

A P R O P H E T I C G U I D E

UNSHAKABLE

HOW TO PREPARE FOR
UNCERTAIN TIMES

DR. HAL H. SACKS

Unshakable: How to Prepare for Uncertain Times

First Edition, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by Hal H. Sacks, DMin

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided by U.S. copyright law.

Unless otherwise indicated, scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® (NIV). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. Scriptures marked AMP are taken from the Amplified® Bible, Copyright © 2015 by the Lockman Foundation La Habra, CA 90631. All rights reserved. Used by Permission. Scriptures marked AMPC are taken from the Amplified® Bible, Classic Edition, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by the Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Scriptures marked ESV are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scriptures marked (GNT) are from the Good News Translation in Today's English Version – Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission. Scriptures marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation (NLT), Copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

To order additional books:

www.BridgeBuilders.net

www.amazon.com

Published by BridgeBuilders International Leadership Network

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025915671

ISBN: 979-8-218-60980-1 (paperback)

ISBN: 979-8-9996041-0-1 (e-book)

Editorial: Inspira Literary Solutions

Design: Zachariah Levi Jonathan Green

DEDICATION

To Jesus Christ, my Messiah,
and my loving wife, Cheryl

*Anyone who listens to my teaching
and follows it is wise, like a person
who builds a house on solid rock.*

*Though the rain comes in torrents
and the floodwaters rise and
the winds beat against that house,
it won't collapse because
it is built on bedrock.*

*But anyone who hears my teaching
and doesn't obey it is foolish,
like a person who
builds a house on sand.*

*When the rains and floods come
and the winds beat against that house,
it will collapse with a mighty crash*

Matthew 7:24–27 NLT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface ix

SECTION I: THE WAKE-UP CALL

1. The Shaking & the Vision 4

 Are You Ready for What’s Coming?

2. How Did We Get Here? 20

 Reclaiming Truth in an Age of Confusion

3. Return to Me 34

 Restoring the Fear of the Lord

4. Why Your Foundation Matters 46

 The Four Stones Every Unshakable Life Is Built On

SECTION II: HOW TO PREPARE FOR WHAT’S COMING

5. Hearing God’s Voice 64

 Learning to Listen When Everything is Shaking

6. Becoming Unencumbered 78

 The Divine Reset

7. Finding Your Unshakable Purpose 94

 Standing Firm When You Step into Your Assignment

8. Unmasking the Enemy 104

 Exposing Satan’s End-Time Strategy

SECTION III: THE WAY FORWARD

9. Entering God’s Rest. 120

 The Key to Overcoming in Tribulation

10. The Power of Family & Community 130

 Creating Covenant Relationships That Can Endure the Storm

11. Discipling Rebuilders for the Future. 146

 Preparing a Generation to Restore What We’ve Lost

12. Turning the World Right Side Up 162

 How Everyday Believers Can Transform Culture—Everyday

Afterword178

Acknowledgments 188

Notes 190

About the Author 196

PREFACE

This is not just a book. It's a wake-up call.

I didn't write this because I wanted to—I wrote it because I had to. What began as a burden from the Lord turned into a race against unfolding events. While these pages were being written, Israel and Iran went to war. Missiles flew. The U.S. struck Iran's nuclear sites. And for a moment, the world held its breath. It appeared that World War III would break out.

What we used to call “birth pains” are now full contractions. The clock isn't just ticking—it's thundering. I realized this message wasn't just timely. It was late.

There's no more room for spiritual spectators. No more time for halfhearted Christianity or compromise dressed as discernment. The era of “safe” faith is over. The middle ground is disappearing. If we don't choose where we stand, the shaking will choose for us.

God is drawing a line—not to condemn, but to commission. To separate those who watch history from those who shape it. Those who burn with holy fire from those who flicker out in fear.

This book isn't just a survival guide. It's a summons. It's for those who feel the rumble in their spirit and know: God is about to move, and I must be ready.

You are not here by accident. You are not reading this by chance. He is calling you—now.

Let's begin.

SECTION I

THE WAKE-UP CALL

*Once more I will shake not only the
earth but also the heavens...
so that what cannot be shaken
may remain.*

Hebrews 12:26–27

CHAPTER 1

THE SHAKING & THE VISION

Are You Ready for What's Coming?

In the summer of 1970, I stood on the cliffs overlooking a small beach in Costa Mesa, California, a young Jewish filmmaker with a camera on my shoulder. I'd been asked to produce a documentary on what was happening below—thousands of hippies singing Jesus songs, getting baptized in the Pacific Ocean at Pirates Cove. Just another assignment, I thought. Just another California oddity I was looking to capture on film.

As I watched through my lens, something unexpected happened. The scene below wasn't just religious theater. These young people—long-haired, barefoot, many still bearing the marks of hard living—were rejoicing, and profoundly real. They waded into the waves, singing, weeping, and embracing one another as they were baptized. Some had to be carried out of the water, so overcome were they by what they'd experienced.

I was witnessing God's answer to a lost generation that had been shaken to its core. Vietnam had torn the nation apart. Cities burned with racial unrest—nationally beloved leaders were assassinated, and once respected institutions crumbled. Young people who'd grown up in prosperity found themselves adrift in a sea of LSD and other drugs, the "free love" movement, all

ending up in existential despair. Everything their parents had built around them seemed to be collapsing.

But here, at the Pacific Coast, Heaven was responding to Earth's groaning.

That day on the cliffs, I was deeply challenged, marking the beginning of a lifelong journey—a journey that would lead me to encounter Jesus as my Messiah and where I would come to understand the generational patterns that brought us to that point.

That pursuit would take me five decades to grasp fully—a divine cycle that pulses through history. When human structures fail catastrophically, when society reaches a breaking point, when people cry out in desperation, God begins to move. He always has. He always will.

Now, in the later years of my life, I'm watching it unfold once again.

The Evidence of Another Great Shaking

As I write these words in early 2025, the evidence of another great shaking surrounds us. We stand in the midst of unprecedented collapse across every sphere of society—cultural, spiritual, economic, and governmental structures that once seemed permanent are crumbling before our eyes.

Our political landscape has fractured beyond recognition. Tribal divisions make common-sense governance nearly impossible. Leaders are chosen not for wisdom but for their ability to inflame their base. Justice has become selective, applied differently depending on political allegiance or moral view.

It's hard to believe this is the same nation many of us grew up in.

Universities—once bastions of free thought and truth-seeking—have become ideological battlegrounds. Biblical worldviews are not merely challenged but openly mocked. Students are taught what to think, not how to think. Financial markets soar and crash in almost weekly occurrences, and entire nations teeter on the edge of default. The system, once built on trust, now runs on fear and speculation.

The shaking isn't just national, it's global. The world order established after World War II is unraveling. Old alliances fracture while new threats emerge. From Ukraine to the Middle East, from Taiwan to the South China Sea, regional conflicts threaten to ignite wider wars. Nations once considered pillars of stability now tremble from within.

The ground beneath us is no longer steady. We feel it shifting. It's like standing on sinking sand.

The moral foundations are crumbling at breathtaking speed.

What was unthinkable a generation ago is now mandated. What was sacred is now scorned. What protected children now preys upon them.

In our schools, innocence is under assault. Children are sexualized through curriculum that would have been considered pornographic just years ago. Kindergarteners learn about gender fluidity. Middle schoolers are taught to question their biology. Parents who object are labeled bigots.

On our streets, lawlessness reigns. Violent crime surges while prosecutors refuse to prosecute. Shoplifters walk free while shop owners go bankrupt. The elderly are offered death instead

UNSHAKABLE

of care—euthanasia marketed as dignity. Life itself has become negotiable, disposable, a matter of convenience.

In our homes, the family—God’s first institution—lies in ruins. Marriage has been redefined, then discarded altogether. Children grow up without fathers. The birth rate plummets as self becomes the only altar we worship at. So many have forsaken the blessing of children in pursuit of personal freedom.

According to researcher Dr. George Barna, two-thirds of adults in America now reject absolute moral truth.¹ When truth becomes relative, everything becomes permissible. When God’s standards are abandoned, man’s depravity knows no bounds.

Ancient hatreds have returned with modern vengeance. Antisemitism spreads from college campuses to city streets. Synagogues require armed guards. Jewish students hide their identity. The hatred many thought buried has risen from its grave, more brazen than ever.

We haven’t just lost our way—we’ve inverted our values. We call evil good and good evil. We celebrate what God condemns and condemn what God celebrates. We protect predators and persecute protectors.

Meanwhile, the Church in the West is shrinking and retreating.² Congregations that once numbered in the thousands now struggle to fill a few pews.³ Young people flee organized religion, seeking spirituality without submission, experience without truth. Christian influence in public life is not just waning—it’s openly scorned and systematically removed.

Yes, God is still moving—but not at the scale or speed we desperately need. We all know of dynamic churches, ministries, and individuals who are making a real impact—winning people

to Christ, discipling the next generation, and standing boldly for truth. These are bright lights in the darkness, and we thank God for them. But the statistics speak for themselves. Despite these faithful efforts, we are losing the larger cultural war. The next generation is slipping through our fingers. The Church cannot afford to settle for isolated victories—we must rise together with greater urgency, clarity, and commitment. We must do better.

What we're facing is more than cultural decline or institutional weakness. **It's deeper.** This is not merely about shifting trends or moral confusion—we are living in the midst of a spiritual crisis.

Wars and rumors of wars dominate the headlines. Floods, droughts, and famines strike with escalating frequency and intensity, leaving millions in peril. Civil unrest, terrorism, and the rising tide of “horrorism”—acts so brutal they defy comprehension—are fueling fear and destabilizing nations across the globe.

The alarms are sounding. Can we hear them?

The signs are everywhere, yet many remain asleep. What we're seeing is not just political, social, or economic—it's prophetic. In fact, what God revealed to me in a vision decades ago is a warning of what will happen if we do not wake up and turn to Him. That warning now feels imminent.

The Vision That Changed Everything

In 1984, long before anyone was talking about cultural collapse or a coming shaking, God gave me a vision that has marked me ever since.

During a time of prayer, I suddenly seemed no longer in my room. In the vision, I stood gazing out over a desolate landscape

blanketed with collapsed buildings and broken structures. As far as the eye could see, there was vast devastation—heaps of rubble, cracked foundations, and twisted debris. The air was thick with an eerie silence. It reminded me of those haunting images from Hiroshima—total destruction where life once thrived.

But it wasn't just the destruction that gripped me—it was the people. They wandered among the ruins with expressions of utter shock and bewilderment. They had built their lives, their organizations, and their institutions on faulty foundations that couldn't hold up under the shaking.

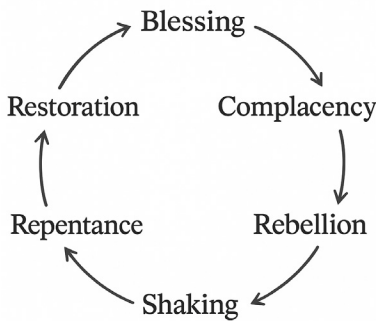
The Lord spoke: "They built on sand, believing it would hold. They chose speed over depth, appearance over substance. Now the shaking reveals what was always true—only what is built on My Word will remain."

"When, Lord?" I asked.

"It has already begun," He said. "But the greater shaking is yet to come."

Recognizing the Divine Pattern

Throughout Scripture, God's pattern remains consistent:



In Judges: For nearly 400 years, Israel repeated this pattern. Whenever the Lord raised up a righteous judge for them, God would use that judge to deliver them...but when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors (see Judges 2:18–19). Seven times they cycled through blessing, rebellion, oppression, crying out, and deliverance. Each generation forgot the lessons of the previous one. Israel would thrive under God’s blessing, then drift into complacency. Complacency led to compromise and disobedience, and rebellion toward God. Then came the shaking—enemies would oppress them, systems would fail, and desperation would mount. In their crisis, they would cry out to God in repentance, and He would restore them.

In Jeremiah: God revealed this pattern once again to an entire nation then facing judgment. The people of Judah, and particularly their leaders, repeatedly violated their covenant with God by worshiping other gods, acting unjustly, and ignoring God’s prophets. In this recurring cycle, God faithfully demonstrated His mercy even in judgment—always leaving a remnant, always providing a path back through repentance. *“Therefore, this is what the Lord says: ‘If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve Me...’”* (Jer. 15:19).

