ask Him to help you understand it. Everything you need for life and godliness is found in the knowledge of Him."

"I will. I will. She replied. "But what do I do next?" she asked.

The stranger replied, "It's about time for a parent-teacher meeting with Clair's parents, isn't it?"

"Yes", she said. "I suppose it is."

"Good," he stated. "Connect with them. They are true disciples and they walk in truth. They've been brought into your life to help you."

"One more thing, Abby", the stranger said. "Keep shining. And be ready to give a reason when people ask you why. Tell them what Jesus has done for you." With that, the stranger stepped back into the hallway and closed the door.

Jumping to her feet, Abby cried, "Wait! Wait, I have more questions!"

She ran to the door. Throwing it open, she dashed into the hall. But to her amazement, the hall was empty. In the distance, she heard a motorcycle.

Chapter 5 The Student

There were only a handful of vehicles in the parking lot of the city park where Ty Bolen was sitting in his car. He could hear the sounds of banter and laughter in cadence with a bouncing basketball and the occasional twang of the goal rim as the ball bounced off it. He'd been sitting in his car for 15 minutes watching his friends. They all met every Monday after school for a friendly pick-up game but today, he was in no hurry to join them.

He was deep in thought, so much so that he did not notice the motorcycle that pulled into the parking space beside him. After pulling off his helmet, the rider leaned in Ty's direction and asked, "When are you going to talk to them?"

Startled from his thoughts, Ty looked quickly around and focused his attention on the stranger. "I'm sorry, what did you say?"

"When you're going to tell them about yesterday?" the stranger replied. He continued, "That's what's on your mind, isn't it?"

"How did you know that?" Ty replied. "Who are you?"

The stranger leaned back and said, "Oh, I'm just a friend. Are you going to be a real friend to these guys?"

"I guess so," Ty said with a look of bewilderment. "I care about these guys."

"I know you do", the stranger replied. "You care so much that you didn't sleep much last night."

"I don't know how you know all this, but you're right. I couldn't sleep."

"Jesus does that, Ty. He changes people from the inside out. He gives us a new love for people and changes the way we see them," the stranger said.

"Wait, you must have been at church yesterday!" Ty exclaimed.

"I was, Ty. You opened the door. Any regrets?" the stranger asked.

"No! No regrets," Ty said quickly. "I can't explain it but it is awesome. I've never had this kind of peace. I left the church yesterday and felt like I was on a cloud. At least until last night when I thought about my friends. They don't have this. They..." Ty paused, then continued, "They don't know. But that's what I'm struggling with. I want them to have this, too but I don't know what to say to them."

The stranger smiled. "You'll find all your answers in the Bible, my friend. Open the Bible app on your phone Ty, and look up Mark chapter 5."

Ty pulled his phone from his back pocket and after three or four swipes said, "OK. I've got it."

"So, here's a guy who came to Jesus. What does it say about him, Ty?" The stranger asked.

Ty took a few moments to scan the verses, then said, "This guy's life was a mess. Highs and lows. Destroying himself. And no one could help him – until He met Jesus. Sounds a lot like me – before yesterday."

"Yes, it does," said the stranger, "And after that, what did the man want to do?"

Ty looked at his phone again. After a moment, he replied, "He wanted to go with Jesus. It says he begged him."

"But what did Jesus tell him to do?" the stranger asked.

Ty read the following verse to himself, then looking up, cried, "That's it! That's my answer!"

The stranger said, "Good, Ty. This is your home. These are your friends. Why don't you spend a few minutes praying, asking God to give you boldness and the right words to say?"

Ty bowed his head and prayed. When he finished, he immediately opened his car door and started to get out. Only then did he realize that the stranger was already riding out of the parking lot.

Chapter 6 The Warrior

There was only a single place setting on the old kitchen table as Jean Duvall bowed her head and gave thanks for her meal. She had grown somewhat accustomed to eating alone, however, this evening she felt the absence of her deceased husband, Carl, a little more than usual. She missed their conversations and she was thinking how nice it would be to hear his thoughts about what had happened at the church yesterday. Her thoughts of Carl were interrupted by a knock at the front door.

She got up from the table and hustled across the living room. When she opened the door, she was greeted by a familiar face. "Hello," Jean said. "I wondered if we'd see you again. Please, come in."

