

# HOW TO WALK IN YOUR CALLING WITHOUT FEAR

OVERCOME DOUBT AND STEP  
INTO GOD'S ASSIGNMENT



## DBA MINISTRIES

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# Introduction: God Still Uses Fearful People

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." - 2 Timothy 1:7

If you picked up this book, chances are you're hearing something deep within your spirit—a divine whisper, a holy nudge, a persistent pull toward something greater than your current reality. Maybe it comes in quiet moments of prayer, or perhaps it interrupts your daily routine with an urgency you can't explain. You know God is calling you to something, but there's just one problem: you're terrified.

Let me start by telling you something that might surprise you: that fear doesn't disqualify you. In fact, it might be the very proof that God is about to do something extraordinary through you.

## The Myth of the Fearless Saint

Somewhere along the way, we bought into a lie. We believed that God only uses the confident, the qualified, and the courageous. We look at the giants of faith—the preachers on platforms, the missionaries in foreign fields, the business leaders transforming industries for Christ—and we assume they must have always been fearless. We imagine they woke up one day with unshakeable confidence and perfect clarity about their calling.

But here's what we miss when we put God's chosen vessels on pedestals: Moses stuttered and begged God to send someone else. Gideon was hiding in a winepress when the angel called him a "mighty warrior." Esther trembled at the thought of approaching the king. Peter denied Jesus three times. And Paul? He described himself as the chief of sinners.

If God waited for perfect, fearless people to accomplish His purposes, He'd still be waiting.

## What Is a Calling?

Before we go any further, let's get clear on what we mean by "calling." Your calling isn't just about vocational ministry—though it certainly can be. Your calling is the unique way God has designed you to glorify Him and serve others. It's the divine assignment written into your DNA before you took your first breath.

Your calling might be:

- Starting a business that operates on Kingdom principles
- Teaching children with the love of Christ
- Creating art that points people to eternity
- Leading in the marketplace with integrity
- Ministering to the broken and forgotten
- Writing words that heal and inspire

- Building families that reflect God's design
- Pioneering solutions to societal problems

The specifics matter less than this truth: You were created on purpose, for a purpose. And that purpose is bigger than your fear.

## **The Calling Contradiction**

Here's where it gets interesting. Almost everyone I've met who is walking powerfully in their calling will tell you the same thing: they didn't feel ready. They weren't confident. They battled imposter syndrome, insecurity, and sometimes paralyzing fear.

In fact, the presence of fear might be one of the clearest indicators that you're on the verge of something significant. Why? Because the enemy of your soul has no reason to intimidate you if you're not a threat to his kingdom. Fear often shows up strongest right before breakthrough.

Think about it. Would you be afraid to speak if your words had no power? Would you hesitate to step out if your obedience wouldn't make waves? Would you question your qualifications if God wasn't preparing to qualify you for something beyond your natural ability?

Your fear might actually be evidence of your calling, not proof against it.

## **Why This Book?**

Over the next seven chapters, you're going to meet some remarkable people. But I want to be clear—they're not remarkable because they're superhuman. They're remarkable because they're just like you: flawed, afraid, and sometimes failing. The difference is they learned a secret that changed everything.

They discovered that God doesn't call the qualified—He qualifies the called.

You'll meet Christine Caine, who discovered her adoption as an adult and could have spiraled into an identity crisis. Instead, she founded one of the world's most effective anti-trafficking organizations. You'll hear from Nick Vujicic, born without limbs, who was told he'd never have a normal life. Today, he preaches to millions about the God who makes all things possible.

You'll walk with Sarah Jakes Roberts through her journey from teen pregnancy and public shame to becoming one of the most powerful voices in this generation. You'll sit with Jeremy Camp as he buried his young wife and wondered if he'd ever sing again—then watched God use his deepest pain to touch millions.

These aren't superhero stories. They're stories of ordinary people who said yes to an extraordinary God, even when their knees were shaking.

## **The Journey Ahead**

This book isn't just about inspiration—though you'll find plenty of that. It's about transformation. It's about moving from paralysis to purpose, from fear to faith, from knowing you're called to actually walking in that calling.

In each chapter, you'll discover:

- A real story of someone who overcame fear to fulfill their calling
- Biblical principles that anchor their journey (and yours)
- Practical steps you can take today
- Prayers and declarations to strengthen your faith
- Action items to move you forward

And because I believe in the power of consistent action, this book concludes with a 90-day breakthrough program designed to launch you into your calling with boldness and clarity.

## **A Personal Word for You**

Before we begin this journey together, I need you to hear something. That thing you're afraid of? That calling that seems too big, too bold, too impossible for someone like you? That's exactly where God does His best work.

He specializes in using the unlikely, the unqualified, and the uncertain. He delights in taking our weakness and displaying His strength. He's not looking for perfection—He's looking for surrender.

You might be thinking, "But you don't know my past. You don't know what I've done, where I've failed, how far I've fallen." You're right, I don't. But God does. And He's calling you anyway.

Maybe you're afraid you'll fail. Join the club—every person in this book felt the same way. Maybe you're worried about what people will think. So was Moses. Maybe you feel unworthy. So did Isaiah. Maybe you think you're too young, too old, too broke, too broken. God has heard it all before, and His response remains the same: "My grace is sufficient for you."

## **The Time Is Now**

Here's what I know to be true: You didn't pick up this book by accident. In a world full of distractions and endless content, something drew you here. I believe that something is Someone—the same God who formed you in your mother's womb, who knew you before the foundation of the world, who has plans to prosper you and not to harm you.

He's been preparing you for this moment longer than you realize. Every experience, every struggle, every victory and defeat has been shaping you for your divine assignment. And now, He's inviting you to step into it.

Yes, you might be afraid. Yes, you might feel unqualified. Yes, you might have a thousand reasons why someone else would be better suited for whatever God is calling you to do.

But here's the beautiful truth: God doesn't make mistakes. If He's calling you, He will equip you. If He's sending you, He will go with you. If He's chosen you, He will empower you.

The only question is: Will you say yes?

Over the coming pages, you'll discover that you're in good company. Every giant of faith started as someone small, scared, and uncertain. But they took the first step. Then another. And another. And before they knew it, they were walking in the fullness of their calling, watching God do through them what only God could do.

That's your invitation. That's your destiny. That's your time.

Welcome to the journey of walking in your calling without fear. It won't always be easy, but I promise you this: it will be worth it.

Let's begin.

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*Prayer: Father God, I thank You for the person holding this book. I thank You that You have called them by name, that You have a purpose and plan for their life that is good and perfect. I pray that as they read these pages, fear would lose its grip, faith would rise like the dawn, and courage would flood their heart. Show them that You don't need their perfection—just their willingness. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Chapter 1: Christine Caine - Overcoming Insecurity and Abuse

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." - Jeremiah 1:5*

The manila envelope sat on Christine Caine's kitchen table like an unexploded bomb. At 33 years old, she thought she knew who she was—a Greek woman from Sydney, Australia, with a passion for Jesus and a growing ministry. But the contents of that envelope would shatter everything she believed about her identity and send her on a journey that would ultimately free millions.

"I remember my hands shaking as I opened it," Christine recalls. The adoption certificate inside bore her name, but everything else was foreign. Unknown mother. Unknown father. Unknown medical history. Unknown heritage. In one moment, three decades of assumed identity crumbled like a house of cards.

For someone who had built her life on knowing who she was in Christ, suddenly not knowing who she was in the natural felt like standing on quicksand. The questions rushed in like a flood: Who am I really? Why was I given away? Was I unwanted? Am I who I thought I was?

But Christine's story doesn't begin or end with that envelope. It begins with a girl who grew up in an immigrant family in Australia, experiencing abuse that would have destroyed most people's ability to trust, let alone lead. It continues through years of feeling like an outsider—too Greek for the Australians, too Australian for the Greeks, too passionate for the reserved, too bold for the traditional. And it culminates in a woman who would stand before world leaders, rescue trafficking victims, and inspire millions to find their purpose despite their past.

## The Early Years: When Shame Speaks Louder Than Purpose

Christine Bakalakos (her maiden name) grew up in a working-class Greek immigrant family in Sydney. From the outside, they looked like any other family trying to make their way in a new country. But behind closed doors, Christine endured sexual abuse that began when she was just three years old and continued for years.

"I learned early that the world wasn't safe," she shares. "I learned to build walls, to protect myself, to trust no one fully. When you're a child and the people who should protect you become sources of pain, it rewires something deep inside you."

The abuse left scars that ran deeper than skin. It whispered lies that would take decades to fully silence: You're damaged goods. You're worthless. No one will want you if they knew the truth. You're too broken to be used by God.

These lies became the soundtrack of her childhood and teenage years. While other kids worried about grades and friendships, Christine battled shame that threatened to suffocate her dreams before they could even form. She excelled academically—perhaps trying to prove her worth through achievement—but inside, she felt like she was dying.

"I thought if I could just be good enough, smart enough, successful enough, maybe I could outrun the shame," she reflects. "But shame is a relentless pursuer. It doesn't care about your achievements. It wants your identity."

## **Finding Faith: When Light Breaks Through**

At 22, Christine encountered Jesus in a way that changed everything. It wasn't a subtle shift—it was a radical transformation. For the first time in her life, she heard a voice louder than shame. It was the voice of her Creator, calling her chosen, loved, and set apart for a purpose.

"When I gave my life to Christ, it was like someone turned on the lights in a room I didn't know was dark," she explains. "Suddenly, I could see that my past didn't have to define my future. But knowing that in your head and believing it in your heart? That's a journey."

Christine threw herself into church life with the same intensity she'd applied to everything else. She served, she studied, she grew. But even as she began teaching Bible studies and leading youth groups, the old voices would resurface. Who do you think you are? If they knew your past, they'd never let you lead. You're playing a role you were never meant to play.

The enemy has a way of using our deepest wounds as weapons against our calling. For Christine, every step toward her purpose felt like a battle against her past. But she kept walking, kept serving, kept saying yes to opportunities that terrified her.

"I learned that courage isn't the absence of fear," she says. "Courage is feeling the fear and doing it anyway because you know God has called you to it."

## **The Envelope: When Everything You Know Becomes Unknown**

By the time Christine was 33, she had married her husband Nick, moved into full-time ministry, and was beginning to see the fruit of years of faithful service. She was teaching at conferences, writing curriculum, and watching God use her story to bring healing to others. The shame of her past, while not completely silent, had at least been muffled by the louder voice of purpose.

Then came the envelope.

Christine's brother called with news that would upend everything: while handling some government paperwork, he'd discovered documents indicating Christine had been adopted. The family secret, kept for over three decades, was suddenly exposed.

"I felt like I was falling," Christine remembers. "Everything I thought I knew about myself—my heritage, my medical history, my identity—was suddenly a question mark. It wasn't just about being adopted. It was about being lied to, about having such a fundamental part of my identity hidden from me."

For many people, this would have been the breaking point. After surviving abuse, fighting through shame, and building a life of purpose, to have the very foundation of your identity shaken could have sent everything crumbling. Christine spent days wrestling with God, with anger, with a grief she couldn't quite name.

But in that wrestling, something powerful happened. God began to speak to her about identity in a way she'd never understood before.

## **The Revelation: Your History Doesn't Determine Your Destiny**

"God began to show me that I had been building my identity on the wrong foundation," Christine shares. "Yes, I knew I was a child of God. But underneath that, I was still holding onto earthly markers of identity—my family name, my Greek heritage, my natural history. God was inviting me to a deeper level of freedom."

She began to study Scripture with new eyes, seeing how God consistently chose people with questionable backgrounds, unknown origins, and complicated histories:

- Moses was adopted into Egyptian royalty but was actually a Hebrew slave's son
- Esther was an orphan who became a queen
- Jesus himself was born under scandalous circumstances, with questions about his parentage following him throughout his ministry

"I realized that God often obscures our natural identity so He can reveal our spiritual destiny," Christine explains. "If I had always known I was adopted, would I have had the confidence to step into ministry? If I had known my biological parents had given me away, would I have believed I was chosen by God? Sometimes God protects us from information until we're strong enough in Him to handle it."

## **The Birth of A21: When Personal Pain Becomes Global Purpose**

As Christine processed her adoption, God began connecting dots she couldn't have seen before. Her experience of abuse. Her journey through shame. Her questions about identity and worth. Her discovery of being "unwanted" by her biological parents. It all started to form a picture of preparation for something bigger than personal healing.

During a trip to Greece with Nick, Christine noticed posters of missing children everywhere. When she asked about them, she learned about the horrific reality of human trafficking—modern-day slavery happening in her parents' homeland and around the world. As she researched more, the statistics overwhelmed her: millions of people trafficked, bought and sold like property, stripped of their identity and worth.

"I couldn't shake the parallel," she says. "These trafficking victims were experiencing on a massive scale what I had experienced personally—abuse, shame, stolen identity, being treated as less than human. And I knew God was calling me to do something about it."

But the fear was immediate and intense. Who was she to take on something so big? She wasn't a lawyer or a police officer. She didn't have experience in international justice. She was just a Bible teacher from Australia with a complicated past.

The voices of inadequacy roared: You're not qualified for this. You'll fail. You'll make things worse. Stay in your lane. Teach your Bible studies and leave the big problems to bigger people.

## **The Decision: Qualified by the Called, Not Called by the Qualified**

"I remember the moment I had to decide," Christine recalls. "I was standing in my kitchen, and I felt God asking me a simple question: 'Christine, will you trust that I know what I'm doing?' Not 'Do you feel qualified?' Not 'Do you have a plan?' Just 'Will you trust me?'"

This is the pivotal moment in every calling—the moment when we have to decide if God's voice is louder than our fear. For Christine, years of healing and growth had led to this point. She could choose to let her past, her insecurities, and her lack of qualifications keep her silent. Or she could believe that the God who had rescued her from shame could use her to rescue others.

"I realized that God doesn't call the qualified—He qualifies the called," she says. "My job wasn't to be ready. My job was to be willing."

In 2008, Christine and Nick founded A21, a global anti-trafficking organization. They started with a big vision but no idea how to accomplish it. They faced criticism from people who said they were naive, that they didn't understand the complexity of the issue, that they should leave it to the experts.

"Every fear I'd ever had about not being enough came rushing back," Christine admits. "But I kept remembering Jeremiah 1:5—God knew me before I was formed in the womb. Before my biological parents gave me up, before my adoptive parents took me in, before the abuse, before the shame, before any of it—God knew me and set me apart for this purpose."

## **The Fruit: When Obedience Unleashes the Impossible**

Today, A21 operates in 18 locations across 13 countries. They've helped rescue thousands of trafficking victims, prosecute traffickers, and prevent countless more from being trafficked through education and awareness. What started as one woman's willingness to face her fears has become a global movement of abolitionists.

But Christine is quick to point out that the fruit didn't come without fierce battles against fear and insecurity along the way:

"Every new country we wanted to enter, I heard the voices: You don't understand their culture. Every time we faced opposition: You're in over your head. Every time a rescue operation was dangerous: You're putting people at risk with your inexperience. The enemy never stops trying to use our insecurities against our calling."

So how did she press through? Christine developed what she calls "spiritual disciplines for defeating insecurity":

**1. Anchoring Identity in Scripture, Not Circumstances** "I had to become obsessive about renewing my mind with God's Word. Every time insecurity whispered, I countered with Scripture. 'I am chosen' (Ephesians 1:4). 'I am God's workmanship' (Ephesians 2:10). 'I can do all things through Christ' (Philippians 4:13). I literally wrote verses on cards and carried them everywhere."

**2. Choosing Obedience Over Confidence** "I stopped waiting to feel confident and started choosing to be obedient. Confidence is often the fruit of obedience, not the prerequisite for it. Every time I did something scared, I grew a little stronger."

**3. Surrounding Herself with Faith-Builders** "Nick was crucial in this journey. When I wanted to shrink back, he pushed me forward. I also intentionally sought out people who had done hard things for God. Their stories reminded me that fear is normal but not final."

**4. Focusing on the One, Not the Overwhelming** "When I looked at the millions trafficked, I wanted to quit. It was too big. But when I focused on one girl who needed rescue, one survivor who needed aftercare, one community that needed education—suddenly it was doable. God doesn't call us to save the world. He calls us to faithful obedience in our assignment."

## **The Deeper Work: Healing That Enables Calling**

What many people don't realize about Christine's story is that stepping into her calling didn't instantly heal all her wounds. In many ways, the calling exposed wounds she didn't know were still bleeding.

"When you're rescuing girls from sexual exploitation, your own sexual abuse memories don't conveniently disappear," she shares vulnerably. "When you're fighting for the voiceless, your own voicelessness as a child resurfaces. God was calling me to minister from my pain while still healing from it."

This is a crucial understanding for anyone walking toward their calling while still working through their past: God doesn't wait for you to be fully healed before He uses you. Often, He heals you through using you.

Christine found that every girl they rescued was also rescuing her. Every survivor who found their voice helped her find hers more fully. Every trafficker brought to justice was justice for her own childhood self. God was weaving her pain into purpose in real-time.

"I used to think I had to be completely whole before God could use me," she reflects. "Now I know that God uses broken vessels best because His light shines brightest through the cracks."

## **The Multiplication: When Your Yes Releases Others**

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of Christine's story is how her willingness to overcome insecurity has released thousands of others to do the same. Through A21, ordinary people who feel unqualified are becoming abolitionists. Through her books and speaking, countless individuals are finding courage to face their calling despite their fears.

"Every time I speak, I meet people who say, 'If God can use you with your past, maybe He can use me with mine,'" Christine shares. "That's when I know every battle with insecurity was worth it. My willingness to be vulnerable about my journey gives others permission to begin theirs."

This is the kingdom principle we often miss: our individual obedience has exponential impact. When we overcome our insecurities to step into our calling, we don't just fulfill our own purpose—we create a pathway for others to fulfill theirs.

## **The Principle: God Qualifies the Called**

The foundational truth of Christine's story is this: God doesn't look for the qualified. He looks for the available. He doesn't search for the confident. He searches for the willing. He doesn't need our perfection. He needs our surrender.

Consider how God responded when people felt unqualified:

- To Moses' "I am not eloquent," God said, "I will be with your mouth" (Exodus 4:10-12)
- To Gideon's "I am the least in my family," God said, "I will be with you" (Judges 6:15-16)
- To Mary's "How can this be?" God said, "Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:34-37)

The pattern is consistent: God's presence is the qualification. His power working through our weakness is the strategy. As Paul discovered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

## **Your Turn: From Insecurity to Impact**

Christine's story isn't meant to make you think, "Wow, she's amazing." It's meant to make you think, "Wow, God is amazing, and if He can use her, He can use me."

Whatever is making you feel disqualified from your calling—your past, your pain, your lack of education, your personality, your mistakes—these are not obstacles to God. They're opportunities for Him to show His power.

But you have to make the same choice Christine made in her kitchen that day. Will you trust that God knows what He's doing? Will you believe that He who began a good work in you will complete it? Will you let His voice be louder than your insecurity?

## **Practical Steps: Moving from Insecurity to Obedience**

**1. Identify Your Core Insecurities** Take time to write down what makes you feel unqualified for your calling. Be specific. Is it your education? Your past? Your personality? Your experience? Get it all on paper so you can see what you're really battling.

**2. Find Your Counter-Scriptures** For each insecurity, find a Scripture that speaks truth. If you feel too damaged, claim Isaiah 61:3—"beauty for ashes." If you feel too weak, claim Joel 3:10—"Let the weak say I am strong." Write these on cards and review them daily.

