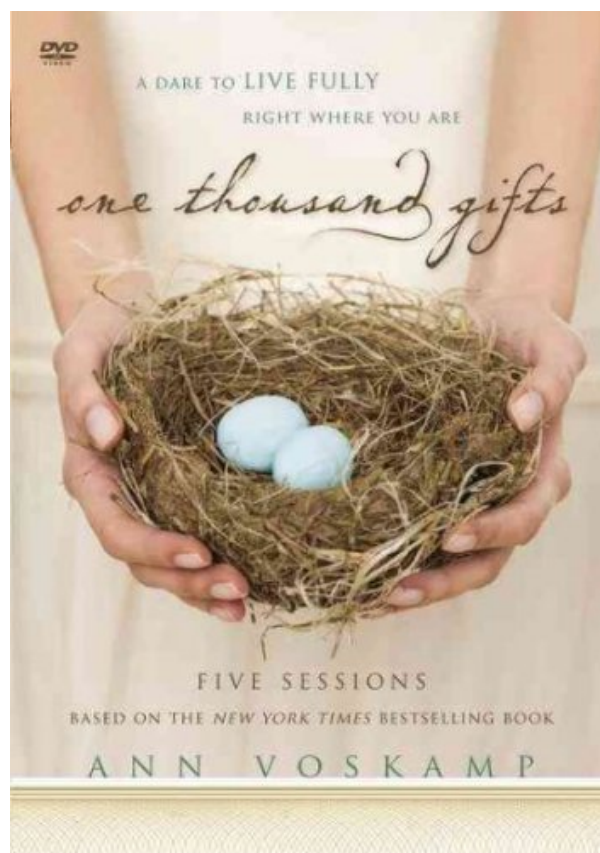
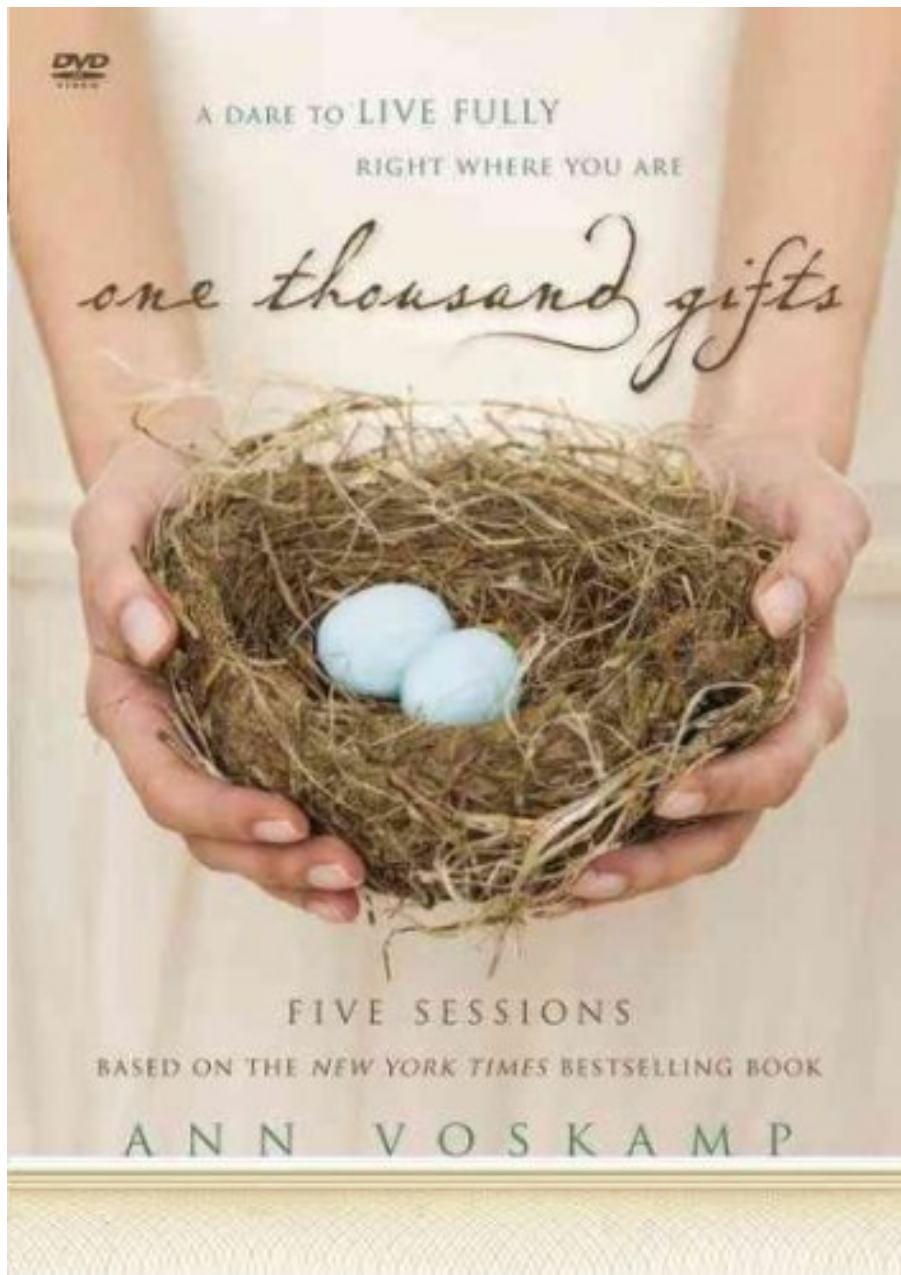


