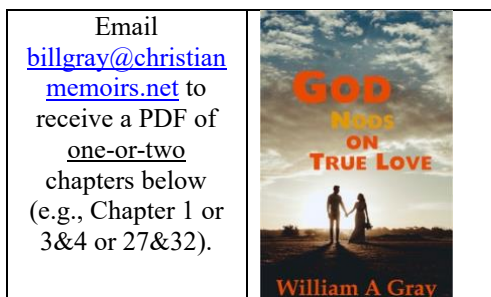


## Chapter Overviews from *God Nods on True Love* –

by William A. Gray (2021):



### Chapter 1. Mission: Impossible

California born-and-bred, sun-bronzed Marg pleads for her best friend Cindy Lou to help her, once again: “California guys are just leaping lechers! Trying to leap all over me, lusting after me. All I want is one good one.” Cindy Lou listens for hours, like many times before, feeling like an enabler because Marg rejects Cindy Lou’s advice, again. Except this: leave California and go to Virginia to teach at Liberty Falls College, on an upcoming sabbatical.

As Marg departs with new hope, Cindy Lou prays for her – and for herself: “for husband who would share three love affairs with her: an *agape*-love commitment as a lifelong marriage partner, a *philia*-love companion who enjoys the same spiritual, mental and physical activities, and an *erotic* lover for her pent-up passion. Three love affairs in that exact order of importance.”

Marg departs, trusting in Fate or Good Fortune as described in her favorite *Gestalt Prayer*:

*I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you, and I am I, and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it can't be helped."*

### Chapter 2. Mission: Possible Begins

Vivacious Marg bounces into the Rec Center Gym to play pickleball and prospect for a new kind of man. Her sun-bronzed beauty attracts everyone’s attention, especially the Local Pickleball Ambassador: Rod introduces her to other pickleballers, especially to his sister Bib and best friend JT.

That night, JT phones Rod. “You *lucky dog*! Fate just gave you the pick of the litter.... That new eye-candy ... Marg ... that fate brought to our little town from California.... Wish I were still Pickleball Ambassador so I could’ve met her first ... you *lucky dog*.”

Before going to sleep, Rod asks his little dog Shep: “Is Marg a *God Nod* for you and me, Shep? But, don’t get too excited. She might just be a *California gal* who is only passing through our little town.” [Before his wife Mary died, Rod shared his thoughts with her. Afterward, he talks to Shep, who always listens.]

### Chapter 3. Improving Prospects

Marg asks Rod to coach her because she’s a newbie to pickleball. She quickly learns because of his coaching techniques, and asks to be his pickleball partner: *If we play well as pickleball partners, this awesome man might become more than just a prospect.* Rod was also thinking the same things about her: *Is this a God Nod or what?*

Later, at Serious Coffee, Rod and Marg discuss their past and present, and future hopes. They disclose their grieving after their spouses tragically died.

Rod wonders: *Why does Marg still grieve Mike’s passing so strongly?*

Marg wonders: *Why does Rod not grieve Mary’s passing like I grieve for Mike?*

Both wonder: *Have I been spoiled? Can I be spoiled again ... by someone else?*

### Chapter 4. Not Peggy Sue

At a pickleball picnic, Rod asks Marg what her full name: Margaret Susan Campbell, of Scottish Highlander heritage. He asks: “Were you ever called *Peggy Sue*, instead of Margaret Susan?” Because Rod’s favorite song was *Peggy Sue* by Buddy Holly: “Other kids stopped calling me *four eyes* after I started wearing black horn-rimmed glasses and *looked cool*, like Buddy. Doing this, plus *singing* Buddy’s songs, helped me get through adolescence.”

Unphased, Marg won’t let Rod call her *Peggy Sue* and gives him ‘that look’ whenever he starts singing.

### Chapter 5. Are You the One?

Marg learns more about Rod from JT, and journals this: “Why are we so different? Do we have a future together? Only Fate and time will tell.” Rod tells Shep: “I’m going to do everything I can to keep her here with us, Shep. If Marg isn’t the right woman to *replace* our Mary, who can?” [He knows there is no other prospect in small-town Liberty Falls. So does JT.]

### Chapter 6. From Highest High to Lowest Low

To entice Marg to remain in Virginia with him, Rod starts escorting her on a *Virginia Bucket List* of exciting adventures (National Zoo, Skyline Drive, etc.) that she cannot experience in her beloved California.