In Israel’s monarchy: From David’s glory to exile in Babylon—the pattern played out over centuries. Solomon’s wisdom gave way to idolatry. Revival under Hezekiah was followed by rebellion under Manasseh. Each generation had to choose.

In the Early Church: Even the New Testament church experienced these cycles. The passion of Pentecost cooled into the lukewarm Laodicea. Paul warned Timothy that *“there will be terrible times in the last days”* (2 Tim. 3:1) as people would have *“a form of godliness but denying its power”* (v. 5).

UNSHAKABLE

This divine pattern reveals three truths:

- Before judgment comes, God gives space for mercy and repentance.
- Shaking is meant to bring awakening, not desolation.
- A godly remnant always emerges to rebuild on truth.

Consider how this pattern played out before the Jesus Movement I witnessed:

America in the 1950s experienced unprecedented blessing—prosperity, global influence, and church attendance at historic highs. But blessing bred complacency. By the early 1960s, that complacency had turned to rebellion. Prayer was expelled from classrooms in 1962.

The sexual revolution torched traditional values. Drug use exploded. Then came the shaking—the Vietnam war claimed 58,000 American lives while the nation watched on television. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was murdered in April 1968, followed by Senator Robert F. Kennedy just two months later. Cities burned after Dr. King's death—Watts, Detroit, Newark, Washington, DC. Police clashed violently with protesters at the Chicago Democratic Convention. On campuses, students burned draft cards, flags, and Bibles while declaring God dead. The National Guard occupied universities. Everything that once seemed unshakable was shaken apart.

It was in the midst of that shaking that God moved. The “Jesus People” Movement wasn't the shaking—it was heaven's response to a generation that had been shaken back to desperation for truth.

The pattern is consistent—blessing, complacency, rebellion, shaking, repentance, and restoration. Yet shaking never comes without God first sounding the alarm. The Lord sends prophets not only to warn but to provide instruction on how to prepare. Simply knowing a tsunami is coming is not enough. Jesus spoke of two builders—one wise, one foolish. Both faced the same storm. Only one house stood unshaken.

This is why the shaking is actually mercy. As Hebrews 12:27 reveals, God shakes “*so that what cannot be shaken may remain.*” He allows the breaking to produce blessing. He permits the collapse of false foundations, so we’ll build on true ones.

More Than Historical Cycles

God’s patterns of shaking aren’t random—they follow a divine rhythm so consistent that even secular historians have recognized it. In their landmark book *The Fourth Turning*, William Strauss and Neil Howe documented what believers have long understood: history moves in cycles.

These historians discovered that societies move through four distinct seasons roughly every 80–100 years—a saeculum, the span of a long human life:

1. **“The High”**—confident rebuilding after crisis, society united around shared purpose
2. **“The Awakening”**—spiritual renewal stirs, younger generations question the established order
3. **“The Unraveling”**—institutions weaken, cynicism grows, individualism erodes unity
4. **“The Crisis” (Fourth Turning)**—survival feels threatened, complete transformation follows

America has experienced three previous Fourth Turnings:

- **The American Revolution** (1770s–1780s)
- **The Civil War** (1860s)
- **The Great Depression/World War II** (1929–1945)

Each brought total transformation. Strauss and Howe predicted our next Fourth Turning would begin around the mid-2000s. They were right.

But here's what secular historians miss: behind every cultural shaking is a divine purpose. What they call generational patterns, the Bible reveals as God's redemptive rhythm. Their "Awakening" phase often coincides with what the Church recognizes as revival. Their "Crisis" phase matches biblical shaking that removes what cannot remain.

Most people witness only one Fourth Turning in their lifetime. By God's providence, I've observed this pattern firsthand—from "The Awakening" of the '60s and '70s that birthed the Jesus Movement, through "The Unraveling" of institutions, to today's emerging Fourth Turning. This rare perspective reveals something profound: we're not merely repeating cycles but moving in a spiral. Each turning intensifies; each crisis is more global. Technology has compressed time; what took decades now happens in years. Paul warned that *"these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come"* (1 Cor. 10:11).

Jesus Himself described escalating birth pains in Matthew 24—each wave more intense than the last, all pointing toward His return. We're accelerating toward that culmination, when every shaking gives way to the eternal Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Understanding these patterns is spiritually urgent. If we're in a Fourth Turning, crisis precedes transformation. The question is: Will we recognize this divine moment and position ourselves for God's redemptive work?

The Prophetic Convergence

I recently joined prophetic leaders from thirty-two nations for a three-day gathering in Dallas, Texas. The voices around the table confirmed what I've been sensing: a greater shaking is coming to America and the world. These prophetic voices proclaim that the coming shaking will be more intense and expansive than most of us are expecting—and that out of this upheaval, a Greater Spiritual Awakening will arise, triggering a massive harvest more abundant than the Church is currently prepared to disciple.

You and I are stepping into uncharted spiritual territory—an era unlike anything we've ever walked through in our lifetime. This will not be easy. The coming waves of disruption will test even mature believers. But our Mighty God is calling us to *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and His glory appears over you”* (Isa. 60:1-2).

This is not only a corporate word—it is a personal summons. I believe the Lord is issuing a clarion call:

“If you have ears to hear, get ready!”

You need only to listen to the news to hear it—the headlines are crying out that we're entering perilous, chaotic, and unprecedented times. The upheaval around us is more than judgment—it's mercy. Like birth pangs increasing in frequency and intensity, these disruptions signal that something new is on the horizon. They are God's way of awakening us to realign with His purposes.

UNSHAKABLE

“We cry out for revival—but do we understand what we’re asking for?”

People often ask me, “Some prophets say a great shaking is coming. Others say a massive revival is coming. Which is right?” I say—both. The shaking and the outpouring are not opposites—they are partners. The shaking clears the ground. The outpouring fills it.

Revival is coming, yes. But so is a tumultuous shaking. We must prepare for both.

As Hebrews 12:26–27 declares: *“Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens...so that what cannot be shaken may remain.”* Through these divine disruptions, God strips away what is temporary so that what is eternal can take root. He’s not just calling us to be attentive, but to hear what He’s saying and obey, positioning ourselves for the restoration He promises (see 2 Chr. 7:13–14).

“When God comes, He comes in holiness. And His holiness shakes everything that stands in opposition to Him...”

The Moment of Decision

What will be your response? History reveals a powerful pattern: after every great national crisis (shaking) comes a window of opportunity for renewal and reformation. That same opportunity stands before us now.

This book is not a message of doom—it is a call to destiny. In the midst of shaking, God is summoning His people to rise in His strength and stand unshakable. It’s not just about weathering the storm—it’s about being Spirit-led into revival and rebuilding new, godly foundations that will stand firm in the days to come.

Great shaking often precedes great transformation. In such times, foundations are tested—what is built on sand will fall, but what is anchored to the Rock of God’s Word will endure. And from what endures, we are given a divine opportunity: to rebuild, to reform, and to restore according to God’s original design. How will you rebuild?

Standing on those cliffs in 1970, I faced a choice that would cost me everything. I could remain a detached observer, filming from above, or I could set down my camera and join what God was doing. But for a Jewish man, embracing Jesus meant exile from family, community, identity itself. That choice—between comfortable distance and costly discipleship—confronts us all when Heaven breaks into our carefully controlled world.

The shaking isn’t meant to destroy you—it’s meant to free you from everything that’s not eternal. It’s an invitation to build your life, your family, and community on the only foundation that will stand: Jesus Christ.

This book is a wake-up call to the church. This will require courage, a new mind-set, and flexibility. We cannot assume that the way we have done things in the past will work in this new season.

In the chapters ahead, we’ll explore how to:

- **Build your life on four unshakable foundation stones** that will stand when everything else collapses—the bedrock relationships God designed to sustain you through any storm.
- **Build authentic spiritual community** that stands together when everything else fragments—covenant relationships that strengthen, support, and sharpen you for what’s ahead.

UNSHAKABLE

- **Hear God's voice with crystal clarity** when all other voices scream for your attention—learning to discern divine direction in the midst of chaos.
- **Prepare the next generations to stand unshakable**—equipping them with bold faith and spiritual authority for the days ahead.
- **Discover and step into your Kingdom assignment** for this historic hour—positioned and empowered to transform your sphere of influence.

You will learn how to become unentangled with the world and stand strong in every storm. You will emerge knowing how to position yourself to be part of God's redemptive work in this critical hour.

Becoming Unshakable—Your Action Step

At the end of each chapter, you'll find reflective questions and prayers to help you apply these truths. The journey to becoming unshakable begins with honest assessment.

Before you turn the page, ask yourself: What has God already been speaking to me about that I've been hesitant to face? What foundations in my life need strengthening? Where have I built on sand instead of rock?

Write it down. Date it. This is your starting point.

The shaking has begun. The vision is unfolding.

The time to prepare is now.

*This is what the Lord says:
“Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths, ask where the
good way is, and walk in it.”*

Jeremiah 6:16

CHAPTER 2

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Reclaiming Truth in an Age of Confusion

June 1962.

Twenty-five second-graders bow their heads in a New York classroom: “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country.”

It’s the last time this prayer will be spoken in an American public school.

At first, the changes seemed small. We removed prayer. Then the Ten Commandments. Then God altogether.

2008. Wall Street collapsed. Eight million jobs vanished.⁴ Three million homes foreclosed.⁵ The bankers who caused it received \$700 billion in bailouts⁶ and million-dollar bonuses.⁷

Prison sentences: zero.⁸

2011. The U.S. government armed Mexican cartels—2,000 guns “lost.”⁹ A Border Agent killed.¹⁰ The Attorney General held in contempt of Congress.¹¹

Punishment: none.¹²

UNSHAKABLE

2019. New York legalized abortion up to the time of birth.¹³
They lit One World Trade Center pink to celebrate.¹⁴

2020-2021. Cities burned—Minneapolis. Portland. Seattle. Two billion in damages.¹⁵ Dozens dead.¹⁶ Congress insider-traded on pandemic intel.¹⁷ Churches fined \$100,000 for singing outside.¹⁸ Strip clubs and casinos stayed open.¹⁹

Parents escorted out of school board meetings by police for opposing pornographic books.²⁰

Drag shows for kindergarteners.²¹

Teachers fired for stating biological facts.²²

Children chemically castrated. Surgically mutilated.²³

Fentanyl flooding into our country.²⁴

Babies born alive during abortions left to die.²⁵

Good is evil. Evil is good.

How did we get here?

Not overnight. Not by accident. But through a thousand small surrenders.

We didn't just wake up one day in a nation turned upside down. The disintegration began in the heart—when truth no longer seemed necessary, and God no longer felt real. I remember what it looked like in my own generation, when the foundations first started to crack.

Hippies lined the streets—barefoot, long-haired, unbathed, homeless, and aimless. They sought meaning in Eastern mysticism and Marxist ideology, numbing their pain with whatever drugs they could find.

It was more than rebellion. It was a generation crying out for something real, something true, something their parents' empty religion couldn't provide. They rejected the system. But in rejecting it, they lost their bearings.

Today, we're that generation's children and grandchildren. The confusion has evolved, but the ache remains. We don't see flower children on street corners—we see gender-confused children in classrooms. We don't have hippie communes—we have online tribes bound by shared delusions. We traded acid trips for hormone trips. Different symptoms. Same disease.

But this time, we're not victims of deception. We're willing participants. We chose comfort over conviction, relevance over righteousness, acceptance over truth. And we called our rebellion "progress."

In Chapter One, we examined the shaking around us. But to become truly unshakable, we must understand not just what is happening, but why. We must name the sickness before we can apply the cure.

All Heaven is calling the Church to account—not for what the world has done, but for what we have allowed. This isn't just cultural collapse. It's a divine disruption designed to awaken a sleeping Church.

The Lord is revealing foundations that cannot stand and calling us to choose. Will we continue limping between cultural compromise and biblical truth? Or will we finally decide whom we will serve?

The Great Exchange: A Culture Drifting from God

Romans gives us a devastatingly clear diagnosis of how civilizations fall:

For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him...their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator (v. 1:21, 25).

This decline is more than a slow moral slide. It is a deliberate exchange of truth for a lie.

In 2021, Byron “Tanner” Cross stood before his school board in Virginia. A soft-spoken elementary teacher, he addressed them with conviction but not anger: “I love all of my students, but I will never lie to them regardless of the consequences. I cannot affirm that a biological boy can be a girl and vice versa.” Within days, he was suspended.