The stranger smiled and said, "Thank you, Ms. Duvall." As she pushed the screen door open, she replied, "Oh, you can call me Jean." The stranger walked inside.

"Please," Jean said, pointing toward the kitchen, "I was about to eat supper. Are you hungry? I have plenty! I..." she paused, "I guess I still fix for two people."

Again, the stranger smiled. "I understand," he said. "But I'm not hungry. Thank you."

"Well, I'm certainly glad you've come. I have a lot of questions," she said.

"I understand that, too, Jean. The answers are coming," he replied.

Jean looked puzzled. "I'm not sure I know what you mean."

The stranger leaned toward her. "Your prayers have been heard," he said softly.

Jean began to cry. After a few moments, she said, "Thank you. I needed to hear that." She wiped her eyes and continued, "Carl and I always worked for the Lord as a team but these last three years have been difficult. It's like half of me is gone now. Sometimes I feel useless."

The stranger gently placed his hand on her shoulder. "You are neither useless nor unfruitful, Jean. Prayer is the most important work you can do."

Jean continued, "After he died, I kept asking the Lord why He brought Carl home and left me here alone. While I was praying one day, I felt like I needed to pray for the people in our church. Ever since then, my burden for the church has continued to grow."

"Your burden is from the very heart of the Father, Jean," the stranger said.

Jean went on, "The church is languishing. We've grown cold. And the world around us is so... so lost. People are perishing. I've prayed every day for a movement of God. Has it started?" she cried. She took the stranger's hand and asked, "Was yesterday the beginning or the end?"

"God is at work, Jean," he answered. "But He does not force anyone to come to Him. And our enemy has also come with the forces of darkness. There is major warfare going on both here and in the heavens."

Jean sighed and said, "I guess we should expect that shouldn't we?"

"You know the scriptures. What are we told about prayer?" he asked.

"Oh, so much is said about prayer. We should devote ourselves to prayer. We should pray and not faint," she replied.

"Exactly. I've been sent to tell you that your prayers are being heard. And you are to keep praying, Jean. Don't stop praying."

Jean nodded and said, "I will. I will."

Once again, he patted her on the shoulder, saying, "Remember the power of a righteous man's prayers." He smiled and added, "That includes a righteous woman, too." And then he turned and walked toward the door.

Jean stood on the porch and watched the stranger ride away on his motorcycle. When he was no longer in sight, she stepped back into the house. As she slowly closed the door, she leaned against it and said, "Thank you for this, Lord. Now Jesus, how do you want me to pray?"

Chapter 7 The Shepherd

The hour was late and most people in the community were already asleep. No one noticed the light on in the church. Sitting across the table in the pastor's office, the stranger leaned in and asked, "Where are you?"

The last 34 hours had been an emotional roller coaster for Pastor Matt, and were both the highest and lowest periods of his life. In his 15 years of ministry, he'd never experienced anything like what happened the day before. People were in the altar, some were huddled and praying with each other. Many did not leave until well into the afternoon. When he did get home, his phone rang continuously well into the evening. Some wanted to be baptized. Some wanted to talk about God's will for their lives. Some just wanted to praise Jesus for His mercy and grace.

Today had not been so good. The day started two hours before daylight with another phone call, this time urging him to come immediately to the hospital. He'd hastily dressed and arrived 20 minutes later. An hour after arriving, he'd sat beside the wife of a deacon when a doctor had walked into the waiting room, shook his head, and said, "I'm sorry. We did all we could do..."

The rest of his day had been a continuation of Sunday afternoon, a whirlwind of calls and visits. While some people were still rejoicing, many were confused, obviously not understanding what had happened. But there were several people who were upset at the interruption of yesterday's service. This was the case of the two deacons who had interrupted his supper, demanding that he meet with them at the church. Once there, Matt had listened with few comments as they expressed their frustration, blaming him for anything and everything and accusing him of destroying their church.

It was late when they finally left and Matt was near exhaustion. He'd closed the door behind them and held his emotions in check until he heard them drive away. Then he sat down at his desk and wept. Months of stress, frustration, and disappointment had come crashing down on him. After a few minutes of weeping, he had begun to pour his heart to God. "I don't understand, Lord! Yesterday was so wonderful. I thought we were going to see a real revival. I don't know what to do! You know my heart! What have I done wrong? I have been seeking but right now, I need answers!"

