



Finding Moosewood, Finding God: What Happened When a TV Newsman Abandoned His Career for Life on an Island

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For twenty-five years, millions of Americans watched Jack Perkins on NBC News as a correspondent, commentator, and anchorman. People were familiar with his face, his bearing, and his rich, reassuring bass.

Yet at the age of fifty-two and at the height of his career, Jack Perkins left the world of broadcasting and moved with his wife, Mary Jo, to a bare-necessities cabin on an uninhabited island off the coast of Maine. This isolated home they came to call Moosewood was the setting for and the catalyst to Jack and Mary Jo's spiritual awakening. For thirteen years they endured (and learned to enjoy) snowbound winters, shuttling supplies from the mainland, testing themselves and the strength of their marriage, and discovering the rewards and glories of a close-to-nature life. Which is to say, the rewards and glories of a close-to-God life. As far as the public was aware, Jack Perkins had vanished. In fact, he was doing research; not, for a change, about the unknown private life of a movie star or celebrated artist, but about the unknown sides of himself.

Jack's personal account in *Finding Moosewood, Finding God* tells a relatable story of one man drawn to cast off a shallow and unsatisfying lifestyle in order to seek out a deeper, more meaningful and spiritual life. Within the course of explaining how their lives were blessedly transformed especially during the cycle of their first year of island living, Jack draws in stories from his long career in an impressionistic, associative way that invites the reader to connect the dots. One finds—as he finally did—that there'd been many hints along the way of a greater plan at work. This rich memoir also contains a photo insert.

Finding Moosewood, Finding God: What Happened When a TV Newsman Abandoned His Career for Life on an Island Details

Date : Published February 19th 2013 by Zondervan

ISBN : 9780310318255

Author : Jack Perkins

Format : Hardcover 312 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Biography, Spirituality

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From Reader Review Finding Moosewood, Finding God: What Happened When a TV Newsman Abandoned His Career for Life on an Island for online ebook

Wes Baker says

I went into this book predisposed to like it. I watched NBC news when I was growing up and it fed my desire to get into broadcast journalism, so I was very familiar with Perkins and his work for NBC. The idea that he "found God" late in his career, causing him to leave it and move to one of my favorite places--coastal Maine--seemed to be a perfect connection of three strands I would find inherently interesting--Perkins career at NBC, "finding God" and moving to Maine. However, my interest flagged as I went through the book and I finally gave up on it about half-way through. It had too much of an "it's all about me" tone to it, both in terms of his admittedly stellar career and the benefits from having found God. Perhaps influenced by a "prosperity gospel" from their time with Rev. Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral, Perkins and his wife's "finding God" was mainly manifested by having coastal property in Maine dropping into their laps, allowing him to leave his job and retire to a slower pace and a chance to enjoy a "back to nature" existence, and not much beyond that. Although, as you might expect, the book is well-written, their story never developed into the compelling narrative I was hoping for and the "look how much God blessed us" narrative worn thin.

Betsy says

This is an autobiography written by Jack Perkins, who, with his wife Mary Jo, decide to leave the life of privilege behind and move to an island in Maine. Everyone they know thinks they are crazy, but the Perkins are thrilled at the adventure of it and to live more intentionally with God. The name of their home is Moosewood, and they are the only inhabitants of the island.

There are moments of profound thought written in these pages, but not enough for me to have a sustained interest. I have a feeling he has more to say about what he learned in those 13 years, but unfortunately he would come back to his life's successes instead.

I was intrigued initially by their decision to live more primitively. The simplicity of waiting for the tides to recede in order to cross over to the mainland, heating by wood stove all winter, being snowed in for weeks at a time, all made for good reading. But unfortunately there was something about his writing style that did not inspire as I had hoped. Instead it often became "let me tell you a little bit more about me and my accomplishments".

Sharon says

Jack Perkins was an NBC correspondent and anchorman for thirty years. He and his wife enjoyed living in busy Los Angeles, but felt something was missing from their lives. Both had grown up in Ohio and were products of a 1930-40's childhood and small town lifestyle. Thinking about starting a simpler life, they

purchased land on an island in Maine, built a cabin, and started spending vacations there wherever possible. They eventually moved there permanently, and in seeking to enrich their lives by living close to nature and with a minimum of "stuff", they found God.

Faith says

I if the press discourages or encourages you, you should read this book, loved the perspective.

Angela says

One account of someone trying to pull the plug on a hectic lifestyle. I found it interesting because his feelings about moving across the country to restart life was a lot like ex-pats feel when they move to a different country. There is almost always:

the honeymoon phase, when a culture is fresh and wonderful,

the disillusionment phase where the confusing parts of why a culture does what it does is revealed and people struggle to try to make sense of different "rules"

the adjustment phase as the newbie comes to terms with the new culture,

and the acceptance phase, adopting portions of the new culture as preferable to the country of origin.

Even the amount of money they had to spend on new digs aside, this could be recommended reading for anyone planning a long-distance move.