The story made national headlines—not because Cross was inflammatory, but because he refused to exchange truth for a lie. He faced what every believer now faces: the cost of refusing the exchange.

This exchange happens in stages. Watch the progression: First comes ungratefulness—forgetting God as the source. Then pride—elevating human wisdom above divine truth. Then moral confusion—the blurring of right and wrong. Finally, celebration of sin—calling evil good and good evil.

I’ve watched this pattern unfold in my lifetime. In the 1960s, we removed prayer from schools. In the 1970s, we legalized the killing of the unborn. In the 1980s and ’90s, we redefined family.

In the 2000s, we redefined marriage. Today, we're redefining what it means to be male and female.

Each stage prepared the way for the next. Each compromise made the next one easier. Until we arrived here—where a teacher can be fired for stating biological reality, where a father is arrested for protecting his daughter, where good men die defending property while their killers walk free.

We are watching Isaiah 5:20 unfold in real time: *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.”*

The Near Loss of a Biblical Worldview

At the heart of this cultural crisis is a worldview crisis. We've lost the fear of the Lord.

When a nation stops trembling before God, it starts bowing to idols. When we cease to revere His holiness, we lose the ability to recognize evil. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (see Prov. 9:10)—and when we abandon that holy fear, foolishness rushes in to fill the void. This is why a teacher can read pornography to children while parents who protest are arrested. We've lost our spiritual compass—the very thing that tells us which way is up.

A biblical worldview is rooted in the awe and reverence of Almighty God—acknowledging Him as the Creator of all things, Scripture as the infallible and absolute truth, and Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It upholds the immeasurable worth of every human life, the sacred covenant of marriage, and the unchanging moral order established by God.

According to researcher Dr. George Barna, only 4% of Americans hold a biblical worldview today.²⁶ Only 2% of millennials.²⁷ Think about that—98 out of 100 young adults have exchanged Scripture for social media, truth for feelings, Christ for culture.

How did we lose our biblical foundations? I believe there are three core failures:

First, we failed to live the Great Commission.

We were called to take the reality of Christ into every part of life—our homes, our schools, our workplaces—but instead, we kept the gospel inside church walls. Jesus said, *“Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples”* (Matt. 28:19–20 GNT). Sadly, we’ve preached inside our churches but remained silent in the marketplace. We’ve shared our faith on Sundays but lived like everyone else Monday through Saturday.

Second, we have denied the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord promises, *“But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth”* (Acts 1:8 AMPC). We’ve neglected this gift and attempted to live the Christian life through human effort, creating a powerless religion that couldn’t transform a heart, much less a culture.

Third, we’ve failed to disciple the next generation with truth.

We’ve outsourced their spiritual formation to schools that taught them they were cosmic accidents, to media that shaped their values, and to peers who shared their confusion. We gave them activities, but not discipleship. Entertainment, but neglected to give them an encounter with God.

This silence hasn't happened in a vacuum. As culture grew louder, many church leaders grew quieter—uncertain how to respond, or afraid of the cost.

A recent Barna survey revealed that nearly 50% of pastors hesitate to speak on moral issues from the pulpit due to fear of offending their congregation or losing attendance.²⁸

Yet the burden of discipleship doesn't rest on church leaders alone. Parents are called to be truth-bearers in their homes. In a world where confusion reigns, our children need clarity—not just in church settings, but around the dinner table. They need to hear and see what it looks like to love God's Word, to stand for truth, and to walk in courage and compassion.

This is not a spectator moment. Every believer has a part to play. We are all called to share the good news, walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, and disciple the next generation, whether it be our own children or those the Lord puts in our path.

The Rise of Cultural Idols

Like Israel in the days of Elijah, we have bowed to Baal. The forms may differ, but the spiritual reality remains the same. God is exposing these false altars and calling His people to confront what they've tolerated for too long. The spirit of Baal is alive and active today, offering counterfeit fire, false identity, and fruitless worship. It wears many faces—idols that have infiltrated our culture, our churches, and even our hearts.

The Idol of Self

Expressive individualism: The belief that personal authenticity and self-expression are the highest good, making individual desires the ultimate authority. “Follow your heart. Do what

makes you happy.” This form of reverence prioritizes personal fulfillment over divine calling and elevates personal feelings and gain above both God’s purpose and His kingdom rule (see 2 Tim. 3:1–2, 4).

The Idol of Pleasure

Hedonism: The pursuit of physical and emotional gratification as life’s primary purpose. A culture obsessed with pleasure but starved for real love. What was once sacred has become casually shared, what was once private has become shamelessly public, and what was once shocking has become celebrated. This includes sexual immorality and the worship of comfort and convenience (see Eph. 5:3–5; 1 Thess. 4:3–5; Heb. 13:4).

The Idol of Wealth

Materialism and consumerism: Finding identity and security in possessions rather than in God’s provision. Accumulating more things while becoming more empty. Our identity has become tied to consumption rather than character, our value measured by possessions rather than purpose (see Matt. 6:19–21, 24; Rev. 3:17).

The Idol of Power

Control and dominance as savior: The longing to be in charge—to shape outcomes, direct people, and secure our version of the future—can quietly become a form of worship. Whether in relationships, organizations, ministries, or culture, the obsession with influence and authority often masks a deeper mistrust in God’s leadership (see Ps. 146:3; John 18:36). Power, in itself, is not evil. But when it becomes the means by which we try to secure identity, impose our will, or protect ourselves from uncertainty, it replaces dependence on the Holy Spirit.

A Call to Confront What's Broken

We are not the first generation to lose our way. But every generation is faced with a choice: remain in disobedience or respond to God's truth.

In 1 Kings 18, Israel faced a defining moment. For years, they had tried to worship both Yahweh and Baal—keeping one foot in covenant with God while chasing after cultural idols. A devastating drought had gripped the land—the physical manifestation of their spiritual compromise.

On Mount Carmel, the prophet Elijah confronted 450 prophets of Baal and a nation caught between two worlds. His question pierces through the centuries: *“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him”* (1 Kings 18:21).

The Hebrew word for “waver” literally means “to limp along.” Picture someone trying to walk on two different paths simultaneously—hobbling, unstable, making no real progress. This was Israel's condition. Today, this is our condition.

Before fire fell from Heaven that day, Elijah did something crucial: he rebuilt the altar of the Lord. Stone by stone. Twelve stones for twelve tribes—restoring their covenant identity. The fire didn't fall on a compromised altar. It fell on a restored one.

This is our Mount Carmel moment. We cannot be politically correct and biblically faithful. We cannot serve cultural acceptance and Kingdom advance. We cannot rebuild on the same crumbling foundation.

The broken altars of our generation lie before us:

- the broken altar of Family, where prayer and devotion once rose daily
- the broken altar of Truth, where God's Word was the final authority
- the broken altar of Worship, where His presence was pursued above all else

The Lord is grieving over these ruins. But if we rebuild—He will return with fire!

Truth Still Stands

Here's what the enemy doesn't want you to know: truth hasn't moved. It still stands—unchanged, unshaken, and unstoppable.

"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever" (Isa. 40:8). Truth is not just a principle. It is a person. And He is speaking again.

Culture shifts. Opinions change. Kingdoms rise and fall. But God's truth remains unchanging. Marriage is still between one man and one woman. Life is still sacred from conception to natural death. Identity is still found in Christ, not in our desires. Salvation is still through Jesus alone.

The question isn't whether truth will survive—it will. The question is whether we will stand on it when the cost keeps rising.

Revival will never come through a diluted gospel. It comes through exalting God's holiness alongside His love. It requires

repentance, not just inspiration. It demands the cross, not just the crown.

We got here one compromise at a time—by trading truth for convenience, reverence for relevance, discipleship for entertainment. But we don't have to stay here. The ruins can be rebuilt. The altars can be restored. And the fire can fall again—on hearts that once more stand in awe and tremble before a holy God.

Reflective Questions:

1. **The Great Exchange:** Where have you personally exchanged God's truth for cultural lies? What "exchange" has cost you the most spiritually?
2. **The Loss of Biblical Worldview:** Of the three areas discussed in this chapter that are vital to preserving a biblical worldview—living out the Great Commission, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, and discipling the next generation—which have you tended to overlook or neglect the most in your own life? What specific step will you take this week to strengthen that area so your life more fully reflects a biblical worldview?
3. **The Rise of Cultural Idols:** Of the four idol categories (self, pleasure, wealth, power), which has the strongest pull in your life? What would it look like to tear down that altar?
4. **Truth Still Stands:** What unchanging truth from God's Word do you need to stand on when everything around you is shaking? How will you rebuild the altar of truth in your own life this week?

Pause and Pray:

Dear Lord, I humble myself before You today and ask for Your Spirit of truth to search my heart. Forgive me for the times I have compromised, remained silent, or wavered between truth and deception. I want to be fully Yours—undivided in my loyalty and wholehearted in my worship.

Give me the courage to tear down every idol in my life that competes with my affection for You. Restore the altar of truth in my heart. Give me the strength to stand firm in You and speak Your truth with love and boldness. Let my life be a light to those walking in darkness. Make me a beacon of clarity, conviction, and compassion. I choose to follow You alone.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*“Ever since the days of your ancestors,
you have scorned my decrees
and failed to obey them.
Now return to me, and I will return to you,”
says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.
But you ask,
“How can we return when
we have never gone away?”*

Malachi 3:7–8 NLT

CHAPTER 3

RETURN TO ME

Restoring the Fear of the Lord

But you ask, “How can we return when we have never gone away?”

There it is—the most dangerous deception of our age. We still have churches on every corner. We still print “In God We Trust” on our money. We still call ourselves a Christian nation. But God sees past our religious veneer to the heart of our rebellion.

Like Israel before us, we’ve mastered the art of performance instead of presence, of ritual without relationship. We haven’t physically abandoned God’s house—we’ve just removed His lordship. We haven’t stopped using His name—we’ve just stopped fearing it.

Jim Bakker discovered this truth the hard way. In the late 1980s, his televangelist empire came crashing down. Convicted on multiple counts of fraud and imprisoned, his secret life of financial mismanagement and sexual sin was exposed for the world to see. But years later, while serving his sentence, he made a startling confession to author and minister John Bever: “John, this prison wasn’t God’s judgment on my life—it was His mercy. If I had kept living the way I was, I would have ended up in hell forever and ever.”

Jim said he had always loved Jesus. But then he added something even more sobering: “I just didn’t fear God.”

“There are millions of Americans just like me,” he continued. “They love Jesus, but they have no fear of the Lord.”

In that prison cell, Jim Bakker finally understood what we’ve forgotten: loving Jesus without fearing God is an incomplete understanding of our relationship with the Father. It’s the difference between sentiment and surrender, between religious activity and true relationship.

This isn’t mere intellectual blindness. It’s spiritual delusion. We’ve drifted so gradually, compromised so subtly, that we don’t even recognize how far we’ve strayed. And now, surrounded by the collapse of everything we’ve built apart from Him, we hear Heaven’s invitation: “*Return to me, and I will return to you*” (see Zech. 1:3; Mal. 3:7).

This is the cry of God’s heart—not condemnation, but invitation. He is not asking for performance, but proximity. He is not looking for religious routine, but for relationship.

But returning requires something we’ve largely lost—the fear of the Lord.

Love without Fear: The Fatal Flaw

Jim Bakker’s prison revelation was not just a warning—it was a mercy-filled invitation back to what we were made for: a relationship with God that holds both love and holy fear in beautiful tension.

God longs for intimacy with us—deep, personal communion with His children. And yet, He also invites us to draw near

with reverence, to recognize His majesty and holiness. This is the God whose presence made Moses remove his sandals, whose glory filled the temple with smoke, and whose voice still speaks with power and purity today.

To truly know Him is to encounter both His tender embrace and His consuming fire. We were never meant to separate the two. His love draws us close, and His holiness transforms us in that closeness.

This isn't theological theory—it's the path to becoming unshakable. The fear of the Lord doesn't drive us away; it draws us in deeper. It's what moved Moses to lead a nation, and what can move us to stand firm, walk humbly, and live wholly for Him.

Because here's what Jim learned in that prison cell: you can't truly love someone you don't respect. You can't have intimacy without reverence. And you can't know God—really know Him—while ignoring half of who He is. Only the Holy Spirit can restore what we've lost. He alone can rekindle holy awe in hearts grown cold. And when He does, something shifts—obedience stops feeling like duty and becomes delight. Those who truly see Him can't help but follow. Those who fear Him find themselves running to Him, not from Him. It's the paradox Moses discovered at the burning bush: the same God who says "*Do not come closer*" then invites us to speak face to face.

