





# Courageous Calling

How Men Rise from Fear, Walk with God, and Lead with Faith

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*The Battle Plan for Winning Back Your Soul*

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# Dedication



To my dear Carito—

Thank you for believing in God's purpose for my life from the very beginning. From our early days of dating while I served in youth ministry at the Salvation Army, to launching my first e-commerce business—I'll never forget the nervous excitement of registering my first LLC. Through dry seasons, doubts, and internal battles, your faith, strength, and loyalty have remained. You've supported me as I became a leader, hosted small groups in our home, fostered international children, and pursued God's vision with boldness. You are the greatest earthly blessing the Lord has given me. And it brings me so much joy to see you also step boldly into God's calling on your life and achieving the dream of being not only a dentist, but a specialist.

To my parents—

Thank you for not just telling me about Jesus, but showing me His love, character, and unwavering consistency. You didn't give up on me during the messy teenage years. Your mercy helped me learn the life-altering difference between walking with righteous friends and being pulled into the world's counterfeit version of freedom.

To my double blessing daughters—Bexy and Joy—

Daddy loves you more than words can say. My deepest prayer is that you will always see Jesus clearly in our family, and that you will discover the breathtaking beauty of living wholeheartedly for the King of kings.

And to you, dear reader—

Throughout this journey, I've battled fear, hidden behind busyness, and questioned my own strength. This book isn't theory. It's the battle plan I needed—drawn from Scripture, real stories, and years of walking with men who were falling apart inside. Now I'm passing it on to you.

## Courageous Calling: How Men Rise from Fear, Walk with God, and Lead with Faith The Battle Plan for Winning Back Your Soul

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### Why This Book Matters:

In a world where Christian men are overwhelmed by stress, silenced by shame, and stuck in performance-driven faith, *Courageous Calling* offers a radical path back to wholeness. This is not a self-help book. It's a wake-up call a whole new way of life with God. You were made for more than survival—you were made for spiritual leadership, authentic relationships, and a legacy built on faith, not fear. Through powerful stories, biblical insight, somatic exercises, daily routines, and practical challenges, this book will help you dismantle internal strongholds, rewire your mind and body, and rise into the man God created you to be.

Whether you're a business leader, student, husband, father, or just tired of pretending, *Courageous Calling* will lead you into a battle worth fighting—one for your soul, your family, and your future.

#### ✓ First:

Men must *reclaim loving God* with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

→ That means full honesty, full-body surrender, full ownership of their emotions, desires, thoughts, and actions.

#### ✓ Then:

Men can *love their neighbor* (wife, boss, children, pastor, brother, enemy) **as themselves** — not from performance, fear, shame, or hiding — but from **wholeness**.

#### ✓ And:

Perfect love (real love) **casts out fear** —

but only when men stop pretending and start actually **bringing the truth of what they feel, think, believe, and want** into real conversations with God first —

Then with others

**Love God with all** → First battleground

**Love neighbor as self** → Flowing from healed wholeness

**Perfect love casts out fear** → *Fully integrated*, not just mental belief

**The Cycle You Will Develop:**

## Courageous Calling Framework

 Regulate

 Reveal

 Replace

 Rise

 Reign

## *A 5-Step Journey for Faith Over Fear*

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### 1. Regulate

*“Be still and know that I am God.” —Psalm 46:10*

Begin by calming your nervous system. This step helps you break free from stress patterns and restores peace through Spirit-led practices.

 Includes:

- Breathwork & grounding techniques
- Scripture-based meditation
- Embodied prayer

 Goal: Restore internal safety and peace

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### 2. Reveal

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart.” —Psalm 139:23*

Uncover hidden fears, lies, and self-protective vows that have shaped your responses.

 Includes:

- Reflective journaling
- Identifying false agreements
- Inviting the Holy Spirit to illuminate wounds

 Goal: Bring hidden fears into the light

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### 3. Replace

*“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” —John 8:32*

Trade lies for truth, shame for sonship, and integrate forgiveness into your restored identity in Christ.

 Includes:

- Scripture-based identity declarations

- Forgiveness exercises
- Inner healing practices

 **Goal: Rewire your identity and walk in wholeness**

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#### 4. Rise

*“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...” —Ephesians 2:10*

**Activate your spiritual gifts and vision for impact in family, work, and beyond.**

 **Includes:**

- Discovering your calling
- Aligning with your mission
- Leadership development

 **Goal: Step into God's purpose with clarity**

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#### 5. Reign

*“Let your light shine before others...” —Matthew 5:16*

**Establish a lifestyle of boldness, wholeness, and kingdom leadership in every sphere of life.**

 **Includes:**

- Developing daily rhythms of courage
- Building community connections
- Leading with integrity

 **Goal: Lead with faith, integrity, and legacy impact**

## Book Outline

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### **Introduction: The Wake-Up Call**

- **Why this book was written**
  - **The cost of living a fearful life**
  - **The invitation to courage, calling, and Christlike leadership**
  - **The Courageous Calling Self-Assessment Quiz + Scoring Chart**
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### **Part I – Breaking the Chains of Fear**

#### ***Confronting What's Holding You Back***

##### **Chapter 1: God Has Been Searching Fiercely for You**

- How fear disguises itself
- Breaking free from emotional autopilot
- God's Invitation to become truly courageous

##### **Chapter 2: The Silence Within**

- When Fear Silences Your Voice and Leadership (Brad's story)
- How suppressed emotions erode connection
- Tools for speaking up in truth and love

##### **Chapter 3: Why Performing Harder Will Never Set You Free**

- Performance anxiety in Christian men (Matt's story)
- The false gospel of hustle and self-worth
- The Idol of Image vs. the Security of Identity

##### **Chapter 4: Hearing God's Voice Louder Than Fear**

- Holy Stillness and the Practice of Listening
- Mental Noise vs. God's Voice: Identifying False Tones

- Trusting God's leadership in unknowns
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## **Part II – The Way Forward — *Holy Spirit Courage from the Inside Out***

*Rebuilding a Life of Identity, Intimacy, and Integrity*

### **Chapter 5: Breaking the Lies You Once Believed**

- Replacing fear-based labels with God-given identity
- Victory Over the Darkness principles
- Replacing false beliefs with God's truth

### **Chapter 6: Sacred Rhythms that Regulate Your Soul**

- Daily nervous system resets
- Breath, prayer, movement, and stillness
- Crafting a courageous daily rhythm

### **Chapter 7: When You Hear His Voice**

- Eric Liddell's story of purpose and peace
- Hearing God in your calling
- Obedience over outcomes

### **Chapter 8: Brotherhood, Boundaries, and Becoming Whole**

- The necessity of godly male friendships
  - Confession, accountability, and shared strength
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## **Part III – Lead with Faith**

*Living Boldly, Loving Deeply, and Leaving a Legacy*

### **Chapter 9: Confession that Sets You Free**

- Stories of unmasking sin

- Breaking cycles of secrecy and shame

### **Chapter 10: Fierce Love in Marriage and Family**

- Humility, leadership, and emotional safety at home
- Redefining masculinity through sacrificial love

### **Chapter 11: Building What Matters Most**

- Eternal impact vs. temporary success
- Stewarding your influence at work and in ministry

### **Chapter 12: The Call to Courage**

- The final charge
- A memorable call to action
- **Introduction of the Courageous Creed**

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## **Appendix**

- **Courageous Calling Quiz & Scorecard**
- **Archetype Explanations**
- **Journal Pages**
- **QR Codes for Coaching Calls & Certifications**

## **Before You Go Any Further...**

### **Courageous Calling Initial Assessment**

Before we go any further, I want you to slow down and take an honest inventory—not of your theology or titles, but of your reality.

This journey isn't about information. It's about transformation. And transformation starts when you face the truth about where you are right now.

That's why I created the **Courageous Calling Self-Assessment**—a short, powerful quiz to help you discover what's fueling your faith, where fear might still be hiding, and what type of leader you're becoming.

Don't skip this. Don't skim it.

**Take five minutes. Be honest. Write your answers down.**

The clarity you'll gain might surprise you—and it'll shape everything that comes next.

### **Courageous Calling Self-Assessment Quiz**

*Discover what's fueling (or frustrating) your faith, leadership, and purpose.*

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#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Answer each of the following 20 questions honestly.

Choose the answer that best reflects your current mindset or behavior. Be honest about yourself on an average day.

You'll total your points at the end to see your Courageous Calling Archetype and get your personalized action plan.

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#### **QUIZ QUESTIONS**

##### **1. When God calls you to take a risk...**

- A) I tend to delay or avoid it
- B) I start but then second-guess and overanalyze
- C) I ask for confirmation but usually follow through
- D) I move forward boldly, trusting God's leadership

**2. When it comes to leading in your home or work...**

- A) I often avoid it or let others lead
- B) I try to lead but feel overwhelmed or unsure
- C) I lead decently but sometimes feel stuck
- D) I lead with purpose, prayer, and courage

**3. Do you have other men who know the real you?**

- A) No—I don't open up about deeper things
- B) I've tried but haven't found solid brothers
- C) I have a few men, but we don't go deep often
- D) Yes—I meet regularly with men who challenge and sharpen me

**4. When you think about your salvation...**

- A) I wonder if I've done enough to be saved
- B) I hope I'm saved, but I struggle with doubt
- C) I believe I'm saved but sometimes feel unworthy
- D) I am confident I'm saved by grace through faith in Christ

**5. When things don't go your way...**

- A) I shut down or escape through distractions
- B) I get angry or controlling and regret it later
- C) I try to stay calm but often react emotionally
- D) I pause, breathe, and ask God for clarity and strength

**6. How do you begin your day?**

- A) With phone, stress, or avoidance
- B) Rushed and reactive, hoping to catch up
- C) I try to pray/read when I remember
- D) With a focused rhythm of breath, Scripture, and purpose

**7. What motivates your daily actions?**

- A) Fear of failure or not being enough
- B) Pressure to perform or avoid pain
- C) A desire to grow but lacking consistency
- D) Clear vision from God and a desire to glorify Him

**8. How do you usually respond to temptation?**

- A) I give in and feel shame afterward
- B) I try to resist but often end up compromising
- C) I fight it with prayer and Scripture, but not always consistently
- D) I recognize it quickly and stand firm in my identity

**9. When you fail spiritually or morally...**

- A) I isolate and feel stuck in guilt
- B) I promise to do better but feel distant from God
- C) I eventually open up and try to grow from it
- D) I confess quickly and remember who I am in Christ

**10. How does technology affect your focus and peace?**

- A) I'm often scrolling or distracted by it
- B) I waste time on it but sometimes catch myself
- C) I've set boundaries, but I still struggle
- D) I'm intentional with my tech use and take screen breaks

**11. How often do you pray intentionally?**

- A) Rarely—I'm usually too busy or forget
- B) Occasionally, when something goes wrong
- C) I try to pray daily but sometimes rush it
- D) I set aside time each day to talk and listen to God

**12. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your daily decisions?**

- A) I honestly don't think about Him much
- B) I try to remember Him in big moments
- C) I sense His guidance but often doubt it
- D) I regularly invite Him to lead and empower me

**13. How do you approach reading the Bible?**

- A) I know I should but rarely do
- B) I read occasionally but struggle to stay consistent
- C) I read regularly but mostly out of routine
- D) I read as a lifeline—expecting God to speak each day

**14. What do you do when you feel stressed or overwhelmed?**

- A) I withdraw, numb out, or ignore it
- B) I vent or try to push through

- C) I stop and pray when I can
- D) I pause, breathe, ground myself, and invite God in

**15. How do you handle conflict in your relationships?**

- A) I avoid it or shut down
- B) I react emotionally and often regret it
- C) I try to work through it but get stuck
- D) I pursue peace, ask good questions, and stay calm

**16. How clear are you on God's calling in your life?**

- A) I have no idea what I'm called to
- B) I think I know, but it feels far away
- C) I'm exploring it and gaining clarity
- D) I'm actively pursuing the purpose God designed me for

**17. What happens when others criticize or misunderstand you?**

- A) I take it personally and shut down
- B) I get defensive or discouraged
- C) I try to listen but still feel impacted
- D) I stay grounded in my identity and respond with grace

**18. How consistent are your physical health and energy habits?**

- A) I often neglect them or feel drained
- B) I try to manage but don't have a rhythm
- C) I have some good habits but lack consistency
- D) I steward my body with movement, rest, and fuel

**19. How do you recharge spiritually and emotionally?**

- A) I rarely feel recharged—I'm just surviving
- B) I try things like prayer or rest, but it's hit or miss
- C) I have a few tools that work when I use them
- D) I've created daily and weekly rhythms that restore me

**20. How would those closest to you describe your leadership?**

- A) Distant or inconsistent
- B) Stressed or well-meaning but overwhelmed
- C) Present but still growing in confidence
- D) Grounded, wise, and intentional with impact

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**SCORECARD:**

For each answer:

- **A = 1 point**
- **B = 2 points**
- **C = 3 points**
- **D = 4 points**

Question	Answer	Points
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Q1		
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Q2		
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Q3		
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Q4		
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Q5		
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Q6		
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Q7		
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Q8		
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Q9

Q10

Q11

Q12

Q13

Q14

Q15

Q16

Q17

Q18

Q19

Q20

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## RESULTS BREAKDOWN

### 20–34 Points

#### **The Striving Survivor**

You're showing up, but life feels like survival mode. You may feel stuck in stress, fear, sin patterns, or self-doubt. You're not alone—and this is not your finish line. God is calling you out of hiding, into healing, and into brotherhood.

**Next Step:** Start with nervous system resets + a brother to walk with.

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## ● 35–54 Points

### The Isolated Initiator

You're trying to grow, but you're carrying too much alone. You've had moments of clarity and faith—but old habits, disconnection, or lack of structure are blocking breakthrough.

**Next Step:** Build a rhythm and connect to a brotherhood that challenges and sharpens you.

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## ● 55–69 Points

### The Awakening Warrior

You're awake. You're pursuing Christ. And though you still face resistance, you are rising in identity, faith, and leadership.

**Next Step:** Strengthen your structure. Start mentoring or inviting other men into your walk.

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## ● 70–80 Points

### The Grounded Leader

You walk with strength, integrity, and spiritual clarity. You're living your faith out loud—and now, God is calling you to multiply.

**Next Step:** Lead others intentionally. Consider training to become a Courageous Coach.

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## NEXT STEPS

### Book a Free Courageous Call

Ready to go deeper?

Scan this QR code or visit:

<https://courageouscallings.com/book-a-call>

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### Interested in Coaching or Certification?

Want to join a program or become a Courageous Coach?