**3. Take One Terrifying Step** What's one thing you could do this week that moves you toward your calling but terrifies you? Make the phone call. Send the email. Sign up for the class. Share your testimony. Do it afraid.

**4. Share Your Real Story** Find one trusted person and share the real story of what God is calling you to and what makes you feel unqualified. Let them speak faith over your fear. Often, our insecurities lose their power when we bring them into the light.

**5. Start Where You Are** You don't have to found a global organization tomorrow. What's the smallest version of your calling you could start today? If you're called to teach, start with a small group. If you're called to write, start with a blog. If you're called to lead, volunteer somewhere. Faithfulness in little things leads to greater things.

## **The Promise: Your Past is Your Preparation**

As Christine often says, "Your past is not your problem—it's your preparation. Your mess is not your shame—it's your message. Your test is not your defeat—it's your testimony."

God isn't looking for perfect people with pristine pasts and unshakeable confidence. He's looking for imperfect people who will trust His perfect love. He's not waiting for you to feel qualified. He's waiting for you to say yes.

The same God who took an abused, adopted girl from Sydney and used her to rescue thousands is looking at you right now. He sees your insecurities, your fears, your complicated past—and He says, "Perfect. I can work with that."

Your Jeremiah 1:5 moment is now. Before you were formed in the womb, He knew you. Before your parents, your past, or your pain, He set you apart. Before you felt qualified, He appointed you.

The only question is: Will you believe Him?

Christine did. And the world has never been the same.

Neither will yours when you do.

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*Prayer: Father, I thank You that You don't call the qualified but qualify the called. I bring You every insecurity, every fear, every reason I feel disqualified from my calling. I choose to believe that Your grace is sufficient, that Your power is made perfect in my weakness. Give me the courage to take the next step, even when I'm shaking. Use my past as preparation, my pain as purpose, my mess as a message. I trust that You know what You're doing, even when I don't. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I am chosen before the foundation of the world. I am appointed for such a time as this. My past does not disqualify me—it prepares me. I am qualified by the blood of Jesus and empowered by His Spirit. I will not let insecurity silence my calling. I will obey afraid and watch God do what only He can do. I am who God says I am, and I can do what God says I can do.*

## Chapter 2: Nick Vujicic - Born Without Limbs, Called to Preach

*"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." - 2 Corinthians 12:9*

The ultrasound technician's face went pale. She excused herself from the room, leaving Dushka Vujicic alone with the cold gel on her belly and a growing knot of dread in her chest. When the doctor entered, his expression confirmed her worst fears. Something was wrong with her baby.

"I'm sorry," he said gently. "Your son appears to be missing his limbs."

In that sterile hospital room in Melbourne, Australia, the Vujicic family's faith collided head-on with a reality they never could have imagined. Boris and Dushka were devout Christians, refugees from Yugoslavia who had built their life on the belief that God was good, that He had a plan, that He would protect and provide for His children. But how could a good God allow their son to be born without arms or legs?

On December 4, 1982, Nicholas James Vujicic entered the world with a rare condition called Tetra-amelia syndrome. He had no arms, no legs—just a small foot with two toes attached to his left hip. The medical staff didn't know what to say. His parents didn't know what to think. And for the first time in her life, Dushka refused to hold her baby.

"My mother was in shock," Nick recalls. "She had prayed for this child, prepared for this child, and when I arrived, she couldn't even look at me. She later told me it wasn't that she didn't love me—she was terrified of what kind of life I would have."

No one in that hospital room could have imagined that this limbless baby would one day stand before millions (yes, stand—more on that later), that he would become one of the most sought-after speakers in the world, that his story would inspire countless individuals to overcome their own limitations and pursue their God-given purpose. They couldn't see that this child, who seemed to embody limitation itself, would become living proof that God's power is made perfect in weakness.

But first, he would have to survive childhood. And that would prove to be its own miracle.

### **The Early Years: When Different Means Difficult**

Growing up without limbs in a world designed for people with them presented challenges most of us can't fathom. Simple tasks that others took for granted—brushing teeth, getting dressed, turning pages in a book—required innovative solutions and incredible determination.

"I learned early that I had two choices," Nick shares. "I could focus on what I didn't have, or I could maximize what I did have. I had my little foot, which I called my 'chicken drumstick.' I had my mind. I had my voice. And most importantly, I had parents who refused to let me use my disability as an excuse."

Boris and Dushka made a crucial decision early on: they would raise Nick as normally as possible. No special treatment. No lowered expectations. No pity. If his brother Aaron had to make his bed, so did Nick—even if it took him ten times longer to figure out how.

"My parents' tough love saved my life," Nick reflects. "They could have wrapped me in bubble wrap, done everything for me, protected me from every struggle. Instead, they equipped me to face the world as it was, not as we wished it was."

But even with supportive parents, the world outside their home was brutal. Children stared. Adults whispered. Some parents pulled their kids away as if his condition was contagious. The playground became a battlefield where Nick's differences made him an easy target.

"Kids would call me 'freak' and 'alien,'" he remembers. "They'd ask if my mom had done drugs or if God was punishing my family. One kid said I should be in a circus. Another said I'd be better off dead."

The words cut deeper than any physical wound could. By age eight, Nick was battling depression. By ten, he was contemplating suicide.

## **The Darkness: When Pain Seems Permanent**

"I remember lying in bed at night, praying that God would give me arms and legs," Nick shares. "I promised Him I'd do anything, be anything, if He would just make me normal. When I woke up each morning still limbless, I felt like God was rejecting me all over again."

The questions tortured him: Why did God make me this way? What's the point of living if I'll never be able to do what others can? Who could ever love someone like me? What kind of future could I possibly have?

At ten years old, Nick attempted to drown himself in the bathtub. As the water filled his lungs and darkness crept in, a single thought stopped him: the image of his parents at his funeral, blaming themselves for his death.

"I couldn't do that to them," he says. "They had already sacrificed so much for me. Even in my darkest moment, love pulled me back."

But surviving isn't the same as living. Nick spent the next several years existing in a gray space between despair and hope, going through the motions of life while battling the constant whisper that he was a mistake, a burden, a cosmic cruel joke.

The turning point came through an unexpected source: a janitor at his school.

## **The Revelation: When Purpose Breaks Through**

"Mr. Arnold was our school janitor, but he was also a man of deep faith," Nick recalls. "One day, he pulled me aside and said, 'Nick, God has a plan for your life. You may not see it now, but He's going to use you in ways you can't imagine.'"

The words seemed absurd. How could God use someone who couldn't even open a door without help? But Mr. Arnold persisted, sharing scripture after scripture about God's purpose in suffering, His strength in weakness, His beauty in brokenness.

One verse particularly pierced Nick's heart: John 9:3, where Jesus, speaking about a man born blind, said, "This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

"For the first time, I considered that maybe my disability wasn't a mistake," Nick shares. "Maybe it wasn't a punishment or an oversight. Maybe—just maybe—it was actually part of a bigger plan."

Nick began devouring Scripture with new eyes, finding hero after hero who God used not in spite of their limitations but because of them:

- Moses, who claimed he couldn't speak well, became God's mouthpiece to Pharaoh
- David, the smallest and youngest, defeated the giant
- Paul, with his "thorn in the flesh," became the greatest missionary in history

"I started to see a pattern," Nick explains. "God consistently chose the weak to shame the strong, the foolish to shame the wise, the broken to display His wholeness. What if my greatest limitation could become my greatest platform?"

## **The First Steps: When Calling Requires Courage**

At seventeen, Nick gave his first public speech to his prayer group of twelve people. His topic: "How to Find Hope in Hopeless Situations." His hands—er, his heart—shook the entire time. His voice cracked. He forgot half of what he planned to say.

But something powerful happened in that room. As Nick shared his journey from despair to hope, he watched hardened teenagers cry. A girl who had been cutting herself came forward for prayer. A boy considering suicide asked to talk privately afterward.

"I realized that my limitations gave me credibility others didn't have," Nick reflects. "When someone with arms and legs says 'You can overcome anything,' it's inspiring. When someone without arms and legs says it, it's proof."

Word spread about the limbless teenager who spoke with unusual power about hope. Invitations trickled in—a youth group here, a school assembly there. Each time Nick spoke, the same thing happened: walls came down, hearts opened, lives changed.

But with the calling came crushing fear.

"Every invitation terrified me," Nick admits. "What if I fell off the stage? What if they laughed? What if I couldn't answer their questions? What if they saw me struggle to drink water or need help with something basic? The fear of being seen as weak was paralyzing."

The enemy's whispers grew louder with each opportunity: You're making a spectacle of yourself. They're not inspired—they pity you. You're exploiting your disability. Stay home where it's safe. Don't embarrass yourself or your family.

## **The Decision: Embracing Weakness as Strength**

Nick faced a crucial choice: he could let fear keep him silent, or he could embrace the very thing that made him most vulnerable as the thing that made him most powerful.

"I had to die to my ego," he shares. "I had to stop trying to appear strong and start celebrating my weakness. Paul said he would boast in his weaknesses so Christ's power could rest on him. I finally understood what that meant."

Nick developed what he calls "holy shamelessness"—the willingness to be completely vulnerable about his struggles, needs, and limitations because it pointed people to God's sufficiency.

"I started letting people see me struggle," he explains. "I'd joke about needing help cutting my steak. I'd be honest about the daily challenges. I'd share the dark thoughts that still sometimes crept in. And the more real I was about my weakness, the more powerfully God used me."

## **The Ministry Explosion: When Obedience Opens Doors**

What started as a teenager sharing his testimony exploded into a global ministry that defied all logic. By 21, Nick had graduated from university with a double degree in Accounting and Financial Planning. But instead of pursuing a traditional career, he founded Life Without Limbs, a non-profit organization dedicated to sharing hope with the hopeless.

The invitations multiplied exponentially. Schools, churches, prisons, corporations, stadiums—everyone wanted to hear from the man without limbs who radiated more joy than most people with all their appendages intact.

"I went from speaking to twelve people to speaking to twelve thousand," Nick marvels. "From my hometown in Australia to sixty-nine countries across six continents. From wondering if anyone could love me to meeting my beautiful wife Kanae and having four children. Every impossible thing I thought my disability would prevent, God turned into a testimony of His power."

But the journey wasn't without its battles. For every triumph, there was a trial. For every standing ovation, there was a private struggle.

## **The Daily Reality: When Calling Meets Humanity**

What people see on stage—Nick's infectious joy, his unstoppable attitude, his powerful presence—is real. But it's not the whole story.

"People sometimes think because I've found purpose in my pain, the pain disappears," Nick shares honestly. "That's not true. I still have days when getting out of bed feels impossible—and not just physically. I still have moments when I see fathers throwing balls with their sons and grief hits me like a wave because I can't do that with mine. I still face practical challenges that exhaust me."

Travel, for instance, presents unique difficulties. Airport security. Airplane bathrooms. Hotel showers. Stages without ramps. Well-meaning but insensitive comments. Physical exhaustion from doing everything the hard way.

"There are nights in hotel rooms where I cry from sheer frustration," Nick admits. "Where I wonder if I'm crazy for putting myself through this. Where the enemy whispers, 'See? You're not cut out for this. Go home. Give up.'"

So how does he persist? Nick has developed spiritual and practical disciplines that keep him anchored in his calling:

**1. Daily Surrender** "Every morning, I have to surrender my limitations to God again. I pray, 'Lord, I give you my lack of arms and legs. Use it for Your glory today.' It's not a one-time decision—it's a daily death to self."

**2. Perspective Practice** "I keep testimonies from people whose lives have changed through my story. When I want to quit, I read them. A girl who didn't commit suicide. A man who reconciled with his estranged son. A woman who found faith again. These remind me why the struggle is worth it."

**3. Power in Partnership** "I couldn't do this alone. My wife Kanae is my hands and feet—literally sometimes! My team handles logistics I can't. My prayer partners cover me spiritually. God never called us to do His work in isolation."

**4. Embracing the Process** "I used to pray for God to make things easier. Now I pray for Him to make me stronger. The struggles keep me dependent on Him, and dependency is where His power flows freest."

## **The Message: Your Limitations Are Your Platform**

The core message of Nick's life isn't "overcome your limitations." It's "let God use your limitations." There's a profound difference.

"The world tells us to hide our weaknesses, compensate for them, pretend they don't exist," Nick explains. "But the Kingdom says our weaknesses are where God's glory shines brightest. Our limitations become His launching pad."

This flies in the face of everything our achievement-obsessed culture teaches. We're told to project strength, hide struggle, appear to have it all together. But Nick's life demonstrates the opposite: vulnerability is power, weakness is strength, limitation is opportunity.

"When I stand on stage with no arms and legs talking about hope, no one can argue with me," he says. "When I tell a suicidal teenager that life is worth living, they can't dismiss me as someone who doesn't understand. When I tell a businessman facing bankruptcy that God has a plan, they see I'm not speaking from theory but experience."

## **The Multiplication Effect: When One Yes Unleashes Many**

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of Nick's story is how his willingness to embrace his calling has unleashed calling in others. Millions have heard his message. Countless individuals have found courage to face their own limitations and pursue their God-given purpose.

"After almost every event, people come up to me and say variations of the same thing: 'If God can use you without arms and legs, He can use me with my problems,'" Nick shares. "That's when I know every struggle is worth it."

This is the kingdom principle at work: our obedience in weakness creates a permission structure for others to be obedient in theirs. When we stop hiding our limitations and start letting God use them, we give others courage to do the same.

A teacher with a speech impediment who was afraid to speak publicly heard Nick and now leads conferences. A veteran with PTSD who thought his brokenness disqualified him from ministry heard Nick and now counsels other veterans. A woman with chronic illness who believed she had nothing to offer heard Nick and now runs a support group that's changed hundreds of lives.

"My limitation became their liberation," Nick reflects. "That's how God's economy works. He takes what looks like subtraction and turns it into multiplication."

## **The Deeper Truth: Power Perfected in Weakness**

Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:9 aren't just a nice sentiment—they're the secret to kingdom impact. When Paul pleaded with God to remove his "thorn in the flesh," God's response revolutionized how we should view our limitations: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Notice God didn't say His power is made perfect "despite" weakness or "after" weakness is overcome. It's made perfect **IN** weakness. Our limitations aren't obstacles to God's power—they're conductors of it.

"I used to think God would use me once I overcame my disability," Nick shares. "I thought maybe He'd give me arms and legs, then I'd serve Him. Or maybe I'd become so functional that people would forget I was disabled. But God's plan was exactly opposite. He wanted to use me **THROUGH** my disability, not apart from it."

This is crucial for anyone struggling to see how God could use them with their limitations:

- That addiction you're battling? It qualifies you to reach addicts.
- That broken marriage you're rebuilding? It positions you to help others rebuild.
- That learning disability you've struggled with? It equips you to show others that God's wisdom transcends human ability.
- That chronic illness you endure? It demonstrates that God's strength shows up in physical weakness.
- That poverty you've experienced? It proves that God's provision isn't limited by economic status.

"Your greatest limitation is often connected to your greatest assignment," Nick teaches. "The thing you think disqualifies you is often the very thing that qualifies you uniquely."

## **The Practical Path: From Limitation to Platform**

How do you move from seeing your limitations as liabilities to seeing them as platforms? Nick offers practical steps:

- 1. Identify Your "Thorn"** "What's the thing about yourself you'd change if you could? What makes you feel 'less than'? What do you try to hide or compensate for? That's probably connected to your calling."
- 2. Reframe Your Perspective** "Stop asking 'Why did God allow this?' and start asking 'How does God want to use this?' The first question leads to bitterness. The second leads to purpose."
- 3. Start Small and Vulnerable** "Share your struggle with one person. Be honest about how your limitation has shaped you. Watch how your vulnerability gives them permission to be vulnerable too."
- 4. Look for Your People** "Who else struggles with what you struggle with? Who feels disqualified by what disqualifies you? Those are your people. You have credibility with them that no one else has."
- 5. Celebrate Small Obediences** "You don't have to start a global ministry tomorrow. Did you encourage one person today? Did you choose faith over fear in one small way? Celebrate that. Faithfulness in little things leads to greater things."

## **The Cost and the Crown**

Nick is honest about the cost of saying yes to God's call on his life. The physical challenges haven't disappeared. The emotional toll of constant vulnerability is real. The spiritual attacks from an enemy who hates seeing weakness transformed into strength are relentless.

"Some days I wonder what life would have been like if I'd just become an accountant," he admits. "If I'd chosen the safe path, the comfortable path, the path that didn't require me to display my limitations to millions of people."

But then he remembers the faces. The teenage girl in South Africa who put down the pills. The businessman in Japan who chose life over suicide. The mother in Brazil who found hope to keep going. The soldier in America who discovered purpose after losing his legs.

"Every limitation I face is worth it if one person finds hope," Nick says. "Every struggle is worth it if one person realizes God can use them too. Every tear is worth it if it waters someone else's faith."

## **Your Turn: What Platform Is Hidden in Your Pain?**

As you read Nick's story, what stirred in your spirit? What limitation in your own life suddenly looked different? What weakness have you been trying to hide that God might want to use as a platform for His power?

The enemy wants you to believe your limitations disqualify you. He wants you to think that God can only use the strong, the whole, the capable. But Nick's life shouts the opposite: God specializes in using what the world calls useless. He delights in displaying His strength through human weakness. He takes our greatest limitations and turns them into our greatest platforms.

"You don't have to be limbless to be used by God," Nick emphasizes. "You just have to be willing to let Him use whatever limitations you have. Your weakness isn't your shame—it's your superpower in the Kingdom of God."

## **The Challenge: Will You Let God Use Your Weakness?**

Right now, God is looking at your life—at all of it. The strengths and the struggles. The abilities and the limitations. The victories and the vulnerabilities. And He's not discouraged by what you lack. He's excited about what He can do through what you lack.

But you have to make the same choice Nick made. Will you keep trying to hide your limitations, or will you offer them to God as platforms for His power? Will you keep waiting to feel strong enough, or will you let Him be strong in your weakness?

"I can't promise it will be easy," Nick says. "I can't promise you won't have days when you want to quit. But I can promise this: if you let God use your limitations, you'll impact lives in ways

that your strengths never could. You'll see His power in ways that perfection never reveals. You'll find purpose in the very things you thought disqualified you."

The world is waiting for what God wants to do through your weakness. They don't need another perfect person pretending to have it all together. They need someone real, someone broken, someone limited who has discovered that God's grace is sufficient, that His power is made perfect in weakness.

That someone is you.

Your limitations are not your liability—they're your platform.

Your weakness is not your shame—it's your strength.

Your thorn is not your curse—it's your calling.

The only question is: Will you let God use it?

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*Prayer: Father, I bring You my limitations, my weaknesses, my thorns in the flesh. For so long, I've seen them as disqualifications, as reasons You couldn't use me. But today, I choose to believe that Your power is made perfect in my weakness. I offer You my limitations as platforms for Your glory. Use my struggles to strengthen others. Use my pain to bring purpose. Use my weakness to display Your strength. I may not have all my limbs, or all my health, or all my abilities, but I have You, and You are enough. Give me courage to be vulnerable, faith to be obedient, and joy in letting You use what I lack for Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I am not limited by my limitations. My weakness is where God's power shines brightest. My thorns are platforms for His glory. I will not hide my struggles but let God use them to help others. I am qualified not by what I have but by Who has me. Today, I embrace my weakness as my kingdom superpower. God's grace is sufficient for me, and His power is made perfect in my weakness.*

# Chapter 3: Sarah Jakes Roberts - From Teen Mom to Pastor

*"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." - Romans 8:28*

The pregnancy test fell from Sarah Jakes' trembling hands, clattering against the bathroom tile. Two pink lines. Positive. At thirteen years old, the daughter of Bishop T.D. Jakes—one of the most prominent pastors in America—was pregnant.