It was at that point that there had been another knock at the door. Matt's first thought had been, "Oh, no. I can't do this again...". But the knocking had persisted. Reluctantly, because it was a soft knock, he had opened it. Later, he would reflect on that and give thanks for his decision. Standing at the door was the stranger. The stranger's first words had been, "Don't be afraid, Matt. Your answer is on the way."

They had sat at the small table in the corner of Matt's office. The stranger had begun with a simple question, "Where are you?" and listened as Matt

recounted the events and conversations of the last two days. Being able to talk about it had been therapeutic for him. Matt finished, saying, "I do not understand why this is happening."

The stranger's reply was penetrating. "There are people around you who are praying, Matt. Praying for an awakening in the church. Praying for you. And you have been asking questions, haven't you?"

"I am struggling", Matt replied. "I don't understand why the church is languishing. I've preached the word faithfully. I visit people. I try to love them. I work 60 to 70 hours a week but for some of them, I never do enough. I was thinking about resigning until yesterday..." Matt paused in reflection, then continued, "I thought we'd turned a corner. I believe I've done everything I was supposed to do but nothing has worked. It seems that the harder I try the worse it gets... and we continue to decline. And after today..." He paused again, then said, "I just don't know what to do."

At that point, the stranger said, "Let me ask you some more questions, pastor."

For the next hour, his questions guided the conversation through a discussion of what it means to build on the right foundation. They talked about being a disciple and the daily fellowship with Christ that true disciples should enjoy. He asked Matt to look up several passages of scripture and helped him focus by asking more questions. Several times he followed up Matt's answers with, "But how would Jesus answer that?"

The hour passed in what seemed like only a few minutes to Matt. His exhaustion had dissipated and his heart burned within him. Nearing the end of the conversation, the stranger asked him to read Christ's letter to the church at Ephesus. After Matt read the first verses of Revelation 2, the stranger leaned toward him and asked, "So, if Jesus wrote a letter to your flock, shepherd, what would He say?"

Matt hesitated for several moments before answering, "First love... I know that's what yesterday was about... why He was knocking on the door yesterday. We've left Him out and become lukewarm. We're got to get back to Christ having first place in everything... our first love."

The stranger smiled and said, "What will that take, Matt?"

"For most of us, I think we're going to have to start over," Matt replied.

"And where will you start over, Matt?" the stranger asked.

This time Matt did not hesitate. "At the feet of Jesus."

"It will not be easy," the stranger said. "You are already experiencing the opposition. But never forget that the Lord is with you. Can I ask you another question, Matt?"

"Sure", Matt replied. The stranger said, "Matt, we know that everyone will give an account of their lives. What do *you* want to hear Christ say when you stand before Him on that day?"

Matt realized that this was perhaps the most important question he'd been asked today and answered without hesitation. "Well done," he said. "I want to hear Him say, "Well done."

Standing to his feet, the stranger said, "Then I have one more question for you, my friend. What will that take for you to hear Him say that?"

The stranger turned and walked to the door. Turning back, he said, "You'll find your answer in John, chapter 15. Read it and listen to what Jesus is saying." And then he walked out, leaving the door open behind him.

A minute later, Matt heard a motorcycle engine fire up. As the sound of the engine faded into the distance, Matt hurriedly opened his Bible, breathed a prayer, saying, "Talk to me, Jesus," and began to read John 15. Suddenly he sat up and exclaimed, "That's it! That's it! Thank you, Lord!"

Pastor Matt found his answer. He also knew that his life and his ministry would never be the same.

Across the table...

I hope you enjoyed reading *The Door*. My prayer is that this little novel will be thought provoking and create a renewed hunger for God's word.

If you and I could sit down across a table, here's a few questions I might ask you. Take a few minutes with each question and think about your answers.

– Jeff S. Mann

- What about *The Door* most intrigues you?
- Which of the characters in the book do you most identify with? Why?
- If you could write an ending for chapters one and two, how would they end?
- Throughout the book, the reactions of people when came to the door of the church are described. How would you respond if Jesus knocked on your door? Is He knocking now?
- What questions do you have about what you've read?

If you have questions, would like to know more about the Jesus Christ, the True Door, or if you'd like a host a small discussion group to help others "come and see", visit us at www.essentialnorthamerica.org.

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