Scan this QR or visit:

<https://courageouscallings.com/contact>

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## COURAGEOUS ACTION PLANS

### ● The Striving Survivor

- **Daily Habit:** 2 minutes Scripture + 2 minutes stillness
  - **Scriptures:** Romans 5:8, Psalm 34:18
  - **Brotherhood Challenge:** Reach out to one man and be real
  - **Next Step:** Book your Courageous Call
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### ● The Isolated Initiator

- **Daily Habit:** Breathwork + 10-minute prayer walk
  - **Scriptures:** Proverbs 27:17, Galatians 6:2
  - **Brotherhood Challenge:** Start or join a weekly check-in
  - **Next Step:** Build a 30-day rhythm with accountability
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### ● The Awakening Warrior

- **Daily Habit:** Scripture, movement, and a to-win list
  - **Scriptures:** 2 Timothy 1:7, Ephesians 2:10
  - **Brotherhood Challenge:** Invite another man into growth
  - **Next Step:** Map your calling and lead someone
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### **The Grounded Leader**

- **Daily Habit:** Protect your rhythms while investing in others
- **Scriptures:** Matthew 28:19–20, Titus 2:6–8
- **Brotherhood Challenge:** Disciple 1–2 men intentionally
- **Next Step:** Apply for Courageous Coach Certification

### **Next Steps**

Scan below to book your free Courageous Transformation Call:



Scan below to contact our team and learn more about programs and certification:



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#### AFTER THE QUIZ:

Now that you've taken the quiz, you're not just reading passively—you're engaging as a man in motion.

Whether you scored as a Striving Survivor or a Grounded Leader, this book is your battle plan to grow stronger, braver, and more rooted in your identity in Christ.

So don't let your score define you—**let it guide you.**

You're here for a reason. God's calling isn't just for "someone out there." It's for you.

Let's start the journey together. Chapter 1 begins now.

## **Part I – Rise from Fear**

### **CHAPTER 1: God Has Been Searching Fiercely for You**

The eyes of the Lord have been searching for you.

Searching fiercely across the earth — looking for men willing to rise, willing to fight, willing to be made strong by His Spirit.

Why? Because God does not look for things this world looks for. God is not searching for the most successful, the most impressive, or the most put-together.

He is searching for hearts — hearts that will fully belong to Him.

Not men who have it all figured out.

Not men who never failed.

But men who are willing to lay it all down.

Men who are willing to rise again — fueled not by human strength, but by supernatural power from heaven.

Men whose lives will shock the world — not because of how great they are, but because of how good and powerful their God is.

Deep down you know there's more in you than what you're living.

This book isn't about adding more to your plate—it's about finally becoming the man you were always meant to be.

Brother, if you've ever felt counted out...

if you've ever been told you're not enough...

if you've doubted whether you still have a place in God's story —

this is your moment to know...

God refuses to stay silent in your life any longer.

The cycle of outward silence and compliance to others expectations aren't your protection.

They're slow suffocation.

You were born for a Courageous Calling.

And Heaven is standing ready to strengthen you.

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So only one question remains: Will you answer the call? Are you fully available to God? To be seen by Jesus and strengthened by the Holy Spirit?

**You were made for more than survival.**

More than pretending.

More than pushing through stress and hoping no one notices the pressure behind your eyes.

Here's the reality: **Most men settle and don't fully answer God's call.** They perform at work, stay silent at home, numb out at night—and call it “being responsible.”

And they lose out on an abundant life and settle for just mediocre. Not because they're weak.

They lose because they spend their best strength fighting the wrong wars.

But God didn't create you for a cage.

He created you to **lead, love, and live with courage**—not perfection, but purpose.

In this chapter, we're going to expose the fear that's been holding you back and name the false identities you've carried too long.

No more masks.

No more hiding.

Just raw, real, holy ground.

## **LEADERS IN CRISIS**

The research is clear that many of our spiritual leaders today are worn down and in crisis.

A recent LifeWay study found that 45% of U.S. Protestant pastors are so drained that they seek help from their primary care physician just to manage stress and anxiety. Many more feel isolated and lacking in support.

About half of Christian leaders say they struggle with their own health: failing to consistently exercise; struggling to eat right.

If the shepherds are exhausted and overwhelmed, what about the rest of the flock?

## **FAITH IN CRISIS**

It's not only the leaders. It's our entire faith that's in crisis.

29% of Christians now believe sharing the Gospel is solely the church's responsibility.

Only 36% of men attend church weekly.

39% of men do not read the Bible personally.

Less than 13% of Christian men attend Sunday School or Bible studies weekly.

## **COMMUNITY IN CRISIS**

Today, 73% of men say they don't even have six close friends.

15% of men have zero close friendships at all.

Meanwhile, men are spending over 7 hours a day staring at screens — and less than 30 minutes a week in face-to-face conversations.

Among young men under 30, video game use is 2–3 hours a day; 70% say gaming helps them escape real-life and its stress.

Nearly 1 in 5 young adults are battling symptoms of screen and gaming addiction - and the majority of them are men.

28% of young men believe AI companions could replace real-life romantic relationships.

## **FINANCES IN CRISIS**

50% of men express serious financial fear.

78% live paycheck to paycheck.

38% carry significant credit card debt.

## **RELATIONSHIPS IN CRISIS**

42% of men admit hiding major secrets from their wives.

26% of Millennials report poor or disconnected relationships with their fathers.

Something is seriously wrong.

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Still, I see it time and time again.

The young man who tries so hard to please his friends, his girlfriend, or his church. Terrified to lose them; terrified to be found lacking. He grows into the married man who works so hard to keep up — carrying more weight on his back than he knows how to bear. Battling life, faith, finances, and expectations—but somewhere in that silent performance, his soul begins to drown.

Trying to hold it all together — buying the house, raising the kids, showing up and even serving at church, getting a dog (or two cats), planning for a retirement he barely believes will ever come.

Many people keep telling him:

-Keep your head down.

-Keep your tithe up.

-Keep up the performance.

-It's going to work out.

No one told him that a slow spiritual death can wear a smile 'til it's last breath.

I lived it too.

I spent much of my life trying to push anxiety off me.

Trying to chase after the approval and acceptance of others.

In middle school and high school, I was terrified of being rejected by my friends, so I laughed at the jokes, went to the parties, compromised my values, and told myself I'd make it up to God somehow.

In college, I was the guy with the double life—trying to be funny, cool, athletic, and charming enough to be liked by everyone. At parties, I could smile and chug a drink, but something inside me was off and aching.

I'll never forget one day in my communication methods class. I was busted for living a lie. I thought I was doing pretty well — until an atheist professor, of all people, called me out.

He said, "If someone took an honest look at your life — your lifestyle, your words, your priorities — would they be able to clearly see the faith you claim to have? If you're going to call yourself a Christian," he said bluntly, "then live like it. Otherwise, you're just giving the real followers of Jesus a bad name."

I was convicted to the core.

That moment shattered my comfortable compromise.

Thank God that wasn't the end of the story. The professor didn't stop there. He had us write an honest evaluation of ourselves — and then create our own challenge that would move us towards authenticity by honestly evaluating our core values and beliefs and then aligning our lifestyle. I decided on a summer mission trip with college students across the USA. I saw them authentically living for Jesus and experienced genuine joy, friendship, and community. It truly changed my life.

I turned my life back to God—and for the first time, I wasn't just reading words on a page. I was meeting the Person. The living, breathing I AM. The God I'd ignored while chasing approval, applause, and acceptance.

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**BOOK DESCRIPTION: What is Courageous Calling?**

This book isn't just for reading or inspiration. It's a training manual for changing your life.

In the chapters ahead, you'll retrain your nervous system, soul, body, and mind — so you can walk fully in your calling with strength, clarity, and faith that won't back down.

You'll learn to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and rise into the courageous calling you were always meant to walk in.

This journey isn't just about surviving.

It's about conquering fear at the root - and living free at last.

Reflection Questions:

- Where have I been moving away from the eyes of the Lord rather than moving towards Jesus?

- What patterns have I become entrenched in that were constructed by people (including myself) and are not God's design? (People pleasing, scrolling on phone, just getting a check, etc.)

Challenge:

Boldly ask God to show you what battles He designed you to fight—and which ones you are wasting strength on.

## Chapter 2: The Cost of Silence

### *The War for Your Mind, Heart, Soul, and Strength*

Brad sat in silence again. His wife vented. He nodded. Rage simmered under his skin, but he said nothing. Not because he was at peace—but because he was afraid.

He was tired of pretending, but terrified to speak. Like many men, Brad had confused silence with strength. He thought keeping the peace was noble. But inside, he was losing a war.

Beneath his anger, was fear.

Fear of what would happen if he ever stood up.

Fear of what she might say.

Fear of losing the little peace he was desperately trying to keep.

He felt like she controlled everything - the family decisions, the schedule, even the exact minute he was supposed to meet her at the bottom of the stairs to take the kids to school. But silence wasn't going to solve this for him.

#### **Silence isn't neutral. It says:**

- “You’re too much for me.”
- “I’ve checked out.”
- “Your pain is safer unspoken.”

Brad didn't want those messages to be said. But his silence was being felt.

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### **The Lie of Peacekeeping**

Jesus never said, “*Blessed are the peacekeepers.*” He said, “*Blessed are the peacemakers.*”

Peacekeeping avoids. Peacemaking steps courageously to the front lines—with truth, love, and courage.

Brad wasn't making peace. He was avoiding conflict—and it was costing him connection, authenticity, and intimacy with the one person he vowed to love most.

This same pattern plays out in boardrooms, churches, and even among best friends. Men would rather numb, scroll, or stuff it down than step into the awkwardness of honesty.

But what if silence is the very thing that's keeping us stuck?

The silence of men creates a vacuum of leadership in families and communities. We've been conditioned to believe that silence equals strength—but in reality, it often equals disconnection, damage, and delayed healing.

Studies show 34% of practicing Christians say anxiety and depression are harming their relationships (Barna).

Nearly half of young adults fear failure daily.

This isn't just a personal issue—it's a spiritual war. A war on identity, wholeness, and brotherhood.

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### **Silence Is Not a Strategy— Numbing Out Is Not a Solution**

Your silence might feel safer. But it's also **the soil where bitterness and resentment grows**.

Likewise, being aggressive and barking orders (temper tantrums) is NOT the solution either. But you do need to become assertive like Jesus.

Courage isn't about control—**it's about clarity**.

I've worked with men who waited years to admit to themselves and finally to others what they were really battling. Some were overwhelmed by anxiety. Others were caught in cycles of porn, resentment, or spiritual numbness they couldn't explain.

But here's the truth: **What you don't speak out will eventually leak out.**

When you hide your pain, you don't just carry it—you **pass it down**.

Your children feel it.

Your spouse senses it.

Your friends notice it.

And without even realizing it, you begin to live a double life—one on the outside, one on the inside.

**But it's not just silence killing us. It's AVOIDANCE, too.**

Numbing out is not the solution. It's actually a slow death.

Men today are more *stationary* than ever before—sitting behind desks, parked in front of screens, zoning out with games or doom-scrolling into numbness. We call it rest, but it's not restoring anything.

It's suffocating our strength, our joy, and our relationships.

We weren't made for passivity.

We were made to *move*, to *fight*, to *build*, to *lead with presence*.

And yet, we sit motionless—eyes glazed over and souls restless. Spiritually sleepwalking to avoid the battles we were born to win.

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### **The War Is in Your Body**

So, how do we break these cycles?

You don't just fight fear with thoughts. You fight it with your body—your breath, your posture, your presence. It's time to trade in the old tools that keep us stuck.

- It's the clenched jaw at midnight.
- The shallow breath during conflict.
- The restless legs that won't calm down.

Fear lives in your nervous system. It trains you to survive, not lead. But healing can't happen in hiding—or in passivity.

It starts when you show up—fully engaged, physically present, and spiritually awake.

This is why God doesn't just ask for your belief—He asks for your whole self.

Not just your heart. Not just your mind. But your strength.

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### **Embodied Obedience: Moses' Battle Stance**

When a man steps into courageous leadership, it doesn't just change how he thinks; it changes how he shows up, how he speaks, how he moves, and **how he leads in his body**.

This isn't a new idea. In fact, it's ancient.

There's a powerful moment in Exodus 17, when Israel is at war with Amalek. God didn't just say, "Trust Me and I'll give you victory." **God instructed Moses to raise his hands**—a literal, physical act of leadership and obedience.

"As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning."

— Exodus 17:11

Think about that. **God connected victory in battle to the position of a man's body.**

Moses' hands lifted high wasn't just symbolic—he was honoring God with his **body**—positioning himself physically in a way that reflected surrender, faith, and leadership. It wasn't flashy. It was *faithful*. And it mattered.

It wasn't easy. His arms grew tired. His shoulders burned. But God didn't say, "That's okay, just believe in your heart." No—God expected Moses to hold the posture. And when Moses couldn't do it alone, Aaron and Hur came alongside him, physically supporting his hands to stay lifted until the battle was won.

This is a picture of what leadership often looks like:

It's heavy.

It requires physical obedience.

It takes brotherhood.

God linked Israel's success to one man's willingness to offer his body in an act of worship and authority.

That's not just Old Testament symbolism. It's New Testament truth.

"You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

Therefore honor God with your bodies." (1 Corinthians 6:19–20)

When you raise your hands in surrender, walk into hard conversations, kneel in prayer, breathe through fear, or stand in battle—not for yourself, but for others—you are **honoring God with your body**.

We live in a culture that says, "Well, if you believe it in your heart, that's enough." But Scripture tells a deeper story. God is not just interested in your ideas, words, or knowledge—He wants your obedience demonstrated through your body.

Throughout Scripture, God invites—and even commands—His people to worship Him with their **bodies in motion**.

“Let them praise His name **with dancing** and make music to Him with timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes delight in His people...”

— *Psalms 149:3–4*

David danced before the Lord with all his might—not to put on a show, but to pour out praise in full-bodied joy (2 Samuel 6:14). When the Pharisees criticized loud worship, Jesus said even the rocks would cry out if His people stayed silent (Luke 19:40).

Worship is not supposed to be tame. It's meant to be total—body, mind, and spirit aligned in awe of the living God.

God still brings victory through men who offer Him *not just their minds, but their whole selves in worship to Jesus*.

---

### God's Battle Plan For Victory: Love Fully

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with:

- All your **heart** – your desires and pursuits
- All your **soul** – your identity and integrity
- All your **mind** – your thoughts and beliefs
- All your **strength** – your body and actions

This wasn't just theology. It was a **battle plan**. Fear fractures. God integrates.