She asks Rod to take her to The Holocaust Museum to see exhibits showing how Nazis exterminated her kinfolk. She sees countless *black-and-white* images: photos

and movies of atrocities, and lists of eyeglasses and gold crowns from teeth. For the first time, she understands why *The Medium is the Massage* [Marshall McLuhan's famous book] as she is impacted (*massaged*) by all the *black-and-white* images she sees everywhere she turns. Marg is so devastated that she clings to Rod like no other man before, feeling closer to Rod than ever, protected by this new kind of man.

### **Chapter 7. Refocusing**

To lift Marg's spirits, Rod escorts her to the Library of Congress to see books her English Literature colleagues and she have written, which are copyrighted and housed there.

Next day, they watch the sun rise on romance-inspiring Kissing Bridge, which locals believe has promoted happy-ever-after marriages.

### **Chapter 8. Giving Thanks**

Marg flies Cindy Lou to Liberty Falls for Thanksgiving. She wants Rod to coach Cindy Lou to play pickleball and spend time with her, so her trusted friend can provide honest impressions of Rod.

To entertain dinner guests, Marg and Cindy Lou dramatize how they cooked a California Tofu Turkey with Vegan Stuffing, clowning around like Lucille Ball and Ethel Mertz would do on an *I Love Lucy* TV show. Everyone is impressed, especially Rod – and JT.

### **Chapter 9. Getting to Know You**

From Cindy Lou, Rod learns about Marg's past as a *happy hippy* and Cindy Lou's failed attempt at this (because of her upbringing, born-and-bred in Virginia).

That night, Rod whispers to Shep, "Is it a *God Nod* for Marg's best friend to hail from Virginia?"

### **Chapter 10. Seeking Independence**

Rod and Bib take Marg on more Virginia Bucket List adventures: Colonial Williamsburg where American Independence was promoted, the National Cathedral that required over one hundred years to build, and decorating a float for the Liberty Falls Christmas Parade – adventures not possible in California.

At the Pickleballers Annual Christmas Party, Marg's dancing style *clashes* with Rod's and she *storms away* in front of all his friends.

Rod contacts Cindy Lou on Facetime, and looks so downcast that she tries to lift his spirits by jesting – *If you ain't who you is, then who you is, is who you ain't* – before giving Rod her honest advice.

### **Chapter 11. Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

Marg flies Cindy Lou to Liberty Falls for Christmas. Rod and Bib take them to *Handel's Sign Along Messiah* at The Kennedy Center.... That night, Rod whispers emerging concerns to little Shep: "What *God Nods* are occurring? Marg didn't sing-

along with as much spirit as Cindy Lou – why not? Does Marg know the reason for the season? Wish you could tell me, Shep.”

### Chapter 12. Christmas Memories

After bow-sawing down two Christmas trees, Marg insists Rod and Cindy Lou decorate a tree so she can report more honest impressions about Rod. Marg and Bib decorate another tree so she can ask: “Is there anything about Rod you would change if you were not his sister, but his steady girlfriend ... or his wife?” Marg doesn’t like Bib’s answer.

### Chapter 13. Do Us Proud

The foursome finish decorating the Christmas float, then join others already wrapping presents at the Youth Center, where Marg muses to herself: *Rod doesn’t have a wandering eye ... fidelity is important to him. But, he sure needs my creative gift-wrapping instruction.*

Rod was thinking: *Jesus came to earth as God’s Perfect Gift to all mankind, gift-wrapped in flesh as a little baby – instead of arriving as a conquering, earthly king.* [Cindy Lou has the same thoughts.]

### Chapter 14. The Reason for the Season

At Liberty Falls Bible Fellowship, Rod narrates *The Christmas Story* from the Bible, interspersed with Christmas Hymns.

That night, this occurs, most unexpectedly: “As much as Bib liked Marg and hoped she and Rod’s relationship would develop further, Bib loved Rod even more, and thus disclosed her honest impressions.....”

Disheartened, Rod mumbles to Shep: “Marg doesn’t grasp how Jesus’ birth was God’s special Christmas gift to the whole world, like Cindy Lou does. What does this mean in the bigger picture?”