In that moment, Sarah felt her life shatter into a million pieces. The weight of what those two lines meant crashed over her like a tsunami: the disappointment in her parents' eyes, the whispers in church, the headlines in gossip magazines, the death of every dream she'd held for her future. How had she gotten here? How had the bishop's daughter become another statistic?

"I remember sliding down the bathroom wall, sobbing so hard I couldn't breathe," Sarah recalls. "I wasn't just crying about the pregnancy. I was crying because I knew that in one moment of teenage rebellion, I had potentially derailed not just my life, but my family's ministry. The shame was suffocating."

Today, Sarah Jakes Roberts stands before thousands as a powerful voice of restoration, purpose, and grace. Her Women Evolve movement reaches millions of women around the world. Her books top bestseller lists. Her sermons break chains and heal hearts. But the journey from pregnant teenager to powerful preacher was paved with pain, public humiliation, and battles against shame that threatened to define her forever.

## The Weight of a Last Name

Growing up as T.D. Jakes' daughter came with privileges many would envy—nice homes, good schools, travel, and exposure to world leaders and celebrities. But it also came with pressure that few could understand.

"People think being a preacher's kid is like being Christian royalty," Sarah explains. "What they don't see is the fishbowl you live in. Every mistake is magnified. Every rebellion is scrutinized. Every normal teenage struggle becomes a reflection on your parents' ministry."

Sarah was the classic middle child, sandwiched between siblings who seemed to navigate the expectations with more ease. She struggled with feeling invisible at home while being hyper-visible in public. The disconnect created a perfect storm for rebellion.

"I was trying to figure out who I was apart from being 'Bishop's daughter,'" she reflects. "I wanted to be seen as Sarah, not as an extension of my father's ministry. But I went looking for identity in all the wrong places."

At thirteen, Sarah began dating an older boy who made her feel seen, special, mature beyond her years. The relationship quickly became physical, and like many teenage girls, Sarah confused attention with love, desire with worth.

"I thought I was so grown," she says with a sad smile. "I thought I understood love and relationships. But I was just a child playing with adult consequences."

## **The Moment Everything Changed**

When Sarah discovered she was pregnant, her first instinct was to hide. Maybe if she didn't tell anyone, it would somehow go away. Maybe she could figure out a solution that wouldn't destroy everything. But hiding a pregnancy in a public family is impossible.

"I'll never forget telling my parents," Sarah shares, her voice still carrying echoes of that long-ago pain. "My mother cried. My father was silent for what felt like hours. When he finally spoke, he said, 'We're going to get through this.' But I could see the hurt in his eyes. I had brought shame on our family, on his ministry, on everything he had built."

The news leaked, as news always does when you're in the public eye. The headlines were brutal: "Bishop's Teen Daughter Pregnant!" "T.D. Jakes' Family Scandal!" "Preacher's Kid Gone Wild!"

"I remember going to church and feeling like everyone was staring," Sarah recalls. "Some with pity, some with judgment, some with that satisfied look people get when someone they put on a pedestal falls off. I wanted to disappear."

But disappearing wasn't an option. The Jakes family made the decision to face the situation head-on. No hiding, no sending Sarah away, no pretending it wasn't happening. They would walk through this as a family, publicly and honestly.

## **The Birth of Shame and a Son**

On November 10, 1996, Sarah gave birth to her son, Malachi. Holding him for the first time was a moment of profound joy mixed with crushing fear.

"He was perfect," she remembers. "Ten fingers, ten toes, this beautiful baby boy. But I was fourteen years old. I didn't know how to be a mother. I could barely take care of myself, and now I was responsible for another human being."

The challenges were immediate and overwhelming. While her friends were worried about homework and homecoming dances, Sarah was dealing with 2 a.m. feedings and diaper changes. While they were dreaming about college and careers, she was trying to figure out how to finish high school with a baby.

"The isolation was crushing," Sarah admits. "I didn't fit in with my peers anymore—what did I have in common with kids whose biggest worry was what to wear to school? But I didn't fit in

with adult mothers either—they looked at me like I was a cautionary tale for their own daughters."

The shame became her constant companion. It whispered to her in the quiet moments: You've ruined your life. You've embarrassed your family. You'll never be more than a teen mom statistic. God can't use someone who's failed so publicly. Your sin is too big, too visible, too shameful.

## **The Dropout Who Couldn't Drop Out of God's Plan**

By sixteen, Sarah had dropped out of high school. The combination of motherhood, public scrutiny, and academic struggles proved too much. Another headline, another failure, another layer of shame.

"When I dropped out, I felt like I was confirming everyone's worst assumptions about me," she shares. "The preacher's daughter who got pregnant and couldn't even finish school. I felt like a walking disappointment."

Sarah's late teens and early twenties became a blur of trying to outrun her shame. She got married at nineteen to a man who seemed to offer escape from her past, but the marriage was built on shaky foundation. She had another child, but the relationship was toxic, marked by manipulation and control.

"I jumped from one bad decision to another," Sarah reflects. "I was so desperate to prove I could make something work, to show that I wasn't a complete failure, that I kept making choices from a place of brokenness rather than wholeness."

By twenty-three, Sarah was divorced, a single mother of two, a college dropout, and carrying shame that felt like it would crush her. The enemy's lies seemed confirmed: You're too damaged for God to use. Your past is too messy. Your failures are too public. Just accept that you'll always be known for your worst moment.

## **The Turn: When Rock Bottom Becomes Solid Ground**

"I hit rock bottom when I realized I was becoming someone I didn't recognize," Sarah shares. "I was angry, bitter, defensive. I was parenting from a place of pain. I was existing, not living. One night, I looked at my children sleeping and realized I was perpetuating a cycle of brokenness. That's when I knew something had to change."

Sarah made the difficult decision to move back home with her parents. For someone who had been trying to prove her independence, it felt like ultimate failure. But sometimes what looks like moving backward is actually positioning for a leap forward.

"Moving home was humbling," she admits. "But it was also healing. For the first time in years, I stopped running from my shame and started facing it. I got into therapy. I went back to school."

Most importantly, I began to really encounter God—not as the Judge I had imagined, but as the Redeemer He actually is."

In the safety of her parents' home, surrounded by love despite her failures, Sarah began the hard work of healing. She started reading the Bible with new eyes, seeing story after story of people whose worst moments became launching pads for their greatest purpose:

- Tamar, who faced sexual assault and shame but is listed in Jesus' genealogy
- Rahab, a prostitute who became part of the lineage of Christ
- The woman at the well, with five husbands and a live-in boyfriend, who became an evangelist
- Mary Magdalene, delivered from seven demons, who became the first to proclaim the resurrection

"I started to see a pattern," Sarah explains. "God doesn't just use people despite their past—He uses them because of it. My mess could become my message, but first, I had to let Him heal the mess."

## **The Process: From Shame to Purpose**

Sarah's journey from shame to purpose wasn't instantaneous. It was a daily choice to believe God's truth over the enemy's lies, to choose healing over hiding, to pursue wholeness even when brokenness felt more familiar.

"People want a dramatic testimony where everything changes overnight," Sarah says. "But real transformation is usually quieter. It's choosing to get up each day and do the work. It's going to therapy when you'd rather stay in bed. It's reading Scripture when shame is screaming louder. It's tiny acts of obedience that slowly rebuild a life."

Sarah returned to school and earned her degree. She began serving quietly in her father's ministry, not on the platform but in the background. She focused on raising her children and breaking generational patterns. Slowly, as she did the private work, God began to prepare her for public purpose.

"I wasn't trying to become a preacher," she emphasizes. "I was just trying to become whole. But as I healed, I started sharing my story in small settings—women's groups, youth meetings. And every time I was vulnerable about my shame, I watched other women find freedom from theirs."

## **The Call She Never Saw Coming**

In 2013, Sarah's life took an unexpected turn. She had remarried—this time to Touré Roberts, a pastor and purpose coach who saw her not as damaged goods but as a daughter of destiny. Together, they were building a blended family and serving in ministry. Then came the phone call that changed everything.

"My dad called and said, 'I want you to preach at Woman Thou Art Loosed,'" Sarah recalls. "I laughed. I thought he was joking. This was his premier women's conference with thousands of attendees. Why would he want me—the family failure—on that platform?"

But T.D. Jakes saw what Sarah couldn't yet see: her pain had become her platform. Her shame had become her strength. Her mess had become her message. He wasn't inviting her to speak despite her past—he was inviting her because of what God had done through it.

"I was terrified," Sarah admits. "The last time many of these women had heard about me, I was a pregnant teenager bringing shame on my family. Now I was supposed to minister to them? Every insecurity came flooding back."

The enemy's assault was relentless: They remember your failure. They'll judge you. You have no business on that platform. You're not a real preacher. You'll embarrass your father again. Stay in your lane. Stay in your shame.

## **The Platform: When Private Healing Becomes Public Ministry**

Sarah stood backstage at Woman Thou Art Loosed, fighting panic. Thousands of women filled the arena. The weight of the moment—standing on the platform she had brought shame to years earlier—threatened to overwhelm her.

"I almost ran," she confesses. "But then I heard God whisper, 'They don't need your perfection. They need your transparency. Tell them what I've done in you, and watch what I do through you.'"

Sarah walked onto the platform and did something revolutionary: she led with her shame. She didn't hide her teen pregnancy, her failed marriage, her dropped education. She owned every failure, every mistake, every moment of brokenness. And then she declared what God had done in spite of and through it all.

"The response was overwhelming," Sarah remembers, tears in her eyes. "Women were weeping, shouting, finding freedom. Not because I was so powerful, but because I was so transparent. They saw themselves in my story. If God could redeem my public shame, He could redeem their private shame."

That message launched Sarah into a ministry she never planned or pursued. Invitations poured in. Her messages went viral. Women around the world began reaching out, saying the same thing: "Your story gave me hope that my story isn't over."

## **Woman Evolve: When Personal Transformation Becomes Movement**

In 2017, Sarah felt God stirring something new in her heart. She saw women everywhere stuck in shame, defined by their worst moments, believing their past disqualified them from purpose. She knew what that prison felt like, and she knew the key to freedom.

"Woman Evolve was born from my own evolution," Sarah explains. "I wanted to create a space where women could be honest about their struggles without judgment. Where they could evolve from who they were to who God created them to be. Where shame could be transformed into purpose."

What started as a conference has become a global movement. Hundreds of thousands of women gather online and in person to hear a message that Sarah embodies: Your past doesn't define you. Your mistakes don't disqualify you. Your shame doesn't have the final word. You can evolve.

"The women who come aren't looking for perfection," Sarah shares. "They're looking for permission—permission to be human, to be healing, to be becoming. They need to know that evolution is possible, that who they were doesn't have to be who they are."

## **The Message: Your Past Is Not Your Prison**

The core message of Sarah's ministry is revolutionary in its simplicity: God is not intimidated by your past. He's not shocked by your failures. He's not limited by your shame. In fact, He specializes in resurrection—taking dead things and bringing them back to life.

"Religion tells us to hide our shame," Sarah teaches. "But the Kingdom says bring your shame to the light, and watch it lose its power. The enemy wants you to believe your worst moment is your defining moment. God says your worst moment can become your launching moment."

This message resonates because Sarah doesn't preach it from theory—she preaches it from experience. When she talks about shame, women know she understands. When she speaks about single motherhood, teen pregnancy, divorce, and public failure, she's not offering platitudes but testimony.

"I couldn't minister to women in shame if I hadn't walked through shame," Sarah reflects. "I couldn't speak to their pain if I hadn't experienced pain. My mess became my ministry training ground."

## **The Integration: When Past and Purpose Collide**

What makes Sarah's story so powerful is that she hasn't disowned her past—she's integrated it. Her son Malachi, whose conception once felt like the end of her future, is now a young man who watches his mother minister to millions. The pregnancy that brought shame has become a bridge to countless young women facing unplanned pregnancies.

"Malachi sometimes travels with me to conferences," Sarah shares. "When women see him—this tall, handsome, godly young man—and remember he's the baby from my teen pregnancy, they

see redemption in human form. They see that what the enemy meant for evil, God used for good."

Sarah is transparent about the ongoing journey. The shame didn't disappear overnight. The consequences of early choices still require navigation. Co-parenting is complicated. Blended families are challenging. Public ministry while private healing is delicate.

"I'm not standing before people as someone who has arrived," Sarah emphasizes. "I'm standing as someone who is arriving. Every day, I'm still evolving. Every day, I'm choosing purpose over shame. Every day, I'm believing God's plan is bigger than my past."

## **The Multiplication: When One Woman's Yes Releases Thousands**

The impact of Sarah's willingness to transform shame into purpose extends far beyond her own story. Women around the world are finding courage to face their own shame and step into purpose:

- A woman who had an abortion in college and thought God could never use her is now counseling women in crisis pregnancies
- A former addict who believed her past disqualified her is now leading a recovery ministry
- A divorcee who felt like damaged goods is now ministering to women navigating divorce
- A woman with a criminal record who thought her life was over is now mentoring women coming out of prison

"Every time I share my story, I watch women realize their story isn't over," Sarah says. "They stop seeing their past as a prison and start seeing it as preparation. They stop hiding their shame and start letting God transform it into purpose."

## **The Practical Path: From Shame to Purpose**

How do you move from shame to purpose? Sarah offers practical wisdom from her journey:

**1. Stop Running, Start Facing** "You can't heal what you won't face. Stop running from your shame. Turn around, look it in the eye, and invite God into it. He's not afraid of your mess."

**2. Get Help** "I needed therapy. I needed mentorship. I needed community. Shame thrives in isolation but dies in healthy community. Find safe people who can walk with you through healing."

**3. Renew Your Mind** "For every lie shame tells you, find a scripture that tells you truth. When shame says you're disqualified, Romans 8:1 says there's no condemnation. When shame says you're worthless, Psalm 139 says you're fearfully and wonderfully made. Replace lies with truth, one thought at a time."

**4. Start Small** "You don't have to start a global ministry. Start by sharing your story with one person. Start by serving in small ways. Start by believing God can use you right where you are. Faithfulness in small things leads to greater things."

**5. Embrace Evolution** "Transformation is a process, not an event. You're not going to wake up tomorrow completely healed and ready to change the world. But you can wake up tomorrow one step closer to who God created you to be. Embrace the evolution."

## **The Cost of Transparency**

Sarah is honest about the cost of living transparently with a shameful past. Not everyone celebrates redemption. Some people prefer to keep others in their shame. Some are uncomfortable with grace that radical.

"I still get criticism," Sarah admits. "People who think I have no business in ministry because of my past. People who bring up my teen pregnancy as if I've forgotten. People who are more comfortable with condemnation than redemption."

The vulnerability required to continually share her story takes a toll. Living as a public example of redemption means constantly revisiting pain. It means her children have to navigate their mother's past being public knowledge. It means every new level of influence brings new levels of scrutiny.

"Sometimes I wonder what life would be like if I could just minister without everyone knowing my past," Sarah reflects. "But then I meet a teenage mother who says my story saved her life, and I know every moment of vulnerability is worth it."

## **Your Turn: What Shame Is Waiting to Become Purpose?**

As you read Sarah's story, what shame in your own life surfaced? What past failure have you believed disqualifies you from future purpose? What mess have you been hiding that God might want to transform into a message?

The enemy wants you to believe your shame is too big, too public, too painful for God to redeem. He wants you to stay trapped in who you were, unable to evolve into who you're meant to be. But Sarah's life declares a different truth: shame's expiration date is whenever you decide to hand it to God.

"Your worst moment doesn't have to be your last moment," Sarah preaches. "Your biggest failure can become your greatest testimony. Your deepest shame can become your most powerful platform. But you have to be willing to stop hiding and start healing."

## **The Invitation: Will You Evolve?**

Right now, God is looking at your life—all of it. The good, the bad, and the shameful. He sees every failure, every mistake, every moment you wish you could erase. And He's not disappointed. He's not disgusted. He's not disqualifying you.

Instead, He's inviting you to evolution. He's calling you from shame to purpose, from hiding to healing, from who you were to who He created you to be. But evolution requires a choice. Will you stay trapped in who you were, or will you evolve into who you're meant to be?

"I'm living proof that God doesn't just restore—He redeems," Sarah declares. "He doesn't just forgive your past—He uses it. He doesn't just heal your shame—He transforms it into purpose. But you have to let Him."

Today, shame may be telling you that you're too damaged, too exposed, too failed to be used by God. But God is telling a different story—a story of redemption, restoration, and purpose. A story where teen moms become powerful preachers. Where public shame becomes private strength. Where your worst chapter becomes the prologue to your purpose.

Your evolution starts now. Your shame has an expiration date. Your purpose is waiting.

The only question is: Will you evolve?

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*Prayer: Father, I bring You my shame—all of it. The failures I've hidden, the mistakes that haunt me, the past I wish I could change. I'm tired of running, tired of hiding, tired of letting shame define me. Today, I choose evolution. I choose to believe that You can transform my mess into a message, my shame into purpose, my past into a platform. Help me to stop seeing myself through the lens of my worst moment and start seeing myself through the lens of Your redemption. Give me courage to be transparent, strength to heal, and faith to believe that my story isn't over. Thank You that my past doesn't disqualify me—it qualifies me uniquely for the purpose You have for me. I receive Your redemption. I embrace evolution. I step into purpose. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I am not defined by my past. I am not disqualified by my failures. I am not limited by my shame. I am evolving from who I was to who God created me to be. My mess is becoming my message. My shame is becoming my strength. My past is becoming my platform. I embrace transparency. I choose healing. I walk in purpose. My worst moment is not my last moment. I am evolving, and my evolution will inspire others to evolve. My shame has met its expiration date. My purpose has met its inauguration date.*

# Chapter 4: Jeremy Camp - Losing His Wife, Then Following God's Call

*"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." - Psalm 34:18*

The hospital room was supposed to be filled with hope. Jeremy Camp, a 23-year-old aspiring musician, sat beside his bride of just five months, holding her frail hand as worship music played softly in the background. Melissa had beaten cancer once before—surely God would heal her again. They had prayed, fasted, believed, declared, and stood on every healing scripture they knew. Their entire church was interceding. This was supposed to be their miracle story.

But on February 5, 2001, at just 21 years old, Melissa Lynn Camp took her last breath.

"I remember the moment her hand went limp in mine," Jeremy recalls, his voice still carrying the weight of that sacred, shattering moment. "Everything in me wanted to shake her awake, to demand that God fix this. We were newlyweds. We had plans. We had promises. How could God call me to music ministry and then take away the person who believed in that calling more than anyone?"

In that sterile hospital room, as nurses quietly turned off machines and offered condolences, Jeremy faced a crisis that would define not just his faith, but his entire future: Would he still sing to a God who didn't heal his wife? Would he still trust a Savior who felt silent in his greatest hour of need? Could worship flow from a heart that was completely broken?

The answers to those questions would transform a grieving widower into a voice of hope for millions who have wondered if God can use their pain for purpose.