---

### God never called men to stay quiet.

He called them to:

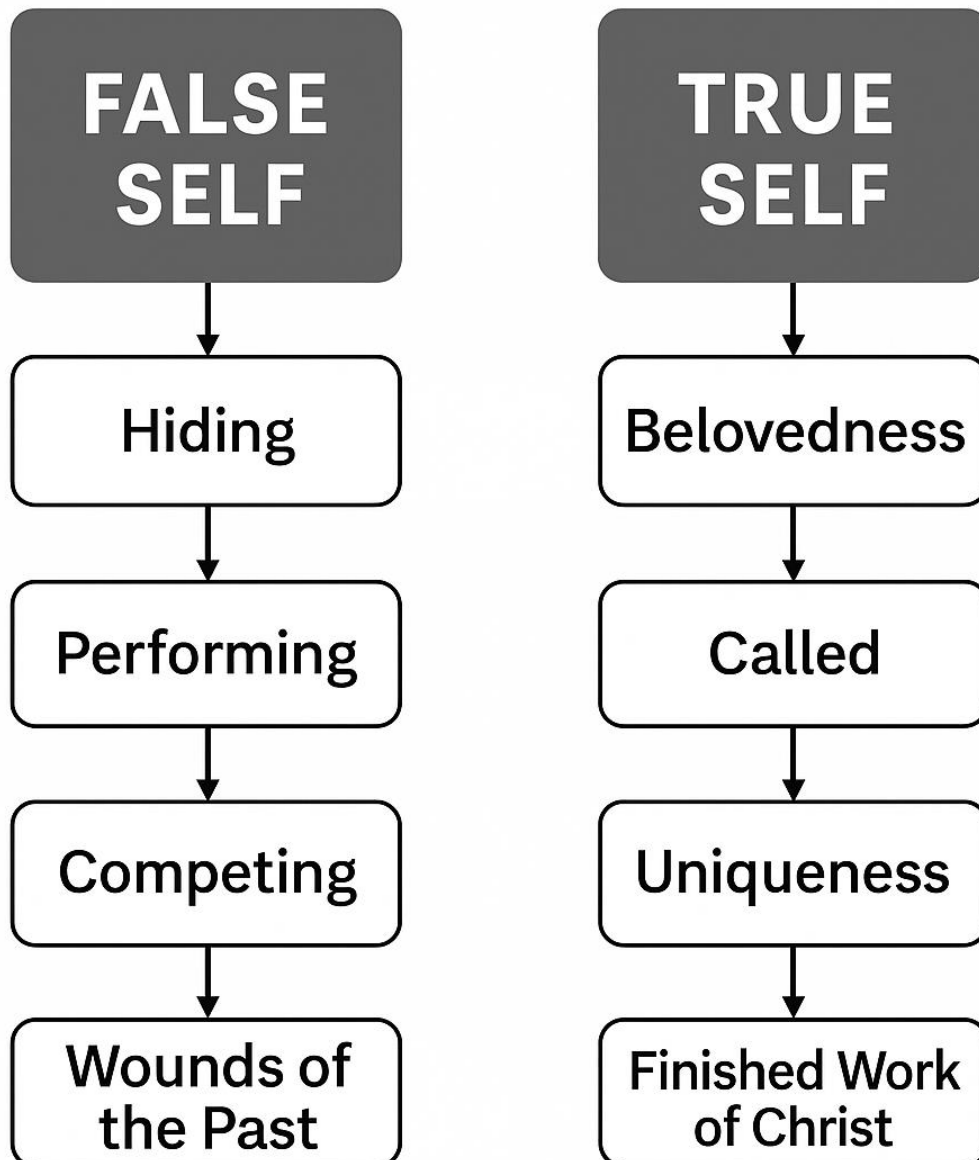
- Speak truth in love
- Confess sins
- Encourage one another daily

When men stay silent, families suffer, churches lose transparency, and the enemy gains ground.

But when one man breaks the silence in God's love—marriages heal, children feel secure, and brotherhood becomes possible.

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# **FALSE SELF vs.TRUE SELF**



## Reflection Questions

1. What emotions do you tend to hide from the people closest to you? Why?
2. What part of Brad's story hit home most for you?
3. How might your leadership change if you stopped staying silent and started speaking with courageous love?

---

### **Call to Action – Break the Silence, Lead with Courage**

This week, take one **physical step** of courageous vulnerability:

- **Speak the unspoken.** Pick one person—your wife, friend, or pastor—and share the battle you've kept hidden.
- **Pray out loud with movement.** Let your voice rise raw and unfiltered to your Father. Don't edit—just express.
- **Write it down.** If you can't say it, write a letter. You don't even have to send it. But get the truth into the light.

“The truth will set you free—but only if you stop hiding it.”

You weren't made to be silent.

You were made to lead.

## Chapter 3: Winning the Inner War

Most men today aren't just exhausted.

**They're exhausted from fighting the wrong wars.**

Fighting for performance.

Fighting for approval.

Fighting to stay busy.

Research shows:

- 39% of young adults often feel sad or depressed.
- 34% often feel isolated and alone.

This is the result of fighting for appearance instead of authenticity.

Fighting to survive instead of fighting to thrive.

**It's not about achieving a better version of yourself by the world's standards**

With all the performance running rampant in Christian circles today —  
it's not just wolves in sheep's clothing we need to be on guard against anymore.

No — the war is inside us now.

It's fear, all dressed up in a polo and khakis, shaking hands at church.

Fear that tells you you're doing fine — as long as you keep performing, keep smiling, say you're blessed, and keep your real battles below the surface.

**Performance can look spiritual.**

It shows up early to serve.

It lifts hands (or keeps them folded together) during worship.

It signs up for one more Bible study.

But underneath, it's fueled by fear.

- Fear that says if you stop doing, you'll stop mattering.
- Fear that says you have to earn God's smile one checklist at a time.
- Fear that says being tired is holy — as long as you never show you're hurting.

And so you run.  
You hustle.  
You pretend.

Until one day you realize you're not leading from faith anymore — you're just trying not to drown.

---

### **The Lessons from Shattered Dreams**

I thought I was finally getting it right.  
No more party lifestyle. No more double life.  
Just church, discipleship, spiritual maturity...

But deep inside, the same lie was still driving me:  
“If I can just get it right — maybe then I’ll be accepted.”

I wasn’t performing anymore. I was breathing with God again.  
But I didn’t realize how deep the addiction to approval had rooted itself in my soul.

**It knew it could get me to trade the party life for a new idol called church performance.**

I started trying to be the "good Christian guy" — reading the right books, attending the right prayer meetings, stacking up the right spiritual résumé.

And then it all shattered.

When I applied to minister to the Greek system at my university, I was rejected.  
My past failures caught up with me.

I wasn't just turned down for a role. I felt like I was exposed. Rejected.  
Like God Himself was done with me.

I remember walking that campus, once feeling like a leader, now feeling like a ghost.  
The 2008 great recession hit. No job offers. No titles.

Just a little bronze bell. A pair of heavy boots. And a freezing Salvation Army street corner.

Hour after hour, ringing that bell on that freezing Salvation Army street corner, I realized: I had nothing left to offer God but myself.

And maybe that's where life has brought you too.

No more image to protect.

No ministry title.

No applause.

Just the echo of a little bronze bell, and the ache of a heart that's run out of ways to earn what can only be received.

In those hours, I started reading *Desiring God* by John Piper—and something in me broke open.

Not in despair.

But in awe.

God wasn't waiting for me to climb my way back to Him with a perfect spiritual résumé. He was loving me—right there in the cold, in the silence, in my lack.

And I finally began to believe it: **God's love wasn't tied to my performance.**

It was tied to His presence.

The Holy Spirit wasn't reserved for ministers with clean records.

He was living in me—right then.

Not because I earned it.

But because Jesus did.

My college degree didn't give me value.

My ministry dreams didn't define my calling.

**The indwelling presence of God did.**

And standing there with nothing in my hands but a bell and a book, I realized something I'll never forget:

I was already more loved, more called, and more equipped than I ever dared to believe.

Not because of who I was becoming.

But because of **whose I already was.**

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## ◆ \*\*Matt's Story: From Polished Success to Raw Vulnerability\*\*

Matt was a client of mine — a husband, a father, and the owner of a booming car dealership. But behind the polished image, his marriage was cracking.

His wife nearly had an affair. They hadn't touched in months.

Matt could've buried the pain under work. He could've played the victim. But he didn't.

In our sessions, we named the chaos in his head. We called out how he'd used sex as escape — leaving his wife feeling hollow and alone.

We gave that part of him a name: "The Deal-Maker." The high-achiever who closes deals but avoids intimacy.

Then we got to work.

We built new rhythms: grounding practices, truth-telling conversations, rituals that helped them rebuild trust.

Today, Matt's marriage is alive. His faith is deeper. And his business? It's expanding into new territory.

But the breakthrough didn't come from hustling harder. It came from courage. From honesty. From choosing vulnerability over image.

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## 🔒 Who Does God Say You Are?

It's time to finally lay down the old weapons.

The ones you've been gripping so tightly—**success, appearance, prestige, approval, even trying to be accepted**—thinking they'd protect you from failure or rejection.

But they've only worn you out.

They've only made you bleed.

And they were never meant to win this war. The moment you surrender your performance and your pain, something incredible happens:

**God starts renaming you.**

You're no longer the addict.  
You're no longer the angry one.  
You're no longer the failure, the fake, the fraud.

You're **son**.  
You're **chosen**.  
You're **free**.  
You're **called**.  
You're **clean**.

The enemy loves labels—because labels limit.  
But God speaks **identity**—because identity activates.

Just look at Paul.

Before Christ: Violent, arrogant, feared.

After Christ: "I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

(*Galatians 2:20*)

He didn't just get forgiven—he got **renamed**.

**True peace begins when you stop fighting to prove who you are—and start living from who God already says you are.**

So I'll ask you:

- What name have you been living under?
- What lie have you accepted as your identity?
- What would change if you actually believed you were loved before you lifted a finger?

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 **Speak This Over Yourself:**

- I am not what I've done.
- I am not what I failed to do.
- I am who God says I am.
- I am chosen, not overlooked.
- I am restored, not ruined.

- I am a son, not a slave.
- I am called, not forgotten.
- I am sealed with the Spirit of God—and no man or mistake can take that from me.

#### Reflection Questions:

1. Where in my life am I confusing hustle with real spiritual strength?
2. What fears have been fueling my busyness — even when it looks good on the outside?
3. What part of my life would feel terrifying to surrender — but might be exactly what God is asking me to trust Him with?

#### Challenge:

Take one hour this week — no phone, no checklist, no agenda — and sit with God.

Tell Him everything you're tired of carrying.

Ask Him what part of your life He wants you to stop trying to control.

Then listen.

Even if it feels uncomfortable.

Even if it feels small.

Obey whatever He says — even if it's just to rest.

## Chapter 4 – Hearing God's Voice Louder Than Fear

Most of the noise we listen to isn't outside—it's inside.

It's the voice of lies we've carried for years:

"I'm not enough."

"I'll never measure up."

"If I slow down, I'll fall apart."

That inner static keeps us from hearing the still, calm voice of God.

The life you long for will never be found by obeying the loudest voice in the room.

Fear is loud. God often whispers.

But don't mistake whispering for weakness.

- Fear bullies. God invites.
- Fear pushes. God waits.
- Fear demands. God leads.

The life you long for will be found by learning to trust the One who doesn't have to shout to move mountains.

But fear doesn't just scream in emergencies.

It fills our days with distractions:

- The endless to-do list
- The mindless scrolling
- The background anxiety we've normalized

Fear knows if it can keep you **busy**, **tired**, and **distracted**, you'll never slow down enough to hear what God is really saying.

But God's voice is never in the panic.

God's voice calls you deeper—where peace begins even while the battle rages around you.



### Why Can You Trust Jesus' Peace?

Because **Jesus already has the victory.**

God isn't worried.  
Jesus isn't pacing.  
Heaven isn't scrambling.

He is the **undisputed Champion**.

And when you walk with Him, His peace becomes your position.

You don't have to force it.

You don't have to perform for it.

You just have to **clear the noise** and let His Spirit move in power.

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### **Mental Noise: Lies We Mistake for God's Voice**

Sometimes fear doesn't yell—it disguises itself as responsibility, urgency, or even 'God talk.'

These lies sound spiritual. But they aren't from your Heavenly Father:

- “You should be farther along by now.”
- “If you were stronger, you wouldn't be struggling.”
- “Keep pushing—you can rest when you're done.”
- “God only shows up when you prove yourself.”

Ask yourself:

**Would a loving Father speak like that?**

If not, don't follow the tone—follow the truth.

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### **IDENTITY CHECK-IN**

What voices have been louder than God's?

- Fear
- Busyness
- Pressure
- Inner Critic

Ask yourself honestly:

“Would my Heavenly Father talk to me like this?”

Let His kindness re-tune your internal frequency.

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### **My Story: Meeting God in the Whisper**

I'll never forget the fall after I returned from CRU's summer retreat at Daytona Beach. Everything in me had shifted.

I couldn't wait to get back to my dorm—just to be alone with Him. Even when twenty guys were laughing, gaming, blasting music... I couldn't wait to shut my door and open my heart.

It wasn't just Scripture anymore. It was a **conversation**.  
It wasn't just reading. It was **encounter**.

For the first time, I realized:

The Bible wasn't a textbook. It was a **doorway**.

Each time I opened it, His Spirit pulled me closer—not just to teach, but to meet.

**Too many men treat the Bible like a classic car in a museum:**

- They admire it.
- They study its craftsmanship.
- They take notes.  
But they never open the door... climb inside... turn the ignition... and let the Holy Spirit drive them toward freedom.

Jesus warned the Pharisees of the same trap:

“You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to Me! Yet you refuse to come to Me to receive this life.”

— John 5:39–40

You weren't created to admire the Word from a distance.

You were created to **move with it**.

To let it **ignite your soul**.

To let it **lead you into freedom**.

---

### **MENTAL RESET TOOL: The Whisper Practice**

Too many Christian men fight fear by grinding harder or numbing out.  
But God doesn't shout over your chaos. He invites you into His calm.

 **This week, set aside 30-60 minutes to engage in this life transforming practice:**

1. **Be Still & Present With God** – No phone. No distractions. Just be.
2. **Name the Fear** – Say it out loud to God. Don't edit it.
3. **Ask Him how it has rooted itself** into your life and soul and ask Him to release it.
4. **Wait on His answer.** Even if it feels uncomfortable. Even if it feels small.
5. **Write down what you heard and how you will live differently.** (Let Scripture, stillness, or a sense of peace rise.)

**Repeat this for 7 days** (consistency stops the roots from growing again.) Start your day by listening, not striving. Listening is how warriors learn to walk in peace.

---

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What voices have been louder than God's lately? Fear, busyness, pressure, or self-doubt?
  2. When have I truly encountered God—not just learned about Him?
  3. What would change if I treated the Bible like a doorway instead of a manual?
  4. When was the last time I made dwelling with God a real priority?
  5. Am I willing to trust God's whisper even if it means slowing down when everything around me says speed up?
- 

### **SCRIPTURE SPOTLIGHT**

“And after the fire came a gentle whisper... and Elijah heard it.”

— *1 Kings 19:12-13*

“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You.”

— *Isaiah 26:3*

“The sheep listen to His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.”

— *John 10:3*

### Activity: Calling Clarity Prayer Practice

- Ask the Holy Spirit: “What have You made me for in this season?”
- Journal your answers to:
  1. What burdens break your heart?
  2. What themes keep showing up in your life?
  3. Where do you feel both fear *and* fire?
- Close by praying: “God, show me what You’ve already placed in my hands.”

### The Challenge: “A 5-Step Listening Walk with God”

Do this during a normal day—at work, at home, or while walking:

#### 1. **Start with a Question**

As soon as you wake up, say:

*“Good morning, Father. What do You want to show me about Yourself today?”*

#### 2. **Let Scripture Answer**

Open your Bible to a reading plan or favorite passage. Read slowly until one verse stirs your attention.

Ask: *“God, what are You trying to say to me through this?”*

#### 3. **Watch for Echoes**

Throughout the day, pay attention to repeating words, themes, or internal nudges. Don’t dismiss random thoughts that align with God’s heart—**those may be His whisper.**

#### 4. **Practice “Back-and-Forth Prayer”**

Write a 2-minute journal entry **to God**.

Then, pause and **write what you think He would say back**—not as doctrine, but as a relational practice of listening and testing.

#### 5. **End with Gratitude + One Bold Obedience**

Before bed, ask:

*“Where did I hear You today?”*

*“What can I meditate on (fix my mind on) as I rest tonight?”*

Then thank Him—for His presence, not performance.