Understanding the Fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord is not terror—it is reverence. It is not about cowering but about awe. It is the posture of the heart that recognizes God’s holiness, His authority, and His right to rule our lives. Scripture makes this clear:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
The fear of the Lord leads to life. The friendship of
the Lord is for those who fear him* (Proverbs 9:10;
19:23; Psalm 25:14 ESV).

When we lose the fear of the Lord, we lose our way. We drift into compromise, complacency, and confusion. But when we return to it, everything changes. The fear of the Lord anchors us when the world shakes. It purifies motives, aligns priorities, and brings life-giving conviction.

I saw this transformation firsthand on that California beach in 1970. Those young people emerging from the waters weren’t just wet—they were weeping. Not from sorrow, but from encountering the Holy One. They had traded counterfeit freedom for holy fear, and in that exchange found true life. What I didn’t fully understand then was that I was witnessing an entire generation learning to tremble before God again.

What Holy Fear Looks Like

But what does it look like when someone truly encounters the fear of the Lord? Moses shows us. He was a man on the run from his past, from his calling, from his identity. Forty years in the wilderness had worn away his confidence. He was content to remain hidden, tending sheep in obscurity. Until the day Heaven interrupted Earth with fire.

The bush burned but was not consumed. Moses stopped in his tracks. This wasn't normal. This was holy. Fear gripped him—not the kind that drives you away, but the kind that demands your full attention.

When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, “Moses! Moses!” “Here I am!” Moses replied. “Do not come any closer,” the LORD warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground” (Exodus 3:4–5 NLT).

In that moment, Moses realized he was not just witnessing a miracle; he was standing in the presence of the Almighty. He covered his face, afraid to look at God. But this fear didn't push him away. It drew him in. The burning bush was not a spectacle—it was an invitation.

Before Moses could lead a nation, he had to bow before a holy God. Before he could stand before Pharaoh, he had to fall before the flame. That's what the fear of the Lord does—it arrests us, awakens us, and prepares us for the sacred assignments we were born to fulfill.

When Nations Remember How to Tremble

What happens when an entire people rediscover the fear of the Lord? Nineveh shows us.

When Jonah declared, *“Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown,”* this violent pagan city did the unthinkable (see Jonah 3:4). From the king to the common people, they fasted, wore sackcloth, and cried out to God for mercy.

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened (Jonah 3:10).

They understood what many in the modern Church have forgotten: the fear of the Lord leads to repentance, and repentance leads to mercy. If God responded with mercy to Nineveh, how much more will He do for His people in any nation that humbles itself in holy fear?

God's Hidden Work in the Shaking

In this hour, God is exposing what is hidden—not to shame, but to heal. Leaders have fallen. Hidden sin has come to light. This is not Satan attacking; it is God purifying. As Hebrews 12:26–27 declares: “*Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens...*,” exposing everything that has been built on a wrong foundation.

We are in such a time of divine disruption. And it demands not just our attention, but our repentance.

September 11, 2001, shook our nation to its core. For a moment, churches filled and prayer arose. The fear of the Lord briefly returned. But the urgency faded. We cannot wait for another disaster to turn our hearts toward God. The shaking has already begun.

Just as the social upheaval of the 1960s prepared hearts for the Jesus Movement, today's shaking is preparing a generation for encounter. But will we recognize the moment? Will we return to holy fear before it's too late?

The Power of Corporate Repentance

Throughout history, when God's people have returned to Him with genuine repentance, revival has followed. Each awakening began the same way, with hearts learning to tremble before God again.

The Welsh Revival (1904–1905)

Wales had grown spiritually cold. Churches were formal and lifeless. Then Evan Roberts, a young coal miner, began preaching a simple message:

- Confess all known sin
- Remove anything doubtful from your life
- Obey the Holy Spirit promptly
- Publicly confess Christ

As people responded, services lasted for hours, filled with weeping and reconciliation. The results were staggering. Over 100,000 people were converted within a year, transforming entire communities. Crime rates plummeted as hearts were changed. Taverns emptied as men found a different kind of spirit to fill them. The transformation was so complete that even the pit ponies in the coal mines became confused—they no longer understood their handlers' commands because the miners had stopped cursing!

The Hebrides Revival (1949–1952)

Two elderly sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith, grieved over their spiritually dead church and community. Peggy was blind and Christine nearly bent over with arthritis. Yet night after night until dawn, they cried out to God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to their island.

God answered. Conviction swept the region. People were found kneeling along roadsides, crying out for mercy. Duncan Campbell, the Scottish evangelist who came to preach during the revival, reported that 90% of converts never attended a meeting; they were saved in fields, on roads, in their homes. The fear of God had fallen on an entire community.

The Jesus Movement (1960s–1970s)

What I witnessed from those cliffs wasn't organized or orchestrated. Like Wales and the Hebrides, it began with broken people encountering a holy God. But this time, it was a generation that had tried everything else—drugs, free love, Eastern mysticism, revolution. When they finally encountered the fear of the Lord, they didn't just change—they were transformed.

Standing on those cliffs in 1970, camera still rolling, I watched what holy fear produces. These weren't religious professionals conducting a service; they were prodigals coming home. As each person emerged from the Pacific waters, you could see it in their eyes: reverent awe mixed with overwhelming joy. They had encountered the Holy One, and they would never be the same.

The Pattern Is Always the Same

Whether in ancient Nineveh, turn-of-the-century Wales, or the beaches of California, God's pattern remains consistent: shaking leads to desperation. Desperation leads to encounter. Encounter produces holy fear. Holy fear births true repentance. And repentance releases revival.

We see this pattern even in the Early Church. When the apostles faced persecution in Acts 4, they didn't pray for easier circumstances. They prayed for boldness. And God answered.

“When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31 NKJV). John Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed preacher of the Early Church, saw the connection: “This was the proof that they were heard, and of His visitation... They gained increased boldness.” He understood that when God’s people return to Him in holy fear and desperate prayer, He doesn’t just forgive—He fills. He doesn’t just restore—He empowers.

The same Spirit that shook that prayer meeting wants to shake our generation. But it begins where it always begins: with the fear of the Lord drawing us to our knees.

Living Ready for What’s Coming

Like Noah, we are being called to prepare before the storm fully hits. Noah lived in a time of great wickedness. Yet when God warned him of what was to come, Noah obeyed. He feared the Lord more than man. He built the ark even though the skies were clear. His obedience saved his family and preserved a future. That kind of obedience is only possible when we walk in the fear of the Lord. What does this look like practically?

- Remember who He is—majestic and holy.
- Let reverence lead you into relationship, not away.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to restore holy awe.
- Keep intimacy rooted in obedience.

But it all begins with repentance—a change of heart, mind, and actions. It begins with reverence. It begins with returning.

When God shakes us, He's not just trying to reform the old, He's preparing us to receive the new. Jesus warned that "*new wine must be poured into new wineskins*" (see Luke 5:38). The shaking removes what cannot contain His purposes. The fear of the Lord doesn't just adjust us; it transforms us, creating in us the capacity to carry what God wants to pour out.

When people truly encounter the fear of the Lord, they don't try to reform the old; they become new. They don't adjust their lifestyle; they abandon it for something infinitely better. The fear of the Lord doesn't paralyze; it propels believers into their communities with the gospel, fearlessly turning the world right-side up.

Your Moment of Decision

We stand at a crossroads. The path of complacency is wide and easy—but it leads to collapse. The path of repentance is narrow—but it leads to revival.

Will we wring our hands over the shaking, or return to the One who holds the world in His hands? Will we keep building on sand, or return to the Rock?

"*Return to Me*," says the Lord. This is not condemnation; it's invitation. He's not asking for performance, but proximity. Not religious routine, but relationship.

The same holy fear that gripped Moses at the burning bush waits to arrest us, awaken us, and send us out in power. The same fire that fell in Wales and the Hebrides is available today. The same Spirit that transformed broken hippies into bold witnesses wants to transform our generation.

But first, we must choose.

Let us walk in holy fear. Let us return while there is still time.

Reflective Questions:

1. Where in your life have you lost the fear of the Lord, and how has that affected your choices, priorities, or convictions?
2. Are there areas where the Holy Spirit is exposing what's hidden, not to shame, but to heal? Will you allow Him full access?
3. Like Moses at the burning bush, is God calling you to remove your shoes, to lay something down, because you're standing on holy ground?
4. What sacred assignment might God be preparing you for, and how is He using this season of shaking to ready your heart?
5. What would it look like for you to begin rebuilding today, with reverence, obedience, and faith?

Pause and Pray:

Lord, awaken my heart to holy fear. Not fear that runs or hides, but awe that draws near and bows low. Forgive me for every place where I've grown casual with what is sacred. I take off my shoes. I choose the narrow road. I return to You with all my heart.

Shake what must be shaken in me, so that what cannot be shaken will remain. Restore in me the reverence that brings wisdom, the humility that brings life, and the intimacy that brings Your voice near. I want to walk in holy fear, anchored, surrendered, and ready for all You've called me to build.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*They are like a man building a house,
who dug deep and laid the foundation
on rock. When a flood came, the torrent
struck that house but could not shake it,
because it was well built.*

Luke 6:48

CHAPTER 4

WHY YOUR FOUNDATION MATTERS

The Four Stones
Every Unshakable Life Is Built On

June 24, 2021. 1:22 a.m.

In the darkness of a Miami night, families slept peacefully in Champlain Towers South—a 12-story beachfront condominium that had stood for forty years. Children dreamed in their beds. Parents rested from another day. Grandparents visited for the summer.

Then, without warning, the unthinkable.

A security camera captured what the human mind struggles to process: in less than twelve seconds, the center of the building simply vanished. One moment, there were homes. The next, there was rubble. The northeast section teetered, then followed into oblivion.

Ninety-eight souls—gone.

In the days that followed, as rescuers searched desperately for survivors, a sickening truth emerged. This wasn't a sudden catastrophe. This was a slow-motion disaster forty years in the making.

Engineers had warned. A 2018 report documented “major structural damage” to the concrete slab beneath the pool deck. Water had been seeping in for decades, corroding the steel reinforcements. Cracks spider-webbed through support columns. The parking garage showed signs of distress.

But repairs were expensive. Meetings were contentious. Decisions were delayed. Meanwhile, residents enjoyed their ocean views, hosted family gatherings, lived their lives—never knowing they were dwelling on a foundation that was already failing. Everything continued as usual. Until the day it didn’t.

The building didn’t fall because of a hurricane or earthquake. It fell because of what was hidden beneath—weaknesses that compounded year after year until that terrible moment when the structure could no longer support the weight it carried.

The spiritual parallel stops me cold.

How many of us are living like those residents? Our lives look stable from the outside—successful careers, growing ministries, happy families. We post the highlights on social media. We receive congratulations. We enjoy the view.

But what about the foundation? What about those hairline cracks we’ve noticed but ignored? The compromises we’ve rationalized? The warning signs we’ve postponed addressing because the cost of repair seems too high?

Jesus knew something about foundations that our generation has forgotten: what’s hidden beneath determines what stands above. In an age of instant everything, we’ve become master builders of facades while neglecting the deep, patient work of laying proper foundations.

Jesus promises that *“Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock”* (Matt. 7:24–25). Notice He doesn’t promise the storm won’t come. He promises that when it does, what’s built on the Rock will remain standing.

The prophetic vision I shared in Chapter 1—a landscape of collapsed structures and scattered ruins—has haunted me ever since. But as I looked closer, the Lord showed me something I hadn’t fully grasped. There was a common cause behind every collapse. Each building had crumbled because of the condition of four foundation stones.

I could see that some builders had started well but then got off track. They began with great precision, but impatience drove them to skip steps. Others were ambitious, so driven to expand that they built beyond the boundaries of what their foundation could support. They constructed outwardly impressive lives, ministries, businesses, families—but beneath the surface were foundational cracks; they were destined to fall. As Scripture warns, *“Whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ...But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done”* (1 Cor. 3:10–11, 13 NLT).