## **The Beginning: When Dreams and Calling Collide**

Jeremy Franklin Camp grew up in a pastor's home in Lafayette, Indiana, the son of Tom and Teri Camp. Music wasn't just entertainment in the Camp household—it was ministry. His father led worship, his mother sang, and Jeremy learned early that music could usher in God's presence and change atmospheres.

"I never wanted to be a 'Christian musician,'" Jeremy explains. "I just wanted to be a musician who was a Christian. But every time I tried to write secular songs, they came out pointing to God. It was like He had already marked my music for His purposes."

After high school, Jeremy enrolled at Calvary Chapel Bible College in Murrieta, California. He wasn't there to become a rock star—he genuinely wanted to deepen his faith and understanding of Scripture. But music kept calling. He led worship for the college, played at local venues, and began to sense God stirring something bigger.

"I was content to just lead worship at church and maybe play some small shows," Jeremy shares. "But during a prayer time, I felt God clearly say, 'I'm going to use your music to reach people you'll never meet, in places you'll never go.' I had no idea that calling would require a price I never imagined paying."

## **Meeting Melissa: When Love Seems Like God's Perfect Plan**

In the fall of 1999, Jeremy met Melissa Lynn Henning at a Bible study. She was beautiful, radiant, with a faith that seemed to glow from within. Their connection was immediate and undeniable.

"Melissa was everything I thought I wanted in a wife," Jeremy remembers. "She loved God passionately, supported my music calling completely, and had this joy that was contagious. When I was with her, I felt like I could conquer the world."

But their budding romance hit an unexpected obstacle. During Christmas break, Melissa went home to visit family. When she returned, she had devastating news: she had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

"I remember her trying to break up with me," Jeremy recalls. "She said I didn't sign up for this, that I should find someone healthy, someone who could give me a normal life. But I told her I wasn't going anywhere. I thought my love could help heal her. I thought our faith combined would overcome anything."

What followed was a whirlwind of treatments, prayers, and what seemed like a miracle. After aggressive treatment, Melissa's cancer went into remission. The doctors were amazed. Their church celebrated. It seemed like God had answered their prayers in dramatic fashion.

"We took it as a sign," Jeremy shares. "God had healed Melissa because He had plans for us together. We were going to be this powerful ministry couple. Her testimony of healing combined with my music—we thought we understood God's plan perfectly."

On October 21, 2000, Jeremy and Melissa married in a beautiful ceremony filled with worship, joy, and thanksgiving for God's healing power. Their honeymoon was everything young love should be—dreams shared, futures planned, promises made.

"Those first few months of marriage were perfect," Jeremy reflects. "We'd wake up and pray together, dream about the children we'd have, the ministry we'd build. Melissa would come to all my shows, worshipping in the front row. I'd write songs inspired by our love and God's faithfulness. We thought we were living our happily ever after."

## **The Return: When Healing Becomes Heartbreak**

Three months into their marriage, Melissa began experiencing stomach pain. At first, they attributed it to stress, diet, maybe a lingering effect of her previous treatments. But when the pain intensified, they returned to the doctor.

The news was devastating: the cancer was back, and it was aggressive.

"I'll never forget sitting in that oncologist's office," Jeremy says. "The doctor was talking about treatment options, statistics, realistic expectations. But all I could hear was white noise. This wasn't supposed to happen. God had healed her. We had testimonies. We had promises."

But Melissa's faith remained unshakeable. Even as her body weakened, her spirit seemed to strengthen. She would worship through the pain, pray through the nausea, and encourage others even from her hospital bed.

"Melissa taught me what real faith looks like," Jeremy shares, tears in his eyes. "Not faith that denies reality, but faith that trusts God in the middle of reality. She would say, 'Jeremy, God is still good. Whether He heals me here or heals me in heaven, He's still good.'"

Jeremy threw himself into battle mode. He researched every treatment, pursued every prayer minister, declared every scripture. He led worship with desperate intensity, as if the perfect song could unlock Melissa's healing. Their church rallied, holding prayer vigils, fasting, believing for another miracle.

"I was so focused on the outcome I wanted that I almost missed what God was doing in the process," Jeremy reflects. "While I was begging God to heal Melissa's body, He was using Melissa to heal something in my soul—my need to understand and control His plans."

## **The Goodbye: When Worship Meets Grief**

As January 2001 turned to February, it became clear that barring a dramatic miracle, Melissa's time was short. The cancer had spread throughout her body. The treatments had stopped working. The medical team shifted from cure to comfort.

"Those last days were sacred and terrible," Jeremy remembers. "We would lie in her hospital bed together, and I'd play guitar and sing over her. Sometimes she'd join in with a whisper. Sometimes she'd just smile. We worshipped our way toward goodbye."

One conversation from those final days changed Jeremy's life forever. Melissa, weak but clear-eyed, took his hand and spoke words that would echo through his future ministry:

"Jeremy, when I'm gone, I want you to keep singing. Promise me you won't stop. God gave you music not for the easy times but for times like this. People need to know that worship isn't just for mountaintops—it's for valleys too. Promise me you'll show them."

On February 5, 2001, surrounded by family and friends singing worship songs, Melissa passed from this life to the next. She was 21 years old. They had been married just five months.

"When she died, something in me died too," Jeremy shares. "Not just my heart, but my understanding of how God works. Everything I thought I knew about faith, about calling, about God's plans—it all shattered with her last breath."

## **The Aftermath: When Faith Meets Fury**

The days following Melissa's death were a blur of funeral arrangements, condolences, and crushing grief. Well-meaning people offered platitudes that felt like salt in wounds: "God needed another angel." "Everything happens for a reason." "She's in a better place now."

"I wanted to scream at everyone who tried to explain away my pain with Christian clichés," Jeremy admits. "I didn't want explanations. I wanted my wife back. I wanted the future we had planned. I wanted God to make sense."

Jeremy found himself angry at God, confused by God, and yet unable to let go of God. He would rage at heaven one moment and collapse in desperate prayer the next. His guitar sat untouched in the corner—how could he sing to a God who had let Melissa die?

"I went through all the stages of grief, but not in order," Jeremy explains. "I'd have anger for breakfast, denial for lunch, and depression for dinner. Bargaining was my midnight snack. I kept thinking if I could just understand why God allowed this, maybe the pain would lessen."

But in the midst of his wrestling, something unexpected happened. Songs began to form—not songs of easy answers, but songs of raw honesty. Melodies that carried questions. Lyrics that bled real pain. Music that didn't pretend everything was okay.

"I remembered Melissa's words—to keep singing, to show people that worship isn't just for mountaintops," Jeremy shares. "So I picked up my guitar and did the only thing I knew how to do: I turned my pain into prayer, my questions into songs."

## **"I Still Believe": When Pain Becomes Purpose**

Six weeks after Melissa's death, Jeremy wrote a song that would change everything. Sitting alone in his apartment, surrounded by photos of his bride and memories of what was supposed to be, he penned words that felt like they were being pulled from the deepest part of his soul:

*"Though the questions still fog up my mind  
With promises I still seem to bear  
Even when answers slowly unwind  
It's my heart I see You prepare  
But it's now that I feel Your grace fall like rain  
From every fingertip, washing away my pain  
I still believe in Your faithfulness  
I still believe in Your truth  
I still believe in Your holy word  
Even when I don't see, I still believe"*

"Writing 'I Still Believe' wasn't therapeutic—it was like performing surgery on myself without anesthesia," Jeremy recalls. "Every word was a choice to trust when trust felt impossible. Every note was a declaration that God was still good when nothing felt good."

The song was deeply personal, written for an audience of One. Jeremy had no intention of sharing it publicly—it felt too raw, too vulnerable, too sacred. But during a small gathering at his church, someone asked him to share what God had been doing in his heart. Without planning, Jeremy grabbed his guitar and sang "I Still Believe" for the first time.

"The room erupted in tears," Jeremy remembers. "Not sad tears, but the kind of tears that come when truth pierces through pain. People came up afterward saying things like, 'I buried my child last year and couldn't worship until now,' or 'I've been angry at God since my diagnosis, but your song gave me permission to believe again.'"

Word spread about the young widower who could sing honestly about pain while still declaring faith. Invitations began coming to share his story and music at churches, conferences, and events. Each time Jeremy sang, the same thing happened—broken people found hope.

## **The Calling Clarified: When Ministry Means Vulnerability**

What Jeremy discovered in those early days of reluctant ministry was that his pain had given him a platform he never wanted but desperately needed. His loss had created a credibility that no seminary degree could provide.

"When I told people that God was faithful even in loss, they couldn't argue with me," Jeremy explains. "When I sang about trusting God through tears, they knew I wasn't offering empty platitudes. My wound became my witness."

But stepping into this calling came with a cost Jeremy hadn't anticipated. Every time he shared his story, he had to relive Melissa's death. Every time he sang "I Still Believe," he reopened the wound. The very thing that gave him ministry influence also kept his grief fresh.

"There were nights I'd come off stage after ministering to hundreds and go back to my hotel room and weep," Jeremy admits. "I'd wonder if this was healthy, constantly revisiting my pain. But then I'd get letters from people saying my vulnerability saved their faith, and I knew this was my assignment."

Jeremy faced a crucial choice: he could protect himself by moving on from the pain, writing happier songs, building a ministry that didn't require him to bleed publicly. Or he could embrace the calling that had emerged from his greatest loss—being a voice for those walking through valleys.

"I realized that avoiding my pain would mean avoiding my purpose," Jeremy shares. "God hadn't caused Melissa's death, but He was determined to use it. My job was to stay vulnerable enough for Him to do that work through me."

## **The Music Explodes: When Authenticity Resonates**

Jeremy's commitment to authentic, pain-informed worship resonated with a generation tired of Christian music that seemed disconnected from real struggle. His debut album, "Stay," released in 2002, featured "I Still Believe" and other songs born from his journey through grief. It quickly climbed the charts, not because of marketing genius but because of genuine need.

"I started getting letters from people I'd never meet, from countries I'd never visit," Jeremy marvels. "They all said variations of the same thing: 'Finally, someone who understands that faith and pain can coexist.' I realized God was fulfilling that word He'd given me in college—using my music to reach people and places beyond my physical presence."

What followed was a career that defied industry expectations. Album after album, Jeremy refused to abandon the authentic vulnerability that marked his music. Songs like "Walk by Faith," "Healing Hand of God," and "There Will Be a Day" spoke to the reality of pain while pointing to the hope of eternity.

"The music industry kept pushing me to write more 'positive' songs," Jeremy recalls. "They wanted anthems that were easier to market. But I couldn't abandon the people in the valley just to make more commercial music. My calling was to those who were walking through hell and needed to know God was walking with them."

## **Love Again: When Healing Makes Room for More**

In 2003, something unexpected happened—Jeremy met Adrienne Liesching, a South African singer with a heart for worship and a understanding of pain. Their connection was different from what he'd experienced with Melissa—less lightning bolt, more steady sunrise.

"I was terrified to love again," Jeremy admits. "Not just because of the pain of loss, but because I wondered if loving someone new meant betraying Melissa's memory. How could I promise 'till death do us part' when I knew how quickly death could come?"

But Adrienne brought her own wisdom to their relationship. She didn't try to replace Melissa or minimize Jeremy's grief. Instead, she honored his journey while inviting him into a new chapter.

"Adrienne taught me that the heart's capacity for love isn't limited," Jeremy shares. "Loving her didn't diminish what I'd had with Melissa. If anything, Melissa's influence had taught me to love better, to cherish more deeply, to never take a single day for granted."

They married in 2003, and God has blessed them with three children. But Jeremy is intentional about how this new happiness intersects with his ministry to the grieving.

"Some people struggle when they find out I remarried," Jeremy acknowledges. "They think it means the pain is gone or that I've 'moved on' from Melissa. But grief and joy aren't mutually exclusive. I can be happily married to Adrienne while still carrying the sacred scar of losing Melissa. Both are part of my story, part of my calling."

## The Movie: When Story Becomes Scripture for Others

In 2020, Jeremy's story hit movie theaters with "I Still Believe," a film that brought his journey with Melissa to a global audience. Watching his most painful moments recreated on screen was surreal and often difficult.

"Sitting in the theater, watching an actor play me watching my wife die—it was one of the hardest things I've ever done," Jeremy shares. "But I kept thinking about all the people who would see this who were walking through their own loss. If reliving my pain could help one person find hope, it was worth it."

The movie's impact exceeded expectations. Jeremy received thousands of messages from viewers who found faith through the film, who chose to trust God through their own valleys, who decided to keep believing even when belief felt impossible.

"One message particularly stood out," Jeremy recalls. "A young man wrote to say he was planning to take his life after his fiancée died in a car accident. He went to see the movie as a 'goodbye' to the world. But seeing my story—seeing that someone else had survived that kind of loss and found purpose in it—gave him hope to keep living. That one message justified every moment of vulnerability."

## The Ongoing Ministry: When Your Wound Becomes Your Weapon

Today, Jeremy Camp continues to tour, write, and minister from the intersection of worship and suffering. His music catalog spans over two decades, but the thread remains consistent—honest faith that doesn't pretend pain doesn't exist.

"My calling hasn't been to have answers," Jeremy explains. "My calling has been to point to the One who holds us in our questions. I can't tell someone why their child died or why their cancer returned. But I can tell them that God is present in their pain, that worship is possible in their winter, that their story isn't over."

Jeremy has learned practical principles for ministering from pain without being consumed by it:

**1. Honor the Journey** "I don't try to rush people through grief or give them timelines for healing. I simply share my journey and let them know they're not alone in theirs."

**2. Stay Tender** "The temptation after sharing your story a thousand times is to let it become routine. I fight to stay tender, to remember that for someone in the audience, this is their first time hearing hope in their hopelessness."

**3. Point Beyond Yourself** "My story isn't the solution—Jesus is. I'm just evidence that He's faithful in the valley. My job is to point beyond my experience to His eternal promises."

**4. Embrace the Both/And** "I can be grateful for my current blessings while still grieving past losses. I can sing joyful songs and laments. Faith isn't either/or—it's both/and."

**5. Trust the Purpose in the Pain** "I may never fully understand why God allowed Melissa to die so young. But I've seen Him use her death to bring life to so many others. I have to trust that He sees a bigger picture than I do."

## **The Deeper Truth: Your Pain Can Become Your Platform**

Jeremy's story reveals a profound kingdom principle: God doesn't waste our pain. He doesn't cause all pain, but He refuses to let it be meaningless. In His economy, our deepest wounds can become our greatest ministry tools—if we'll let Him use them.

"The very thing that almost destroyed my faith became the foundation for ministering to others' faith," Jeremy reflects. "The songs I wrote in my darkest moments have brought light to others' darkness. God is that redemptive—He can transform our worst days into weapons against despair."

This doesn't mean God orchestrates tragedy to create ministry. It means He's so powerfully redemptive that He can bring purpose from any pain, meaning from any mess, ministry from any misery.

"I wouldn't wish losing Melissa on anyone," Jeremy emphasizes. "But I also can't deny the fruit that has grown from that grave. Thousands have found faith through a story I never wanted to live. That's the mysterious math of the Kingdom—our subtraction becomes multiplication in God's hands."

## **Your Turn: What Pain Is Waiting to Become Purpose?**

As you read Jeremy's story, what pain in your own life surfaced? What loss have you experienced that feels too deep for God to use? What valley are you walking through that seems to disqualify you from ministry rather than qualify you for it?

The enemy wants you to believe your pain is pointless, that your loss leaves you with nothing to offer, that your grief disqualifies you from helping others. But Jeremy's life declares the opposite: your pain can become your most powerful platform, your loss can become your loudest testimony, your valley can become the very place where you minister most effectively.

"You don't have to lose a spouse to have a ministry of pain," Jeremy emphasizes. "Maybe you lost a dream, a job, a relationship, your health, your plans. Maybe you're walking through depression, divorce, disappointment. Whatever your valley, God can use it to help others navigate theirs."

## **The Choice: Will You Worship in the Valley?**

Right now, you face the same choice Jeremy faced in that hospital room as Melissa slipped away: Will you still believe? Will you still worship? Will you let God use your pain for His purposes?

"Worship in the valley isn't about pretending everything is okay," Jeremy teaches. "It's about declaring that God is still God when nothing is okay. It's about choosing to trust His character when you can't trace His hand. It's about believing that somehow, someway, He can bring beauty from these ashes."

Your pain may be fresh, the wound still bleeding. Or it may be an old scar that still aches when the weather changes. Either way, God is inviting you to something profound: letting Him transform your valley into a place of ministry.

"The world doesn't need more people pretending pain doesn't exist," Jeremy declares. "It needs people brave enough to worship through tears, honest enough to sing songs in minor keys, vulnerable enough to show that faith can survive the valley. It needs you—not the polished version, but the real version, scars and all."

Today, your Melissa moment might be calling. The loss you never wanted, the pain you never planned, the valley you never chose—it might be the very thing God uses to bring hope to someone else walking through darkness.

The question isn't whether you've experienced pain deep enough to minister from. The question is whether you'll let God use that pain for His glory and others' good.

Your valley is waiting to become your voice.

Your pain is waiting to become your platform.

Your wound is waiting to become your worship.

Will you still believe?

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*Prayer: Father, I bring You my pain—all of it. The losses that still ache, the valleys that still echo with questions, the wounds that still bleed. I confess that sometimes I've wanted to stop believing, stop worshipping, stop trusting. But today, I choose to declare with Jeremy: I still believe. I believe You're present in my pain. I believe You can bring purpose from my problems. I believe You can use my valley to help others through theirs. Give me courage to be vulnerable about my journey. Help me to worship not just on mountaintops but in valleys. Use my pain as a platform for Your glory. I may not understand why You've allowed what You've allowed, but I trust that You waste nothing—not even my tears. Make my wound my witness. Make my mess my ministry. Make my valley my voice. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I still believe in God's faithfulness. I still believe in His truth. I still believe in His holy word. Even when I don't see, I still believe. My pain is not pointless. My loss is not meaningless. My valley is not wasted. God is transforming my wounds into worship, my grief into grace, my valley into victory. I will worship in the winter. I will sing in the storm. I will trust in the trial. My pain is becoming my platform, and others will find hope through my honesty. I still believe.*

# Chapter 5: Bishop T.D. Jakes - From Obscurity to Global Voice

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9*

The congregation of Greater Emmanuel Temple of Faith consisted of ten people—and that was on a good Sunday. Thomas Dexter Jakes Jr., all of 23 years old, stood behind a makeshift pulpit in a converted storefront in Montgomery, West Virginia, preaching with the passion of someone addressing thousands. The handful of faithful members, mostly elderly women who called him "Pastor" with more faith than evidence warranted, nodded and offered occasional "Amens" to encourage their young shepherd.

"I remember counting the offering one Sunday—\$42.50," Bishop Jakes recalls with a laugh that carries no bitterness. "I gave \$20 of it back because Sister Johnson needed groceries. My wife Serita was pregnant with our twins, we were living on government cheese and food stamps, and I was digging ditches during the week to keep the lights on. But every Sunday, I preached like lives depended on it. Because even if only ten lives were listening, they did."

Today, Bishop T.D. Jakes leads The Potter's House, a 30,000-member church in Dallas. His conferences fill stadiums. His books top bestseller lists. His influence reaches from prisons to palaces. But the journey from that storefront church to global influence is a masterclass in faithfulness in obscurity—and why God often keeps His greatest voices hidden until they're truly ready to be heard.