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ONE THOUSAND GIFTS: A DARE TO LIVE FULLY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE (HARDBACK) BY (AUTHOR) ANN VOSKAMP BY ANN VOSKAMP PDF

Drawing heartbreaking beauty out of the simplest of details, Ann Voskamp invites you into her grace-bathed life of farming, parenting, and writing---and deeper still into your own life. Here you will discover a way of seeing that opens your eyes to ordinary amazing grace, a way of living that is fully alive, and a way of becoming present to God that brings you deep and lasting joy.

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- Dimensions: 7.52" h x 5.51" w x .0" l, .15 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover

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4614 of 4838 people found the following review helpful.

The Message Gets Lost in the Words

By Books and Chocolate

I think this is one of those reviews that I'm going to take some heat over because I know this book and the author are very popular in Christian circles right now. That's why I wanted to read it myself, because I had heard so much about it.

First, the positive. I know several bloggers who are sharing their own 1000 gifts/gratitude lists and I'm always blessed to read them. I have kept my own accounting of what I call "grace notes" for years so I understand the blessing of looking for things to be thankful for. Voskamp shares from her heart with stories about her family and her own spiritual journey, and I think anyone reading this book would come away with a heightened sense of looking for God's grace in daily life whether it be having one's child come through surgery or the admiring the beauty of a full moon. I appreciate the encouragement to live life fully right where we are without feeling we need to work through a "bucket list" of daring experiences or exotic locations before we can be fulfilled.

But, this was a difficult book for me to read. Voskamp is obviously a poet at heart but the entire book is sing-songy with long descriptions and awkward word phrases and metaphors that I found distracting. It doesn't read as someone would actually talk in real life conversation.

As an example: "...tonight over our farm will rise the Great Hexagon of the blazing winter stars - Sirius, Rigel, ruby Aldebran, Capella, the fiery Gemini twins, and Procyon, and in the center, scarlet Betelgeuse, the red supergiant larger than twice the size of earth's orbit around the sun - and I will embrace the skin of a boy child that my body grew from a seed. The low heavens outside the paned windows fill with more snowflakes than stars, no two-stacked crystals the same; the trees in the wood draw in collective green breath to the still of January hibernation, and God in the world with birth ice from His womb, frost of heaven, bind the chains of the Pleiades, loose the cords of Orion, and number again the strands on my head."

Those who like this kind of poetic narrative with mystical undertones will enjoy this book. Those who don't will likely struggle to find the message in the sea of words. For me, it was just too much page after page, and it took me a while to finish the book because I had to take it in small doses.

I was also wary of the mystical/contemplative spirituality/emergent church references, as she references those known to be mystics, panentheists, universalists, or New Age authors such as Brother Lawrence, Henri Nouwen, Annie Dillard, Brennan Manning, Sarah Ban Breathnach, Teresa of Avila, and Dallas Willard, among others. The influence of the teachings of these various authors is apparent in Voskamp's writing.

In addition, I was uncomfortable with the chapter on making love to Jesus in which the author speaks of seeking communion with God in what can only be termed as sexual language, taking it to a level that I personally don't believe scripture intends. Voskamp writes, "Mystical union. This, the highest degree of importance. God as Husband in sacred wedlock, bound together, body and soul, fed by His body, quenched by His blood . . . God, He has blessed - caressed. I could bless God - caress with thanks. It's our making love. God makes love with grace upon grace, every moment a making of His love for us. . . . couldn't I make love to God, making every moment love for Him? To know Him the way Adam knew Eve. Spirit skin to spirit skin. . . The intercourse of soul with God is the very climax of joy . . . To enter into Christ and Christ enter into us - to cohabit."