The Lord said to me, “My people have built carelessly. They’ve adorned the walls but neglected their foundations. And now, the shaking has revealed what is truly secure—and what is not.” Jeremiah 2:13 says, *“For my people have committed two sins: They have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”*

They built in their wisdom to sustain their own lives, using their own design and ignoring the Lord's wisdom and provision, the fountain of living water.

The Foundation God Requires

In my vision, I saw four immovable stones, laid side by side—each one a sacred and strategic relationship, meant to anchor our lives and make us unshakable in the storms of life.

These were not abstract spiritual ideas. They were deeply practical, reflecting God's blueprint for how we're meant to live and relate:

1. Our Relationship with Father God: Knowing and Being Known By Him

The first foundation stone was radiant, glowing with light, but fractured or missing in many lives. The Lord whispered, "This is where everything begins. If this one fails, all the others are unsustainable and will crack in time." Many believers today are more shaped by the voices of culture than the voice of their Creator. Jesus confronted this very issue: "*They loved human praise more than praise from God*" (John 12:43).

Is that true of us? Are we chasing influence and relevance more than God? If so, we may soon find we've built a life He never authored.

Several years ago, a man came to me, broken and desperate. Once a high-profile leader in the Christian community, the owner of a multi-million-dollar company, he had let success and ambition get in the way of his relationships with God and family. He failed to notice the warning signs of fractured relationships and chronic stress that eventually drove him to ungodly addictive

behaviors. Now he was on the verge of losing everything. Jesus asks a sobering question: “*What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?*” (Mark 8:36 ESV).

Sadly, this was not the story of just one man. I’ve spent time with dozens who’ve walked down this same self-destructive path. But thankfully, we serve a God of redemption. I can say that every one of these men rebuilt their lives on a godly foundation. They were restored to the Lord and their families. Though some of them did lose everything and had to start over, the Lord was faithful to restore. As each of these men came into a fresh relationship with their Father God, they learned to receive and rest in the Father’s love, not performing for approval, but living from acceptance. They came to know Him as “Abba,” reflecting the nearness and tenderness of a deep relationship with a Father who restores.

Our Lord is calling us to draw near to him—into a deeply intimate, relevant, and transformative relationship marked by love, trust, obedience, and communion. This is not just a feeling but a way of life—rooted in covenant, cultivated through surrender, and expressed through faithfulness and nearness to His heart. It is a return to the garden—walking with God in the cool of the day—restored through Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and grounded in the Father’s faithful love.

It is knowing Him personally, not just knowing about Him, even as Jesus pointed out in John 17:3: “*And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*” (ESV). We are invited to walk in close fellowship with Him (see James 4:8). Like any relationship, it requires our intentional time and presence.

In the days ahead, only those rooted in intimacy with Father God will stand. We will be tempted to conform, compromise, and cave to pressure. But sons and daughters close enough to hear their Father's voice will not be moved. *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me"* (John 10:27).

I hear the Spirit saying: "Rebuild a heart of worship. Renew your identity in Me. Rediscover the One who calls you by name. Return to Me, and I will return to you" (see Mal. 3:7).

2. Our Relationship with Family: The Battle for the Home

The second foundation stone was cracked, due to compromise and neglect, and it was under siege. I sensed the groaning of the generations—parents and children, husbands and wives—crying out for restoration. The Lord said, "The enemy has targeted the family because it is My original design for fruitfulness and legacy."

We are not just experiencing cultural drift; we are in a spiritual war for the soul of the family—one that began with Adam and Eve in the garden. The shaking of society begins with the shaking of households. God created the family as a sacred trust—a place of covenant love, protection, and generational transfer. But many homes today are fractured, distracted, or simply disconnected.

The enemy knows that if he can destroy the family, he can destroy the nation. He uses everything from busyness to bitterness, from silence to screaming, to divide what God joined together. But the Spirit is calling us to rebuild and to fight for our families with weapons not of this world.

Husbands, lead with humility, patience, and prayer. Wives, love with honor and intercession. Parents, disciple your children

relationally and intentionally. Children will learn how to honor and bless those who gave them life and showed them the way.

Scripture speaks to each of these roles:

- *“Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them”* (Col. 3:19).
- *“Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:22).
- *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4).
- *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”* (Eph. 6:1).

But these commands are not burdens; they are blueprints. And when we walk in them, healing flows.

I remember a couple whose marriage was in ruins. On the brink of divorce, they sought the wise counsel of the pastor who married them. “Are you praying and reading the Bible together every day?” the pastor asked. Sadly, the couple admitted they had not.

But following their pastor’s advice, even though the situation seemed hopeless, the couple chose to spend time praying and reading the Word together every day. One night, the husband was reading aloud:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud....It keeps no record of wrongs....It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4–8a).

As the words left his mouth, the Spirit of God entered the room. Tears flowed. Apologies were spoken. Years of bitterness began to break under the weight of God's presence. That night, the altar of God's love was rebuilt. And the fire of the Holy Spirit reignited their marriage with love.

The Lord is restoring homes. But He is looking for who will stand in the gap for their family; who will refuse to let the shaking have the final word.

I hear the Spirit saying: “Guard your family altar, so that you do not allow the fire of God to go out. Forgive quickly. Love deeply. Fight fear with faith. What you build at home will echo into eternity.”

3. Our Relationship with Spiritual Community: Rebuilding the Walls Together

The third foundation stone I saw was surrounded by rubble, not because it had been ignored, but because it had been abandoned. The Spirit of God grieved, saying, “My people have isolated themselves from godly community, and now they are vulnerable to the storm” (see Prov. 18:1).

From the beginning, God designed community. The *ekklesia*—often translated “church”—comes from the Greek *ek* (“out of”) and *kaleo* (“to call”), meaning “*those called out for a purpose*.” It is not a building or institution, but God's people influencing their community in His name. In the New Testament, an *ekklesia* was both a family and a governing body, deciding what entered or left the city gates. So today, God's *ekklesia* is Christ's spiritual household and His authority on earth—a reflection of His love and a defense against darkness. Yet many believers choose isolation over connection, preference over participation, comfort over covenant. The shaking has revealed how fragile

our commitment to one another has become. Pride, fear, and unforgiveness have fractured the walls of unity.

But the Lord is rebuilding His house—stone by stone, heart by heart. *“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house”* (1 Peter 2:5).

I’ve seen what happens when believers refuse isolation and form a “revival prayer cluster”—small groups committed to gathering regularly.

Our friends Guy and Teri began hosting a simple “Taco Tuesday” meal with four other couples. What started as casual fellowship soon became a catalyst for something deeper. The couples made a bold commitment: every night at 8:00 p.m., each family would stop and pray in their homes for revival to break out in their households. Then, on Sunday afternoons, they would gather in Manhattan Beach—sometimes praying in homes, other times walking through neighborhoods interceding together for revival in their city. Almost every recorded revival in history began with such a praying remnant—families and friends who cried out together until heaven answered.

This is the power Jesus promised: *“Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them”* (Matt. 18:20). Like grapes that must remain in the cluster to produce new wine, believers clustered together release the fresh anointing of the Spirit. This intentional commitment to gather, to link arms in covenant community, has anchored them in the shaking. When one faces a crisis, four couples stand with them. When doubt creeps in, nine voices speak truth. They’re not just meeting; they’re becoming living stones fitted together in relationship.

Hebrews 10:24–25 calls us to gather, to stir one another to love and good works, and to encourage one another as the Day draws

UNSHAKABLE

near. We cannot fulfill our mission alone. We were never meant to.

Psalm 133 declares the blessing of unity, not just emotional warmth, but supernatural power: *“There the Lord commanded the blessing—Life forevermore”* (NKJV).

When God’s people walk in unity, whether in traditional congregations, home fellowships, or marketplace gatherings—God’s divine favor and empowerment flows—leading to flourishing and well-being.

But unity isn’t automatic. It takes intentionality. It requires dying to self, forgiving often, and honoring those with whom we disagree. We’re not just called to find our community, but to engage with it. We’re not called to critique our community, but to help build it.

I hear the Spirit saying: “In the days to come, your strength will be found not in isolation, but in covenant community.” This is the wisdom of Nehemiah 4:13–14—families rebuilding together. This is also the heart of Ephesians 4:32—“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” This is the power of 1 Corinthians 12—many parts, one body, each member necessary and valued.

4. Our Christ-like Relationship with the World: Representing God’s Kingdom in the Chaos

The fourth foundation stone in the vision was often completely missing—too many were waiting in fear to establish this relationship. The Lord said, “This is the part My people often neglect—but in this hour, I am calling them to rise in the power of My Holy Spirit as ambassadors, not spectators, fearlessly representing My values in every sphere of culture.”

We were not redeemed just to be safe; we were sent to be salt. We weren't rescued merely to survive, but commissioned to disciple nations. Our relationship with the world is not about assimilation or withdrawal—it's about our divine representation of the ministry of Christ Jesus in every sphere of culture.

The Great Commission isn't a suggestion, it's a command: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"* (Matt. 28:19–20). This is why we were saved—not just *from* something, but *for* something.

The enemy would love to keep us isolated, focused only on our comfort, our schedules, our preferences. But the Spirit is beckoning us outward—into the streets, into schools, into government, into culture—as light in the darkness and a voice in the wilderness.

I hear the Spirit saying: “I am sending you into the world—not to reflect it, but to transform it. Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. You are My witnesses. Stand firm. Speak truth in love. Show mercy and loving justice. Carry My presence wherever you go” (see Matt. 5:14–16).

Are You Building on the Rock?

The times of shaking are here, and more are coming. Jesus guaranteed it: *“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock”* (Matt. 7:25).

UNSHAKABLE

That Rock is Christ—not just in principle, but a relationship with a Person. Everything that is established and unshakable flows from a relationship with Him.

Your identity flows from a relationship with the Father, who calls you His child, friend, and warrior (see 1 John 3:1). Your family's strength flows from covenant relationships that mirror Christ and His bride (see Eph.5:31–32). Our exponential spiritual power flows out of our relationship with Christ and His ministry to a lost and dying world—miraculous signs will accompany those who believe. Christ Jesus is still setting people free (see Mark 16:17).

History confirms this truth. The Jesus Movement powerfully demonstrated what happens when people encounter the Father's love and boldly carry His Holy Spirit into the world. Multitudes are delivered and set free, accepting the redemptive truth of Jesus Christ. But it also revealed a sobering lesson. Without all four foundation stones working together, even genuine moves of God can dissipate and fail to transform society. One or two foundation stones, no matter how strong, cannot bear the weight of God's purpose alone. All four stones must be laid with care.

The philosophies of man will not withstand what is coming. Human strength, clever strategies, and cultural compromise will collapse under pressure. Only lives anchored in relationship, the four which God designed as foundations, will unshakably endure. So, where do you start?

- With honesty: Which relationships have you neglected?
- With humility: Where have you substituted activity for intimacy?
- With intention: Are you building programs or cultivating relationships?

I believe the Lord is speaking the same message He showed me in that vision: Return. Realign. Rebuild.

Return to the foundation—relationship with Him. Everything else flows from there. The shaking is not to destroy you. It is to awaken you. To anchor you. To call you back to what matters most—knowing Him and being known.

I hear the Spirit saying: “This is a Nehemiah hour. I am rebuilding from the ruins anew. But I am not rebuilding the way man builds. I am laying the foundation of Christ, My Son, in you with My righteousness, My justice, My truth, and My love. Will you let Me rebuild in you a foundation that no storm can shake—one forged by My design, anchored in My truth, and filled with My glory? Now is the time. Will you say ‘yes’?”

Reflective Questions:

1. Is there a relationship in your life—with God, a family member, your church, or the world—that you have neglected or avoided because it feels too painful or inconvenient to face?
2. Have you allowed compromise, comfort, busyness, or pride to become more important than restoring what God values most?
3. Are you building any part of your life in your own design instead of relying fully on God’s blueprint?

Pause and Pray:

Father, I invite You to examine my foundation. Show me where I've built on sand—even if it's been hidden under layers of good intentions. Tear down what needs to fall and help me rebuild what matters most. Teach me to value what You value. Let every foundation stone in my life be laid by Your hand. Anchor me, Lord, not just for my sake, but so my life can become a refuge for others.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

SECTION II

HOW TO PREPARE
FOR WHAT'S COMING

*However, when He, the Spirit of truth,
has come, He will guide you into all
truth; for He will not speak on His own
authority, but whatever He hears
He will speak; and He will tell you
things to come.*

John 16:13 NKJV

CHAPTER 5

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Learning to Listen When Everything is Shaking

These words of Jesus contain a promise that changes everything. In the midst of chaos, we are not left to navigate alone. The Spirit of Truth, the same Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation, who rushed upon the prophets, who raised Christ from the dead, lives in us and guides us through every storm.