The goal isn’t to have a dramatic moment—it’s to **train your spirit and nervous system to recognize God’s voice walking with you throughout the day.**

## Chapter 5: Breaking the Inner Cage

In Chapter 3, we uncovered the mask of performance and how fear drives men to prove their worth. But this chapter goes deeper—beyond behavior—to the wounds and lies that quietly form the *inner cage* of shame.

The biggest prison in your life isn't what happened to you.  
It's the lie you believed afterward.

Some men numb their wounds with TV, porn, scrolling, or work.  
Some obsess over the hurt until it owns them.

Both lose the same battle—because **you can't heal what you refuse to bring to the Great Physician and His team of disciples.**

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” — *Matthew 11:28*

The real cage isn't the pain itself.  
It's the **silent agreement** you made with fear when no one was watching.

---

### **Expose the Trap: How the Inner Cage is Built**

Every man gets wounded.

Some wounds are massive—betrayal, abandonment, abuse.

Some seem small—a rejection, a failure, a moment you didn't feel seen or valued.

But they become deadly when they go untreated.

When they're ruminated over... picked at like a scab.

And in Christian circles, the infection often runs deeper—because too many men were taught to **suppress pain instead of heal it.**

Suppression isn't strength. Suppression is slow spiritual death.

“When a boy is told he's too sensitive, too stupid, or not enough—he carries those words like bricks in a backpack. And as a man, he wonders why he can't run free.”

Hurt alone won't destroy you.

It's the lie you believe to survive the hurt.

- “I'll never be enough.”
- “I have to fix everything myself.”

- “It’s safer to never open up again.”
- “If people really knew me, they’d walk away.”
- “Don’t bring it up. It’ll only make things worse.”

**Fear plants the lie. Pain waters it. Without resistance, it becomes a wall.**

A wall that separates you from healing.

A wall you decorate with busyness, success—even religious activity.

But deep down, you know: **you’re not free.**

**Hurt → Lie → Agreement → Isolation → Numbing or Obsessing → Deeper Cage**

### **My Story: Rejected and Exposed**

There were seasons when I felt like I was finally getting it right.

No more party life. No more double life. Just church, discipleship, purpose...

But deep inside, the lie still whispered:

“If I can just get it right, maybe I’ll finally be accepted.”

I had left the world behind but unknowingly picked up a new idol: **church performance.**

I tried to be the “good Christian guy”—reading the books, attending the prayer meetings, building a spiritual résumé.

Then it all shattered.

I applied to minister in the Greek system at my university—and got rejected.

My past caught up with me. I wasn’t just declined. I felt *exposed*. *Disqualified*.

As if God Himself was done with me.

The great recession hit. No job offers. No titles.

Just a little bronze bell, a pair of heavy boots, and a freezing Salvation Army street corner.

Hour after hour ringing that bell, I realized:

I had nothing left to offer God but *myself*.

And maybe that’s where God is leading you too.

### **Admit the Pain: You Can’t Heal What You Keep Hiding**

You can't break free from a battle you're unwilling to admit you're losing.  
Suppressing pain isn't faith. It's death in disguise.

Real courage—real healing—starts when you stop lying to yourself about what hurts.

- Admit the hurt.
- Admit the fear.
- Admit the rejection.
- Admit the anger you've buried so deep you barely recognize it.

Bring it into the light. Not because you're weak - but because you're finally willing to bring it to the one true place it can be fully healed:

Bring it to **Jesus**.

And to **trusted brothers** who will carry it with you.

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.” —  
*James 5:16*

Jesus doesn't just forgive sin. He **replaces false lies and identity** with truth. He restores what fear distorted.

---

### **Breaking the Lie and Releasing the Pain**

Feeling pain is only the beginning.

**Freedom comes when you renounce the lie** that chained you to it.

This is not just a battle of the mind. It's a battle of the body too.

Fear doesn't only live in your thoughts. It embeds in your nervous system.

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### **Lie Detector Exercise**

Write down the top 3 lies you believed growing up.

Examples:

- “I’m not wanted.”
- “I have to earn love.”

- “I always mess things up.”

Ask God:

- Where did I first believe this?
- Whose voice does this sound like—God or man?
- What agreement(s) did I make with this lie?
- What truth does God want me to believe instead?

**Replace each and every lie with truth.**

✗ Lie: “I’m always a disappointment.”

✓ Truth: “I am fully loved, chosen, and pleasing to my Father.”

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Naming the lie is how you rip fear off and step with faith into the light.

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### 🌟 **The Forgotten Step: Resetting Your Body for Freedom**

Naming the lie and stating the Truth with words is powerful. But it doesn’t complete the transformation

**Fear has not only infected your thoughts—it’s wired into your nervous system.**

This is the *crucial step* so few Christians are ever taught:

You must **release the lie from your body**—not just your mind. True freedom in Christ involves your whole being.

“Tremble before the Lord, all the earth.” — *Psalms 96:9*

“My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws.” — *Psalms 119:120*

Even Jesus trembled in Gethsemane.

Shaking is not weakness. It’s the body’s **release** and **surrender**.

It’s your body’s **reset**. It’s the nervous system’s way of saying:

*“I’m letting go of fear, and I’m trusting again.”*

The body that tensed up in trauma is the same body that can now be restored in **faith**.

---

## **Practical Body Reset**

1. Stand tall. Breathe deep.
2. Shake your hands, arms, legs.
3. Target your tension zones:
  - Jaw: Open wide and stretch
  - Shoulders: Roll and shake
  - Chest: Pound lightly and breathe
  - Hands: Flick out fear
  - Legs: Stomp firmly
4. Speak truth aloud:
  - “Fear doesn’t own me.”
  - “Lies don’t define me.”
  - “Jesus, I trust Your Truth.”
5. End in stillness and whisper:

“I belong to You, God. Not fear. Not shame. Only You.”

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## **Reflection and Challenge**

### **Reflection Questions:**

- What lie have I been living under?
- Where did I feel tension the most?
- What shifted when I shook and prayed?
- What truth must anchor me now?

### **Challenge Action Step:**

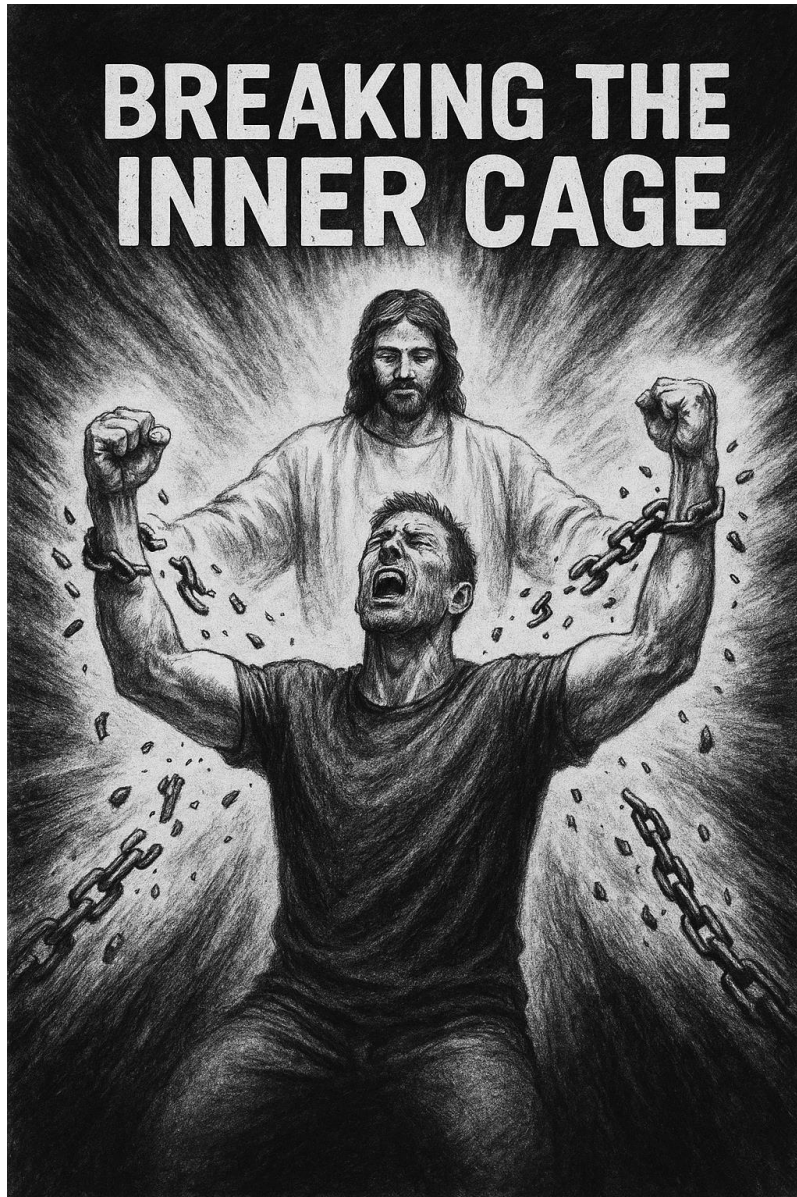
- When fear rises: Stop. Breathe. Shake. Speak truth.
- Share this experience with a trusted brother.

Remember: You're not just fighting for your freedom.  
You're modeling freedom for someone else.

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👊 **Final Word:**

You were never made to carry fear silently.  
You were made to **break it**—and walk free.



**Activity: Calling Clarity Prayer Practice**

- Ask the Holy Spirit: “What have You made me for in this season?”
- Journal your answers to:
  1. What burdens break your heart?
  2. What themes keep showing up in your life?
  3. Where do you feel both fear *and* fire?
- Close by praying: “God, show me what You’ve already placed in my hands.”

# Chapter 6: Bold Action – How Fear Is Broken by Movement

*How Your Body Reacts—and How God's Truth Can Rewire It*

In the last chapter, you began breaking free from the lies that held you back. But now you're probably wondering:

“Why do I still get so tense... so triggered... even when I *know* the truth?”

The answer: **Your body remembers what your mind has tried to forget.**

Your nervous system was trained in fear long before you ever understood what was happening. It reacted to rejection, chaos, yelling, being ignored, expectations you could never meet...

Even if you don't consciously believe those lies anymore, **your body still flinches like they're true.**

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## The Science of a Soul Under Pressure

When something reminds you of a past wound—  
A tone of voice.  
A delay in a text reply.  
A disappointed look.  
A messy house.  
A tough conversation...

Your brain sounds the alarm and triggers one of three responses:

- **Fight** (anger, control, criticism)
- **Flight** (escape, busyness, withdrawal)
- **Freeze** (shutdown, numbness, passivity)

And here's the kicker:

**Most men don't even realize they've been hijacked.**

They think they're just “irritable,” “tired,” or “not in the mood.”  
But their **bodies are reacting to a perceived threat**—one rooted in old pain, not present reality.

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Most Christian men don't know what to do when their fear is triggered.  
They either:

- Explode and regret it
- Shut down and withdraw
- Numb out or avoid it entirely

### ***So, what can be done?***

You don't just think your way out of fear.  
You move through it. You outgrow it.

Those triggers aren't your enemy.  
They're invitations.  
Not to perform harder—but to **pause, process, and pursue healing.**

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## **The Real Battle Is Internal**

The war isn't just “out there.”  
It's within you.

- Can you stay present when you feel disrespected?
- Can you respond in truth when shame creeps in?
- Can you turn to God when fear shouts for control?

Spiritual maturity isn't perfection—it's training your nervous system and spirit to stay grounded in Christ when your flesh wants to run.

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## **What Triggers Are Really Telling You**

Triggers aren't the enemy.  
Triggers are signals—it's your soul saying:  
“There's a wound here that still needs truth.”

If your wife's request makes you feel controlled—maybe control was forced on you in childhood.

If your boss's correction makes you shut down—maybe criticism once made you feel worthless.

We can't renew our minds **until we've stilled our bodies.**

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**Every trigger is actually an opportunity.**  
Get curious and ask:

- What just got touched in me?
- Where have I felt this before?
- God, what do You want to reveal or heal?

Jesus doesn't shame you for being triggered.  
He meets you there.

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## **How Your Nervous System Gets Rewired: Training the Vagus Nerve Like a Muscle**

Think of your autonomic nervous system like the electrical wiring of your body—designed by God to keep you alive and responsive. It governs automatic reactions like heart rate, digestion, and breathing. But it also controls how you react to stress, fear, and relational tension—often without you realizing it.

At the center of this system is something called the vagus nerve—the main highway that runs from your brainstem to your chest, lungs, and gut. It's the command center for whether you stay calm and connected or go into fight, flight, or freeze.

But here's the deal:

Just like your muscles don't grow stronger without resistance, being put to the test...  
Your nervous system doesn't regulate itself without intentional training.

We call it vagal toning—and it works the same way as building your bench press. At first, it feels awkward. Even shaky. You might want to give up. But the more you train it—through specific exercises, intentional breathing, and God-centered movement—the stronger you get.

You develop the internal resilience to lift what used to crush you.

## **Movement Is Ministry to Your Nervous System**

When we move our bodies in intentional ways—especially slow, rhythmic movement tied to breath—we signal safety to the nervous system. It's like telling your body, "Hey, we're okay. We're not in danger anymore."

This is why somatic practices like:

- Grounding (feeling your feet, engaging your senses),

- Deep, slow breathing (especially exhaling longer than you inhale),
- Stretching, shaking, walking, or even dancing before prayer,

...are not just self-help tricks.

They're spiritual alignment tools—bringing your body under the authority of truth.



## God Wants You Strong in Spirit & Nervous System

You weren't designed to stay stuck in panic or passivity. God gave you a body—and through Christ, you've been given power to renew your mind and rewire your reactions.

This doesn't happen all at once. Just like Paul spent time in the Arabian desert and Damascus—about three years total (Galatians 1:17–18)—with God preparing him before he began his public ministry...

You train. You condition. You grow stronger.

Fear is broken not just by belief—but by embodied bold action.  
Your body needs to experience what your spirit already knows:  
You are safe. You are loved. You are free.



## Courage Grows in Motion

Fear wants you frozen. God wants you moving. **God never waits until you feel ready.**

Look at Joshua: he wasn't fearless—but he obeyed.  
David didn't wait to be affirmed before he ran toward Goliath.  
George Washington crossed the Delaware in impossible odds.  
Eric Liddell gave up Olympic fame to honor God.

Each of these men acted before the evidence was concrete.  
That's what courage looks like—obedience before certainty.

Too many Christian men are stuck waiting until they feel ready.  
But you won't feel your way into transformation—you move your way into it.

**Boldness is movement. And movement is the pathway to freedom.**

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## Identity Isn't Just Theological—It's Neurological

Romans 12:2 doesn't just call you to "renew your mind."

It's also a call to **retrain your nervous system** out of the patterns of this world.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."  
— *Romans 12:2*

Because the world's pattern is survival.

God's pattern is surrender.

The world's pattern is self-protection.

God's pattern is **sonship**.

When your body is grounded in **who you are in Christ**, you respond differently:

- You don't attack—you stay connected.
- You don't flee—you stay present.
- You don't freeze—you move in faith.