## The Making of a Voice: Wounds That Shape Calling

Born in South Charleston, West Virginia, in 1957, Thomas Jakes Jr. entered a world that didn't seem designed for destiny. His father, Ernest, was an entrepreneur who ran a janitorial business—teaching young Thomas that there was dignity in every kind of work. His mother, Odith, was an educator who insisted that her children would rise above their circumstances through learning.

But young Thomas carried secret struggles that would later inform his ministry in profound ways. He battled a severe lisp that made public speaking seem like an impossible dream. Childhood asthma left him physically weak, often watching from the sidelines while other children played. And undiagnosed learning differences made academic success a constant struggle.

"I was the kid nobody expected to amount to much," Bishop Jakes shares. "I couldn't speak clearly, couldn't breathe easily, couldn't learn quickly. But my mother saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself. She would make me read aloud for hours, forcing me to push through the lisp. She'd say, 'Baby, God's got something for you to say. We've got to get your mouth ready for your message.'"

The wounds went deeper than physical limitations. Growing up Black in West Virginia during the civil rights era meant navigating a world of limited opportunities and lowered expectations. Watching his father work multiple jobs just to keep food on the table while maintaining his dignity taught Thomas that calling often comes clothed in struggle.

"My father would come home covered in whatever he'd been cleaning that day—sometimes literal human waste—but he'd hold his head high," Bishop Jakes remembers. "He taught me that your work doesn't define your worth, but how you do your work reveals your character. Even cleaning toilets can be ministry if you do it as unto the Lord."

## **The Call: When Purpose Interrupts Plans**

As a teenager, Thomas felt the pull toward ministry but resisted. He watched local pastors struggle to make ends meet, saw churches split over petty disputes, witnessed the toll ministry took on families. His plan was practical: get a degree, get a good job, take care of his family. God could use someone else for the preaching.

But at 17, during a particularly powerful service at his home church, Thomas felt what he describes as an "undeniable compulsion" to preach. The call wasn't accompanied by angels or audible voices—just a persistent, internal knowing that wouldn't leave him alone.

"I tried to bargain with God," he recalls. "I told Him about my lisp, my limitations, my lack of education. I presented a very logical case for why He should choose someone else. But calling isn't about logic. It's about surrender."

His first sermon was a disaster by most metrics. The lisp was pronounced, his nervousness palpable, his theology basic. But something happened that he couldn't explain—people were touched. Lives were changed. The Word, however imperfectly delivered, carried power.

"An old woman came up to me afterward with tears in her eyes," Bishop Jakes shares. "She said, 'Young man, I don't know what you're going to become, but I know God's hand is on you. Don't you dare quit.' I held onto those words through many dark nights."

## **The Storefront Years: When Faithfulness Feels Foolish**

In 1980, at just 23 years old, Thomas Jakes founded Greater Emmanuel Temple of Faith in a converted storefront in Montgomery, West Virginia. The space was humble—mismatched chairs, a borrowed sound system, walls that leaked when it rained. But to him, it was holy ground.

"Starting that church was either faith or foolishness—maybe both," he reflects. "I had no money, no members, no reputation. Just a word from God and a willing heart. Most Sunday mornings, I wondered if I'd heard God correctly."

The early years were marked by grinding poverty and persistent discouragement. Thomas worked multiple jobs—digging ditches for the gas company, working at a chemical plant, anything to provide for his growing family while keeping the church doors open. Serita, his wife, stretched every dollar, made meals from almost nothing, and never complained about the sacrifices.

"There were nights I'd come home from digging ditches all day, covered in mud, muscles screaming, and still have to prepare a sermon," Bishop Jakes remembers. "Serita would run me a bath, make me a sandwich, and say, 'God sees your faithfulness, baby. This is not your end—it's your beginning.'"

The congregation grew slowly—painfully slowly. From 10 to 15. From 15 to 25. Each new member felt like a major victory. But the growth came with complications. The storefront leaked worse as more bodies filled the space. The offering barely covered rent, let alone provided a salary. Other pastors in town questioned his calling, suggested he was too young, too inexperienced, too ambitious.

"I remember one particularly low Sunday," he shares. "Only seven people showed up. The furnace had broken, so we could see our breath while we worshipped. The offering was \$28. I went home and told Serita maybe everyone was right—maybe I wasn't called to this. She looked at me and said, 'Did those seven people need to hear from God today?' I said yes. She said, 'Then you did your job. Let God worry about the numbers.'"

## **The Hidden Years: When Obscurity Is Preparation**

For seven years, T.D. Jakes pastored in relative obscurity. Seven years of small congregations, financial struggle, and wondering if his ministry would ever extend beyond that leaky storefront. But looking back, he sees those years differently now.

"God wasn't punishing me with obscurity—He was preparing me through it," Bishop Jakes explains. "In that small church, I learned to preach with passion whether there were 10 people or 100. I learned to pastor real problems, not theoretical ones. I learned to trust God's provision when the math didn't make sense. I learned that faithfulness in small things is the prerequisite for larger things."

Those hidden years were a seminary of struggle. Every sermon had to count because he might not get another chance with that person. Every counseling session mattered because these weren't anonymous congregants—they were Sister Johnson who babysat his kids and Brother Williams who helped fix the church van. Every financial challenge taught dependence on God rather than systems.

"Obscurity is God's greenhouse," Bishop Jakes teaches. "It's where He grows roots before He grows branches. Too many people want the platform without the preparation, the influence without the integrity, the crowds without the character. But God knows that private faithfulness prepares us for public fruitfulness."

During those years, something crucial was happening beneath the surface. The lisp that had plagued him was gradually conquered through countless hours of preaching. His theological understanding deepened through voracious reading by candlelight when the electricity was cut off. His unique preaching style—a blend of intellectual depth and emotional connection—was forged in the furnace of ministering to people with real problems.

"I couldn't preach theory to people who couldn't pay their rent," he explains. "I couldn't offer platitudes to women in abusive relationships. I had to find where Scripture met struggle, where heaven touched earth. Those ten people taught me more about ministry than any seminary could have."

## **The Breakthrough: When Preparation Meets Opportunity**

In 1987, after seven years of faithful obscurity, things began to shift. The church had grown to about 100 members and moved to a slightly larger facility. But more importantly, T.D. Jakes had grown. The raw talent was now seasoned with experience. The passion was now paired with wisdom. The call was now confirmed by fruit.

A pastor friend invited him to speak at a conference in Charleston. It was a small gathering, nothing prestigious, but it was his first invitation to minister outside his own church. He prepared like it was the opportunity of a lifetime—because he understood that faithfulness in small opportunities opens doors to larger ones.

"I preached a message called 'Woman, Thou Art Loosed,'" Bishop Jakes recalls. "It was a word God had given me for the women in my small congregation who were bound by past pain. I had no idea that message would change everything."

The response was electric. Women who had been carrying shame, abuse, and brokenness for years found freedom. Word spread about the young pastor from the storefront church who preached with unusual authority about healing and deliverance. Invitations began trickling in—a revival here, a conference there.

"I remember the first time I preached to 500 people," he shares. "I was terrified. But then I remembered Sister Johnson and Sister Williams and all the faithful few who had sat through hundreds of sermons in that leaky storefront. I realized I wasn't preaching to 500 strangers—I was preaching to 500 Sister Johnsons who needed the same hope."

## **The Multiplication: When Faithfulness Bears Fruit**

What happened next can only be described as exponential multiplication. The message of "Woman, Thou Art Loosed" spread like wildfire. Churches began inviting T.D. Jakes to minister specifically to broken women. The crowds grew from hundreds to thousands. A book deal followed. Then another. Then another.

In 1996, T.D. Jakes moved to Dallas to plant The Potter's House. Starting with 50 families who relocated with him from West Virginia, the church exploded in growth. Within years, it became one of the largest and most influential churches in America.

"People often ask me the secret to the growth," Bishop Jakes reflects. "I tell them there's no secret—just years of hidden faithfulness suddenly becoming visible fruitfulness. God wasn't surprised by the multiplication. He had been preparing me for it through every small sermon, every financial struggle, every moment of obscurity."

But with greater influence came greater attacks. Critics questioned his prosperity, his teaching style, his rapid rise. Some suggested he had compromised to achieve success. Others accused him of building a personality cult rather than a church.

"The attacks were vicious and personal," he admits. "But those years in obscurity had built something in me that criticism couldn't destroy. When you've preached to ten people with passion, you can't be accused of doing it for fame. When you've dug ditches to keep the church open, you can't be accused of being in it for money. Obscurity had inoculated me against the infections that come with influence."

## **The Wisdom of Waiting: Why God Delays Promotion**

Looking back over his journey, Bishop Jakes sees divine wisdom in the timing of his emergence. Had he been given a global platform at 23, he might have been destroyed by it. Had the breakthrough come before the breaking, the blessing might have become a curse.

"At 23, I wanted success," he admits. "By 30, I wanted significance. There's a profound difference. Success is about you—your platform, your recognition, your achievement. Significance is about others—whose lives are changed, whose chains are broken, whose destinies are unlocked. Those years of obscurity transformed my motivation from success to significance."

He identifies several crucial developments that happened during his hidden years:

**1. Character Before Crowds** "In obscurity, your character is formed because nobody's watching. You learn to do right because it's right, not because it's recognized. That integrity becomes your foundation when everyone is watching."

**2. Dependence Before Influence** "When you have no resources except God, you learn real dependence. When the church survives on miracles, you never forget who your Source is, no matter how many resources you later accumulate."

**3. Compassion Before Competition** "Ministering to a handful of hurting people develops genuine compassion. You can't fake caring when you know everyone's name and story. That compassion remains even when you're ministering to thousands."

**4. Message Before Platform** "In obscurity, you have time to develop your unique voice without the pressure of public opinion. By the time people are listening, you actually have something worth saying."

**5. Family Before Fame** "Those early years of struggle bonded our family. My children saw daddy dig ditches and preach with the same dedication. My wife and I became true partners. Fame tests families, but obscurity builds them."

## **The Ongoing Journey: Faithfulness at Every Level**

Today, Bishop T.D. Jakes' influence spans the globe. His conferences pack stadiums. His books sell millions. His media empire reaches countless souls. But he's quick to point out that the calling remains the same—only the canvas has expanded.

"I'm still the boy with the lisp whom God called to preach," he says. "I'm still Sister Johnson's pastor, just with a few more Sister Johnsons. The scale has changed, but the sacred trust remains the same. Every sermon matters. Every soul counts. Every opportunity is holy."

He continues to pastor with the same intensity that marked those storefront years. Despite the private jets and presidential invitations, despite the book deals and movie productions, the core calling remains unchanged: preach the Word, heal the broken, equip the saints.

"Sometimes I dream about that storefront church," Bishop Jakes shares. "I see those ten faithful members who believed in a lisping kid with big dreams and no money. I realize they weren't just my congregation—they were my professors. They taught me that ministry isn't about the size of your crowd but the size of your heart. They taught me that God honors faithfulness in hidden places before He promotes to public spaces."

## **The Lesson for Us All: Your Obscurity Is Not Oversight**

The power of Bishop Jakes' story isn't in where he ended up—it's in where he stayed faithful. For seven years, he pastored in obscurity, unknown and often unappreciated. But those weren't wasted years—they were investment years. Every sermon to ten people was practice for preaching to ten thousand. Every financial miracle for \$50 was preparation for managing millions. Every counseling session with Sister Johnson was training for counseling a nation.

"God is not overlooking you in your obscurity," Bishop Jakes preaches with conviction. "He's preparing you. He's building in you what the platform will require. He's developing in darkness what will shine in daylight. Your hiddenness is not punishment—it's preparation."

This truth challenges our instant-gratification culture. We want influence without apprenticeship, platforms without preparation, crowds without character. But God's economy operates differently. He's more interested in our depth than our reach, our faithfulness than our fame, our character than our charisma.

"If you're in obscurity right now, pastoring a small church, leading a small ministry, faithful in a small assignment—rejoice!" Bishop Jakes exhorts. "You're in God's seminary. You're in Heaven's preparation program. What you do when nobody's watching determines what God can trust you with when everybody's watching."

## Practical Principles for Thriving in Obscurity

From his years in hiddenness, Bishop Jakes distilled practical wisdom for those currently serving in obscurity:

**1. Excellence in Everything** "Preach to ten like you're preaching to ten thousand. Excellence in obscurity creates habits that serve you in influence. God promotes those who are faithful with little."

**2. Develop Daily Disciplines** "Use obscurity to build spiritual disciplines. Read voraciously. Pray consistently. Study deeply. These habits are harder to build once you're busy with bigness."

**3. Value Every Person** "The person you pastor in obscurity may be the one who opens doors in the future. But even if they don't, they're made in God's image and deserve your best. Ministry to one is ministry to Him."

**4. Document the Journey** "Keep a journal during obscurity. Write down the lessons, the struggles, the miracles. You'll need these reminders when influence comes. Success has amnesia—records help you remember."

**5. Resist Comparison** "The enemy will torment you with the success of others while you're hidden. Remember: God's timing for them isn't His timing for you. Your obscurity is not His oversight—it's His wisdom."

**6. Prepare for Promotion** "Study leaders who handle influence well. Read about the fallen and learn what to avoid. Use obscurity to prepare for the pressures that come with platform. Get ready before you get there."

## Your Turn: What Are You Doing in the Darkness?

As you read Bishop Jakes' story, what resonates with your current season? Are you pastoring a small church, wondering if God has forgotten you? Are you faithful in a ministry that seems to bear little fruit? Are you working a secular job to support a calling that hasn't yet provided?

The enemy wants you to believe that obscurity equals insignificance, that small means unimportant, that hidden means overlooked. But Bishop Jakes' journey declares the opposite: obscurity is opportunity, small is sacred, hidden is preparation for being seen.

"Your storefront church matters," Bishop Jakes declares to every hidden servant. "Your ten people count. Your faithfulness in the dark is seen by the One who matters most. Don't despise

the days of small beginnings. Don't rush past the university of obscurity. What you're learning in hiddenness is preparing you for harvest."

## **The Challenge: Will You Stay Faithful in the Hidden Place?**

Right now, God is watching how you handle obscurity. He's noting your faithfulness when there's no applause. He's measuring your consistency when there's no recognition. He's building in you what the future will require.

The question isn't whether God will promote you—He promotes the faithful in His timing. The question is whether you'll remain faithful while you wait. Will you preach with passion to empty chairs? Will you serve with excellence though no one notices? Will you stay steady in the storefront, trusting that God is preparing you for more?

"I thank God for those seven years in obscurity," Bishop Jakes reflects. "I wouldn't trade them for an early platform. They made me who I am. They taught me what matters. They prepared me for everything that followed. Your obscurity is not your enemy—it's your friend. Embrace it. Learn from it. Let it prepare you. Because when God decides it's time for you to be seen, you'll be ready."

Today, in your hidden place, in your small assignment, in your obscure calling—be faithful. Preach like lives depend on it, even if only ten are listening. Serve like Jesus is watching, because He is. Build like you're laying foundation for a skyscraper, even if it looks like a shack right now.

Your obscurity is not oversight. It's preparation.

Your hiddenness is not punishment. It's protection.

Your small beginning is not your ending. It's your launching pad.

Be faithful in the storefront. The stadium is coming.

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*Prayer: Father, I thank You for the hidden place. I thank You that obscurity is not oversight but preparation. Forgive me for despising small beginnings, for comparing my assignment to others, for wanting promotion without preparation. Help me to be faithful where You've planted me, to serve with excellence though no one sees, to build character in the darkness that will sustain me in the light. I trust Your timing. I embrace Your process. I commit to faithfulness in the hidden place, knowing that You see, You remember, and You reward. Prepare me in obscurity for what You've prepared for me in influence. Let my roots grow deep while I wait for branches to spread wide. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I am faithful in the hidden place. I serve with excellence in obscurity. I am not overlooked—I am being prepared. My small beginning is not my conclusion—it's my foundation.*

*I will not despise where God has me but will be faithful with what He's given me. I am growing in the darkness what will shine in the light. My obscurity is my opportunity. My hiddenness is my preparation. I am faithful with little, and God will make me faithful with much. My storefront season is preparing me for my stadium season. I embrace the process. I trust the timing. I am faithful in the hidden place.*

# Chapter 6: Lisa Bevere - From Addiction to Ministering to Women

*"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." - Revelation 12:11*

The bathroom floor was cold against Lisa Bevere's cheek as she lay there, her body wracked with the aftermath of another bulimic purge. At 21 years old, she was trapped in a vicious cycle of binging, purging, diet pills, and self-hatred that had consumed her life for five years. The young woman who would one day stand before millions declaring their worth in Christ couldn't look at herself in the mirror without disgust.

"I remember lying on that floor, feeling so empty—not just physically, but spiritually bankrupt," Lisa recalls. "I had tried everything to fill the void inside me. Food, relationships, parties, achievements. But the more I consumed, the emptier I became. I was literally dying from the inside out, and I knew if something didn't change, I wouldn't make it to 25."

Today, Lisa Bevere is a New York Times bestselling author and internationally known speaker who has ministered to millions of women across the globe. Her organizations, Messenger International and Lisa Bevere Ministries, rescue women from human trafficking, provide education to girls in developing nations, and equip women to discover their God-given purpose. But the journey from that bathroom floor to international platforms is a testament to how God transforms our deepest struggles into our strongest ministries.

## The Perfect Storm: When Pain Seeks Numbing

Lisa Oldham grew up in a middle-class family in the Midwest, the only girl sandwiched between brothers. From the outside, life looked normal—suburban home, family dinners, good schools. But beneath the surface, dysfunction ran deep. Her parents' marriage was volatile, marked by explosive fights and cold silences. As the only daughter, Lisa often felt invisible, lost in the chaos of a home where emotional survival was a daily battle.

"I learned early that being noticed meant being criticized," Lisa shares. "So I became an expert at being whoever I thought people wanted me to be. The good student at school, the wild child at parties, the perfect daughter when relatives visited. But I had no idea who Lisa really was."

The search for identity led her down increasingly destructive paths. By high school, she was drinking heavily, experimenting with drugs, and engaging in promiscuous relationships—anything to numb the pain of not knowing who she was or why she existed.

"I thought if I could just be thin enough, pretty enough, popular enough, someone would finally love me," she reflects. "But the more I chased external validation, the more internal chaos I created. I was trying to fill a God-shaped void with everything but God."

The eating disorder began innocently enough—a diet that spiraled into obsession. But what started as an attempt to control her weight became the thing that controlled her life. Bulimia offered a twisted sense of power: she could eat whatever she wanted and then purge it away, maintaining the illusion of control while secretly spiraling into deeper bondage.

"The enemy is brilliant at taking our legitimate needs and twisting them into illegitimate behaviors," Lisa explains. "I had a legitimate need for love, acceptance, and purpose. But instead of finding those in God, I sought them in food, in men, in achievements. The eating disorder was just a symptom of a much deeper soul sickness."

## **The College Years: When Rebellion Meets Religion**

Lisa arrived at Purdue University determined to reinvent herself. College would be her fresh start, her chance to become whoever she wanted to be. But the patterns followed her. The bulimia intensified. The partying escalated. The emptiness deepened.

"I was majoring in fashion merchandising, minoring in self-destruction," she says with painful honesty. "I'd spend my days in classes learning about beauty and image, and my nights hunched over toilet bowls, destroying my body. The irony wasn't lost on me—I was studying how to make things look good while I was falling apart inside."

It was during her junior year that Lisa encountered Christians who were different from any she'd met before. They seemed to possess a joy and peace that didn't depend on circumstances. They talked about Jesus like He was real, present, and interested in their daily lives.