Jeff says

I bought this on sale on a remainder shelf, intrigued by the title and the fact that it was inexpensive. Mr. Perkins is a very good writer, and he has had a very interesting life as a journalist and on the slice of island in the midst of Arcadia National Park he bought with his wife. I think I would have liked this book better though if he had set up his life as a journalist first, rather than interspersing flashbacks throughout the narrative of their life on the island. The book is filled with Bible quotes and the writer's reflections on events in his life that he now interprets as God looking over him, as well as some intriguing thoughts on God as the collective unconscious that is shared by all of mankind. But from the title, I was expecting a more mystic experience to happen on the island. In fact, I'm not sure how life on the island lead him to to "find" God. My general impression is that he had more spare time to read and think. Still, he doesn't really take us through even that process. Nor does he explore in enough detail all the problems and rewards of living on a small, otherwise uninhabited island, instead focusing on a few rather isolated incidents. So why did I give it even 4 stars? Like I said at the beginning, Mr. Perkins is a very good writer, and the book has many interesting anecdotes. The book largely wasn't what I thought it was going to be, but it is what it is and I did find most of it entertaining.

Mary says

I was really expecting more from this book. When a notable journalist and his wife decide to abandon fame and fortune and live on a small island in Maine, he should have more to say. Let me just say, he is no Thoreau. Although he says that he "found God," I never got much of a sense of what that meant to him. I know that he tuned in to nature and simplicity and kept a Bible by the fire, but that is about the extent of it. He spent a lot of time talking about his life before the island, but I never got a sense of his day-to-day life there other than knowing that he spent a lot of time getting wood ready for the fire. His wife was a two-dimensional figure. She did some drawing and other crafts, but that is about all he shares. They spent 13 years there. Wish he had told us more about it.

Bill Powers says

From riches to "rags"

So often we read of how the revered in our world rose from the "rags" of an ordinary life to the riches of fame and glory. Often their stories ended up leaving me feeling empty and far removed from them. This wonderful story of how one in the throes of the "riches" found his true riches by leaving them behind in favor of the "rags" touched and impacted my life more than I can say! His writing style is as easy to read as his voice is easy to hear (and I learned some wonderful new vocabulary!) As someone who will be traveling to Maine in the fall for the first time, I know I will be seeing and appreciating it so much more personally as I remember seeing it thru his eyes! As a photographer, myself, my next purchase (today) will be Jack Perkins' photography. I am so thankful this story was told!

Whitney says

Interesting autobiography. I was more interested in his transition to the new life on the island than the flashbacks of his professional highlights, so I skimmed over those sections. Insightful recognition of the presence of God in his life, even before becoming a believer, was thoughtfully covered as well.

Carol says

I picked up this book a couple days after I actually had visited Bar Harbor and seen the low tide path to the home the Perkinses built on Bar Island, which of course made it even more interesting.

A story of leaving the known for the unknown, a life of prestige and public notice for something quiet and perhaps more rich in less worldly ways. Includes some wonderful stories of Jack Perkins work life as well.

Tim Fargo says

Finding Moosewood is a delight from cover to cover. There were frequent moments throughout every

chapter where I just was stopped by the beauty of the prose. I reread it just to find these all again. The experiences Jack (and Mary Jo Perkins) shared, the questions they faced, the trust and courage they demonstrated in their pursuit of interests of the heart and talents, and the support for each others dreams provides valuable opportunity for both introspection and discussion. Finding Moosewood both entertained and informed, and is a must for all 50-somethings facing the inevitable passages of life and search for meaning. An absolutely fabulous read.

Courtney says

I would have given it higher but the continual flashbacks took away from the book. I didn't need to know about all his accomplishments with his career. I would have liked to have heard far more about his life there. The thirteen years was barely touched in this book.

Kathy says

What happens when an NBC news anchor steps away from worldly success at the age of 52, downsizes, and moves with his wife to a tiny island off of Maine? Well, you have to read this book to find out! It was delightful. Mr. Perkins is a gifted author and I especially enjoyed his personal soul-probing as he looks into the slower pace of island living and begins to look at his past and see God's hand throughout his career and his life. The tale runs back and forth between his past life of journalistic adventures and his present life of hiking, gardening, photography and being open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all things. I recommend the book highly!

Erlyn Trinidad says

Mr. Perkins certainly had a charmed life with all that he wanted seemingly being served up to him. It is a life of serendipitous chain of events one after another. I felt compelled to read the book essentially because of my desire to one day be able to live off the grid. On top of that I find it rather intriguing that someone who lives such a charmed life could be drawn into a life of simplicity in an island setting. The title makes you think that he will expound on just how rich a relationship he has come to foster with his Creator upon having to move to Moosewood. But I find very very little of that as I read through the book. And yes it is a memoir and the writer is entitled to of course make a trip down memory lane and write down his proudest moments, of which there are a lot for him, given how talented he is in his industry. And although some may pick up a tone of bragging, I wouldn't say that it came across that way, although, some may very well say that it does. His, is a life well lived with very little misfortune or struggles along the way.

