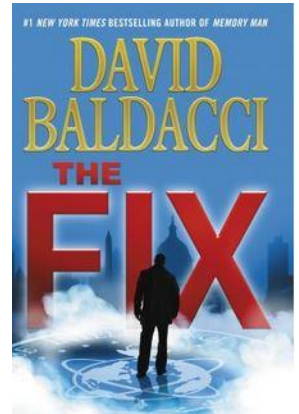


## The Mystery Novel of Life

I just finished reading the most recent David Baldacci book. Like all of his fictional novels it is a fast-paced adventure mystery, packed with surprises that keep you in suspense. Just when you get comfortable with a plot line there is a dramatic twist of events. A new threat is sprung on the central characters, whose mission it is to figure out “who done it,” and why. There are times when the good guys are literally fighting for their lives as they get closer to solving the case. The clandestine bad guys are trying to stop those seeking the truth. As is the case with many mystery novels, a murder happens very early in the story. That gets our attention.

We, too, are seeking the truth: the truth is God’s story. It began with creation. From the time mankind was introduced to the scene we have resisted giving in to God’s direction. The world was in continuous chaos when God brought in the star character to help unravel the mystery. God commissioned His son to be our perfect example and His messenger. Here is where the plot thickens. The murder occurs when Jesus is put to death on the cross. We think we know “who done it,” as we blame Herod and Pontius Pilate for the crime. To confuse things, they were following the crowd. Massive crowds all said to “crucify him.” Now who do you blame? Symbolically, we were part of that crowd. Just as the crowd said to crucify him we have turned away from Him, too. It is called sin. A man innocent of any sin was murdered for our sins, yours and mine. As crazy as it sounds, that is a true statement. Jesus died for you and me. And that is just the introduction to the story.



We’re living our chapters of the book now. Almost every day we experience the twists and turns of life. There are plenty of highs, such as the birth of a child or a loving marriage. We are surrounded by supportive friends and sometimes take wonderful vacations, to see God’s broader creation for ourselves. But there are the bad surprises that come when we least expect it. It may be a sudden illness or accident that challenges us physically. It may be the loss of a loved one, a job or perhaps a relationship gone bad. The list is endless. In the mystery novel the lead characters somehow make a miraculous escape from what appears to be a doomsday situation. God does that for us, too. He brings us through the tough times and because of it, we are stronger and more resilient.

When I read mystery novels I pay attention to the little details, as they are game changers. There is a reason why an author inserts a seemingly obscure event in the story. At the time we have no idea that it will play a key role to solve the mystery and may even be a turning point of the story. The same can be true of setbacks in our life. Every experience, negative or positive, becomes a preparation for what is to come. Even though it may be uncomfortable or bring you pain, cherish the opportunity to benefit from a learning experience as the story of God’s plan plays out in your life.

As a person of faith we know the ending will be great. In most novels the good guys win at the end of the story. As people of faith, we know that God will win, too, and we can be part of the story. Our part in God’s victory is not because we are good guys, but because we are believers in Him. Even with its ups and downs, seek the truth of God’s promises as you live out the novel of your life. Sorry to spoil the ending – God wins. Enjoy the ride.

**Scripture:** *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Question:** When things aren’t going your way, can you bring it into your mind that you can grow from the difficult situation?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father. Life is full of twists and turns, of good times and bad. We know there will be highs and lows to our life, but we know you are with us, helping us through the difficult times. Let us be resilient because you give us strength. Amen.