"I was intrigued and irritated at the same time," Lisa remembers. "Part of me was drawn to their authenticity, but another part of me mocked their simplicity. I thought I was too complicated, too damaged, too sophisticated for their Jesus. Little did I know, my complications were exactly what He came for."

A friend invited her to a campus ministry meeting. Lisa went partly out of curiosity, partly to prove these Christians wrong. But something unexpected happened during worship—she felt exposed, like someone could see through all her masks to the frightened, empty girl beneath.

"I literally ran out of that meeting," she admits. "I felt like if I stayed one more minute, all my carefully constructed walls would crumble. And I was right. God was pursuing me, and He's relentless when He wants one of His daughters back."

## **The Surrender: When Broken Meets Beautiful**

The breaking point came on an ordinary Tuesday. Lisa had binged and purged three times already that day. Looking in the mirror, she saw not the put-together college student everyone else saw, but a hollow-eyed stranger. The diet pills weren't working anymore. The alcohol didn't numb like it used to. The relationships left her emptier than before.

"I remember thinking, 'I'm 21 years old, and I'm already exhausted from living,'" Lisa shares. "I had tried everything to fix myself, to fill myself, to find myself. Nothing worked. I was at the end of me."

That night, alone in her apartment, Lisa did something she hadn't done since childhood—she prayed. Not a religious prayer, but a desperate cry: "God, if You're real, I need You to show up. I can't do this anymore. I'm dying, and I don't know how to live."

What happened next was subtle but profound. No lightning bolts, no audible voices, just a gentle impression in her spirit: "Lisa, I've been waiting for you to ask."

"I started sobbing," she recalls. "Not the manipulative tears I'd perfected to get my way, but cleansing tears that seemed to wash years of pain out of my soul. For the first time in my life, I felt truly seen—not the masks I wore, but the real me. And instead of rejection, I felt overwhelming love."

Lisa gave her life to Christ that night, but she's quick to point out that salvation was just the beginning of transformation, not the completion of it.

"I think sometimes we present conversion like it's a magic wand—say a prayer and all your problems disappear," she explains. "But for me, salvation was more like spiritual surgery. God had to do deep work to heal what was broken, and that process was both beautiful and painful."

## **The Process: When Healing Requires Honesty**

Lisa joined the campus ministry that had initially frightened her, surrounding herself with people who could disciple her in faith. But the eating disorder didn't disappear overnight. The patterns of self-destruction didn't evaporate with her salvation prayer. The journey from bondage to freedom required daily choices and often painful honesty.

"I had to learn that my eating disorder wasn't really about food," Lisa shares. "It was about control, identity, and trying to manage pain. Until I dealt with the root issues, I'd just transfer the addiction to something else—even religious activity could become my new drug if I wasn't careful."

The healing process involved several crucial components:

**1. Confession and Community** "I had to tell someone about my struggle. The eating disorder thrived in secrecy. When I finally confessed to a mature Christian woman, the shame began to lose its power. She didn't judge me—she walked with me."

**2. Renewing the Mind** "For every lie I'd believed about myself, I had to find God's truth. When my mind said 'You're worthless,' I'd counter with 'I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.' It was mental warfare, and Scripture was my weapon."

**3. Practical Boundaries** "I had to change behaviors, not just beliefs. That meant accountability for my eating, removing scales from my apartment, avoiding triggers. Spiritual warfare requires practical wisdom."

**4. Identity Reconstruction** "I had to learn who I was in Christ, not just what I wasn't anymore. My identity couldn't be 'former bulimic' or 'recovering addict.' It had to be 'daughter of God,' 'new creation,' 'more than a conqueror.'"

## **Meeting John: When Love Challenges Lies**

During her senior year, Lisa met John Bevere, a passionate young preacher who was as intense about God as she had once been about self-destruction. Their connection was immediate but complicated—Lisa was still working through her healing, still battling old patterns, still learning to receive love without suspicion.

"John saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself," Lisa remembers. "He called out the warrior in me when I still felt like a victim. But I was terrified. How could I tell this godly man about my past? How could he want me if he knew the truth?"

The decision to be transparent with John about her struggles was excruciating. Lisa had learned to hide her brokenness, to present a polished exterior. But real love requires real honesty.

"I'll never forget telling John about the bulimia, the promiscuity, the whole mess," she shares, tears in her eyes. "I was prepared for him to walk away. Instead, he took my hands and said, 'Lisa, that's who you were. Let me tell you who God says you are.' He spoke identity over me when I could only see history."

They married in 1982, but Lisa is honest that marriage didn't magically heal all her wounds. In some ways, the intimacy of marriage exposed wounds she didn't know existed.

"Marriage has a way of revealing every unhealed area of your heart," Lisa explains. "John's love was healing, but it also terrified me. I kept waiting for him to realize he'd made a mistake, to see what I saw in the mirror. I had to learn to receive love, which was harder than learning to give it."

## **The Call Emerges: When Story Becomes Strategy**

In the early years of marriage, Lisa focused on supporting John's ministry while raising their four sons. She found healing in motherhood, pouring into her boys the unconditional love she had craved. But as her children grew, she sensed God stirring something more in her heart.

"I started noticing how many women in our church struggled with the same issues I had—identity, worth, purpose," Lisa shares. "They looked put-together on Sunday, but I recognized the hollow look in their eyes. I knew their secret battles because I'd fought them myself."

Lisa began sharing her testimony in small settings—women's Bible studies, prayer groups, informal gatherings. Each time she was vulnerable about her past, she watched walls come down and women find freedom.

"I realized my mess had become my message," she reflects. "The very things I wanted to hide were the things God wanted to use. My eating disorder gave me credibility with women battling food issues. My promiscuous past gave me authority to speak about sexual purity. My identity crisis equipped me to help others discover who they were in Christ."

But stepping into public ministry terrified her. The old voices returned with vengeance: Who do you think you are? If people knew your past, they'd never listen to you. You're not qualified to teach anyone. Stay hidden. Stay safe.

"I had to go back to the basics of my healing," Lisa admits. "I had to remind myself daily that my qualification came from Christ, not my credentials. My authority came from my testimony, not my theology degree. God wasn't calling me despite my past—He was calling me because of how He'd redeemed it."

## **The Message Takes Shape: Fight Like a Girl**

As Lisa began speaking more frequently, a clear message emerged. She saw women everywhere who were fighting the wrong battles—fighting each other, fighting their design, fighting for acceptance—while neglecting the real battle for their souls and purposes.

"God began showing me that women are warriors, but we've been taught to fight like victims," Lisa explains. "We compete when we should collaborate. We tear down when we should build up. We fight for men's attention when we should fight for God's kingdom. I knew God was calling me to help women reclaim their warrior identity."

This message crystallized into her breakthrough book, "Fight Like a Girl," which challenged women to embrace their God-given strength instead of apologizing for it. But even as the message resonated with thousands, Lisa battled imposter syndrome.

"Every time I stood to speak, the enemy would replay my greatest hits of shame," she shares. "I'd be preparing to tell women they were warriors, and he'd whisper, 'Remember when you were hunched over that toilet?' I had to learn that my testimony included both my failure and God's faithfulness. Both were necessary for the message."

## **Global Impact: When Personal Pain Becomes Corporate Purpose**

What started as sharing testimony in living rooms exploded into a global ministry. Lisa began speaking at conferences, writing books, and creating resources for women's transformation. But the expansion came with unexpected challenges.

"The bigger the platform, the bigger the attack," Lisa explains. "The enemy wasn't content to let me help set women free without a fight. Every new level of influence brought new levels of warfare—criticism, health challenges, family attacks. I had to learn that my personal victory was just the beginning. Now I was fighting for others' freedom."

Lisa and John founded Messenger International, focusing on equipping believers worldwide. But Lisa felt a specific burden for women in developing nations who faced oppression, trafficking, and limited opportunities. Her own journey from bondage to freedom gave her passion for those still enslaved.

"I couldn't forget that I was once a slave—to food, to image, to others' opinions," she shares. "Now that I was free, I had to help free others. My eating disorder was Western world bondage, but women everywhere face different chains. The enemy's tactics change, but his strategy remains the same—steal identity, kill purpose, destroy destiny."

The ministry expanded to include:

- Rescuing women from human trafficking
- Providing education for girls in nations where they're denied schooling
- Creating curriculum for women's identity and purpose
- Training female leaders globally
- Writing resources that have been translated into dozens of languages

"Every woman we help discover her identity in Christ is a victory over my own past bondage," Lisa reflects. "Every girl we educate is a declaration that women have value beyond their bodies. Every leader we raise up is proof that God uses broken vessels for His glory."

## **The Ongoing Battle: When Victory Requires Vigilance**

Lisa is transparent that decades into ministry, she still must guard against old patterns. The enemy doesn't give up easily on those who've escaped his grasp and are helping others escape too.

"I haven't binged and purged in decades, but that doesn't mean the war is over," she admits. "The battleground has shifted. Now the enemy tries to get me to find my worth in ministry success instead of food. He tempts me to control outcomes instead of calories. The tactics change, but vigilance remains necessary."

She's developed practical strategies for maintaining freedom:

**1. Daily Identity Declarations** "Every morning, I speak who God says I am before the enemy can speak his lies. I am chosen, called, equipped, and sent. My past does not define me—God's purpose does."

**2. Transparent Accountability** "John knows my struggles. My prayer partners know my weak spots. Secrecy is the enemy's playground. I stay in the light through honest relationships."

**3. Sabbath Rhythms** "I learned that running hard in ministry can become its own addiction. Regular rest reminds me that my worth isn't in what I produce but in whose I am."

**4. Generational Vision** "When I'm tempted to shrink back, I think of my four sons and now my grandchildren. My freedom isn't just for me—it's for generations. That motivates me to stay strong."

## **The Multiplication Effect: When One Woman's Freedom Unleashes Many**

The most powerful aspect of Lisa's story is how her personal freedom has catalyzed freedom for countless others. Women around the world share testimonies of how her vulnerability gave them permission to face their own bondage:

- A executive who hid her bulimia for 20 years finally sought help
- A pastor's wife addicted to prescription pills found freedom through transparency
- A trafficking survivor discovered her identity as God's warrior princess
- A teenager cutting herself learned she was marking a masterpiece

"Every testimony I receive reminds me why God saved me from that bathroom floor," Lisa says, emotion thick in her voice. "He didn't just want to rescue me—He wanted to rescue others through me. My story became my strategy for setting captives free."

## **The Message for You: Your Mess Is Your Ministry Training Ground**

As Lisa looks back on her journey from addiction to international ministry, she sees God's sovereign hand weaving pain into purpose at every turn.

"I wouldn't wish my eating disorder on anyone," she clarifies. "But I also can't deny that God used it to equip me for ministry in ways nothing else could have. My mess became my message. My test became my testimony. My pit became my platform."

She challenges every woman reading her story to reconsider their own struggles:

"What addiction are you battling that God wants to transform into authority? What secret struggle qualifies you to speak freedom to others with the same struggle? What mess in your life is actually ministry training in disguise?"

The enemy wants us to believe our struggles disqualify us from being used by God. But Lisa's life declares the opposite: our struggles, once surrendered to God, become our strongest qualifications for ministry.

"God doesn't just heal us for our own sake," Lisa teaches. "He heals us so we can become healing agents. He frees us so we can become freedom fighters. He restores our identity so we can help others discover theirs. Your struggle isn't your shame—it's your seminary for specific ministry."

## **Your Turn: What Battle Qualifies You to Lead Others to Victory?**

Right now, you might be battling something that feels like it disqualifies you from God's purposes. Maybe it's an addiction, a secret struggle, a shameful past. The enemy whispers that you're too damaged, too broken, too far gone to be used by God.

But Lisa's story shouts a different truth: You're not too broken—you're perfectly positioned. Your battle isn't your disqualification—it's your unique qualification. Your struggle isn't your shame—it's your future specialty in ministry.

"God is looking for women who will get raw and real about their struggles," Lisa declares. "He's searching for warriors who will say, 'Yes, I battled this, but watch what God did!' He's recruiting freedom fighters who know what bondage feels like and refuse to let others stay enslaved."

The question isn't whether you've struggled—we all have. The question is whether you'll let God transform your struggle into a strategy for setting others free.

## **The Challenge: Will You Let Your Mess Become Your Message?**

Today, God is inviting you to reconsider your struggles through Kingdom eyes. That addiction you're battling or overcame? It's ministry training. That identity crisis you're navigating? It's equipping you to help others find themselves. That secret shame you're carrying? It's your future platform for freedom.

But transformation requires transparency. Healing demands honesty. Freedom necessitates vulnerability. Will you come out of hiding? Will you let God use your mess for His message? Will you allow your test to become testimony?

"I'm living proof that God doesn't waste anything," Lisa declares with conviction. "Not our pain, not our poor choices, not our bondage. He redeems it all and uses it all if we'll let Him. Your story of struggle and salvation is someone else's key to freedom. Don't hide it. Share it. Let God use it."

Somewhere, a woman is battling the same bondage you've faced. She thinks she's alone, too far gone, beyond redemption. Your story could be her lifeline. Your transparency could be her transformation. Your mess could be her miracle.

The bathroom floor doesn't have to be your final chapter. It can be the beginning of a story that sets nations of women free.

Your struggle is your strategy.

Your mess is your message.

Your bondage is your battleground for others' breakthrough.

Will you fight like the girl God created you to be?

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*Prayer: Father, I bring You my struggles—all of them. The addictions I've battled, the bondage I've broken, the secrets I've hidden. For so long, I've seen these as disqualifications, as reasons You couldn't use me. But today, I choose to see them through Your eyes—as ministry training, as qualifications for specific assignments, as strategies for setting others free. Give me courage to be transparent about my journey. Help me to steward my story for Your glory. Use my mess as a message of hope. Transform my test into a testimony of Your faithfulness. I surrender my shame and receive my assignment. Make me a freedom fighter for others still in bondage. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I am not defined by my struggles. I am not disqualified by my past. My mess is becoming my message. My test is becoming my testimony. My bondage is becoming my battleground for others' freedom. I am a warrior, not a victim. I fight from victory, not for victory. My transparency will catalyze transformation. My story will set others free. I am qualified by my struggles to minister to others in the same struggle. I embrace my assignment. I will fight like the woman God created me to be.*

# Chapter 7: Steve Harvey - Slept in His Car, Now Bold About Faith

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." - Hebrews 11:1*

The 1976 Ford Tempo had become more than transportation—it was home. Steve Harvey, 27 years old with a family depending on him, carefully arranged his few possessions in the backseat, using a cooler as a makeshift dresser and hanging his three suits from the garment hooks. The man who would one day host television shows, pack arenas, and influence millions was living in his car outside comedy clubs, washing up in gas station bathrooms, and wondering if he'd lost his mind.

"I remember looking at myself in the rearview mirror one morning," Steve recalls, his voice carrying the weight of those desperate days. "My daughter's picture was taped to the dashboard. I hadn't seen her in months. I was sending what little money I made back home while I lived on bologna sandwiches. And I asked myself, 'What kind of father lives in a car chasing a dream that might never come true?'"

But deeper than the doubt was an unshakeable knowing—a divine conviction that comedy wasn't just what he wanted to do, but what he was created to do. Even as friends called him foolish, family members begged him to "get a real job," and circumstances screamed failure, Steve held onto a promise he believed God had whispered to his spirit: "I gifted you to make people laugh, and through laughter, you'll lead them to Me."

Today, Steve Harvey is a household name—comedian, television host, bestselling author, and unapologetically bold about his faith. But the journey from that Ford Tempo to international influence is a masterclass in what happens when bold obedience collides with divine positioning.

## The Stuttering Kid from Cleveland

Broderick Stephen Harvey was born in Welch, West Virginia, in 1957, but his family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, when he was young. The Harvey household was working-class, proud, and deeply rooted in faith. His father, Jesse, was a coal miner who worked brutal hours to provide. His mother, Eloise, was the prayer warrior who kept the family anchored in church despite their struggles.

But young Steve carried a burden that made every day a battle: a severe stutter that turned simple communication into complex negotiation.

"People don't understand what it's like to have thoughts trapped in your head because your mouth won't cooperate," Steve shares. "I'd know the answer in class but wouldn't raise my hand because I couldn't get the words out. Kids laughed. Teachers got impatient. I felt like God had played a cruel joke—giving me so much to say but no way to say it."

The stutter shaped Steve in profound ways. He became an observer, studying people's patterns, learning what made them laugh, understanding timing not through words but through moments. He developed a rich inner life, imagining himself speaking fluently, commanding attention, making people forget their troubles through laughter.

"My sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Shannon, asked us to write down what we wanted to be when we grew up," Steve remembers. "I wrote 'on TV.' She looked at my paper and said, 'Steve, be realistic. With your stutter, you'll never be on television. Write something achievable.' I was crushed, but something in me refused to change my answer."

That defiant faith—believing in a calling that contradicted current reality—would become Steve's signature trait. But first, he would wander through a wilderness of failed attempts and false starts.

## **The Wilderness Years: When Calling Seems Distant**

After high school, Steve drifted. He attended Kent State University briefly but dropped out. He worked a series of jobs that paid bills but numbed his soul—insurance salesman, carpet cleaner, mailman, even a stint as a boxer. Each job felt like wearing someone else's clothes—functional but never fitting.

"I was making a living but dying inside," Steve reflects. "Every day I'd go to work knowing I was built for something else. But when you have responsibilities, when people depend on you, sometimes you bury your dreams under the weight of necessity."

Steve married young and had twin daughters, Karli and Brandi. The responsibility of fatherhood intensified the tension between security and calling. How could he justify chasing a dream when his girls needed stability?

"I'd come home from selling insurance, and my wife would ask how my day was," he shares. "I'd lie and say 'fine,' but inside I was screaming. I knew I was supposed to be making people laugh, not selling them policies. But comedy doesn't come with a salary and benefits."

The marriage strained under the weight of unfulfilled purpose. Steve became increasingly restless, irritable, distant. He was physically present but emotionally absent, his mind always elsewhere—on stages he'd never stood on, telling jokes he'd never voiced, living a life he'd never dared to pursue.

## **The Break: When Desperation Demands Decision**

October 8, 1985. Steve remembers the date like a birthday—because in many ways, it was. He was 27 years old, working at a Ford plant, when something inside him snapped. Not broke—snapped into place.

"I was installing carpet in this office building," Steve recalls. "The boss was yelling about something, and I just stopped. Right there, holding that carpet knife, I heard God clear as day: 'If you don't do what I created you to do, you'll die never having lived.' It wasn't audible, but it was undeniable."

That night, Steve went home and announced he was quitting his job to pursue comedy full-time. The reaction was explosive. His wife thought he'd lost his mind. His parents begged him to reconsider. Friends listed every comedian who'd failed, every dreamer who'd ended up broken.

"My father pulled me aside and said, 'Son, comedy is for people with fallback plans. You've got babies to feed.' He wasn't wrong," Steve admits. "But I couldn't shake the feeling that playing it safe was actually the riskiest thing I could do. What if I spent my whole life in jobs I hated and died never knowing if I could have made it?"

The decision cost him everything. His marriage couldn't survive the instability. He sent what money he made back for his daughters while he lived on nothing. Friends distanced themselves, embarrassed by his choices. Family gatherings became interventions, everyone trying to talk sense into Steve.

"I lost my family, my home, my reputation," he reflects. "But I found my purpose. And when you're walking in purpose, you can endure what would destroy you otherwise."