At 4:00 a.m., a church leader in Colorado experienced this promise firsthand.

“Get up. Take your family. Leave now.”

The words pierced through sleep with unmistakable urgency. No explanation. No time to pack. Just an urgent command from the Lord. He woke his family, loaded them in the car, and drove away in the darkness. Hours later, a catastrophic flash flood swept through the valley. Their house—and the very ground it stood on—was gone.

Had he not cultivated the ability to hear God's voice, his family would have perished.

In times of shaking, the difference between what falls away and what remains often comes down to one thing: hearing and

obeying the voice of God. When everything around us trembles, human wisdom fails, and man-made structures collapse, there is one voice that never fails.

After I shared my vision of the great shaking with my wife, Cheryl, she grew deeply concerned for our family. Like any loving mother, her first thoughts went to practical protection. She immediately turned to the Lord in prayer: “How should we prepare? Should we store food and water? Should we buy silver or gold?”

The answer that came was not what she expected. It wasn’t a list of physical preparations or financial investments.

Instead, the Lord responded with a spiritual directive: “Read Matthew 25.” That’s all. No explanation. Just three words that would change how we understood preparation forever.

Cheryl grabbed her Bible and turned to a well-known passage—the parable of the ten virgins. She knew the story—ten young women waiting for a wedding procession. Five were wise and brought extra oil for their lamps. Five didn’t. They were foolish, and were unprepared. But as she read it again, the words took on new urgency.

Then came the verse that stopped her cold: “*At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’*” (Matt. 25:6 NLT).

Midnight. Not dawn when you’re refreshed. Not evening when you’re still alert. Midnight—the darkest, most disorienting hour. When you’re deep in sleep. When crisis feels impossible. When shaking comes without warning.

In that moment of jarring awakening, the five foolish virgins made a terrifying discovery. Their lamps were going out. They

scrambled for oil, begging the wise virgins to share. But this wasn't something that could be borrowed or bought in a panic. By the time they returned from searching for oil, the door was shut. Forever.

The Lord's message to Cheryl became crystal clear. We were asking the wrong questions. This wasn't about stockpiling supplies or hoarding gold. It was about something no amount of money could buy at the last minute—the guiding light of intimacy with the Holy Spirit. The oil in the lamp represents our cultivated ability to hear God's voice, to recognize His leading, to move when He says move.

The coming of the Bridegroom is more than a lesson on Christ's return. It offers wisdom for any kind of preparation. You can share your food. You can share your shelter. But you cannot share your intimacy with the Lord, because this precious oil can only be obtained in the secret place with Him. And that intimate knowing of His voice must be cultivated before the midnight hour arrives.

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Matt. 25:13 ESV). The Greek word translated “watch”—*grēgoreō*—doesn't mean passively waiting. It means to stay actively alert, spiritually awake, tuned in. It's the difference between having a radio and knowing how to find the right frequency when the emergency broadcast comes.

I learned this lesson driving through the mountains one night. My radio was tuned to a station, but as I wound through the valleys, the signal kept fading in and out. Other stations bled through, creating a confusing mix of voices. I had to constantly adjust the dial, searching for a clear signal. That's exactly what happens spiritually when we haven't cultivated our ability to

hear God. In the critical moment, we're left frantically searching through the static, unsure which voice to follow.

This is why hearing God's voice isn't a luxury for the superspiritual. It's survival equipment for every believer in Jesus.

In the days ahead, the most valuable resource won't be stockpiles of supplies, but the ability to hear and follow God's voice. This doesn't mean we shouldn't prepare practically. God certainly directed Joseph to store grain for seven years of famine (see Gen. 41:48–49). But Joseph could only prepare because he first heard from God. The provisions followed the revelation.

In places where Christianity is illegal, believers live this reality. In underground churches across hostile nations, Christians don't have the luxury of published service times or of holding services in public buildings. They must pray and listen for the Spirit's direction on when and where to gather. One wrong move could mean imprisonment or death. Yet they thrive—not through human planning but through divine guidance.

They've learned what we must learn: in times of danger, God doesn't abandon His people. He speaks to us. He guides us. He provides supernatural knowledge. As He promised through Isaiah: *"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'"* (Isa. 30:21).

The same God who warned Noah of the flood, who led Israel through the wilderness, who told Joseph to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus—He still speaks today. The question isn't whether God is speaking. The question is whether we've developed ears to hear.

This leads to a profound and essential question: In a world overflowing with noise, conflicting opinions, and counterfeit guidance, how do we recognize the one voice that matters?

Dallas Willard tells of his friend, Peter Marshall, driving through thick fog when he heard an urgent voice call his name: "Peter!" He quickly slammed on the brakes. Getting out to investigate, he discovered he'd stopped just feet from where the road dropped off into an abandoned quarry. This wasn't intuition. It wasn't luck. One more second, and Peter would have plunged to his death. But God intervened.

But how do we become people who hear that life-saving voice? How do we develop the spiritual sensitivity that can mean the difference between life and death?

The God Who Still Speaks

From Genesis to Revelation, we see a God who refuses to remain silent. He walked with Adam in the garden. He called to Moses from the burning bush. He whispered to Elijah in the cave. He thundered from Heaven at Jesus' baptism. And He promised that His Spirit would guide us into all truth (see John 16:13).

God hasn't changed. He's still speaking—we just need to learn how to recognize His voice.

The most reliable and foundational way God speaks is through His written Word. Every other way He communicates must align with Scripture. As Paul reminded Timothy, *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"* (2 Tim. 3:16). His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (see Ps. 119:105).

But God doesn't only speak through the pages of Scripture. Throughout the Bible, we see Him communicating in deeply personal ways.

The Still, Small Voice

When Elijah fled to Mount Horeb, exhausted and discouraged, God didn't speak through the wind that shattered rocks. Not through the earthquake. Not through the fire. After all the dramatic displays came "*a gentle whisper*"—a still, small voice (see 1 Kings 19:12).

This is often how the Spirit speaks to us today, without fanfare but with authority, without volume but with power. Those inner promptings that make us pause. That deep sense of peace confirming a decision. Or the sudden check in our spirit warning us to stop—God's Spirit acting as an "umpire" in our heart (see Col. 3:15 AMPC). The inexplicable knowing that we need to call someone, take a different route, or speak a specific word. This will require practicing stillness, pulling away from all distractions, enough to know that God's Spirit is speaking to you (see Psa. 46:10).

Jesus promised this would be our experience: "*When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth...He will tell you what is yet to come*" (John 16:13). This isn't wishful thinking or religious hope. It's a covenant promise. The Holy Spirit will guide us—not because we're perfect, but because He is faithful.

I remember a missionary in Asia who was walking to a village when she felt an overwhelming urge to stop and turn back. No logical reason. Just an inner check. She obeyed. Later, she learned

that bandits had set an ambush on the very path she would have taken. That still, small voice saved her life.

But here's what's crucial: these inner promptings must always align with Scripture. God will never contradict His Word. If an impression violates biblical truth, it's not from Him.

Dreams, Visions, and Prophetic Insight

Throughout Scripture, God often spoke to His people through dreams and visions—offering guidance, warning, revelation, and encouragement. In the Old Testament, we see this in Joseph's rise to power in Egypt by interpreting a dream Pharaoh had, as well as in Daniel's visions of future empires. In the New Testament, God reveals His will through Peter's vision to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles and through John's powerful vision of the end times, each instance reflecting God's desire to communicate with His people.

God also uses prophetic or insightful words, Spirit-empowered messages that bring encouragement, correction, or direction. Paul reminds us, *"The one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort"* (1 Cor. 14:3). As Amos declared, *"Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets"* (Amos 3:7).

In uncertain times, prophetic insight can provide wisdom for what lies ahead. Even today, in nations where Christianity is forbidden, believers report dreams and visions that provide direction and bring people to faith. Still, every dream, vision, or prophecy must be tested against God's Word and confirmed through prayer and wise counsel. Revelation must be stewarded—not just received but acted upon with faith, obedience, and ongoing intimacy with the Lord. All inspired

dreams and prophetic words, or leadings by the Holy Spirit, flow out of an intimate relationship with God.

Supernatural Knowledge and Wisdom

God often gives supernatural insight through the gifts of the Holy Spirit known as the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom (see 1 Cor. 12:8). A word of knowledge reveals something that could not be known naturally, while a word of wisdom gives divine understanding about what to do next and often how to do it.

We see this clearly in Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well. He told her, *"You have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband..."*—revealing knowledge He could only have received by the Spirit (see John 4:17–19). Her response: *"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet."*

These gifts are still available to believers today. As 1 Corinthians 12:8 (NLT) says, *"To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge."* In times of crisis or decision, these Spirit-given insights can bring clarity, protection, and direction.

Learning to Listen

Recognizing God's voice isn't automatic—it's cultivated through an intimate relationship with God. Just as a child learns to distinguish their mother's voice from all others, we learn to recognize our Shepherd's voice through intentional and intimate time with Him (see John 10:27).

This happens as we:

- Saturate ourselves in Scripture, learning His language and character. The more we know His Word, the more we recognize Him when He speaks to us. As young Samuel learned to say, *“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening”* (1 Sam. 3:9).
- Create space for stillness. Set aside what distracts you, take your Bible, and listen to His Word. *“Be still, and know that I am God”* (see Ps. 46:10). In our noisy world, we must intentionally quiet ourselves to hear His gentle whisper. This might mean rising early, taking walks without earbuds, or simply sitting in His presence without an agenda.
- Obey what we hear. When the Spirit prompts us to forgive someone, give to someone in need, or speak an encouraging word, quick obedience tunes our spiritual ears.

Arthur Blessitt, who carried a cross down Sunset Strip during the Jesus Movement, understood this principle. Night after night, the Spirit would prompt him to approach specific individuals in that dark, chaotic environment. He tells of one evening when God impressed upon him to speak to a particular young man standing alone. Arthur obeyed immediately. That young man was planning to end his life that very night, but through Arthur's obedience to the Spirit's prompting, he found hope in Christ instead. Delayed obedience is disobedience, and it dulls our ability to hear.

For some, unlike the pastor in Colorado or Arthur Blessitt, the crisis or opportunity may have come—and God appeared silent. If you've walked through tragedy or a missed chance to act and didn't hear God's voice, know this: His silence does not mean absence. Sometimes the reasons He didn't speak—or we didn't hear—remain a mystery. There is grace for the questions. But it's never a measure of your faith or His love. He is still with you, and He is faithful to restore and rebuild.

Always stay connected to mature believers. When we isolate ourselves, we're more vulnerable to deception. But in community, we find wisdom, comfort, and confirmation.

The Promise and the Warning

Jesus promised that His sheep would know His voice. This isn't reserved for prophets or pastors—it's the birthright of every believer. But it requires cultivation. Like the five wise virgins, we must gather our oil before midnight comes.

The world is full of voices claiming to offer guidance—self-help gurus, fortune tellers, even AI algorithms promising to predict our future. But only One Voice has the power to guide us through the shaking that's coming. Only One Voice spoke the universe into existence and knows the end from the beginning.

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know (Jeremiah 33:3).

The invitation stands. The question remains: Are you listening?

In the coming days, those who have cultivated ears to hear will navigate the shaking with supernatural wisdom. They'll know when to move and when to stay. When to speak and when to remain silent. When to store up and when to give away. Not through human calculations, but through divine direction.

This isn't about becoming superspiritual. It's about intimacy with the Lord and becoming dependent—acknowledging that without His voice, we're just guessing in the darkness. It's about making room in our lives now, before the midnight cry, to know the One who promises to guide us through every storm.

The oil can't be borrowed. The relationship can't be rushed. The time to cultivate intimacy with the Holy Spirit is now.

Reflective Questions:

1. When you read the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25, which group do you most identify with—those who were prepared with oil, or those who waited too long?
2. Can you recall a time when you sensed God's prompting but didn't act on it? What held you back, and what did you learn from that?
3. Which way of hearing God do you most readily recognize? (His Word, Holy Spirit's inner promptings, dreams/visions, supernatural knowledge) Which do you tend to dismiss or overlook?
4. What specific distractions or noise in your life make it difficult to hear God's voice? What practical step could you take this week to create more space for listening?
5. Who in your life demonstrates a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit? What could you learn from their example?