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## Personal Story: 'Going All In': Testimony In Gainesville

My pastor from when my wife and I lived in Gainesville, FL (GO GATORS!) once shared a story that stuck with me:

A local business owner had built a steady and successful company. Things were going well. But then, in prayer, he felt God speak clearly—"*Give it all away. Empty the bank account.*"

He was scared. It made no logical sense. He didn't know what would happen next.

But like the rich young ruler in Scripture—except with a different ending—he obeyed. He gave everything.

That year, his business boomed. It brought in more revenue than any year before or after. It was as if heaven responded to that single act of surrendered boldness with unmatched favor. In fact, it was so much revenue that it generated more than the amount he gave away after years of saving up.

He didn't just give—he went all in. And God honored it in a way that no one could have predicted.

This story stretched me—because I was still afraid of going all in.

God asked me: “Will you obey Me when the outcome isn’t guaranteed?”

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## **Eric Liddell: Running with God, Not for Glory**

Eric Liddell, Olympic gold medalist and devout Christian, shocked the world when he refused to run an Olympic race held on a Sunday. His decision to honor God over global acclaim brought intense scrutiny—but also deep peace.

After winning gold in a different event, he shocked the world again—by walking away from fame to become a missionary in war-torn China.

When captured and held in a Japanese internment camp, Liddell poured himself into others. Teaching, encouraging, and modeling peace in the middle of chaos. His last recorded words?

“It’s complete surrender.”

Eric didn’t just run for glory—he ran for God. And when he let go of control, God used him to inspire generations.

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## **Rooted Identity = Resilient Courage**

Triggers are not only amplified by unconquered fears. They go into overdrive when your identity is uncertain.

You must know **who you are** before you can break free.

In the book *Victory Over Darkness*, Neil Anderson writes:

*“The more you reaffirm who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will begin to reflect your true identity.”*

You’re not just a man trying not to mess up.

You’re a **child of God**, adopted, redeemed, and filled with the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead.

### **Root Truths from Scripture:**

- I am **God’s workmanship** (Ephesians 2:10)
- I am **free from condemnation** (Romans 8:1)
- I am **a new creation** (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- I am **God's beloved son** (1 John 3:1)

Triggers don't define you.

Trauma doesn't own you.

Jesus says *you are Mine*.

*The more you reaffirm who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will reflect your true identity.*

— Neil Anderson, *Victory Over Darkness*

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## **Body-to-Spirit Reset Practice**

Start your mornings like this: (also works when feeling triggered)

1. **Stand with both feet grounded.**
2. **Breathe in slowly** for 4 counts. Hold for 4. Exhale for 6.
3. **Place your hand on your chest** and say aloud:

“I am God's beloved. I am safe in His love. I don't have to earn anything today.”

4. **Whisper:** “Holy Spirit, reset my body for peace.”
5. **Take one small action in faith**, not fear

This 30-second shift can stop a 3-day spiral.

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## **Real Talk: You Can't Trigger-Proof Your Life**

We live in a broken world. People will still fail you.

But you can become *resilient*, *responsive*, and *rooted*—not reactive.

The goal isn't to never feel a trigger again.

It's to recognize it quickly and return to truth.

**Maturity** is not the absence of conflict.

It's the presence of peace—in **you**—when the conflict comes.

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## **Evening Reset Reflection**

- When did I feel most reactive today?
  - Was it fight, flight, or freeze?
  - What truth did I need in that moment?
  - How can I prepare my body to receive that truth tomorrow?
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## Reflection Questions

- What situations or words trigger me most?
  - Do I tend to explode, shut down, or avoid?
  - What might God be trying to show me through those triggers?
  - What step of bold action have I been avoiding?
  - What truth about my identity can I declare right now?
- 

## Weekly Challenge

This week, when you're triggered:

- Stop. Breathe. Shake. Reset.
- Journal what you felt and heard from God.
- Take one act of obedience—however small.
- Share with a brother (real accountability unlocks freedom).

Let your identity—not your emotions—shape your next move.

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## Scripture Reflections

- *“Do not be anxious about anything...”* – Philippians 4:6
  - *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”* – Colossians 3:15
  - *“I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”* – Galatians 2:20
  - *“You are no longer a slave, but a son.”* – Galatians 4:7
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## Tagline for Chapter:

You can't heal what you refuse to feel.  
But when you move with God in the moment you used to avoid, fear loses its grip—and  
**freedom takes root.**

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# Chapter 7: Refusing to Settle – Reclaiming the Man God Called You to Be

## Part 1: Before You Rise — Surrender

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*“He could out-preach anyone. He could out-strategize most CEOs. But in the process, he lost what mattered most — his own soul and the spiritual safety of his people.”*

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You can have the admiration of thousands, a platform, a team, a family, and a full calendar of ministry events... and still be rotting on the inside.

Mark Driscoll, one of the most influential pastors of a generation, had charisma, strategy, and theology. But what he didn't have was surrender. Behind the sermons was a storm of control, fear, intimidation, and pride. His downfall was public and painful.

This serves as a caution: You can look like you're winning and still be wasting away.

You can be preaching truth... while quietly burning out.

You can look like you're winning and still be wasting away. You can fight for the Gospel publicly — and still avoid your own transformation privately.

You can pray over people on Sunday, and scream at your wife on Monday. You can be preaching truth... while quietly burning out.

And maybe, brother — you've felt it too.

You're showing up. You're pushing forward. But deep down, something's not right. You feel stretched thin, numb, tired, angry, anxious, unseen... or fake.

You tell yourself it's just a season. But what if it's something deeper?

What if God never asked you to carry the pressure you've been trying to hold?

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice...”

Romans 12:1–2 reminds us that our worship is surrender. Not performance. Not a platform. Not striving. Your body — tired, burnt out, anxious — is the offering God wants.

You can't be transformed by more pressure.

**You can only be transformed by mercy.**

Deion Sanders had everything the world promised: NFL glory, MLB success, millions in the bank, TV cameras, trophies, houses, admiration. He was “Prime Time” — on every highlight reel.

But it wasn’t enough.

“I was at the top. **I had everything. And I wanted to die.**”

After winning the Super Bowl, Deion drove his car off a cliff in a suicide attempt. He survived. But more importantly — he surrendered.

**“That’s when I met Jesus. That’s when peace finally came.”**

Deion’s life wasn’t rebuilt with more strategy. It was rebuilt through surrender. God gave him a new heart, a new mission, a new rhythm.

Now, as a coach and father, Deion leads from faith, not flash. He still talks bold — but now he walks with God.

“The greatest thing I ever did wasn’t football. It was meeting Jesus.”

You don’t have to crash to wake up. You don’t have to fall off the cliff to realize God is calling you back.

**But you do have to surrender.**

Not in theory. In reality. In breath. In body. In decisions. In trust.

*If you’re tired, you’re close. If you’re questioning everything, you’re closer. If you’re ready to surrender — you’re right where God wants you.*

## **Part 2: The Reset — Stillness That Rebuilds You**

*"Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit..." — 1 Corinthians 6:19*

### **Your Body is Telling the Truth**

You can say all the right spiritual things — but your body knows when you’re afraid.

Being RESET means your body and soul learn to breathe again under God’s rule. It means you start living in rhythm with the Spirit — not reaction to pressure.

The Holy Spirit Isn’t a Vibe — He’s the Voice

He's not here to give you goosebumps. He's here to transform you from the inside out.

To make you whole.

To fill the cracks that hustle couldn't fill.

To finally give you strength that doesn't run out by Thursday.

And to show the world what a real man looks like —

Not because of your swagger.

But because of your surrender.

You slow down enough to let God build new patterns in you:

- Safety without addiction
- Stillness without guilt
- Strength without tension
- Spirit without fear

Reset is sacred. It's letting God make your nervous system a place of peace again.

There is a version of you that fear has created.

And there is a version of you that God designed.

Most men live stuck somewhere in between.

Which way are you headed?

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## **Reset Exercise: Breath of God (3–7 minutes)**

*"Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." — Genesis 2:7*

1. **Posture** – Sit or stand upright. Hands open. Eyes closed or low.
2. **Breath Pattern** – Inhale (4s), Hold (4s), Exhale (6–8s)
3. **Surrender Phrase:**

"God, I surrender. I let go of control. I lay down my pride. I release my goals. Have Your way in me."

4. **Declare Truth:**

"I am not an orphan. The Holy Spirit lives in me. I will not fear. God is with me—right here, right now."

5. **Finish with Stillness**

This isn't magic. It's surrender, expressed and felt in your bones.

## What Your Life Looks Like After Daily Reset Training:

- Calm mornings, not just caffeine-fueled
- Clear movement, not compulsive busyness
- Peaceful parenting, not panic-driven decisions
- Leading by example, not domination
- Saying "no" because you finally know your "yes"

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## Part 3: Rebuild — Living Empowered by the Spirit

You weren't meant to just collapse and confess. You were meant to rise—not in your old strength but in the Spirit's.

God doesn't build men by making them harder, faster, tougher. He builds them by filling them.

*"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."* — Galatians 5:25

Notice: Not run ahead of the Spirit.

Not drag the Spirit behind your goals. Keep in step.

That's rhythm. That's presence. That's rebuild.

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## The Slow Drift into Settling

Most men want to rebuild. They don't plan to settle.

But over time, distractions stacked.

Disappointments piled up.

Fear convinced you, "You're not enough — and if you try, you'll fail."

You told yourself:

- "Maybe this is just how life is."
- "It's not worth the fight."
- "At least I'm not as bad as \_\_\_\_."
- "As long as I provide, that's enough."

These lies paralyze men with shame, performance pressure, or passive avoidance. It drives them to:

- **Play it safe** instead of take faith-driven risks
- **Numb out** rather than confront wounds
- **Pursue comfort** over calling
- **Settle for survival** instead of surrender to God's greater purpose

It distorts their identity and convinces them that:

- Their past disqualifies them
- Their weakness makes them unworthy
- Their dreams are too far gone

But the truth is:

**“God doesn’t call the qualified — He qualifies the called.”**

**And: “His power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)**

What if God never called you to settle?

What if His invitation for you to surrender is followed by Him raising you up?

**“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.”**

— *James 4:10 (NIV)*

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## **The Cost of Settling**

When you settle:

- Your family gets a shadow of your presence.
- Your wife sees your apathy and wonders if she's the problem.
- Your friends absorb your silence and call it normal.
- Your dreams shrink into routine.
- Your spirit dries up while your calendar stays full.

Settling is the great silent tragedy of modern manhood.

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## **Real Men Rise When Others Stall**

The Bible is full of men who could've settled.

- **Moses** tried to back out of his calling with a list of excuses.

- **Gideon** called himself the weakest.
- **Peter** denied Christ three times.
- **Paul** persecuted the very church he'd later die for.

But they didn't stay stuck.

At some point, they said,

"No more excuses. God has called me out for His purpose, and I'm moving forward—even if it costs me everything."



## Repattern Your Life: Start Small, Think Eternal

You don't have to fix everything today.

But you must stop pretending you're okay with staying stuck.



### Start with a Single Bold Move:

- Call the mentor you've been avoiding.
- Pray out loud with your wife tonight.
- Share the truth with a trusted brother.
- Apply for the job you've been afraid to want.
- Start the conversation you've been putting off.

Settling ends with one simple word: **No**.

No more fear. No more drifting. No more pretending.

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## Rebuild Practice: "Walking in Step" (Morning + Evening Reset)

- Here is a tried and tested daily rhythm for men that we teach and practice that help men to overcome the worst battles our generations face today.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..." — Colossians 3:15

### Morning - Set the Tone

- [ ] Phone remains off until after Scripture and breathwork
- [ ] Cold Splash or Shower (2-3 min)
- [ ] Breath Prayer: "I receive Your peace. I release all fear."
- [ ] Movement + Worship (walk, stretch, worship track)

- ☐ Scripture + Journal (What is God saying to me today?)
- ☐ Daily Declaration: "I am not a slave to fear. I was made for this day. God, lead me into my calling with courage."

Write Top 3 Tasks for Today

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Midday - Reset Your Nervous System**

- ☐ Put phone away during lunch and reset walk
- ☐ Box Breathing (4-4-4-4 for 3 minutes)
- ☐ Grounding + Sunlight (walk outside (barefoot if you dare) or hands touching nature)
- ☐ Speak a Promise: "God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind."
- ☐ Midday Check-In Prompt: "Am I living distracted or directed?"

### **Time with Family (Loved Ones) - Lead Like Jesus**

- ☐ Face-to-Face Time (Family, Friend, or Roommates)
- ☐ Ask or Share Using "Feel-Need-Request"
- ☐ I Feel: \_\_\_\_\_ | I Need: \_\_\_\_\_ | I Request: \_\_\_\_\_ (All takes turns)

### **Evening - Close the Day with Peace**

- ☐ Stretching (neck, back, hips)
- ☐ Breath + Gratitude Loop (3 slow breaths, name 3 things)
- ☐ Scripture or Worship Track
- ☐ Turn off screens 1 hour before bed (book, prayer, or conversation instead)

☐ Daily Journal Reflections with God:

- 1. Where did I walk with You today?
- 2. What am I thankful for?
- 3. What am I still rushing or holding on to that I need to release?

☐ Bedtime Prayer: "God, thank You for today. I trust You with what I didn't finish. I receive Your rest and Your grace."

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## Reflection Questions

1. Where have I started settling without realizing it?
  2. What lies have I been agreeing with about myself?
  3. What is one small area I could obey God in today—even if it's scary?
  4. Who can I invite into my process to help me rise again?
  5. What legacy do I want to leave—and am I headed there right now?
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## Challenge of the Week: Reject the Drift

This week, reject settling in one specific area of your life.

- Identify the place you've drifted (marriage, parenting, purpose, calling).
- Write down what “settling” has looked like for you.
- Pray and ask God to show you one bold move of obedience.
- Take that step—and share it with a brother for accountability.

Let this be the week you reclaim your fire.

Because **you weren't born to drift.**

You were called to lead.

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## Scripture Anchors

- *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world...”* — Romans 12:2
  - *“Fight the good fight of the faith.”* — 1 Timothy 6:12
  - *“I press on toward the goal...”* — Philippians 3:14
  - *“He who began a good work in you...”* — Philippians 1:6
  - *“You are more than a conqueror...”* — Romans 8:37
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## Tagline for Chapter:

Settling is just fear wearing a mask.

But when you rise with obedience, you become the man God always intended

## Chapter 8: Why Men Keep Losing – Is Your Brotherhood Optional, Artificial, or Vital?

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." — Proverbs 27:17

### The Crisis of Connection in a Digital Age

We live in the most connected generation in history—yet loneliness and isolation are at record highs.

Men today can rack up likes, followers, and fantasy league wins... while silently drowning in anxiety, addiction, and aimlessness. We've been lured into thinking that digital connection can replace **deep brotherhood**—but it can't.

Research makes it painfully obvious:

- 73% of men have fewer than six close friends.
- 15% have none.
- 26% of Millennial men had poor or disconnected relationships with their fathers.

Men weren't made to live on islands. You were made for the fire of **real friendship**—the kind that forges you into the man God destined you to be.

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### Fear's Familiar Strategy: Isolation & Counterfeit Brotherhoods

When men don't find real brotherhood, they often substitute it with:

- **Work buddies** who only talk shop
- **Sports teams** that bond but never go deep
- **Online communities** that feel good but require no real vulnerability
- **Addiction circles** that create false unity around mutual dysfunction

These artificial forms feel safe... but they never heal you. They never challenge you. They never truly know you.

