

EXCERPT



**When Your World Ends**  
God's Creative Process for Rebuilding A Life

September 17, 2024 | \$18, 208 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-0825-6

How do you rebuild your life after it falls apart? Dawn Sanders has traveled that path and lived to tell the tale—twice. With her unique perspective, authenticity and courage, Dawn digs deep into the creation story and unearths a seven-step process by which God brings us out of the void and guides us into renewed hope.

## Creating Order in the Face of Disorder

The night Reggie died, my family came over to sit vigil, but as the night wore on, they departed one by one to their own homes until only one of my family members and I remained.

At first my family member was quiet, but eventually she opened up, pausing after each sentence. "I don't know what to say. I got nothing—no words. I don't understand why he's gone. It doesn't. Make. Sense."

"I know. It doesn't make sense to me either."

"It's late and I don't want to leave you alone," she said. "I'm also not sure staying here tonight is the best thing for you. Will you come stay the night with me?"

I was touched by her invitation, but I declined. As confused as I was by Reggie's unexpected death, I was sure of one thing.

"I need to have a conversation with God," I told her. "And it's not going to be one of those pretty prayers."

I pictured myself lying prostrate on the floor, my face soaked in tears, my eyes puffy and red from crying as I lamented before the Lord. No, it wasn't going to look pretty. I imagined looking the ugliest I've ever looked while praying.

"I understand," she said. "You're sure, though?"

"Yeah. I am."

Reluctantly she left.

Now alone, I went to my bedroom. Exhausted, I tried to get some sleep before meeting with God. After a fitful night, I perched on the edge of my bed and prepared myself for an ugly, personal interaction with the Lord. I assumed that as we met face-to-face, I'd bear my heart. I braced for tears and weeping. But in the face of the chaos, confusion, and disorder surrounding Reggie's sudden, unexpected, and inexplicable death, all I had were two words:

"What now?"

Little did I know, but the word *now* spoke to sequence and order. Reggie's passing left me and my life unexpectedly out of order. Before Reggie's death, I knew what to do *now*—and what to do *next*. After his death, not so much.

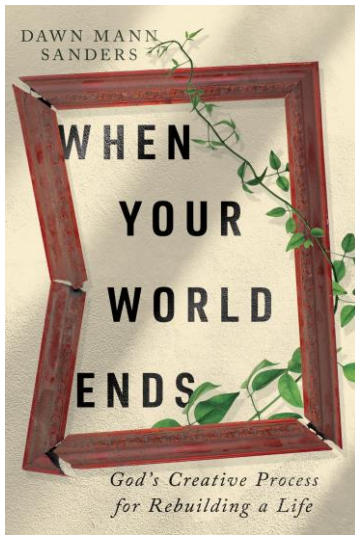


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*"When Your World Ends is a unique and refreshing perspective on moving beyond grief to a place of creative and productive health. This book uses the creation story to encourage the reader to enter the process of healing by utilizing the creative abilities that each person has been given by God."*

— Valorie C. Nordbye, president emeritus of Campus One80 Ministries

It was as if someone had dropped a bomb into the middle of my life, scattering my next steps all around—some in the rubble, some damaged beyond recognition, and *all* out of order.

How could I begin putting my life back together? Without any idea where to start, I felt helpless and confused.

I didn't expect to feel empty at that stage of my life. And I didn't know what to do.

What do you do when tragedy strikes, destroying your life and shattering your plans forever? How are you going to respond to God's invitation to *live* through the end of the world as you know it?

You may be feeling a similar kind of confusion and chaos. Thankfully, in the creation story, we see God creating order in the face of disorder. Restoring order is a fundamental component of God's creative process—one he's exemplified from the beginning.

In the opening chapter of Genesis, God transformed a chaotic, unproductive mess into an orderly, fully functional world. As I envision the stark contrast between the nonfunctional wasteland and the abundant, vibrant universe that emerged, I can't help but feel that God intentionally started with disorder. He wanted us to see how he brings order out of turmoil—it's an integral part of his creative process.

By commencing with chaos, God demonstrated his heart for restoration, illustrating how he can craft something beautiful even when our lives feel like nothing. That's major. God may have allowed Satan, the destroyer, to ruin my life, but my pain wouldn't be in vain (John 10:10). God would lift my confusion and restore the order I once felt. That right there is a reason to shout but wait—there's more.

God bringing order to the initial disorder in Genesis 1 reveals God's heart before the fall, before sin entered the world in Genesis 3. In essence, whether we sin or not, God's plan has always been restoration.

-taken from chapter 3, "It's Part of the Process"



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## ***When Your World Ends*** God's Creative Process for Rebuilding A Life

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Dawn N. Sanders (MDiv, Bethel Seminary) is an associate minister at First Baptist Church of Glenarden (FBCG), where she serves as the director of the sermon-based life groups ministry. Her passion is expository teaching and sharing the wonderful insights God has shown her in his Word. She does this through writing weekly discussion guides for the life groups as well as teaching several in-depth Bible studies. Dawn has written and taught extensively on overcoming adversity and creating a new life, both at FBCG and on her personal blog.

## **An Invitation to Create Something New**

### **What motivated you to write this book?**

**Dawn Mann Sanders:** I had a desire to provide women with a strategy to navigate sorrow and rebuild their lives once the grieving process from some type of traumatic event in their lives had subsided, helping them then discover that the strategy is found within the creation story in Genesis. Whether that catastrophic event or trauma was from a devastating loss, empty nest, church wounding, or deep loneliness due to lost friendships/abandonment, the invitation to create something new is there for all in the book of Genesis. It is my hope that through this book women recognize that the same God, the most powerful force in the universe, present at the beginning, is also present in their seemingly powerless situation.

### **What is the central theme of your book?**

**Dawn:** God invites us to join Him in His creation—of us, our lives, our communities, our environments, and our world—using His creative process as revealed through the creation story. Through what I call "God's Creative Toolkit," He helps us restore order and organization to the confusion resulting from a catastrophic event in our lives. Just as the grieving process takes us through distinct phases, so does creation in more ways than one.

### **What are the five main things you want readers to take away from your book?**

**Dawn:** In this book the reader will:

1. Train herself to follow God's creative process for crafting a new life and legacy even when she's starting with nothing.
2. Connect the chaos, emptiness, and darkness in the Creation Story to similarly formless, void, and dark situations in her story.
3. Learn limbo—the place between two states—is a stop on the journey, a place of rest that's part of the process, not a dead end.
4. Regain her power and agency from the enemy by discerning the difference between the healthy darkness that is God's Secret Place and the oppressive darkness trying to overtake her.
5. Live the life she was meant to live by joining God in His creation of her life, environment, community, and world after hers has been destroyed.



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