## **Three Years in the Wilderness: When Faith Gets Tested**

What followed were three of the hardest years of Steve's life. He traveled from comedy club to comedy club, often driving hundreds of miles for \$50 gigs. When he couldn't afford hotels, he slept in his car. When the car broke down, he slept in train stations. When he couldn't afford food, he went hungry.

"People see the success now and think it happened overnight," Steve says. "They don't know about the nights I cried myself to sleep in that car, wondering if I'd heard God wrong. They don't know about calling home and hearing my daughters ask when Daddy was coming back, knowing I had no answer."

The comedy world was brutal. Club owners who promised payment disappeared. Audiences sometimes booed. Other comedians, threatened by his natural talent, spread rumors to keep him from getting booked. The stutter he'd mostly overcome would resurface when he was exhausted or stressed, leading to humiliating moments on stage.

"I remember one night in Detroit," Steve shares, pain still evident in his voice. "I was so hungry I was dizzy. I got on stage and just blanked. Forgot my entire set. The audience turned hostile. The club owner refused to pay me. I drove to a rest stop and seriously considered driving that car off a bridge. But then I looked at my daughters' picture and remembered—this wasn't just about me."

What kept him going during those dark nights wasn't natural optimism—it was supernatural conviction. Steve had developed a practice of talking to God like a friend, arguing like Jacob, honest about his frustration but unable to let go of the promise.

"I'd say, 'God, You told me to do this. You gave me this gift. Where are You?' And in the silence, I'd hear, 'I'm preparing you. The gift needs the process. Trust Me.'"

## **The Turning Point: When Preparation Meets Opportunity**

In 1989, after three years of homelessness and hundreds of small gigs, Steve caught a break. He was performing at a club in Memphis when someone mentioned the Johnnie Walker National Comedy Search. The winner would receive national exposure and significant money—enough to change everything.

"I knew this was my shot," Steve recalls. "But the competition was fierce. Established comedians with agents and experience. I was still washing up in gas station bathrooms. But I also knew I had something they didn't—I had been forged in fire. My comedy came from pain transformed into purpose."

Steve prepared like his life depended on it—because it did. He refined his material, drawing from his experiences of poverty, family dysfunction, and faith. His comedy was different from the vulgar shock-humor popular at the time. Steve's humor came from a deeper place—observational, honest, surprisingly clean for a comedy club.

"I made a decision early on," Steve explains. "I wouldn't compromise my faith for laughs. I could be funny without being filthy. I could make people think while they laughed. That was my lane, and I stayed in it even when club owners pressured me to 'dirty it up' for bigger laughs."

The night of the competition, Steve took the stage with three years of hunger, homelessness, and humiliation fueling his performance. He didn't just tell jokes—he testified through humor. The audience didn't just laugh—they connected.

He won.

"When they announced my name, I broke down crying on stage," Steve remembers. "Not just because of the money or the exposure, but because God had validated the journey. Every night in that car, every missed meal, every tearful phone call home—it all suddenly made sense."

## **The Platform Expands: When Faithfulness Opens Doors**

The Johnnie Walker win led to appearances on "Showtime at the Apollo." Steve became the host of "It's Showtime at the Apollo," a position that gave him consistent income and national exposure. But more importantly, it gave him a platform to be himself—a man of faith who happened to be funny, not a comedian who happened to believe.

"I never hid my faith, even when advisors said it would limit my appeal," Steve shares. "I'd thank God on stage, talk about prayer in interviews, refuse gigs that required me to compromise. Some doors closed, but the right doors opened wider."

The trajectory was remarkable: "The Steve Harvey Show" sitcom, "The Steve Harvey Morning Show" radio program, bestselling books, and eventually becoming one of the most recognizable faces in entertainment as host of "Family Feud," "The Steve Harvey Show" talk show, and the Miss Universe pageant.

But Steve is quick to point out that each new level brought new battles.

"Success doesn't eliminate spiritual warfare—it intensifies it," he explains. "The enemy wasn't bothered when I was homeless. But when I started influencing millions, when I started talking about faith on mainstream platforms, the attacks multiplied. Financial attacks, relationship attacks, reputation attacks. The bigger the platform, the bigger the target on your back."

## **The Bold Declaration: When Success Demands Witness**

As Steve's influence grew, so did the pressure to minimize his faith. Hollywood advisors suggested he tone down the God-talk. Network executives hinted that secular audiences didn't want to hear about Jesus. The message was clear: you can be successful or spiritual, but not both.

"That's when I had to make another defining decision," Steve recalls. "Was I going to use the platform God gave me to glorify Him, or was I going to act like I got here on my own? I remembered those nights in the car when only God was with me. How could I abandon Him now that everyone was watching?"

Steve made the bold choice to become more vocal about his faith, not less. He ended every show with "God bless." He talked openly about prayer, purpose, and divine provision. He refused to do content that contradicted his convictions, even when it cost millions.

"I lost some opportunities," he admits. "Some people in Hollywood distanced themselves. Some critics mocked my faith. But I gained something more valuable—integrity. My daughters could watch my shows. My mother could be proud. Most importantly, I could face God knowing I hadn't sold out for success."

The boldness paid off in unexpected ways. Steve's authenticity resonated with audiences tired of celebrities who seemed disconnected from real values. His books about faith and success became bestsellers. His speaking engagements at churches and faith-based events multiplied. He became proof that you could succeed in secular spaces without sacrificing sacred convictions.

## **The Ministry Within the Mainstream**

What makes Steve's story unique is how he's created ministry within mainstream media. He doesn't pastor a church, but he preaches through punchlines. He doesn't have a congregation, but millions tune in to hear wisdom wrapped in humor.

"Comedy is my pulpit," Steve explains. "When I make people laugh, their guards come down. When their guards are down, truth can slip in. I can talk about marriage, manhood, faith, and purpose in ways that reach people who'd never step foot in a church."

His approach is strategic and Spirit-led:

**1. Excellence Opens Ears** "I make sure I'm the best at what I do. Excellence gives you authority. When you're undeniably good at your craft, people listen when you speak about your faith."

**2. Authenticity Over Preachiness** "I don't beat people over the head with Bible verses. I live my faith out loud and let people ask questions. Authenticity draws people; religiosity repels them."

**3. Humor Disarms Hostility** "I can address tough topics—racism, relationships, responsibility—through humor that medicine goes down easier. Laughter creates connection where lecture creates walls."

**4. Platform as Partnership** "I see my platform as a partnership with God. He provides the influence; I provide the obedience. He opens the doors; I walk through them boldly."

## The Challenges of Visible Faith

Steve is transparent about the unique challenges of being bold about faith in secular spaces. The attacks come from multiple directions—religious people who think he's too worldly, worldly people who think he's too religious, and everyone in between who has opinions about how he should live his faith.

"Some Christians criticize me for being in Hollywood at all," Steve shares. "They think I should only do 'Christian' content. But Jesus didn't just hang out in synagogues. He went where the people were. That's what I'm trying to do—be light in dark places."

The balance is delicate. How do you maintain holiness while working in Hollywood? How do you stay relevant without becoming relativistic? How do you speak truth without becoming self-righteous?

"I fail sometimes," Steve admits. "I'm not perfect. I've made mistakes, said things I shouldn't have, been places I shouldn't have been. But God's grace covers my imperfection, and I keep trying to represent Him well while being honest about my humanity."

## **The Generational Impact: When Obedience Affects Bloodlines**

One of the most powerful aspects of Steve's story is how his bold obedience has affected his family line. The man who once couldn't provide for his daughters while living in his car now employs his children, teaching them business and faith. The stutter that should have silenced him became the story that inspires his grandchildren.

"My daughters saw me at my lowest," Steve reflects, emotion thick in his voice. "They remember Daddy being gone, the lights being cut off, Christmas without presents. But they also saw God's faithfulness. They saw faith work. Now they're raising their children with that same bold faith."

Steve has been intentional about using his platform to create opportunities for others, especially young people from backgrounds like his. His mentoring programs, scholarships, and youth initiatives focus on combining faith with practical success strategies.

"I want young people to know you don't have to choose between success and faith," he emphasizes. "You don't have to hide your beliefs to achieve your dreams. In fact, your faith is what will sustain you when the dream gets difficult."

## **The Message: Bold Obedience Positions You for Divine Purpose**

The core principle of Steve's journey is this: bold obedience to God's calling, even when it seems foolish, positions you for divine purpose and provision. The very thing that looked like failure—living in a car, losing everything—was actually the process that prepared him for his purpose.

"God's math doesn't make sense to our minds," Steve teaches. "He says lose your life to find it. He says the last shall be first. He says strength is made perfect in weakness. I'm living proof that when you boldly obey what seems like foolishness, God turns it into a testimony that impacts nations."

This principle challenges our security-obsessed culture. We want guarantees before we step out. We want success before we sacrifice. We want clarity before we commit. But faith operates differently.

"Faith isn't about seeing the whole staircase," Steve preaches. "It's about taking the next step even when you can't see where it leads. Bold obedience means moving when God says move, even when moving seems like madness."

## **Your Turn: What Bold Step Is God Calling You To?**

As you read Steve's story, what resonates with your current situation? What dream has God placed in your heart that seems impossible given your circumstances? What bold step are you avoiding because it doesn't make natural sense?

The enemy wants you to believe that following God's call is irresponsible, that faith is foolishness, that bold obedience leads to failure. But Steve's journey declares the opposite: the safest place you can be is in the center of God's will, even when that center looks like chaos to others.

"You might not be called to comedy, but you're called to something," Steve challenges. "Maybe it's starting that business, writing that book, launching that ministry, having that conversation. Whatever it is, it probably scares you. Good. God specializes in using people who move afraid but obedient."

## **The Decision Point: Will You Take the Bold Step?**

Right now, you stand at your own October 8, 1985 moment. You know what God is calling you to do. You've probably known for a while. But the voices of reason, responsibility, and religion keep you frozen in place.

"Let me tell you something about those voices," Steve says with conviction. "The voice of reason said I was crazy to quit my job. Reason was wrong. The voice of responsibility said I was selfish to chase my dream. Responsibility didn't understand that my greatest responsibility was to fulfill my purpose. The voice of religion said God wanted me safe and stable. Religion didn't realize God is more interested in my obedience than my comfort."

The question isn't whether God has called you to something bold—He has. The question is whether you'll obey. Whether you'll step out of the boat of security and walk on the water of faith. Whether you'll trade your Ford plant for your Ford Tempo, trusting that God honors bold obedience.

"I'm not saying everyone should quit their job tomorrow," Steve clarifies. "But I am saying everyone should be boldly obedient to what God is specifically telling them. For some, that's staying in a job but with renewed purpose. For others, it's a radical redirection. The key is obedience, not imitation."

## **The Promise: Bold Faith Leads to Divine Positioning**

Here's what Steve's story guarantees: when you boldly obey God's call on your life, He positions you for influence you couldn't achieve on your own. The platform might look different than you imagined. The journey might be longer than you planned. The process might be harder than you expected. But the purpose will be greater than you dreamed.

"I thought I was just going to tell jokes," Steve reflects. "I had no idea God was positioning me to influence millions, to speak faith into mainstream culture, to show a generation that success without God is failure. The comedy was just the entry point. The real assignment was bigger."

Your bold obedience might start small—a conversation, a class, a confession. But God specializes in multiplication. He takes our loaves and fish of obedience and feeds multitudes. He takes our stumbling steps of faith and creates pathways for others to follow.

"Someone is waiting for what's on the other side of your obedience," Steve declares. "Your bold step isn't just about you. It's about the lives that will be changed, the chains that will be broken, the hope that will be restored because you dared to believe God and move."

Today, the Ford Tempo is in a museum. But more importantly, the faith that sustained Steve in that car now sustains millions who hear his message. The stutter that should have silenced him became the story that speaks loudest. The three years of homelessness became the foundation for homes of hope he builds for others.

Your bold step is waiting. Your divine positioning is prepared. Your platform for His glory is possible.

But first, you have to be willing to sleep in the car of faith, trusting that God is driving you toward destiny.

Will you get in?

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*Prayer: Father, I stand at the edge of bold obedience, and I'm scared. Like Steve, I hear You calling me to something that doesn't make sense, that others won't understand, that requires more faith than I think I have. But today, I choose to trust Your voice over the voice of reason, responsibility, or religion. Give me courage to take the bold step You're showing me. Help me to count the cost but trust Your provision. I surrender my need for security and embrace my need for obedience. Use my bold faith to position me for divine purpose. Let my obedience open doors for others to walk in their purpose. I may not see the whole staircase, but I'm ready to take the next step. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Declaration: I am called to bold obedience. I will not let fear stop what faith has started. My current circumstances do not determine my destiny. I choose faith over comfort, purpose over predictability, obedience over opinion. God is positioning me for divine influence through my bold steps. My obedience today is someone else's breakthrough tomorrow. I am not crazy—I am called. I am not foolish—I am faithful. I will take the bold step God is showing me, trusting Him with the outcome. My faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. I walk by faith, not by sight. My bold obedience is positioning me for divine purpose.*

# Chapter 8: 90-Day Fearless Calling Program

*"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." - 2 Timothy 1:7*

You've journeyed through seven powerful stories of ordinary people who overcame extraordinary fear to walk in their calling. Christine Caine transformed insecurity into global impact. Nick Vujicic turned limitations into platforms. Sarah Jakes Roberts converted shame into purpose. Jeremy Camp channeled grief into worship. Bishop T.D. Jakes proved faithfulness in obscurity leads to influence. Lisa Bevere transformed addiction into freedom ministry. Steve Harvey showed that bold obedience positions us for divine purpose.

Now it's your turn.

The stories you've read aren't meant to merely inspire—they're meant to ignite action. Each testimony proves the same truth: God doesn't wait for you to feel ready before He calls you. He calls you, then equips you as you obey. The gap between where you are and where He's calling you isn't crossed by confidence—it's crossed by courage.

This 90-Day Fearless Calling Program is your practical roadmap from fear to faith, from knowing you're called to actually walking in that calling. It's structured in three progressive phases, each building on the last, designed to move you from internal transformation to external impact.

**Remember:** The people you've read about didn't overcome fear once and move on. They chose courage daily. This program isn't about eliminating fear—it's about acting despite it. It's about building spiritual muscles that make obedience your default response to God's voice.

## Phase 1: Identity & Inner Healing (Days 1-30)

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17*

The first 30 days focus on the foundation that everything else builds upon: your identity in Christ. You can't walk confidently in your calling if you don't know who you are. Like Sarah Jakes Roberts discovered, you must know whose you are before you can know what you're called to do.

### Week 1: Breaking Soul Ties with Fear (Days 1-7)

Fear doesn't just appear—it attaches. It forms soul ties through past experiences, generational patterns, and enemy lies. This week, you'll identify and break these unhealthy connections.

**Day 1: Identify Your Core Fears** Write down every fear connected to your calling. Be specific. Don't write "fear of failure"—write "fear that I'll start the business and go bankrupt like Dad did." Name them to tame them.

*Prayer Focus:* "Father, reveal every fear that's holding me back from my calling. Show me where these fears originated and help me surrender them to You."

**Day 2: Trace the Roots** For each fear you identified, trace its origin. When did it start? What experience planted it? Who spoke it over you? Understanding the root helps you pull out the entire weed, not just trim the leaves.

*Declaration:* "I am not bound by past experiences. What happened before doesn't determine what happens next. I am writing a new story with God as my co-author."

**Day 3: Break Generational Patterns** List fears you've inherited from your family line. Did your mother fear public speaking? Did your father avoid risk? Generational fears often masquerade as "wisdom" or "family traits."

*Prayer Focus:* "Lord, I break every generational curse of fear in Jesus' name. What stopped my parents stops with me. I choose faith as my family legacy."

**Day 4: Renounce Agreements** Write down every agreement you've made with fear: "I'm not smart enough," "People like me don't succeed," "God can't use someone with my past." These agreements give fear legal ground in your life.

*Action Step:* Physically tear up the paper with these agreements. As you do, declare: "I renounce every agreement with fear. I agree with God's Word about my identity and calling."

**Day 5: Replace Lies with Truth** For every fear-based lie, find a scripture that declares truth. Create a "Truth vs. Lies" chart. When fear whispers its lie, you'll have truth ready to counter.

*Key Scriptures:*

- Fear of inadequacy: "I can do all things through Christ" (Philippians 4:13)
- Fear of rejection: "I am accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6)
- Fear of failure: "All things work together for good" (Romans 8:28)

**Day 6: Fast from Fear Feeds** Identify what feeds your fears—negative news, toxic relationships, comparison on social media. Fast from these for 24 hours. Notice how your faith level changes when you stop feeding fear.

*Reflection Question:* What would I attempt if I stopped consuming content that reinforces my fears?

**Day 7: Seal the Deliverance** Today, conduct a personal "fear funeral." Write a eulogy for your fears, thanking them for trying to protect you but declaring their services are no longer needed. Bury or burn the paper (safely), symbolically laying your fears to rest.

*Declaration:* "Fear, you are no longer my advisor. Faith is my new counselor. I am free from fear's control and walking in faith's power."

## **Week 2: Daily Affirmations & Identity Building (Days 8-14)**

Like Lisa Bevere learned, you must speak who God says you are before the enemy can speak his lies. This week establishes a practice of daily identity declarations.

**Day 8: Create Your Identity Statement** Write a one-page declaration of who you are in Christ. Include scriptures, prophetic words spoken over you, and God-given dreams. This becomes your daily confession.

*Example starter:* "I am a child of God, chosen before the foundation of the world. I am called to [specific calling], equipped with [specific gifts], and anointed to [specific impact]..."

**Day 9: Morning Mirror Declarations** Stand before a mirror each morning this week and speak your identity statement aloud. Look yourself in the eyes. Your ears need to hear your mouth declare truth.

*Note from Nick Vujicic:* "I had to learn to see myself through God's eyes, not the mirror's reflection. Speak to who you're becoming, not who you've been."

**Day 10: Write Your Future Testimony** Write your testimony as if it's five years from now. What has God done through your obedience? Who has been impacted? Writing your future testimony builds faith for its fulfillment.

*Prompt:* "I remember when I was afraid to [calling], but God gave me courage to step out, and now..."

**Day 11: Identify Your Spiritual Gifts** Take a spiritual gifts assessment. Ask five trusted people what gifts they see in you. Often others can see what fear has blinded us to. Document these confirmations.

*Action Step:* Begin operating in one identified gift this week, even in a small way.

**Day 12: Claim Your Ephesians 2:10** "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Write out the "good works" you believe God prepared for you. Be specific. Dream big. God's plans exceed our imagination.

**Day 13: Design Your Identity Symbol** Create a visual reminder of your identity—a piece of jewelry, a screensaver, a framed verse. When fear attacks, this symbol reminds you who you really are.

*Sarah Jakes Roberts' Practice:* "I wear a ring that reminds me I'm married to purpose, not to my past."

**Day 14: Identity Communion** Take communion alone with God, specifically thanking Him for your new identity. As you take the bread, receive fresh revelation of who you are. As you take the cup, let it wash away who you're not.

*Declaration:* "I am who God says I am. I can do what God says I can do. I have what God says I have."

### **Week 3: Healing from Past Wounds (Days 15-21)**

Like Jeremy Camp discovered, unhealed wounds become infected when God calls us to greater purpose. This week focuses on letting God heal what's been hidden.