"Woe to the one who is alone when he falls and has no one to lift him up." — Ecclesiastes 4:10

### Modern Culture's Assault on Brotherhood

Culture tells men:

- Go it alone
- Compete, don't connect
- Vulnerability is weakness
- Trust no one

And now AI, social media, and virtual reality offer even more distraction... but even less human connection.

Brotherhood doesn't happen by accident. It requires intention, effort, and honesty.

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## **Strength Without Brotherhood Isn't Strength**

**Even the strongest men crumble when they walk alone.**

Just ask Samson.

He tore apart a lion with his bare hands—yet couldn't open his heart to his people.

Blessed with supernatural strength, but a soul in ruins.

Cut off from his community.

Ignoring God's boundaries.

Chasing intimacy in all the wrong places.

And beneath it all—fear.

Fear of losing Delilah.

Fear of being alone.

Fear that if he didn't keep her happy, he'd lose what he thought would finally fill him.

So he stayed.

He compromised.

He gave away the secret of his strength to someone who never honored it.

Samson didn't fall because he lacked power.

He fell because he lacked brotherhood.

**Strength without brotherhood isn't strength—it's slow-motion suicide.**

Ernest Hemingway was also a man's man.

**War hero. Adventurer. Nobel Prize winner.**

But behind the legend was a man unraveling in silence.

He carried rage, shame, and unhealed wounds for decades—wounds no one was allowed to touch. He prided himself on his quick mind and fierce independence, but over time, the cracks began to show.

Trauma from war, plane crashes, and a lifetime of internal battles broke down the mind he once trusted. His memory faded. His focus scattered. Fear crept in.

Fear of weakness.

**Fear of being exposed.**

Fear that the myth would collapse—and the world would see the broken man underneath.

He drank to numb it.

He traveled to outrun it.

But fear kept hunting him.

In the end, Hemingway didn't fall because he lacked courage.

He fell because he lacked **brothers**—men who could see past the myth and call him back from the edge.

Real strength isn't self-reliance.

**It's letting someone in** before it's too late.

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## Brotherhood Isn't a Luxury—It's a Lifeline

God has always built men in brotherhood:

- Moses had Aaron.
- David had Jonathan.
- Jesus sent disciples two by two.
- Paul had Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy.

Even the Son of God didn't walk alone. So why would we?

When true brotherhood forms, something supernatural happens:

- Accountability replaces isolation
- Laughter replaces pressure
- Confession replaces pretending
- Mission replaces mediocrity

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” — James 5:16

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## Story: The Night I Got Called Out

I almost lost a good friend—because I thought showing up was optional.

My friend Ryan had invited me to a few poker nights with other guys. I kept flaking—busy with work, stress, and excuses.

Then one day, Ryan called me out: “Eric, you're not being a man of your word. You say you'll show up, but you don't. You're leaving us hanging.”

It hit me like a gut punch. Everything in me wanted to dismiss it—but I didn't. I listened. I apologized. And we rebuilt trust.

Ryan wasn't a pastor. He wasn't a Bible study leader. He was a regular guy... who cared enough to call me higher.

That's what brotherhood does. It calls you out. And it calls you up.

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## Brotherhood Is Where Healing Happens

You don't need a stadium of fans. You need a circle of brothers who:

- Know your story
- Speak truth to your lies
- Pray when you forget how
- Call you forward when fear calls you back

In brotherhood, you don't have to hide. You're challenged, covered, and **called up**.

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” — Ecclesiastes 4:12

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## Reflection Questions

1. Where have I been trying to fight battles alone?
  2. What fears have kept me from trusting another man with my real struggles?
  3. What would it look like to stop hiding and start fighting side-by-side with a brother?
  4. Who are 1–2 men God may be highlighting to go deeper with?
  5. What would it take to make the first move?
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## Weekly Challenge

**Practical Invitation: Build Your Brotherhood**

- Text two men today and say, “I need to go deeper in faith and life. Would you be up for walking with me consistently in this?” (Tell him you want real brotherhood—not just surface-level friendship. Set a time to talk and pray.)
- Join a local men’s group, Courageous Calling circle, or form your own.
- At your next hangout, ask a real question instead of making small talk.

If the first guy doesn’t respond—try someone else. Don’t give up. Because your freedom might be waiting on the other side of one bold conversation.

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### **Chapter Tagline:**

**Strength without brotherhood isn’t strength. It’s slow-motion suicide.** Real freedom is found when men walk side-by-side into battle—and refuse to let each other fall.

## Chapter 9: The Strength to Confess

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." — James 5:16

### Theme: True Freedom Begins Where Secrets End

Brotherhood creates the space to change your life—but **confession breaks off the old chains**. Hiding your sin may seem like the way to protect your image—but it will poison your soul.

Confession isn't just honesty. It's warfare. It breaks shame's grip and invites God's power to restore what fear tried to bury.

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### Why We Hide

- We think our sin is *uniquely disqualifying*.
- We believe that if someone knew the whole truth, they'd walk away.
- We're addicted to control, and confession feels like letting go.
- We think God is disappointed and distant.

All lies.

God doesn't just forgive confessed sin—He *delights* to do it. Confession isn't weakness. It's the *courageous path to clarity and connection*.

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### Why Confession Matters Now More Than Ever

We live in a culture that celebrates exposure but resists confession. People are more than willing to air their dirty laundry on podcasts, social media, and interviews. But that's not *confession*.

Confession isn't public shock value. It's private soul-surgery. It's you and a trusted brother. It's you and God. It's the moment the mask drops and healing begins.

Jesus doesn't demand confession because He wants to shame you. He invites it because He wants to free you.

"Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." — James 5:16

Confession opens the floodgates of grace. It releases pressure. It ends the cycle of self-hate. It reminds you: *you are not alone*.

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## The Power of Confession

“You’re only as strong as what you’re still hiding.”

We talk a lot about surrender. About peace. About walking in the Spirit. But here’s the thing: You can’t live empowered by the Holy Spirit while hiding sin in the dark. And you can’t heal what you won’t confess.

Most men spend years—sometimes decades—trying to manage their sin instead of confessing it. You convince yourself:

- I’ll stop soon.
- Nobody needs to know.
- I can handle it.

But sin that stays in the dark gains power. And the longer you hide it, the more anxious, distant, and ashamed you become.

“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” — Proverbs 28:13

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### Story: Brent’s Confession

My college ministry leader Brent told a story I’ll never forget. Years earlier, he stole money out of a restaurant safe. No one saw. He could’ve carried that secret with him forever. No one confronted him. But God did.

He couldn’t escape the weight. The Holy Spirit wouldn’t let him get comfortable with the compromise. As he grew in his walk with God, conviction wouldn’t let him stay silent.

He actually went to the house of his coworker that he had taken the money with years ago. The other young man pretended that he had no idea what Brent was talking about or who he even was. He wanted his sin to stay hidden and to keep the money at the cost of his soul. Brent then tried alone to return the money to the restaurant, Even though it meant he might face legal consequences. But the business was long gone.

So he gave it to a charity — and more importantly, he confessed.

He stood in front of us as our spiritual leader — not with a perfect past, but with a clean heart.

That moment marked me.

I saw what real integrity looked like. And the risk as well as the freedom it gave. Not in charisma.

Not in image.  
But in courage.

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## **My Story: Choosing to Confess**

Fast forward a few years, and I was the one about to step into college ministry.  
I had the opportunity, the connections, and the calling.

But I also had a secret.

Sexual impurity I hadn't dealt with.  
A double life I hadn't brought fully into the light.

And I remembered my mentor's story.  
So I chose to confess.

And just like that — the opportunity was taken away.

But you know what?  
God used that moment not to punish me — but to purify me.  
He wasn't done with me.  
He was just getting started in a different way.

That confession marked the beginning of a different man being formed inside of me.

---

## **Confession Is Courage**

Confession isn't weakness. It's the most courageous thing you can do. It breaks shame. It unlocks healing. It invites grace.

God doesn't need your image. He wants your honesty.

“The enemy thrives in secrecy. The Spirit moves in light.”

You don't need to confess to everyone. But you need to confess to someone. A brother. A mentor. A pastor. A spiritual friend.

## **The Way Into the Light**

As men, we love to skip to the solution.  
Give us the fix. The hack. The strategy.

But here's the truth:  
You can't out-strategize a sin you're still hiding.  
You can't defeat what you're unwilling to drag into the light.

Confession isn't just a warm-up.  
It's not optional.  
It's not a suggestion.

It's vital.

If you want to stop repeating the sin — whether it's lust, greed, anger, or something else —  
then confession is your door to freedom.

You can pray. You can fast. You can read Scripture.  
But if you're still hiding what's killing you, the chains won't break.

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## Brandon's Story: From Chaos to Calling

Brandon was an intelligent “nice guy.”  
Christian. Caring. Striving to do the right thing.  
But beneath the surface, he felt stuck.

“I don't know what I want,” he told me. “I'm not moving forward, but I also can't rest. I feel like I'm being shaped by chaos instead of leading with clarity.”

He had big dreams—a biotech startup in an unreached nation, a PhD, missions, marriage—but also a storm inside: anxiety, people-pleasing, image pressure, and spiritual confusion.

Past relationship wounds had left him afraid of conflict. In his new relationship, the same patterns returned: over-performing, shutting down, and hiding behind charm.

We got to the root.

Brandon had built his identity on being impressive.

So we named his stress mask: **“Jack Sparrow.”**

A clever, distracted version of himself that avoided pain through polish.

But that version wasn't the real him.

Through coaching and prayer, Brandon began to:

- Slow down instead of perform
- Practice vulnerability instead of perfection
- Speak truth instead of ghosting his own voice
- Root his worth in Christ—not success or approval

He faced lies like:

*“I'm not enough unless I'm impressive.”*

*“Disagreeing will make people leave.”*

He learned to sit in stillness. To say “I love you” and mean it. To risk being seen.

Today, Brandon is a husband and has a little toddler daughter.  
He leads with peace and purpose—even in hard conversations.  
He doesn't wear the mask anymore.  
Brandon didn't just find healing.  
**He became the man God always meant for him to be.**

---

## A Simple Framework: How to Confess with Courage

1. **Get Honest with Yourself.**
  - Name the thing you've been avoiding.
2. **Find a Trusted Brother.**
  - Someone who loves Jesus and won't shame you.
3. **Speak the Truth Out Loud.**
  - Not in vague terms. Be specific.
4. **Receive Grace.**
  - Let God and your brother remind you of who you are.
5. **Make Restoration if Needed.**
  - Own the consequences. Step toward healing.

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## False Strength vs. Real Strength

False Strength	Real Strength
Hides in isolation	Brings darkness into the light
Avoids vulnerability	Embraces accountability
Protects image	Prioritizes intimacy with God
Makes excuses	Takes responsibility

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## Common Struggles Men Confess (from research)

- **Lust / Sexual Immorality** – Fueled by isolation and shame.
  - **Anger / Wrath** – Unchecked emotion that damages relationships.
  - **Greed / Materialism** – Pressure to perform, achieve, possess.
- 

## Reflection Questions

1. What area of my life have I been trying to manage in secret?
2. Who is one trusted person I could confess to this week?
3. What lie have I believed that's kept me silent?
4. What truth from Scripture speaks to my real identity in this area?
5. How might confession be the key to unlocking the freedom I've been praying for?

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## Weekly Challenge

Pick one area. One lie. One sin you've been hiding. Bring it into the light. Find one brother. Confess. Pray. Let healing begin.

**Don't skip the step. Freedom doesn't come from hiding. It comes from honesty. And it starts now.**

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## Chapter 10: The Daily Weapons of a Free Man

### Part 1: Built for Battle, Designed for Love

You don't win battles by accident. You win by being equipped, aware, and committed to daily readiness.

Too many Christian men confess sin, ask for help, and feel inspired—only to fall back into old patterns days later. Why?

Because they stop arming themselves every day.

They think:

- “I’m just too busy this morning.”
- “It’s not that big of deal.”
- “I’ll be fine.”

They’re like a trip wire—one trigger away from collapsing. They never reset their nervous system. They never train their body to align with their spirit.

A free man doesn't wait for a crisis to start fighting. He lives with spiritual alertness, mental clarity, and physical preparedness—because the war never sleeps.

Most men don't relapse into anxiety, addiction, or anger because they're weak. They relapse because they dropped their weapons.

You can't win today's battle with yesterday's inspiration.

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### The Spiral or the Cycle: One Will Shape You

Fear is never static. **Left unaddressed, it spirals.** Shame turns into hiding. Hiding leads to numbing. Numbing ends in regret. And regret? It pulls you deeper into fear. The spiral feeds itself—until fear becomes your default and destruction feels inevitable.

This is the enemy's design: a loop of defeat that **grows stronger the longer you stay in it.** You begin to believe this is just “who you are.”

But the courage cycle is even stronger.

When you act in faith, even imperfectly, you start to build clarity. That clarity reveals more of your identity. As identity deepens, movement becomes easier. Growth becomes natural. **The cycle of courage reinforces itself.** Soon God has spoken your identity so clearly (see Chapter

12) that you know your identity and the movement and clarity come that much faster and stronger to your soul. The man of courage is the one described in the Psalms:

**“They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.”**

— *Psalms 84:7 (ESV)*

Jesus even described this dynamic in the Gospels:

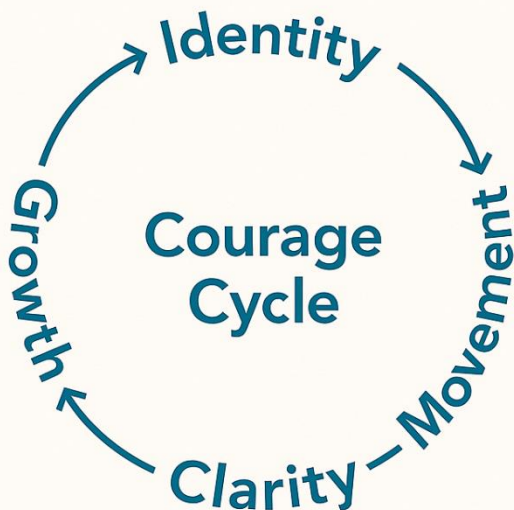
**“To the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”**

— *Matthew 13:12 (ESV)*

This is a spiritual principle: momentum multiplies. The longer you stay in the spiral of fear, the harder it is to get out. But the moment you step into courage—**God meets you there with more.** This is God’s design for your life: **not to spiral, but to cycle upward in strength.**

Before we move forward, take a look at these two patterns side by side. Ask yourself honestly: **Which one have I been feeding? And which one am I ready to break or build today?**

## COURAGE CYCLE



## FEAR SPIRAL



## Your Armor Is Not Optional

Living in courage and breaking free from fear is described powerfully by the Apostle Paul, “Put on the full armor of God...” — Ephesians 6:11

Notice—it doesn’t say “try to be strong.” It says *put something on*. Every day. On purpose.