Pause and Pray:

Heavenly Father, I come to You aware of how much noise fills my life—and how often I've missed Your voice in the midst of it. Forgive me for the times I've relied on my own understanding rather than seeking Your guidance.

I want to hear You. Not just in the dramatic moments, but in the daily decisions. Not just in the crisis, but in the calm. Teach me to recognize Your voice above all others.

Give me oil for my lamp—not just enough to get by, but reserves that overflow. Help me cultivate such intimacy with Your Spirit that when You speak, I recognize You immediately. When You prompt, help me obey quickly. When You warn, give me wisdom to heed.

Remove whatever blocks my spiritual ears—whether sin, distraction, pride, or fear. Tune my heart to Your frequency. Make me sensitive to Your slightest whisper.

I don't want to be caught unprepared when the midnight cry comes. I want to be ready, listening, and responsive to Your voice.

Here I am, Lord. Your servant is listening.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith

Hebrews 12:1-2a

CHAPTER 6

BECOMING UNENCUMBERED

The Divine Reset

A few years ago, *Forbes* magazine published an article called “The Big Reset” about a Silicon Valley company drowning in its own complexity. They called their inefficiencies ‘barnacles’—but this natural image carries profound spiritual truth.

Ships that sail the open seas inevitably collect barnacles, those small creatures that attach themselves to the hull. One or two make little difference. But over time, they multiply, creating drag that slows the vessel and forces it to work harder to move forward. Left unchecked, barnacles can compromise the integrity of the ship itself.

The Lord showed me we are that ship, and He’s warning us to deal with our *barnacles* now—before the storm hits. In calm waters, we barely notice the drag. But when the waves rise and speed matters, those who haven’t removed what encumbers them will find themselves dangerously slow to respond. This is our window of preparation. Every weight we remove now, every hindrance we address today, increases our ability to navigate tomorrow’s turbulence. The unencumbered become the unshakable.

UNSHAKABLE

This is exactly what God is calling us to do in this time of shaking. He is allowing the crisis, the discomfort, the instability—not to destroy us, but to reset us.

- He is realigning us.
- He is simplifying us.
- He is drawing us closer to Himself.

This is not a burden—it's an invitation.

Jesus doesn't call us to frantically do more in times of uncertainty or chaos. He calls us to be blown by His wind and sail in perfect peace, listening to and obeying His voice. To get there, allow Him to remove the *barnacles*—everything that hinders, distracts, or slows you down. Allow Him to realign your life so you can sail freely and unencumbered, even in inclement weather.

A Divine Reset

A recent wake-up call was the COVID-19 pandemic, a storm that brought our nation—and the whole world—to its knees. Things have changed in so many ways since that event, which served as a reset for many people, businesses, churches, and more.

We are just now seeing the long-term ramifications of that crisis. One thing we can say for certain is that it caused people to reassess their priorities and to reevaluate what was really important.

In times of crisis, we are forced to assess how we spend our time, how we budget our money, how we prioritize God and family, and more. We often get our hearts and relationships right. We stop what we are doing to align our will with God's plans so we

can enter into our destinies. We minimize distractions so we can focus on what is truly important. Like the writer of Hebrews said, “*We throw off everything that hinders*”—every encumbrance (see Heb. 12:1).

In the forced stillness of COVID-19, many heard God’s voice clearly for the first time in years. As the Psalmist wrote, “*Be still, and know that I am God*” (Ps. 46:10).

A definition of “reset” is to “return to the starting point or intended purpose,” such as to reset our clocks or priorities. It’s closely aligned with the word “restore,” which means “to bring something back to its original design or intent.” It reminds me of what happens to our computer when we get too many systems running at once. It gets bogged down. It starts running slower or gets totally stuck. Sometimes we have to reboot our computer so it can start over and reset.

But here’s the crucial truth: God doesn’t want us to wait for a global pandemic or personal crisis. He is offering us the opportunity to respond now—before the shakings increase. How can we stand unshakable if we’re divided between God’s purposes and our encumbrances?

Before we can run free, we must recognize the weights that impede us.

The Weight We Were Never Meant to Carry

Clearly, God uses times of crisis in our lives to shake us out of our comfort zones, get our attention, and re-align our lives and thinking to His plan and purposes. Hebrews 12:1 tells us: “*Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.*” The writer doesn’t suggest that we merely put these

UNSHAKABLE

things aside—he exhorts us to throw them off. That means making an intentional, decisive choice to remove the things that hinder us.

In my own life, I've learned that sometimes I don't recognize how much unnecessary weight I've been carrying until I try to move forward. Have you ever cleaned out a closet and been amazed at how much stuff you accumulated? You start pulling things out—old clothes, broken gadgets, stacks of paper—and before you know it, you're surrounded by things you don't need, things that have been cluttering your space for years.

Our lives can look like that, too. We get busy. We take on more obligations. We hold onto things we should have let go of long ago. And slowly, almost without realizing it, we become burdened, weighed down, and unable to move freely in the calling God has for us.

We don't just accumulate things: we accumulate obligations, offenses, and obsolete ways of living. Like those barnacles on the ship's hull, each one seems insignificant at the time. But collectively they create a weight that was never part of God's design for our lives. It's worth noting that the Jesus Movement exploded when young people left behind both the counterculture's complexities and dead religious structures, finding freedom in simply following Jesus. This is not about doing more. This is about letting go of what impedes us.

Recognizing the Weights That Hold Us Back

The late Dr. David Yonggi Cho, once the pastor of the largest church in the world in Seoul, South Korea, was asked what he felt was the biggest problem with the American church. His reply was, “Busyness.”

Probably the most common response when you ask someone how they're doing is, "Busy." Busy has become almost synonymous with significance. We tend to feel that if we're not busy, we are not being useful or are missing out. We fill our lives with so many activities and obligations that there is little time to listen for God's voice, to reflect, to dream, or to invest in meaningful relationships. We are entangled in our responsibilities and commitments. But all too often, this leads to feelings of emptiness and having little lasting fruit to show for all our efforts.

The Apostle Paul warned of this very human tendency toward overcommitment. He wrote, "*No soldier when in service gets entangled in the enterprises of [civilian] life; his aim is to satisfy and please the one who enlisted him*" (2 Tim. 2:4 AMPC). What does it mean to be "entangled"? It means "to twist together so that disengagement is difficult; to become snarled, complicated, and confused."

This is a spiritual principle, but we can also see it in the natural realm. During the Vietnam War, eyewitness reports tell us American troops fought as they did in WWII. They wore heavy clothing and carried heavy gear, which weighed them down, while the Vietnamese traveled light. They were lean and mean. Our troops struggled. Battles were lost.

We can learn lessons from history.

Take a moment to reflect: What weights are holding you back? Are there places in your life—spiritually, emotionally, relationally, or financially—where you feel entangled or tethered? If God opened a door or called you to act in a moment of urgency, would you be free to move—or too encumbered to respond?

Three Dimensions of Becoming Unencumbered

The writer of Hebrews tells us to “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” Becoming truly unencumbered requires addressing all the weight we carry—spiritual, relational, and practical.

1. Spiritual Unencumbering—Freedom from Sin and Performance

The heaviest weights we carry are often invisible. Bitterness. Unforgiveness. Hidden sin. Shame from past failures. Religious performance that exhausts but never satisfies.

I’ve seen Christians collapse under the weight of hidden sin—exhausted by the double life, terrified of exposure, spiritually suffocating. What begins as a small compromise can become a crushing weight. The pattern is always the same: what starts small grows heavy, and what begins as occasional becomes consuming.

And they all say the same thing when they finally break free: “I had no idea how heavy it was until I set it down.”

This is what John meant when he wrote, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). Confession isn’t just about forgiveness—it’s about freedom. It’s about becoming unencumbered.

But it’s not just our sin that weighs us down. Sometimes it’s our religious activity. Martha was distracted by all the preparations while Mary sat at Jesus’ feet (see Luke 10:38–42). How many of us are so busy serving God that we’ve forgotten to simply be with Him?

Some entanglements are obvious sins—patterns of addiction, compromise, or rebellion. But others are subtle distractions—things that pull us away from God, keeping us busy but ineffective.

- Have worry and fear taken up space in your heart?
- Have entertainment and social media drowned out God’s voice?
- Have you allowed comparison, discouragement, or past wounds to steal your joy?

When we allow ourselves to be entangled, we lose focus. That’s why Scripture urges us to fix our gaze not on the chaos or the obstacles, but on Christ. Hebrews 12:1–2 calls us to “...*throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*”

Resetting our focus might mean:

- identifying and removing distractions.
- guarding our thoughts and what we allow into our minds.
- making a renewed commitment to holiness and purity.

God is not calling us to strive in our own strength. He is calling us to come to Him, so He can do the untangling. When our eyes are locked on Him, everything else comes into proper alignment and our priorities become clear.

The divine reset begins in the secret place. It starts when we get alone with God and say, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Ps. 139:23–24 NLT).

2. Relational Unencumbering—Letting Go of Toxic Ties

We were created for relationship, but not every relationship is healthy and beneficial. Some connections drain rather than sustain. Some ties bind rather than bless.

Paul warned Timothy about people in the last days who would have *“a form of godliness but denying its power”* and instructed him simply: *“Have nothing to do with such people”* (see 2 Tim. 3:5). This isn’t about being judgmental—it’s about being wise.

Jesus Himself modeled this. He loved everyone, but He didn’t invest equally in everyone. He had the twelve, the three, and the one (John, the beloved). He knew that to fulfill His mission, He had to be selective about His inner circle.

Consider:

- Are there relationships pulling you away from your calling or God’s presence?
- Is God calling you to step back or set new boundaries?
- Who do you need to release so you can walk lighter and freer?

The divine reset in relationships means asking: Who has God called me to run with in this season? Who sharpens me toward my God-given purpose? Who celebrates my pursuit of holiness? And who consistently pulls me away from God’s best?

3. Financial Burdens—Escaping the Weight of Debt

Many people feel stuck because their financial burdens keep them from obeying God’s voice. They want to give, to serve, to move as He leads—but debt and financial stress hold them back. Debt can be like spiritual quicksand—you don’t realize

how deep you are until you try to get out. God doesn't want us to live enslaved to financial stress. He calls us to live wisely, steward well, and walk in freedom.

The Bible says: "*The borrower is slave to the lender*" (Prov. 22:7b).

I hear the Lord saying, "Tell my people to get out of debt and to live generously. We must ask:

- **Am I trusting God as my provider?** Or do I live in fear, holding on to what I have?
- **Do I need to reset how I manage money to realign with God's principles?** Am I putting God first in my finances, giving Him the first portion of my income (the tithe)?
- **Am I generous in giving to others?**
- **Do I have a plan to get out of debt and live debt-free?**

I'll never forget the morning God showed Cheryl and me what our debt was really costing us. We sat at our kitchen table, surrounded by the evidence of our bondage—credit card statements, loan documents, monthly bills. The numbers seemed to be overwhelming.

We'd been here before. Too many times. The pattern was always the same. We'd start with good intentions—just this expense, just that emergency. Often, a missed paycheck. But instead of standing in faith and trusting God, we'd rely on our credit cards. Then the cycle would begin: cutting back, working extra hours, and finally clawing our way back to zero. We'd celebrate our freedom, promising ourselves "never again." Then life would happen.

That morning was different. As we stared at those bills, the Holy Spirit brought Jesus' words from Matthew 6:24 with devastating clarity: *"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

The revelation hit like a lightning bolt. We weren't just managing debt—we were serving it. That morning, we made a covenant with God and each other. No more excuses. We would do whatever it took to break free—not just for our sake, but so we could say "yes" to God without checking with our creditors first.

God's provision does not come through hoarding, striving, or controlling. It comes through trusting Him and walking in wisdom. Disentangling yourself financially is not just about getting out of debt—it's about stepping into the peace and freedom of God's provision. It's about having enough so that you can give generously to God's work and those in need.

We saw this truth play out a few years later during the 2008 economic crash. Those who learned to walk in God's financial wisdom could respond generously to God in serving others in need, while those in debt or living on the edge were paralyzed.

4. Overcommitment—Clearing the Clutter of Busyness

We fill our schedules with commitments, responsibilities, and distractions—many of them good things, but not necessarily God things. We take on more than we can handle, then wonder why we feel overwhelmed, exhausted, distant from God, and unable to hear His voice. Jesus, on the other hand, never hurried. He was never overwhelmed. He moved at the pace of His Father's will (see Ps. 37:23).