### Chapter 15. Christmas Day

When snow starts falling heavily, Rod and Marg start playing in the snow. Until, she pulls away and dazes off into space, mumbling words over and over from her favorite hippy-era ‘love songs’ as she suddenly leaves:

<p>“I’ve looked at love from both sides now From win and lose and still somehow It’s love’s illusions I recall I really don’t know love at all” ~Judy Collins [<i>Both Sides, Now</i>]</p>	<p>“I came upon a child of God He was walkin’ along the road And I asked him, I said “Where’re you going?” I’m going to try an’ get my soul free ... we got to get ourselves back to the garden ...” ~ Joni Mitchell [<i>Woodstock</i>]</p>
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### Chapter 16. True Love Ways

Next day, Marg phones Rod: “Please come over” and hangs up. For hours, she asks Rod to explain what these two songs mean, especially “love’s illusions” and “child of God” and “get my soul free ... back to the garden.” For, these words keep haunting her, bringing back memories of her hippy past. Rod describes the *learn-unlearn-relearn* process he went through to leave those same memories behind and become a follower of Jesus. And wonders if Marg truly caught what he just taught.

That night, Marg journals: “Do I have to *unlearn* my do-my-own-thing lifestyle and *relearn* something else to find my garden, like Rod did? Do I have to move out of my beloved California where this free spirit feels so well suited? Do I have to *relearn* a new kind of love – *agape*-love – and if so, how? Where is our relationship going? Only Fate knows.”

### **Chapter 17. If You Go to San Francisco**

The New Year begins with Rod returning to San Francisco on business. Marg wants him to have some fun in her beloved Sunshine State, so he will come to love it as she does. “I’ll let Cindy Lou know you’re coming so she can be your Tour Guide for a *California Bucket List* of activities I’ll email her.”

After doing fun-filled activities together, Rod asks Cindy Lou to explain the *Hippie Movement* and learns these *radical hippies* burnt draft cards and the American Flag, and shut down campuses, to oppose The Establishment and Traditions. In contrast, *happy hippys* like Marg just wanted to be left alone to do-my-own-thing.

### **Chapter 18. Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair**

While traveling to Berkeley, Rod learns Cindy Lou was also inspired by Buddy Holly to be less self-conscious about wearing glasses as a youth. They discuss their shared Scottish Lowlander heritage and how *irreconcilable differences* have elevated the divorce rate to 50%.

While touring the University of California–Berkeley, they discuss how yesteryear’s *radical hippies* became university professors who indoctrinate students with their *politically correct* ideology.

That night, Rod realizes that the east-west lifestyles of Marg and him are too far apart to bridge. He recalls how the prophet Samuel chose a little shepherd boy named David: *People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart*. Rod decides to know Cindy Lou’s heart more.

At her home in San Ramon, Cindy Lou journals many positive impressions of Rod she won’t share with Marg.

### **Chapter 19. More Brain Picking**

While Rod is out west, Marg picks Bib’s brain, then JT’s brain, to learn more about Rod and his deceased wife Mary.

That night, Marg journals lots of questions: “Can Rod be the *one* for me? Can I be the *one* for him? Can we effortlessly click like Rod and Mary? Like JT and I seem to?”

JT ponders questions he hasn’t considered before because of his life-long loyalty to Rod: “*If Marg and Rod don’t get together, could Marg and I? What will this do to our life-long friendship?*”

## **Chapter 20. Bah, Humbug in February**

At the Pickleballers Valentine Party, Marg again publicly *storms* off the dance floor to show Rod how displeased *she* is with *his* dancing style. In silence, Rod drives Marg home.... and seeks no advice.

That night for the first time, Rod and Shep both know something is dreadfully wrong. Shep’s tail does not wag that night. Rod utters just two words, *Bah, Humbug!* while cuddling loyal Shep and longing for a *God Nod* he will understand.

## **Chapter 21. Skiing Squaw Valley**

Rod returns to San Francisco to work, and spends the weekend with Cindy Lou, skiing at Squaw Valley. She uses his coaching techniques so that he learns skiing basics.... this impresses both of them as he ‘skis’ down the ski hill, better and better amidst much laughter.

Back in Liberty Falls, Marg asks JT what went wrong, but can’t understand his answer. That night, she ponders these words from a favorite book, *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran:

*“If you love somebody, let them go, for if they return, they were always yours. And if they don’t, they never were.”*

She vows: “I’m going to keep our flame alive! A quitter never wins and a winner never quits!”

## **Chapter 22. A Quitter Never Wins**

Marg hangs out with JT and Bib to learn how to get along with Rod: “More than pleased to impress you with my brother’s qualities,” Bib beams.

That night, Marg journals an unexpected insight: “I had no idea JT could be dead serious one moment AND so funny the next. He can focus like a professional engineer does AND mess about in a light-hearted way. He seems to like me more than I know. Must find out more! Hope my fertile mind isn’t creating complications for all of us.”