Scripture doesn't teach that our relationship with God is to be a sexual, orgasmic experience or that we are to know him the way Adam as husband knew Eve as his wife. Further, what are children and men supposed to do with the notion of making love to Jesus?

Despite the doctrinal and personal issues with this book, I tried to stay focused on what I felt the author's intended message of the book was: live fully and abundantly in daily life by being thankful for the gifts that come from God's grace, no matter how small. I am inspired to live more fully in this kind of gratitude.

This review is simply my opinion of what was actually in the book and not a reflection on the author herself, whom I do not know personally. Her writing style just doesn't appeal to me and I have to question some of the "theology" in the book which is why I recommend discernment when reading it.

1118 of 1195 people found the following review helpful.

Baffled

By Amo

I am a little baffled by One Thousand Gifts. Baffled that everyone seems to love the book, baffled at the reviews, and baffled that I do not seem to be enjoying the book like I expected.

I have seen some major comment craziness over this book which causes me a little apprehension in sharing my thoughts because I don't particularly want to be stoned or have virtual banana peels throw my way. The truth is; however, I did not love it. I had to force myself to keep reading which having a review copy demanded.

Sure, I was touched by the sadness author Ann VosKamp has had to deal with and I wished it was not so for her. Plus, I think giving thanks to God is important; however, I found myself weighed down by her constant, poetical voice. It was hard to follow and taxing to read. Sometimes, I wanted her to say what she meant straight out and not make me search for the intended meaning nor be forced to reread sentences because of the unconventional wording. I personally feel that her prose works for short blog posts but not an entire book, and I wondered if the entire message of the book could be condensed into one or more blog posts that would have been just as encouraging.

As I was reading, there were sentences and sections that made me pause and want to line it up with truth. I wondered if in her manner, there were liberties taken. Just three of the parts that made me wonder were as follows:

"If clinging to His goodness is the highest form of prayer, then seeing His goodness with a pen, with the shutter, with a word of thanks, these really are the most sacred acts conceivable." (pg. 61) So, writing down or taking pictures of what you are thankful for is a sacred act and actually "the most sacred act conceivable"? "Here is the only place I can love Him." (pg. 70) She can only love God when she writes her list? "...discover how to make love to God." (pg. 201) When you use certain words and phrases, you think certain things (sex, not necessarily intimacy).

Perhaps these questions I had were because I was not enjoying the poetry in it all. I do understand that a new voice, a break from ordinary is refreshing and her fan base is solid. Based on bloggers I read and Tweets I am following the majority are devouring One Thousand Gifts.

I did not enjoy One Thousand Gifts, but I do like Ann VosKamp. I read her blog, Holy Experience, at times and sometimes, I link up. From my readings, I believe she loves God with all her heart and desires to serve Him; so none of that is in question here. Plus, despite the fact that the reading was laborious to me, I did close the book desiring to keep writing my list of thanks and wanting to see God's hand in all of my life, which was the purpose and goal of the book to be sure. Thanks to Ann, I have a list going that started long before her book and because of her blog.

One Thousand Gifts was given to me by the publisher in exchange for my honest review.

566 of 637 people found the following review helpful.

Theme is good; writing is horrible.

By Ann G.

I read both good and bad reviews before getting this book thinking that all the good reviews definitely outweighed the bad. But after reading it, I suggest you heed the negative ones carefully, including this.

I've been a creative writer and editor for nearly 20 years and this book is a "headthrobber." I appreciate the theme and the whole passion for thanksgiving and living life fully for Christ, but the way it is written is agonizing. Too many adjectives clumped together, too many dangling clauses, too many useless words, and a trail of thought that has no structure... The whole gift is just lost on me by the time I get to the end of the paragraph. Rather than be blessed by the beauty of what it wishes to impart, I ended up annoyed and disturbed that I am reading a journal of sorts of a very messy mind. I couldn't finish a paragraph without heaving a sigh and rubbing my wrinkled forehead. I am surprised that so many people are rating this with 5 stars. I wish someone edited this in a way that would have preserved the thought without sacrificing style, but with a clear trail of thought, well-structured paragraphs, beautifully constructed sentences, and wise use of adjectives.

I feel the author tried too hard to translate a painting into words, making this book a canvass of her own abstractions. It felt as if she had a thesaurus beside her and used every polysyllabic word without hesitation. It seemed like she had many resources (especially on constellations and the cosmos) and just wanted to pour everything she knows in one book. What a mess.

I am NOT recommending this to any one at all.

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