**Day 15: The Wound Inventory** List every significant wound connected to your calling—rejections, failures, betrayals, losses. Don't spiritualize or minimize. Be honest about what still hurts.

*Christine Caine's Wisdom:* "You can't heal what you won't acknowledge. Admitting the wound exists is the first step to healing."

**Day 16: Forgiveness Letters** Write letters to those who wounded you (don't send them). Express the hurt fully, then declare forgiveness. Forgiveness isn't feeling—it's a decision that releases you from prison.

*Prayer:* "Father, I choose to forgive [name] for [specific wound]. I release them and myself from the debt. Heal my heart and use my pain for purpose."

**Day 17: Shame Inventory** What shame are you carrying that makes you feel disqualified? Write it all down—every embarrassing failure, every secret struggle, every "if they knew" fear.

*Truth:* Your shame is not your identity. It's material for your message.

**Day 18: Testimony Reframe** Take your biggest shame and rewrite it as a testimony. How has God redeemed it? How could it help others? Sarah Jakes Roberts built a movement from her teen pregnancy shame.

*Format:* "I once... But God... Now I..."

**Day 19: Inner Healing Prayer** Set aside extended time for God to heal specific memories. Invite Him into painful scenes. Ask Him to show you where He was and what He wants to speak to that wounded version of you.

*Practical Tip:* Consider doing this with a trusted prayer partner or counselor.

**Day 20: Declare Your Healing** Write a declaration of healing over every area the enemy has attacked. Speak it aloud daily this week. Faith comes by hearing, including hearing yourself declare truth.

*Example:* "I am healed from the wound of [specific event]. What the enemy meant for evil, God is using for good. My pain has become my platform."

**Day 21: Celebration of Redemption** Celebrate what God has healed! Do something special to mark this milestone. You're not the same person who started this journey 21 days ago.

*Bishop Jakes' Reminder:* "Healing isn't just for you—it's for everyone your healed heart will touch."

#### **Week 4: Receiving Your Kingdom Identity (Days 22-30)**

The final week of Phase 1 solidifies your identity not just as healed, but as commissioned. You're not just forgiven—you're sent.

**Day 22: Your Kingdom Job Description** Write a "job description" for your calling as if God were posting it. Include qualifications (that you possess), responsibilities, and kingdom impact.

*Note:* God's job descriptions always include "willingness to look foolish by world's standards."

**Day 23: Anoint Your Assignment** Physically anoint yourself with oil, declaring God's anointing on your calling. Anoint your hands for the work, your feet for the journey, your mouth for the message.

*Declaration:* "I am anointed for this assignment. What God has called me to, He will equip me for."

**Day 24: Spiritual Authority Activation** List the spiritual authority you carry because of your identity in Christ. Authority over fear, doubt, lack, opposition. Practice exercising this authority in prayer.

*Luke 10:19:* "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy."

**Day 25: Write Your Commissioning Letter** Write yourself a commissioning letter from God. What would He say about your calling? What would He affirm? What would He promise? Let the Holy Spirit guide your pen.

**Day 26: Kingdom Networking** Identify three people already walking in similar callings. Reach out to one today. Kingdom connections accelerate kingdom purposes.

*Steve Harvey's Key:* "God uses people to open doors He's ordained. Don't be too proud to need others."

**Day 27: Wardrobe of Calling** What does someone in your calling wear—spiritually speaking? Put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6) specifically related to your calling.

*Example:* "I put on the breastplate of righteousness, knowing my calling to business requires integrity as my protection."

**Day 28: Commission Yourself** Stand before a mirror and commission yourself into your calling, like a ceremonial installation. Speak with authority. Heaven is watching this moment.

**Day 29: Accountability Activation** Share your calling with three trusted people who will hold you accountable to walk in it. Give them permission to challenge you when you shrink back.

**Day 30: Phase 1 Celebration & Assessment** Review the past 30 days. What has shifted in your identity? What fears have lost their power? Journal the transformation. You're ready for Phase 2.

## **Phase 2: Courage & Clarity (Days 31-60)**

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." - Joshua 1:9*

With your identity established, Phase 2 focuses on gaining clarity about your specific assignment and building courage to pursue it. Like Bishop T.D. Jakes in his storefront church, you'll learn that clarity often comes through action, not waiting.

### **Week 5: Prayer and Fasting for Direction (Days 31-37)**

This week, you'll seek God intensively for specific direction regarding your calling. Fasting sharpens spiritual sensitivity and demonstrates you're serious about hearing from God.

**Day 31: Choose Your Fast** Select a fast that challenges you but is sustainable for 7 days.  
Options:

- Daniel Fast (fruits, vegetables, water)
- Media Fast (no entertainment, only worship and Word)
- Partial Fast (skip one meal daily)
- Complete Fast (water only—consult a doctor first)

*Purpose Declaration:* "I'm fasting to hear You clearly about my calling, Lord. I decrease so You can increase in my life."

**Day 32: Create Sacred Space** Designate a specific place for seeking God this week. Make it special—candles, worship music, journal, Bible. This becomes your "tent of meeting" with God.

*Morning Prayer:* "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening. I position myself to hear Your voice above all others."

**Day 33: Listen for the Still Small Voice** Today, practice listening prayer. Ask God specific questions about your calling, then be still. Write down any impressions, images, or scriptures that come to mind.

Questions to Ask:

- "What specific assignment do You have for me?"
- "Who am I called to serve?"
- "What's my next step?"
- "What's blocking me from moving forward?"

**Day 34: Seek Confirmation** Review what you've sensed from God. Look for confirmation in Scripture, circumstances, and trusted counselors. God often confirms His word multiple ways.

*Wisdom from Experience:* "God's direction will never contradict His Word. If what you're hearing doesn't align with Scripture, keep listening."

**Day 35: Fast from Voices of Confusion** Today, fast from all voices except God's—no advice-seeking, no opinion polls, no research. Just you and God. Clarity comes when competing voices quiet.

*Lisa Bevere's Practice:* "Sometimes we collect so many opinions that we can't hear God's voice. Silence the crowd to hear the King."

**Day 36: Dream with God** Ask God to give you dreams—both sleeping and waking—about your calling. Keep a notepad by your bed. God often speaks in the night when our minds quiet.

*Prayer:* "Lord, speak to me in dreams and visions. Show me what You see when You look at my future."

**Day 37: Document the Direction** Write down everything God has shown you this week. Be specific. Vague vision produces vague results. What exactly is God calling you to do?

*Clarity Questions:*

- What problem am I called to solve?
- What people am I called to serve?
- What outcome will my obedience produce?
- What would success look like in God's eyes?

## **Week 6: Refining Your God-Given Assignment (Days 38-44)**

With initial direction received, this week refines and clarifies your assignment into actionable understanding.

**Day 38: Write Your Mission Statement** Craft a one-sentence mission statement for your calling. It should be clear enough that a child could understand it.

*Format:* "I am called to [action verb] [specific people] by [specific method] so that [specific outcome]."

**Day 39: Identify Your Unique Contribution** What do you bring to your calling that no one else can? Your story, style, experience, perspective. God doesn't call duplicates.

*Nick Vujicic's Insight:* "My lack of limbs is my unique contribution. Your greatest challenge might be your greatest credential."

**Day 40: Resource Inventory** List every resource you currently have that relates to your calling—skills, connections, experiences, even failures. God starts with what's in your hand.

*Remember Moses:* All he had was a staff, but in God's hands, it became a tool of deliverance.

**Day 41: Gap Analysis** What's the gap between where you are and where God's calling you? Be specific:

- Skills needed
- Resources required
- Connections to make
- Fears to overcome

**Day 42: Create Your Development Plan** For each gap identified, create an action plan. What books will you read? What courses will you take? What mentors will you seek? Faith requires preparation.

**Day 43: Territory Mapping** Where is your calling meant to impact—local, national, global, digital? Map your territory. Start local, think global. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth.

**Day 44: Opposition Preparation** List potential opposition to your calling. Spiritual, practical, financial, relational. Knowing the enemy's tactics helps you prepare your defense.

*Warfare Reality:* "The enemy always attacks identity before assignment. If he can't stop who you are, he'll try to stop what you do."

## **Week 7: Building Courage Through Action (Days 45-51)**

Courage isn't the absence of fear—it's action in the presence of fear. This week, you'll take increasingly bold actions to build your courage muscle.

**Day 45: Micro-Step Monday** Take one tiny step toward your calling today. Send one email, make one phone call, write one paragraph. Momentum starts with movement.

*Steve Harvey's Wisdom:* "You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."

**Day 46: Tell Someone Tuesday** Share your calling with someone new today. Practice articulating it clearly. Their response will teach you something, whether positive or negative.

**Day 47: Wisdom Wednesday** Research someone successfully doing what you're called to do. What can you learn from their journey? Reach out if possible.

**Day 48: Testimony Thursday** Share your testimony (even in part) with someone who needs hope. Watch how your story ministers. This builds confidence that God can use you.

**Day 49: Faith-Stretch Friday** Do something that scares you related to your calling. Apply to speak somewhere, submit the proposal, register the domain, schedule the meeting.

*Courage Building:* "Every time you do something that scares you, fear loses power and faith gains ground."

**Day 50: Serve Saturday** Find a way to serve someone else in their calling today. Sowing into others' purposes releases blessing on your own.

**Day 51: Sabbath Sunday** Rest in what God has revealed and what you've accomplished this week. Courage needs rest to replenish. Celebrate small victories.

## **Week 8: Weekly Faith-Stretching Actions (Days 52-60)**

The final week of Phase 2 establishes rhythms of courageous action that will carry you into Phase 3.

**Day 52: Public Declaration** Make a public declaration of your calling—social media post, church testimony, family announcement. Public declaration creates accountability.

*Warning:* Not everyone will celebrate. That's okay. You're not called to convince, just obey.

**Day 53: Strategic Connection** Reach out to someone strategic for your calling—a potential mentor, partner, or door-opener. The worst they can say is no.

*Email Template:* "I believe God has called me to [calling], and I respect how you [what they do]. Would you be willing to share 15 minutes of wisdom over coffee?"

**Day 54: Skill Development** Enroll in a course, join a group, or start learning a skill crucial to your calling. Preparation is an act of faith.

**Day 55: Financial Faith** Take a financial step of faith—tithing on the vision, invest in equipment, save toward the dream. Where your treasure is, your heart follows.

**Day 56: Schedule Surrender** Block out regular time in your calendar for calling-related activities. What gets scheduled gets done. Treat calling appointments as sacred.

**Day 57: Warfare Wisdom** Identify the enemy's specific strategy against your calling and develop counter-strategies. If he attacks your confidence, memorize confidence scriptures.

**Day 58: Prototype Practice** Create a small prototype of your calling—teach one person, write one chapter, design one product. Start somewhere.

**Day 59: Feedback Collection** Ask three trusted people for honest feedback about your calling and current progress. Wisdom listens to counsel.

**Day 60: Phase 2 Celebration & Preparation** Celebrate the courage and clarity gained! You know who you are and what you're called to do. Phase 3 will launch you into action.

## **Phase 3: Action & Accountability (Days 61-90)**

*"But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." - James 2:18*

The final 30 days transform revelation into revolution. Like Christine Caine starting A21, it's time to move from preparation to execution. This phase is about doing it afraid but doing it anyway.

### **Week 9-10: Monthly Challenge Implementation (Days 61-74)**

These two weeks focus on one major challenge that significantly advances your calling.

#### **Days 61-74: Choose Your Challenge**

Select ONE from these three options based on your calling:

**Option 1: START Challenge (For Pioneers)** If God is calling you to start something new:

- Days 61-63: Create a detailed plan
- Days 64-66: Secure initial resources
- Days 67-69: Build basic infrastructure
- Days 70-72: Soft launch to test group
- Days 73-74: Refine based on feedback

*Examples:* Start the blog, launch the ministry, open the business, create the course

**Option 2: SHARE Challenge (For Messengers)** If God is calling you to share a message:

- Days 61-63: Craft your core message
- Days 64-66: Create shareable content
- Days 67-69: Book speaking opportunities
- Days 70-72: Deliver your message publicly
- Days 73-74: Multiply through others

*Examples:* Share your testimony publicly, teach your expertise, preach your message

**Option 3: SERVE Challenge (For Servants)** If God is calling you to serve specific people:

- Days 61-63: Identify exact who and how
- Days 64-66: Connect with those you'll serve
- Days 67-69: Develop serving strategy
- Days 70-72: Implement serving plan
- Days 73-74: Establish sustainable rhythms

*Examples:* Serve the homeless, mentor youth, support single mothers

**Daily Accountability During Challenge:**

- Morning: Declare your intention for the day
- Midday: Take one concrete action
- Evening: Document progress and lessons learned

**Week 11: Strategic Prayer Calendar (Days 75-81)**

This week establishes a prayer strategy that will sustain your calling long-term.

**Day 75: Monday - Prayer for Provision** "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19)

*Prayer Focus:* Every resource needed—financial, relational, spiritual, practical

**Day 76: Tuesday - Prayer for Protection** "No weapon formed against you shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17)

*Prayer Focus:* Protection from attacks, distractions, discouragements, and delays

**Day 77: Wednesday - Prayer for People** "God sets the lonely in families" (Psalm 68:6)

*Prayer Focus:* Divine connections, team members, mentors, and those you'll serve

**Day 78: Thursday - Prayer for Power** "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (Acts 1:8)

*Prayer Focus:* Fresh anointing, spiritual authority, supernatural enablement

**Day 79: Friday - Prayer for Perseverance** "Let us not grow weary in doing good" (Galatians 6:9)

*Prayer Focus:* Strength to continue when results seem slow

**Day 80: Saturday - Prayer for Purpose Clarity** "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps" (Proverbs 16:9)

*Prayer Focus:* Continued refinement and clarity of calling

**Day 81: Sunday - Prayer of Praise** "Enter His gates with thanksgiving" (Psalm 100:4)

*Prayer Focus:* Gratitude for the calling, the journey, and the God who calls

## **Week 12: Establishing Momentum (Days 82-88)**

The second-to-last week focuses on creating systems that maintain momentum beyond the 90 days.

**Day 82: Create Your Calling Schedule** Design a weekly schedule that prioritizes your calling. Include:

- Preparation time
- Execution time
- Evaluation time
- Rest time

**Day 83: Build Your Support System** Formalize your support structure:

- Prayer partners (2-3 people)
- Accountability partner (1 person)
- Mentor (someone ahead of you)
- Mentee (someone you're helping)

**Day 84: Develop Your Growth Plan** Create a 6-month growth plan:

- Books to read
- Skills to develop
- Conferences to attend
- Connections to make

**Day 85: Financial Faith Strategy** Create a budget that supports your calling:

- Giving strategy
- Saving strategy
- Investing strategy
- Spending boundaries

**Day 86: Testimony Documentation** Start a testimony journal. Document every victory, miracle, and breakthrough. You'll need these reminders when faith is tested.

**Day 87: Multiplication Mindset** Identify three people you can help discover their calling. Your calling isn't complete until it multiplies in others.

**Day 88: Long-term Vision Casting** Write a 5-year vision for your calling. Dream big. Include:

- Lives impacted
- Territory expanded
- Resources multiplied
- Legacy established

### **Week 13: Fearless Living Launch (Days 89-90)**

The final two days launch you into a lifestyle of fearless calling pursuit.

**Day 89: Commission Service** Organize a commissioning moment:

- Invite close supporters
- Share your calling publicly
- Receive prayer and blessing
- Make a covenant commitment

*Elements to Include:*

- Your testimony of the 90-day journey
- Clear articulation of calling
- Request for accountability
- Prayer of dedication

**Day 90: Fearless Declaration Day** Write and publicly share your Fearless Declaration:

"I, [name], having been called by God to [specific calling], declare that I will no longer allow fear to dictate my obedience. I have spent 90 days discovering who I am, gaining clarity on my assignment, and taking courageous action.

From this day forward, I commit to:

- Daily choosing faith over fear
- Taking consistent action toward my calling
- Remaining accountable to trusted voices
- Celebrating progress over perfection
- Trusting God's timing and provision

I am not who I was 90 days ago. I am not where I was 90 days ago. Fear has lost its hold, and faith has found its voice. I will walk in my calling without fear, knowing that He who called me is faithful.

My past does not disqualify me—it qualifies me uniquely. My limitations do not restrict me—they position me for God's power. My fears do not define me—His calling does.

This is not the end of my journey—it's the beginning of my fearless life. Watch what God does through someone who simply said yes."

## **Beyond the 90 Days: Maintaining Momentum**

The 90-day program is a launching pad, not a landing strip. Here's how to maintain momentum:

### **Weekly Rhythms:**

- Monday: Planning and prayer
- Tuesday-Thursday: Execution and action
- Friday: Evaluation and adjustment
- Saturday: Service and sowing
- Sunday: Rest and renewal

### **Monthly Practices:**

- Review and celebrate progress
- Adjust strategies based on results
- Seek fresh input from mentors
- Share testimonies to encourage others

### **Quarterly Intensives:**

- Take a prayer retreat
- Attend a conference
- Complete a new challenge
- Expand your territory

### **Annual Commitments:**

- Review and update your calling statement
- Celebrate major milestones

- Invest in significant growth
- Multiply through mentoring

## **Your 90-Day Journey Awaits**

You now have a roadmap. The seven heroes of faith you've studied all started where you are—afraid but called. They all took first steps that felt too small and faith that felt too weak. But they took them anyway.

Your calling is waiting on the other side of your obedience. Your purpose is prepared beyond your fear. Your impact is inevitable if you'll just begin.

The enemy will whisper that 90 days is too long, or not long enough. That you should wait for perfect timing, perfect circumstances, perfect confidence. But perfect is the enemy of obedience.

Christine Caine was insecure. Nick Vujicic had no limbs. Sarah Jakes Roberts was ashamed. Jeremy Camp was grieving. Bishop T.D. Jakes was unknown. Lisa Bevere was addicted. Steve Harvey was homeless.

What's your excuse?

They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Your testimony is being written right now. Make it a story worth telling.

Day 1 starts when you decide it does. Your calling can't wait any longer. The world needs what God has placed inside you.

Will you give them 90 days to see if God is faithful?

He is. He always has been. He always will be.

Now walk.

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## **Conclusion: You Were Born for This**

You don't need another confirmation—you are called.

You don't need to wait until you feel brave—obedience comes before confidence.

You don't need to have it all figured out—God will guide your steps as you move.

Every story you've read in this book was written by someone who once sat where you are now: uncertain, afraid, overwhelmed, or even ashamed. But they said *yes* anyway. They moved forward—trembling but trusting. And God met them in their obedience.

The truth is, fear never leaves—it just loses its grip when you decide to move forward with faith.

**God is not asking for perfection. He's asking for your surrender.**

You were born for this moment. Born for this generation. Born with a purpose so specific that no one else can fulfill it but you. Heaven is waiting. People are waiting. And the world is desperate for the light that only *your* story, *your* voice, and *your* obedience can bring.

If you're still wondering, "Am I really called?"—remember this:

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you..."*  
(Jeremiah 1:5)

You are not an accident. You are not too late. And you are not disqualified.

Take the next step—even if it's small. Start the blog. Share the testimony. Apply for the position. Launch the ministry. Mentor the next generation. Write the book. Lead the group. Serve in silence. Speak with fire. Do it afraid, but do it.

**Because God will be with you every step of the way.**

So stand up, beloved. Square your shoulders. Lift your head. And walk in your calling—fearlessly.

You were born for this.