## **Chapter 23. You’re the One I’m Yearning For**

Rod returns from California, and discusses with Marg why they are not good matches, but Cindy Lou is right for Rod, and JT is right for Marg.

Rod flies back to California to spend Spring Break with Cindy Lou. While dancing in Castroville, Rod declares, “I think we are experiencing a *God Nod* just for us.... I did not come from the east coast to the west coast ... to be here right now ... in this particular town ... dancing with you as my partner ... because of fate or good fortune.”

Cindy Lou agrees.

## Chapter 24. Side-by-Side

While driving south, Cindy Lou asks Rod to sing to her like Buddy Holly sang to his *Cindy Lou* [the original name of Buddy’s famous record that was renamed *Peggy Sue*].

As their Tour Guide, Cindy Lou takes Rod on many fun-loving adventures. That night, in their separate motel rooms each recalls the attractions they most enjoyed, but mostly their growing attraction to each other in so many ways. Rod falls asleep humming to his Cindy Lou: *Oh how my heart yearns for you.*

In her journal, Cindy Lou writes: “Good night, *Rod* and *Buddy* and *Tom Sawyer* and *Cool Hand Luke* and *Fonzi* – and *Mate*. What engaging sidekicks you all are.” [For Rod had personified all these characters during their adventures.]

## Chapter 25. A God Nods Saves the Day

On a San Diego beach, Rod eyes Cindy Lou’s physical figure standing out against the setting sun. He sees her beautiful *physical figure* and her *inner beauty* alternating from *figure* to *ground*, and vice versa. He realizes Cindy Lou’s *outer* and *inner* beauty will always alternate as *figure-ground* in his eyes. For, she was just as outstanding *outwardly* as *inwardly* – and *inwardly* as *outwardly*.

Later that day, Cindy Lou fails as their Tour Guide, getting them lost inside the mazes of the San Diego Zoo. Flustered, she bolts away from Rod ... until a *God Nod* saves the day.

## Chapter 26. A Re-do at the Zoo

Next day, Cindy Lou and Rod enjoy laugh-filled adventures at the San Diego Zoo, which draw them closer. Rod reviews all the *God Nods* that brought them together, at this time, in this place. As a College Math Instructor, Cindy Lou says: “It’s mathematically impossible this *just happened* because of random chance or fate.”

Feeling increasingly comfortable in Rod’s presence, Cindy Lou confides what no one else knows: she wants to stop being a Math and Physics Instructor at San Ramon College because colleagues are attacking her Christian morals and worldview – and she doesn’t know what to say or do. Rod offers to coach her to *pose questions* that make them defend what they say. She quips:

“What if I don’t master this skill, Coach?”

“We’ll just keep driving up to Canada.”

“What if it still doesn’t happen?”

“Have you ever driven to Alaska?” he jested to lift her spirits.

## Chapter 27. Faith or Science?

Rod reassures Cindy Lou that her background as a highly competent College Instructor of Math and Physics will enable her to pose difficult questions for her attackers to answer: about truth, morality, evolution, the Big Bang, and the worldview called Naturalism. Rod also reassures her that her Biblical knowledge and Christian faith are compatible with what scientists discover. He describes how the pioneers of science investigated what God created in order to understand Supernatural God's intelligent design and the Intelligent Designer of everything that exists.

While driving north, they practice: Rod makes attacking assertions and Cindy Lou poses questions that will make attackers defend what they say. To intersperse needed levity, they banter and jest, and mimic doing a *brain dump* as they press their foreheads together, wanting osmosis to interchange their thoughts.

## Chapter 28. "A" or "Not-A"

Rod and Cindy Lou practice more "Q&A" interactions such as: "When someone keeps insisting that humans evolved, what will you say?"

"I'll ask three questions they cannot answer with actual evidence:

- How did BOTH the first human male and first female evolve at the same time?

- How did fully functioning reproductive capability evolve so that human offspring survived the very first time?

- How did non-living chemical goo evolve into living humans?"

Rod occasionally wisecracks – like this: "Which came first: the chicken or the egg?" Cindy Lou confidently responds to this age-old question:

"The chicken was created first. God designed into the chicken the capability to lay eggs that can only hatch into chickens. Chicken eggs have at least twelve components, which are *all* required in order to reproduce a fully functioning chicken. Evolution cannot explain this."

