



New York Times Bestselling Author John Eldredge Reveals the Surprisingly Playful, Earthy, and Irreverent Personality of Jesus

The Jesus that one encounters in the Gospels is quite a character: playful, funny, earthy, human, irreverent—and unapologetically unreligious. Yet centuries of cultural and religious assumptions have buried his remarkable personality under pious stereotypes, says bestselling author John Eldredge in his new book *Beautiful Outlaw: Experiencing the Playful, Disruptive, Extravagant Personality of Jesus* (FaithWords/Hachette Book Group, \$22.99, October 2011). “Despite the vandalizing of Jesus by both religion and the world, he is still alive and very much himself. Nowadays it takes a bit of uncovering to know him as he is,” Eldredge says.

Eldredge reads the Gospel stories with the eye and ear of the actor he once was, attune to nuance, tone, back-story and other clues that reveal Jesus’ personality traits. What he finds is not the Jesus of the stained-glass windows or sad-eyed portrait.

Far from meek and mild, Jesus was accused of breaking laws, keeping bad company, heavy drinking, even of being the devil himself. He was so compelling, magnetic and dangerous that the authorities killed him. His anger was frightening. He could be exasperated and impatient. He said outrageous things. But his followers loved him passionately. His unique personality combined traits such as:

- scandalous generosity and compassion
- disruptive honesty
- playfulness and a sense of humor
- cunning
- humility
- trueness
- beauty

Eldredge locates these qualities in Scripture stories, and shows how this Jesus is still knowable today. “For too many people the Jesus they know is too religious to love, too distant to experience, and too rigid to be a source of life. It explains the abject poverty of the church. Jesus hasn’t changed one bit. He is still quite himself. This is how he still acts,” Eldredge says.

Church culture does not often reflect Jesus’ personality. “The personality conveyed through much of Christian culture is not the personality of Jesus but of the people in charge of that particular franchise,” Eldredge writes. The same religious spirit that Jesus fought against is still active, filling people’s heads with “stuffing about Jesus” but no experience of him.

“If only Jesus’ followers shared his personality. That one shift alone would correct so many of the ridiculous and horrifying things that pass for popular Christianity,” Eldredge says.

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Eldredge guides readers into the rich emotional life of Christ as revealed in the Gospels, showing how they can experience the actual personality of Jesus in their daily lives in ways that will deepen their faith. “Jesus came to reveal God to us. He is the defining word on God—on what the heart of God is truly like, on what God is up to in the world, and on what God is up to in your life. An intimate encounter with Jesus is the most transforming experience of human existence. To know him as he is, to have his life, joy, love, and presence cannot be compared.”

John Eldredge is a *New York Times* bestselling author whose books, including the men’s spirituality classic *Wild at Heart*, have sold more than 8 million copies. He is always pushing readers out of their comfort zones, whether he’s confronting a church culture that emasculates men; showing how it’s possible to hear the voice of God; or, with his wife Stasi, offering a real-world look at Christian marriage, from sex to spiritual battles. With an approach that is both winsome and thought-provoking, Eldredge gets to the heart of the matter.

Eldredge is the founder of Ransomed Heart Ministries in Colorado Springs, CO. Ransomed Heart hosts numerous events annually in the U.S. and abroad, helping people discover the true heart of God and empowering them to share the message with others. It has become a grassroots phenomenon with millions of followers. For more information, visit www.ransomedheart.com

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For more information about *Beautiful Outlaw* and to view clips of John reading from the book, visit www.beautifuloutlaw.net

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