Ephesians 6 isn’t a cute children’s lesson. It’s a battlefield blueprint. Let’s break it down:

- **The Belt of Truth:** Ground yourself in God’s Word before the world feeds you lies.  
→ Daily: Memorize or speak one Scripture aloud.
- **The Breastplate of Righteousness:** Protect your heart. Know who you are in Christ.  
→ Daily: Declare, “I am the righteousness of God in Christ.”
- **The Shoes of Peace:** Don’t react—respond. Live led, not triggered.  
→ Daily: Feet on the floor, deep breaths, name 3 things you’re grateful for.
- **The Shield of Faith:** The enemy will fire darts. Faith is your force field.  
→ Daily: Say, “I trust You, God, more than my feelings.”
- **The Helmet of Salvation:** Guard your thoughts. You’re already His.  
→ Daily: Visualize putting on the helmet. Speak your secure identity.
- **The Sword of the Spirit:** Fight back with Scripture.  
→ Daily: Quote a verse when temptation hits. Cut lies with truth.

This is how you stay free.

### John Wesley’s Story: From Fearful and Numb to Bold Leader of a Revival

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, wasn’t always the bold preacher history remembers. In fact, early in his life, **he was spiritually insecure, driven by performance, and terrified of death.**

After years of missionary work—even traveling to America—he confessed he didn’t truly know Christ. He was **numb inside**, full of fear, and haunted by the sense that his faith wasn’t real.

But everything shifted in **1738** when he attended a small group meeting in Aldersgate Street. As someone read Martin Luther’s preface to Romans, Wesley later wrote:

*“I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine.”*

That moment **didn’t just change his theology—it changed his lifestyle.**

Wesley began waking early every morning for **prayer, fasting, journaling, and Scripture**, committing to what he called a **"rule of life"**. It wasn’t a one-time emotional high. It was a daily covenant.

From that point on, he traveled **250,000 miles on horseback**, preached over **40,000 sermons**, and **sparked one of the greatest revival movements** in modern history.

What fueled it? **Discipline. A daily covenant. An anchored nervous system. And an unshakable identity in Christ.**

He didn't run on hype.

He lived on holy habits.

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## **How to Know You Are Saved**

You can train your body and mind—but if you don't know you're saved, you'll still walk like a slave.

Salvation is received—not earned:

If you've doubted whether you're really saved, you're not alone. Even great men of God like John Wesley wrestled with that fear. And it is wise for us to examine and speak sincerely with God to see if our salvation in Jesus is sincere.

Here's what Scripture says:

- *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* (Romans 10:13)
- *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* (Romans 10:9)
- *“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy.”* (Titus 3:5)
- *“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.”* (Romans 8:16)

If you've placed your trust in Jesus, His Spirit **confirms it in your spirit**—not with fireworks, but with a steady peace and growing love for Him.

**Assurance doesn't come from emotion.**

**It comes from believing God's Word and receiving His Spirit.**

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## **What You Can Do Today**

If you've never been sure, settle it today.

Speak this aloud in faith:

“Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I receive You as my Savior and Lord. I trust Your finished work, not my effort. Thank You that I am fully forgiven, fully loved, and fully Yours. Seal me with Your Spirit and lead me in daily obedience. Amen.”

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## Confirm With a Brother

Since you confessed last chapter—don’t stop now.

Here’s your next step:

Call that brother. Text him. Set a time. Sit down face-to-face if you can.

Say this:

*“I’ve been doing a lot of soul work lately—and one thing I want to be 100% sure of is that I know I’m saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Let’s talk about it. Let’s make sure we both know where we stand.”*

- “Do you believe your sins are fully forgiven—not because of anything you’ve done, but because of what Jesus did on the cross?”
- “Have you experienced the Holy Spirit bearing witness in your spirit that you are His?”

If either of you isn’t sure—**this is the moment to settle it.**

Pray together. Declare your faith.

Make it a defining moment—not just for your journey, but for your brother’s too.

Remember it was the moment John Wesley heard his brother in Christ reading the introduction to Romans that the Holy Spirit reached him. This moment could literally transform your brother’s life.

Brotherhood is more than accountability.

It’s helping each other walk boldly in identity and truth.

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## Forgiveness Is a Daily Weapon

Many men carry shame, grudges, and past wounds—not realizing they are dragging weights into every spiritual battle.

Unforgiveness keeps your armor cracked and your soul vulnerable. Jesus said it plainly:

**“If you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” —Matthew 6:15**

This isn’t about legalism—it’s about freedom.

Forgiveness doesn't mean excusing wrongs. It means releasing the offense so it no longer controls you. And you no longer desire evil towards that person (or group).

Daily Weapon Practice:

- Ask God: "Who am I still holding something against?"
- Write their name(s).
- Say aloud: "I choose to forgive [name] today. I release them to You. Set me free from bitterness. Heal my heart."

Forgiveness isn't a one-time moment—it's a daily surrender.

The freer your heart, the lighter your steps in battle.

## **Nervous System Reset: The Overlooked Weapon**

You can't fight spiritual battles if your body is stuck in survival mode. If your nervous system is dysregulated, your brain is foggy, your emotions hijack you, and your decisions spiral.

That's what makes the steady man of discipline rise above the men who sprint and then get distracted and enticed again into their devices and vices.

**This is a 3 to 6 month process not an overnight easy fix.**

Here's how to reset your body to follow your faith.

Keep phone off for each reset:

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### **Body Reset Tools:**

#### **Option A: Cross-Crawl (30s–60s)**

- March in place, right knee to left elbow, switch.
- 3 deep breaths. Declare: "The Lord is my strength and my shield."

#### **Option B: Vagus Squat + Exhale**

- Lower into a squat. Rise while exhaling slowly.
- Whisper Scripture: "The Lord is my strength."

#### **Option C: Jumping Jacks + Breath Hold**

- 10–20 reps. Hold breath, exhale slowly.
  - Say: "I'm safe. I'm led. I'm here."
-

## Even Jesus Had Daily Weapons

Mark 1:35 — “Very early... Jesus got up... and prayed.”

Jesus didn’t wing it. He:

- Withdrew before miracles
- Prayed before decisions
- Fasted before ministry
- Spoke Scripture under pressure

If Jesus needed daily reset, why would we skip it?

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## Daily Freedom: Full-Heart, Full-Body Obedience

“Love the Lord... with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” —Mark 12:30

- **Mind:** Clarity, Scripture, truth
  - **Body:** Breath, grounding, surrender
  - **Heart:** Desire, vulnerability, worship
  - **Strength:** Activation, energy, obedience
- 

## Checklist to Train Daily:

- Start with Scripture, not screen
- Reset your body before work
- Speak identity before fear
- Invite God before decisions

You fight best when: Your body is grounded Your mind is clear Your spirit is yielded

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## Reflection Questions

- Which part of the armor do you tend to forget?
  - What daily triggers spike your nervous system?
  - Who do you still need to forgive—and what will change when you release that?
  - Which weapon are you most excited to practice this week?
-

## **Challenge: Suit Up Daily**

Before picking up your phone, put on your armor. Before work, reset your body. Before fear speaks, declare Scripture.

The enemy doesn't fear a man who talks.  
He fears a man who trains.

## Chapter 11: Leading Your People with Courage

### Part 1: From Healed Man to Courageous Leader

In Chapter 9, you confessed. In Chapter 10, you started daily training.  
Now, here in Chapter 11, **you build your team.**

You weren't just set free to feel better.  
You were set free to lead boldly.

The man who used to hide, react, or numb himself is gone.  
Now the world needs what God's building inside you.  
Not the old performance. Not fake strength.

But presence. Integrity. Authority. Courage.

Your Healing Was Never Just for You

Your family needs your clarity.  
Your significant other need your calm.  
Your team needs your integrity.  
Your church needs your transformation.

And this world?  
This world needs men who carry wholeness into chaos.

You weren't made to just survive this life—you were made to **link arms with men who make you stronger.**

Real men don't just confess sin.  
They commit to **walk together in truth**, growth, accountability, and encouragement.  
If you want long-term freedom, you need long-term **brotherhood.**

---

### A True Brotherhood Isn't a Bible Study. It's a Battle Formation.

Some of you have been in small groups where everyone hides behind polite answers.  
That's not what we're talking about.

A real brotherhood will:

- Ask you if you're becoming the man God called you to be.
- Call you out when you're drifting.
- Encourage you, not cut you down or compare your works to someone else's.
- Pray with power, not just passivity.
- Challenge your excuses and be there to help you grow.
- Never let you forget who you are in Christ.

You can't grow into courageous calling without the **refining fire of brotherhood**.

Men who know how to speak truth in love.

Men who can walk into hard conversations and stay grounded.

Men who lead not from pride — but from peace.

Leadership Is Not About Control. It's About Covering.

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” — Matthew 20:26

Jesus flipped leadership upside down.

He didn't dominate His disciples — He washed their feet.

He didn't manipulate with fear — He led with presence.

He didn't force them — He invited them.

He didn't skip the pain. He carried the cross.

Real Leadership Starts at Home

You don't need a title to be a leader.

If God's given you a family, friends, coworkers — you're already right alongside someone.

The opportunity is right in front of you.

And how you show up matters more than what you say.

- When you breathe to release tension instead of explode
- When you name emotions instead of shutting down
- When you protect instead of manipulate
- When you admit wrong and model repentance

That's leadership.

That's what makes a man trustworthy.

## **Part 2: Rejecting Anxious Leadership and Embracing Courageous Integrity**

Leadership isn't about appeasement or anxiety; it's about conviction and courage.

In today's world, many men fall into the trap of leading from a place of anxiety—constantly seeking approval, avoiding conflict, and striving to be the "nice guy." But this approach often leads to indecisiveness, lack of direction, and a failure to lead effectively.

Jesus modeled a different kind of leadership. He wasn't swayed by public opinion or fear of confrontation. He led with clarity, purpose, and unwavering commitment to truth, even when it was unpopular or led to personal sacrifice.

“Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.” — Luke 6:26

Being a leader means making tough decisions, standing firm in your convictions, and sometimes facing opposition. It's not about being liked by everyone; it's about doing what's right.

### **Jesus Refused to Perform for Applause**

Jesus walked with His brothers—but He never let the crowd define His mission.

He didn't:

- Prove Himself to religious leaders
- Shape His ministry around what others wanted Him to do
- Let the praise of people determine His obedience

Instead, **He moved with confidence**, rooted in the Father's voice.

*“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”* (Mark 1:11)

That identity gave Him strength to:

- Walk away from crowds (*Luke 5:16*)

- Stay silent under pressure (*Matthew 27:14*)
- Rebuke shallow discipleship (*John 6:66*)
- Refuse to be manipulated by His own family (*John 7:3–6*)
- Say “no” to urgent demands when it wasn’t the Father’s will (*Mark 1:37–38*)

*“I do not accept glory from human beings.”* (John 5:41)

*“What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.”* (Luke 16:15)

**Jesus didn’t live for appearance—He lived in alignment.**

And when you know who you are in the Father, *you don’t need to impress anyone.*

That’s the kind of man who thrives in brotherhood—because he doesn’t need to posture. He just shows up real.

### **The Crisis of Male Leadership and Mentorship**

- 82% of young adults believe society is facing a leadership crisis.
- 76% of people believe mentors are important, but only 37% have one.
- 85% of youth in prison come from fatherless homes.
- 90% of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.
- 71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.

When fathers and mentors disappear, young men are left to guess what strength, leadership, and faith even look like.

### **Stepping Into the Gap**

Leadership starts with personal integrity and extends to mentoring others. It’s about being the example that others can follow — not through perfection, but through authenticity and a commitment to growth.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” — 1 Corinthians 11:1

### **Part 3: Practical Steps to Cultivate Courageous Leadership**

### 1. Lead with Honesty, Not Image

People don't need a perfect leader.

They need a present one.

When's the last time you said:

"I was wrong."

"I'm working on this."

"Here's what God is teaching me."

That's how you earn trust in your home, your team, and your church.

### 2. Create a Culture of Ownership

I used to structure team meetings with task lists, progress updates, and project outlines.

But over time, I saw the team disconnect — eyes glazing over, checking the clock.

Something had to shift.

So I simplified our meetings to just two shared questions:

1. What's one thing going well?

2. What's one thing we can improve?

Now, everyone shares. Everyone reflects.

We celebrate wins. We solve problems together.

And the daily to-do lists? We let the systems handle that — so the people stay engaged and empowered.

Simple, consistent leadership builds buy-in and transformation.

### 3. Lead in Your Marriage by Connecting, Not Just Controlling

You don't lead your wife by lectures.

You lead her by staying close.

I created a 5-minute daily rhythm for couples to connect that has radically improved intimacy, communication, and emotional presence.

It's called T.E.A.C.H.

T: Touch — Sit close, hold hands, or share simple contact

E: Experience or Education — Share one thing you did or learned today

A: Appreciate — Say one specific thing you admire about your spouse  
C: Concern or Change — Make a small life request or give a meaningful update  
H: Help — Ask: “What’s one way I can support you today?”

Even busy couples have five minutes.

And when you lead by listening, sharing, and showing up — you lead your marriage with courage and care.

#### 4. Multiply What’s Been Given to You

Start a group.

Mentor one man.

Share the story you’ve been afraid to tell.

You don’t have to know everything.

You just have to be one step further than the man behind you.

“And the things you have heard me say... entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” — 2 Timothy 2:2

#### 5. Remember: Leadership is Not a Title. It’s a Daily Posture

Show up with peace.

Speak truth in love.

Walk with God before you walk into the room.

Be the same man when no one’s looking.

That’s real leadership.

That’s courageous calling in action.

#### 6. Let Go of Impressing — Lead with Integrity and Simplicity

I used to think strong leadership meant having polished plans, bulletproof outlines, and making sure everyone felt good. I thought it meant being the guy with the most answers and the clearest vision.

But over time, I saw something shift — not just in others, but in myself.

When I showed up simply — honest, kind, and direct — things got better. I stopped overthinking how others might react. I started saying, “Here’s what I’m really seeing... Here’s what I believe matters right now.”

I wasn’t trying to impress. I was trying to be clear, caring, and consistent. And people leaned in. Not because I was the smartest — but because they knew I was sincere.

I also learned not to lead alone. In his book *\*Rich Dad Poor Dad\**, Robert Kiyosaki writes that it’s actually better **\*\*not\*\*** to be the smartest person in the room. Why? Because if you’re the smartest and most skilled, **\*\*you become the ceiling.\*\***

But when you build a team of people with greater experience, insight, and skill — you lift the ceiling higher. Together, you lead with more wisdom, greater unity, and multiplied strength.

Leadership isn’t about being impressive. It’s about building a team that wins together, serves together, and grows together.

Let go of trying to be the best in the room — and start building a room where *\*everyone rises\**.

Your influence is not random. It’s a tool in God's hands.

Whether in business, ministry, or mentorship—how are you using your reach for His glory?

Activity: Name 3 people or spheres where your influence matters. Ask God: “How can I be bold and faithful here?”

### **Jesus Modeled It Too**

Jesus didn’t walk alone.

He had:

- **The Three** (Peter, James, John) — His inner circle for the hardest moments.
- **The Twelve** — Men He trained, challenged, and trusted.

- **The Seventy-Two** — Partners sent out with purpose.

Even the Son of God walked in **intentional male community**.

And He calls you to do the same.

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### **Who Are Your Three?**

Every man needs:

1. **A brother who's a step ahead** — to mentor and stretch you.
2. **A brother in the trenches with you** — to encourage and sharpen you.
3. **A brother who's a step behind** — to pour into and remind you what God's already done.