They also discuss findings from *The Human Genome Project* that support Creation as described in Genesis – but never support Naturalism's claim that evolution is true.

## Chapter 29. The Dancing Queen and King Return

Returning to Castroville, Rod and Cindy Lou dance together like they had done this countless times before. They stop when the DJ plays Elvis Presley's *That's When Your Heartaches Begin*. They discuss whether there is any truth in these words:

*"If you find your sweetheart in the arms of your best friend, that's when your heartaches begin ...*

*that's the end of your sweetheart, that's the end of your friend."*



Cindy Lou spoke first, “Rod, you know that Marg and I agreed that she is not the right match for you, and I am.” They leave while discussing being life-long partners, dancing together through life.

### Chapter 30. True Love that Endures

Rod and Cindy Lou decide on new questions she could ask her attackers – like these:

- How do you know that is true?
- How did you come to this conclusion?

Cindy Lou practices asking questions after Rod makes assertions – like these: “Truth is relative. There are no absolutes!”

“I’ll ask: How do you know what you said is really true, if truth is relative?”

At Cindy Lou’s home, they reconfirm all the *God Nods*, which inspires Rod to ask: “Will you marry me, Cindy Lou Dunbar, for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, forsaking all others, until death parts us?” As he slipped an engagement ring on her finger, she proclaims, “Rod, if you had not asked me, I was going to ask you to be my Virginia Gentleman and helpmate forever.”

### Chapter 31. Celebrating Easter

On Easter Sunday, Cindy Lou drives Rod to her church to announce their engagement and to celebrate their first Easter together.

“Cindy Lou, do you mind if I tell you something?” Rod tried to muffle a giggle. Suspecting he was up to something, she wanted to find out. “Certainly.”

“You agree, we should start our marriage with total honesty?”

“I do,” she replied, feeling relieved and pleased he would say this.

“Then, please promise me you won’t laugh.”

“All right. I promise.” She half-hid a growing smile, again suspecting Rod was up to something.

“Well then, here goes ...” Rod paused ... and waited ... and waited ... until Cindy Lou said.

“It’s alright, Rod. You can tell me.”

“I’ve been told that I sing off-key.”

“So?” Caught off-guard, Cindy Lou’s voice was as puzzled as her look.

“Mary and Bib said they constantly prayed for me to *sing better*, that’s what they told me.”

“So?”

“I just want you to know ... that I prayed for each of them ... to *hear better*,” Rod giggled.

This triggered Cindy Lou’s wit, “I’ll do my best to *hear better than you sing*.”

“Can you hear *off-key*?”

“You sing it, Rod, and I’m pretty sure I’ll hear it.”

“My singing won’t just go in one ear and out the other, will it?”

“I’m pretty sure something between my ears will stop it.”

“So, if it stops, you’ll hear it?” He just couldn’t stop, nor could his growing giggle.

“Absolutely ... unless you’re singing *false soprano* ... my brain has a filter for that coming from a man.”

With a lowered voice he said, “Then, I’ll sing in my best Johnny Cash bass.”

“Then, I’ll pretend I’m June Carter and love your singing.”

“You will, June.”

“Yes, Johnny.”

“Why, June?”

“Because I love you.”

“But, do you love me more than June loved Johnny?”

“At least 3.1416 times more.” The math instructor cited the exact ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

“That’s exactly what I wanted to hear from you. Johnny never heard this from June.”

Their light-hearted bantering continues right up to their arrival at San Ramon Bible Fellowship. After the Service, Pastor Matthew announces their upcoming wedding, and everyone congratulates them, especially Cindy Lou’s Bible Study Group.

### Chapter 32. Game, Match, Love

To ensure everyone remains best friends, Bib assembles everyone and reviews what has occurred. After each person agrees, everyone starts planning a June wedding for Cindy Lou and Rod.

Free-spirited Marg and JT imagine how Fate and Good Fortune will be with them on every new adventure as companions in California.

Rod and Cindy Lou thank God for one another and for more *God Nods* interventions they know will come – because: “*We know God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.*” (Romans 8:28)

NOTE: You can read what occurs next in *God Nods on Truth*, the second book in the *God Nods Trilogy*. Email me at [billgray@christianmemoirs.net](mailto:billgray@christianmemoirs.net) to be alerted when it is published.

Email [billgray@christianmemoirs.net](mailto:billgray@christianmemoirs.net) to receive a PDF of one-or-two chapters below (e.g., Chapter 1 or 3&4 or 27&32).