

Hang On, Let Go: What to Do When Your Dreams Are Shattered and Life Is Falling Apart

Frank Viola

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Frank Viola's book *Hang On, Let Go*, is about infusing one's Christian spirituality with real guts.

Viola draws on the tough-minded perspective of the New Testament's James in his efforts to inspire people during hard times. When hope feels lost, the text stresses two quintessential religious practices: holding tight to God, and being willing to let go of everything else. The trick, Viola argues, is to look at "your pain from the vantage point of Christ's sufferings." Here, troubles are never just about the problem at hand—they're also about "your relationship with Jesus."

Written as a series of brief reflections, the book covers topics like the stages of a crisis and divine delays. Together, they form an inspiring body of spiritual truths that draw on biblical lines, as when Viola nods to the psalms to reference cleansing waters, and to Job to discuss the endurance of suffering. Viola's is a staccato, healing theological perspective: "Detach yourself from the outcome. Surrender it to God. But hold on to the Lord. Fiercely."

The book also involves dashes of lived experience as it moves beyond happy, clappy evangelism to be honest about how challenging following Jesus can actually be. Viola alludes to his own struggles and trials; he mentions feeling like he was holding on by a greased fingernail as he avoided the abyss of despair.

As hope-filled as it is challenging, Viola's work acknowledges that letting go includes being willing to abandon any dear expectations about the future. This helps to make *Hang On, Let Go* a fantastic self-help work for Christians who are facing desperate times.

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