I saw a glimpse of his humanity, though, when he wrote about his trip to Somalia and the heart-wrenching situation that those who live there are dealt with. He felt it wasn't right to be feasting on meal after meal and wine after wine amidst all the hunger around them there, and he felt powerless to change their situation. Perhaps only someone truly evil through and through would be so indifferent when faced with the same situation. He likewise displayed his good nature when he opted to hand over his winning bid to another family who's paternal figure was then 92-years old and wanted to be conductor for a day at a fund-raising gala. He is undoubtedly a good person.

What moved me was the thought that people seem to have a penchant for dramatics and extremes, myself included. And we tend to look up to God mostly in times when we feel like we are at our rope's end. But in this memoir, I find it rather surprising and quite in a good way, that there are people who seek to fill in that God-vacuum in their lives, despite having lived a life of glitz and glamour. And I hope that more people would feel that way.

The only thing I wish he could have added in the book would be how his perspective changed through the years, along with other stories of God's saving grace. But then again, Mr. Perkins went ahead and acknowledged that it may not be as moving to other people as their experiences may not be enough to be told, they were perhaps meant to be experienced.

I'm glad he found a life worth living and I hope that he indeed found God in Moosewood.

Gail Welborn says

Reading Jack's memoir is like sitting across the table having coffee with a dear friend

Jack Perkin's inspirational memoir recounts the life of a celebrated, globe-trotting journalist who couldn't find room in his "...life for God..." until he learned "...there was room in God for his life..." It's the story of a road well-traveled from the journalistic corridors of fame to a remote island in the backwoods of Maine where he wrote, he and his wife found "...the greatest story this newsman could ever report..."

The seeds that prompted his decision were buried in the soil of his writing career. Whether meeting master photographer, Ansel Adams or a "...genuine back-to-basics Idaho hermit known as Buckskin Bill" decades earlier, Jack knew such men had found purpose that gave their lives meaning.

Although Jack's life was full to overflowing with fame, fortune and happiness, I could sense an underlying discontent in his writing that presents a "before and after" picture in his memoir. The "before" made me think of the Liber and Stoller's 1969 song classic "Is that all there is?" Peggy Lee's #1 hit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCRZZC-DH7M While the "after" was the realization God had always been there "...patiently waiting..." (pg. 18)

His decision to walk away from his career coincided with another major life event, winning an Emmy...Full Review: <http://tinyurl.com/cma7xx4>

Rich Dailey says

A wonderful memoir. Jack Perkins is a wordsmith of the first order. Recommended.

Barbara says

Finding Moosewood, Finding God transported me to the clear air and fresh pine smell of Maine. And it

transported me to a slower, more deliberate pace of life. I felt at home there.

Jack Perkins and his wife Mary Jo left L.A. and the fast paced world of national news for the beauties and challenges of life on an island off Bar Harbor, Maine.

Perkins writes their tale with his clear, straightforward style. I could hear his rich baritone as I read the stories of their adventures and transformation.

Those who enjoy the stories of the rich and famous will also enjoy the little snippets of Jack's Hollywood connections.

I just re-read the book. Still feel like it is worth reading. I re-read it for book club. 8.16.2016

As I finished this book with a sigh of gratitude I had a small taste of the gratitude the Perkins' have for their years of growth on Moosewood.

ACS Book-finder says

Finding Moosewood, Finding God was a delightful and interesting autobiography written by Jack Perkins, a former NBC News correspondent, commentator, and anchorman. The book weaves together Jack's personal story and details from various interviews and experiences that Jack encountered during his news career. At the age of 52, when Jack's career was at its peak, he and his wife Mary Jo chose to leave their former life of prominence for a remote cabin on an island off the shore of Bar Harbor, Maine which could only be reached during low tide. The isolated home, which they named "Moosewood" after the trees of the same name that populated the island, became the setting for Jack and Mary Jo to "be still and know that I am God."

During Jack's busy years of his career among the rich and famous, he never felt the need for God; but, in this new and quiet, isolated life, Jack began to rethink all he knew. For the 13 years while at Moosewood, Jack and his wife discovered that all through their lives there was the unseen Hand of God guiding their very steps and paths.

I would highly recommend this book to any teen or adult reader. Jack Perkins is a "word-smith" who weaves an almost poetic literary style with vocabulary that is not only delightful, but stretches the reader to discover new words and their meanings. It is also a wonderful reminder that those whom the Lord is seeking, He always finds. Read and enjoy Finding Moosewood, Finding God. (rev. J.LaTour)

DISCLOSURE: A complimentary copy was given to the school for its library.

Hayley Brentmar says

I read this for my book group, and the general consensus was that most of us didn't care for it. There were a few lovely insights scattered throughout. But, overall it was another take on the theme of "privileged white male steps out of society and then has a spiritual experience".

It would be wonderful if we could all buy our own island, not work and just concentrate on nature. But for those of us who don't have the luxury of making those lifestyle choices this book was hard to relate to.

Skipr says

Retiring in your 50s to an (previously) uninhabited island in Maine that is accessible from/to the mainland only a few hours twice a day at the low tides. How cool is that? Jack Perkins and his wife did it - and, loved it. Not only did they find the natural beauty and the solitude they were looking for. They also finally realized how God how been there all their lives before they were ever interested in him.