When these three are in your life, you stop walking in shame or pride.

You walk in **purpose, presence, and power**.

## The Courageous Creed

I refuse to be ruled by fear.  
I will not bow to the lies of shame, silence, or self-doubt.  
I am a son of God—called, chosen, and changed by grace.

I will rise each day and put on the full armor of God.  
I will train my body, renew my mind, and guard my heart.

I will speak truth when it's unpopular. I will confess when I fall. I will forgive quickly and walk humbly.

I will lead with love. I will protect what's holy. I will build what matters.

I will not shrink back. I will not numb out. I will not settle for less than the life God died to give me.

Jesus is my Savior.  
The Holy Spirit is my strength.  
The Father's voice is my compass.

And brotherhood is my battlefield.

This is not just a book. This is my call. And I will answer it— With courage.

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## Final Reflection:

What chapter of your life needs to end—so your calling can begin? Who do you need to text, call, forgive, or confess to today? What habit must die so your spirit can rise?

Don't just put this book back on the shelf. **Put your faith into motion.**

## Your Next Step:

If you're ready to keep walking this journey with brothers who are committed to courage—join us. Visit [CourageousCallings.com/book-a-call](https://CourageousCallings.com/book-a-call) or scan the QR code below.

We're building an army of wholehearted men. Not just healed—but *hungry*. Not just learning—but *living*.

Your story's not over. It's just getting started.

Let's go.

*Eric Gilbert*

Founder, Courageous Calling

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## Chapter 12: Living the Call, Finishing Strong

### Part 1: The Life You Almost Talk Yourself Out Of

You made it to the end of this book, but brother—this is where your *real* journey begins.

Reading doesn't change your life. **Responding does.**

You've looked fear in the face. You've unearthed old wounds, confessed sin, reset your nervous system, and started to take up your spiritual weapons daily. You've seen the cost of silence. You've heard the whisper of God. You've remembered your identity. You've been challenged to live with honor, brotherhood, boldness, forgiveness, and freedom.

So now what?

Now comes the decision that separates readers from warriors: **Will you live what you've learned?**

This world is loud, distracted, divided, and spiritually exhausted. And it's looking for men who walk differently. Not perfectly. Not religiously. But courageously.

#### **How Second Guessing Almost Stole My Life's Greatest Blessings**

I've had seasons where anxiety nearly talked me out of the very blessings God had prepared for me.

I was afraid I'd marry the wrong person — so I almost missed the woman who would become my greatest encourager.

She believed in me when I didn't yet believe in myself. She gave me the courage to start an

online business. To trust God for provision. To dream bigger.

I feared hiring help — afraid I'd mess it up. But that opened the door to real team-building, real growth.

I feared moving from Illinois to Florida — what if the jobs didn't come through? But we stepped. And God provided.

I feared starting a practice to help others with fear and anxiety — because I still battled mine. But I followed God's lead anyway.

Fear almost stole the legacy God was trying to give me.

You Don't Need to Be Perfect. You Just Need to Grow.

If you don't see yourself as a leader, that's okay.  
God doesn't need your resume — He's after your readiness.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13

This is a growth mindset rooted in grace.

You won't always feel strong.  
You won't always feel confident.  
But you can keep stepping forward.

## Part 2: What It Means to Multiply Your Life

A comfortable life will never satisfy the man who was made for calling. You were not designed to be entertained to death. You were designed to lead, to love, to sacrifice, and to shine.

You weren't just saved from something.  
You were saved for something.

Calling isn't a title. It's not your job or platform.  
Calling is your \*obedience\* — to follow the voice of God into the places He sends you, with the people He's entrusted to you, for the season you're in.

Calling is not about hype — it's about faithfulness.

If you're raising kids, that's calling.

If you're mentoring one man, that's calling.

If you're creating something that points people to truth — that's calling.

## Discovering God's Call

Your calling is uncertain when your identity is uncertain.

You must know **who you are** before you can know what to do with your life.

**\*\*LIVE YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST FIRST.\*\***

THEN THE PATH OF YOUR CALLING WILL APPEAR.

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## Abiding in Christ First

This journey is not about achievement or chasing success. It begins with **abiding**—a life-giving and sustaining relationship with Jesus.

God doesn't need your performance. He deeply desires your presence.

As God tells us **who we are** (identity), we will know **what to do** (vocation). Identity in God is:

- **Rooted** in Christ (Scripture-based identity)
- **Defined** by spiritual gifts (life purpose)
- **Demonstrated** in vocation (current mission field)

Think of this process as building a house:

- Foundation = Identity from Scripture
- Framing = Spiritual gifts
- Rooms = Vocations you are called to step into



God is not a vending machine to find your favorite calling (candy).  
Or trying to 'level up' your video game character so you can be stronger than others.  
It's SO MUCH MORE.  
It's an invitation to relationship.  
A Father saying to His child: "Walk with Me. Trust Me. Live free."

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**Before you look ahead, take time to look back with God.**





Jesus has been shaping, refining, and calling you to walk in purpose. But along the way, the enemy has worked to steal, kill, and devour what God planted in you (*John 10:10*).

Use the timeline below to reflect on both—how your Father has lovingly pursued you, and how the enemy has tried to distort your identity.

Let this be a moment of clarity, healing, and truth.

## 1. Identity Formation Timeline

Reflect on your story by prayerfully listing moments under each age range. Look for God's fingerprints—and where the enemy tried to interfere.

Life Stage	Ages 0–12	Ages 13–21	Ages 22–Now
 Strengths			
 Wins			
 Wounds			
 Losses			
★ Defining Moments			

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### Altar Moments: “God met me when...”

Write 3–5 defining encounters where you felt God’s presence or calling.

**Authentic Self Check:** List 3–5 moments when you were fully alive—living as the person God formed you to be.

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## 2. Face Your False Self

Write honestly:

- Where do you tend to hide or perform for wrong reasons? (others' approval, worldly success, security)
- What feels false or draining even though it seems "impressive"?
- What achievements or titles do you cling to out of fear?
- What lies have wounded your sense of worth?

Examples:

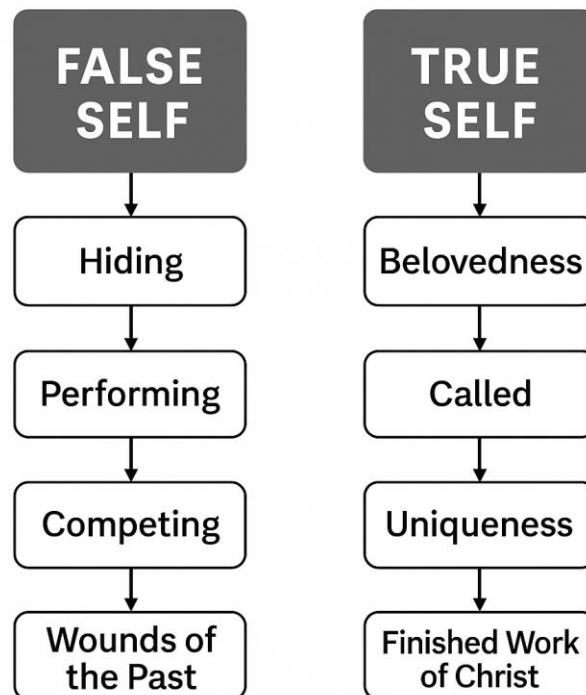
- **"You're not a man."**
- **"You'll never be good enough."**
- **"You don't have what it takes."**

**\*Prayer for Exchange:** (Encounter Jesus and say)

Lord Jesus, I give these aspects of my false identity to you. Cleanse me of all the lies and fears they produced.

By the power of your life, death, and resurrection, I release these burdens and wounds to you. I now take up your protection from and silencing of any enemy and all false things in my life. I take up my cross and my calling now to follow you. Please take this false identity away and exchange it for my true identity in you.

## FALSE SELF vs. TRUE SELF



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### 3. Scripture Foundation of Identity

Read and reflect on:

- **Romans 8:14–17** – You are a child of God, led by His Spirit.
- **Ephesians 2:4–10** – You are God’s workmanship, created for good works.

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### 4. Name Your Identity & Set Your Calling

Bring your whole self to God and ask:

“Jesus, in light of the false identity I carried, who do You now say I am?”

Let the Holy Spirit speak. Listen deeply. Jesus may speak a name, identity, or something else to you.

Jesus in your name I claim this beautiful exchange of identity that you make possible for me.

**Journal: How does embracing this identity produce courage instead of fear?**

### **Closing Prayer:**

Jesus, in Your name I claim this beautiful exchange. Thank You for making my true identity possible.

### **Making It Memorable:**

Now in the Light of what Jesus said - Write your statements that combine your identity with your calling:

- **\*LifeCall Sentence:**

“I am a *(identity role)* who helps *(people)* do/experience *(transformation)*, so that *(bigger Kingdom result)*.”

Ex. 1: “I am a Courageous Coach who helps anxious Christian men break free from fear and self-doubt, so that they can lead their loved one with faith and confidence.”

Ex. 2: “I am a Vision Builder who helps overwhelmed entrepreneurs find God’s clarity and direction, so that their business becomes a vessel for Kingdom impact.”

Ex. 3: “I am a Playful Peacemaker who helps people in distress experience revelation, connection, and gentle reconciliation - so that the Holy Spirit flows with healing, unity, and delight.”

- **Simplify it:** What is the title God gives you for this role?

Ex. 1: Courageous Coach.

Ex. 2: Vision Builder

Ex. 3: Playful Peacemaker.

Ask daily: “Is this decision aligned with who God made me to be?”

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## 5. Living Your Calling Now: 3 Clues

Knowing your Calling in this stage of life often emerges at the intersection of:

1. **Burden** – What issue won't leave your heart? What are you willing to suffer or train for?
  2. **Gifting** – What strengths or insights do *honest* people consistently affirm in you?
  3. **Opportunity** – What open door is right in front of you—even if it feels small?
- 

Use these steps in prayer, journaling, and conversation with others to keep clarifying how God uniquely designed and is calling you.

### **REMEMBER: Your Identity Is Already Secure**

You don't work your way into God's favor.

You don't earn your place in His Kingdom.

You lead, you serve, and you multiply because your identity is **\*\*already settled\*\***.

You are a son of God.

You are filled with the Spirit.

You are sealed with the blood of Jesus.

Nothing to prove. Nothing to fear.

Only the freedom to give, love, build, and bless.

### Legacy Is What Happens When You Multiply Your Life

You won't finish strong because you worked harder than other men.

You'll finish strong because you **\*poured out what God put in you.\***

Start with one man.

(Your son.)

(Your neighbor.)

(Your coworker.)

(Your gym buddy.)

Pray with them.

Speak life into them.

Share what God's done in you.

Leave a blessing that outlives you.

That's what it means to multiply.

That's what it means to finish strong.

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\*The "Prayer for Exchange" and "LifeCall Sentence" frameworks are inspired by the teachings of Jamie Winship (*Living Fearless*) and Will Mancini (*Younique: Designing the Life God Dreamed for You*). Used with gratitude and personal adaptation.

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### **Would you like even deeper insight and clarity on your calling from God?**

Our Courageous Calling quiz is specifically designed to do this as it also analyzes the fears that have been holding you back and an action plan that will put you on the right path.

This book was never meant to be the end of your journey — it's just the beginning.

You weren't meant to walk this alone.

You weren't meant to read and then return to isolation.

That's why **\*\*Courageous Calling\*\*** exists.

We've created programs, coaching, and community spaces for men like you — men who want to overcome fear, discover God's purpose, build unshakable brotherhood, and walk in courageous, Spirit-led leadership.

If something in you stirred while reading this book — if the voice of God nudged you — don't ignore it.

Join us. Be trained. Be sharpened. Be transformed.

👉 Learn more and take your next step at:

\*\*[[www.courageouscalling.co](http://www.courageouscalling.co)](<https://www.courageouscalling.co>)\*\*

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Don't finish this book and stop.

Finish this book and start living what it activated in you.

Reflection and Final Challenge

Take a moment.

Breathe.

**You've walked through a battle — not just of knowledge, but of the soul.**

You've faced fear. You've looked at wounds. You've confessed truths and reclaimed strength.

And now you stand on the edge of something new.

**This is your moment.**

Do not go back to numbness.

Do not slip into silence.

Do not let passivity steal what God is awakening in you.

God has called you.

He is not done with you.

He is just getting started.

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The Courageous Creed

I am a man of faith — not fear.

I do not walk in shame. I walk in the light.

I do not perform to prove. I lead with peace and truth.

I reject passivity. I reject numbness.  
I reject silence. I reject isolation.

I was born for a courageous calling.  
To lead my family. To bless others. To battle for what's right.  
To walk with God — fully.

My body is a temple.  
My mind is being renewed.  
My heart is alive with purpose.  
My spirit is led by the Holy Spirit.

I am a son of God—called, chosen, and changed by grace.

Jesus is my Savior.  
The Holy Spirit is my counselor and guarantee.  
My Heavenly Father is my healer.

I will not be silent.  
I will not give up.  
I will rise — again and again — until the day I hear:

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

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### **Your Next Step:**

Let this not be the end of your breakthrough.  
Let this be the beginning of your mission.

If you're ready to keep walking this journey with brothers who are committed to courage—  
join us.

Visit [CourageousCallings.com/book-a-call](https://CourageousCallings.com/book-a-call) or scan the QR code below.

Stand up, brother.  
You've been called.

👉 Visit [[CourageousCallings.com](https://CourageousCallings.com)) and take your next step.

Go in peace,

*Eric Gilbert*

Founder, Courageous Calling

## Appendix: Tools for the Journey

### 1. The Courageous Calling Self-Assessment Quiz

Use this 20-question quiz to discover your current faith level, core fears, and calling archetype. Find it at [CourageousCallings.com/quiz](https://CourageousCallings.com/quiz) or scan the QR code below.

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### 2. Courageous Coaching Pathway

If you're ready to live out your calling, consider coaching or certification.

- **Book a Courageous Call** to explore programs: [CourageousCallings.com/book-a-call](https://CourageousCallings.com/book-a-call)



- **Become a Courageous Coach:** [CourageousCallings.com/contact](https://CourageousCallings.com/contact)




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### 3. Daily Weapons Checklist

Use this tool as a printable habit tracker or journal insert.

#### Morning Reset:

-  Scripture (Belt of Truth)

-  Identity Declaration (Breastplate, Helmet)
-  Breathwork + Body Reset (Shoes, Strength)
-  Prayer + Armor (Shield, Sword)

### **Midday Check-in:**

- 3 Deep Breaths
- “I’m Safe. I’m Led. I’m Here.”
- Quick Scripture

### **Evening Reflection:**

- Gratitude x3
- “How did I obey today?”
- Confession + Prayer

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### **Final Words from the Author**

Brother, thank you for taking this journey. This wasn’t just a book—it was a battle plan. Now, you are equipped for the war ahead. And you know the General to follow.

Stay connected with community and never give up.

And never forget:

"The enemy doesn’t fear a man who talks. He fears a man who trains with others."

I’m proud of you. Let’s rise together.

— Eric Gilbert, Founder of Courageous Calling

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**Stay Connected**  [Faith Over Fear Program](#)