Have we filled our lives so full that there's no room for intimacy with God? Consider:

- Are my commitments keeping me from spending time with God?
- Have I said “yes” to too many things that are not truly God’s assignment for me?
- Do I need to reset my priorities so I can hear from God clearly?

A businessman came to me exhausted. He was an elder at church, coached his son’s baseball team, served on three nonprofit boards, ran a small group, and managed a demanding career. “I’m serving God in all these places,” he said, “but I’m nearly burned out, have no joy, no peace, and, honestly, no time to hear God’s voice.”

We went through his commitments one by one. “Did God call you to this, or did you call yourself?” I asked about each one. By the end, he realized that most of his “service” was driven by guilt, people-pleasing, or ego—not God’s call.

He resigned from two boards, handed off the small group to his co-leader, and created margin in his life. Six months later, he was a different man. “I’m doing less but accomplishing more,” he said. “And for the first time in years, I actually enjoy my walk and fellowship with the Lord.”

God is calling us to release what is unnecessary so we can be available for what He is about to do. The Lord offers us perfect peace as we keep our purpose firmly in God’s will and our trust in Him (see Isa. 26:3).

The Divine Exchange

Here’s the beautiful truth: God never asks us to let go of something without offering something better in return. He lightens our load, not to leave us empty, but to fill us with Himself. This isn’t

UNSHAKABLE

about living in lack—it's about living in abundance of the right things.

Jesus said, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”* (Matt. 11:28–30).

Notice the exchange:

- Our burdens for His rest
- Our heaviness for His yoke
- Our way for His way

When we become unencumbered, we create space for God to fill us with:

- His presence instead of our performance
- His peace instead of our striving
- His purpose instead of our plans
- His power instead of our effort

So, how do we begin this journey of becoming unencumbered? It starts with honest assessment and continues with courageous action.

Take Inventory: Start Small but Start Now

You don't have to sell everything and move to a monastery. Start with one area God highlights. Maybe it's:

- confessing that hidden sin to the Lord and a trusted friend.
- having that difficult conversation you've been avoiding.

- canceling one commitment that's not God-ordained.
- setting up a plan to eliminate one debt.
- fasting from social media for a week.
- decluttering one room or office as a physical expression of spiritual intent.

Make It About Mission, Not Minimalism

The goal isn't to own less for the sake of owning less or doing less in order to have more leisure time. The goal is to be available for God's purposes. Every weight you remove should be with the question: "How does this free me to follow the Lord more closely and serve Him more effectively?"

Reflective Questions

1. Are you holding bitterness or unforgiveness toward someone? Who do you need to release so you can walk lighter and freer?
2. Are there relationships pulling you away from your relationship with Jesus? Is God calling you to step back or set new boundaries?
3. Is something in the world—like success, approval, or possessions—pulling your heart away from following God's purpose for your life? What would it look like to lay that down?
4. Are financial burdens or debt keeping you in bondage? What steps can you take to reset your finances and walk in freedom?

Pause and Pray

Lord, I want to run this race free and unhindered. Show me what's weighing me down—anything I've allowed in my life that You didn't place there. I surrender it to You now. Untangle what's entangled me. I choose to walk in freedom, not in fear or striving.

Reset my heart. Refocus my mind. Realign my steps with Your purpose for my life.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

But as it is, God has placed and arranged the limbs and organs in the body, each (particular one) of them, just as He wished and saw fit and with the best adaptation.

1 Corinthians 12:18 AMPC

CHAPTER 7

FINDING YOUR UNSHAKABLE PURPOSE

Standing Firm When You Step into Your Assignment

Born into slavery in the final months of the Civil War, orphaned as an infant, George Washington Carver entered the world with nothing—no family name, no inheritance, no earthly advantage. The frail, stuttering child who nearly died in his first winter seemed destined for obscurity. Yet this man would become one of America’s most celebrated scientists, revolutionize agriculture, and demonstrate to the world what happens when someone discovers their God-given purpose.

Each morning at 4 a.m., Carver would rise and walk into the woods of Tuskegee, Alabama. He called it his “divine laboratory.” There, in the pre-dawn darkness, he would talk to God about plants, soil, and the mysteries of creation. “I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station,” he said, “through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.”

One day, he prayed specifically about the peanut—a crop that could restore the depleted Southern soil after decades of cotton cultivation. “Mr. Creator,” he asked, “why did You make the peanut; what is its purpose?”

What followed was extraordinary. In his laboratory, Carver developed over 300 products from the peanut alone, everything from milk and flour to ink and soap. Thomas Edison himself tried to hire Carver away with an enormous salary, baffled by his innovations. But Carver declined, attributing his breakthroughs to something beyond science: “God guides me,” he explained. “Without Him, I am nothing.” What Carver found in those early morning encounters while alone with the Father was a true understanding of his purpose—purpose that transcended his circumstances and echoed humanity’s deepest longing.

That’s just what *USA Today* discovered when they asked people what one question they would most like to ask God.²⁹ “What is the purpose of my existence?” topped the list. In fact, it received twice as many responses as any other question. This yearning is evident among college students as they present this dilemma to their counselors and professors today. These young people want more than a career; they want to believe their life has meaning. It seems every person has an innate need for worth and value.

We have this assurance from the God who created us. As we read in Jeremiah 29:11, “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the Lord, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” This promise reveals a profound truth: our lives are not random or accidental. Each of us has been intentionally designed with purpose.

Carver understood something profound. While self-discovery is essential, our deepest discoveries come through divine encounter. In those pre-dawn conversations with God, he didn’t just receive scientific breakthroughs—he discovered how his natural God-given gifts fit into the Father’s greater design. The Creator who gave him curiosity about plants also revealed their hidden purposes.

When we live aligned with our divine purpose, we develop an unshakable foundation that sustains us through life's inevitable storms. Viktor Frankl, who survived Nazi concentration camps, observed that those who had a sense of meaning were most likely to survive. When your identity is rooted in God's purpose for your life, external circumstances cannot defeat you.

Divine Design: You Were Made on Purpose

Like a potter working clay, God has shaped you with specific contours, textures, and capabilities that make you uniquely suited for particular purposes in His Kingdom at precisely this moment in time. The gifts, talents, and even the limitations you experience are not accidental—they are intentional elements of your design.

“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him” [His purpose] (Phil. 2:13 NLT). This verse suggests that purpose is revealed and fulfilled through a relationship with God. This involves understanding God's character and plan, submitting to His guidance, and living according to His call. Deepening your relationship with the Father helps you understand and live out your unique purpose.

Your Place in God's Redemptive Story

After the initial wave of the Jesus Movement, many newly converted hippies faced a crisis: “Now what?” They had left everything for Christ, but what were they supposed to *do* with their lives? Some thrived—becoming leaders who transformed culture. Others began to drift. Without deep roots in relationship with God, their spiritual clarity dimmed. Small compromises led to confusion about their calling. Like Jesus warned, they

were seeds on rocky ground that “withered away” because they had no root (see Mark 4:6). The difference? Those who thrived understood that purpose flows from abiding in the Vine: *“Remain in me, as I also remain in you...apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:4–5).

Your purpose is a unique thread in the grand tapestry of God’s redemptive story. Finding this purpose requires both spiritual discernment and practical action. It involves prayer and listening, but also requires development, and stepping out in faith and service.

Purpose Unfolds in Seasons

Discovering your purpose is not a single moment of revelation but a journey. As we saw from George Washington Carver’s life, his purpose and success flowed out of his intimate relationship with the Father. Carver learned this powerful truth: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take”* (Prov. 3:5–6 NLT).

This journey requires patience. Joseph struggled to understand his prophetic dreams at a young age, and he had to endure years of trial and error, even slavery and imprisonment. He stewarded his giftings all along the way—as manager in Potiphar’s household, as a supervisor in the prison, and ultimately as second in command of all of Egypt. David was anointed king as a youth and stewarded his gifts shepherding sheep before he was called to shepherd a nation. He spent years in development while living in humble caves and discovering God’s faithfulness through life in the wilderness before ascending to the throne as one of the most beloved kings of Israel. Their stories remind us

that purpose often unfolds through seasons of preparation and testing.

Fulfilling your purpose is more than merely acknowledging your gifts and calling; it requires embracing fully what God has called you to. Half-hearted commitment produces half-measure results. The true fulfillment of your calling will only come to fruition when you are completely sold out to it.

Think of acknowledging your purpose like standing at the shore looking at the ocean. Embracing your purpose is diving in and swimming in its depths. One is observation; the other is participation. As a Christian, you may intellectually understand your gifting and calling, but stop short of surrendering to it wholeheartedly.

Something Powerful Happens When We Align Our Lives with God's Purpose

While studying electrical engineering, the Lord showed me something profound—it's called "the parallel principle." If a wire runs parallel to a high-voltage power line, it can pick up electricity—even without direct contact. That current can be strong enough to kill unless the wire is grounded. The spiritual parallel is clear: when two lines run in the same direction, power flows. But when they run in opposite directions, nothing happens.

In the same way, God's power flows through us when we're in alignment with His purpose. Nothing in Heaven or on Earth can block that flow—except us. When we live in step with His plan, His power can move through us and transform the world around us. However, if we're out of alignment, the connection is broken. When we come into alignment, that power is

transferred—and it can change everything—not only our lives but the world around us.

When you move from acknowledging to embracing your calling, you position yourself to receive His Holy Spirit empowering—that makes success and the impossible possible.

As a young man at Christ for the Nations Bible Institute in Dallas, I sometimes spent days fasting and praying. During one of those times, I heard the Lord speak clearly: “Son, I’ve called you as a prophet to the nations.”

Honestly, it was the last thing I wanted to hear. I couldn’t imagine myself pointing my finger at someone and declaring, “Thus saith the Lord.” I wasn’t looking for controversy or persecution. So instead of embracing the word, I downplayed it. I’d say things like, “Sometimes God shows me things,” which was true. Once, He even sent me to another nation to tell a military leader that he should run for president, and if he did so, the Lord said he would win. And he did.

I might have admitted I was “prophetic,” but I stopped short of calling myself a prophet. Then one day over coffee, a respected leader gently challenged me. He said, “There’s a difference between acknowledging your calling and embracing it.”

His words struck a chord. I realized I had been disobedient by holding back. That day, I repented and fully accepted who God had made me to be. I didn’t start calling myself by the title. But I embraced the call in my heart—and from that moment on, the prophetic gift in my life was released in a greater measure.

Practical Ways to Embrace Purpose

- **Start with honest prayer:** *Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind*” (Ps.26:2).
- **Take one concrete action:** James instructs us to be “*doers of the word, and not hearers only*” (James 1:22 NKJV). What is one step you can take today toward living out your unique purpose?
- **Adjust your daily rhythms:** What regular habits might need to change to align with your purpose? Remember, “*Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much*” (Luke 16:10a).
- **Find accountability:** Share your understanding of your purpose with trusted believers who can help you remain committed. “*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another*” (Prov. 27:17).
- **Celebrate small victories:** Notice and thank God for moments when you see your giftings being used to bring honor to Him.

Encouragement

You were born with a God-given purpose. As you continue looking into and discovering, as well as living out, that unique purpose, you are building on a foundation that cannot be shaken by the storms of life. You become unshakable—not because of your own strength, but because you are aligned with the eternal purposes of God and abide in His strength.

Like Carver in his divine laboratory, we too can discover that our existence is not accidental. When reporters pressed him about his accomplishments, he simply said, “I never have to

UNSHAKABLE

grope for methods. The method is revealed to me the moment I am inspired to create something new. Without God to draw aside the curtain, I would be helpless.”

This is the secret of an unshakable life: finding your purpose not in self-discovery but in divine encounter—in those intimate conversations with your Creator who knows exactly why He made you, and for such a time as this.

Reflective Questions:

1. When have you felt most alive and purposeful? What were you doing—and who were you serving—that brought you deep joy and alignment with God’s heart?
2. What spiritual gifts or strengths do others consistently affirm in you? How might God be calling you to use those gifts more intentionally in this season?
3. What need or injustice in your community, school, or church stirs a deep response in your spirit? Could this be a clue to your unique role in God’s redemptive work?
4. What internal fears or external obstacles have kept you from fully stepping into your calling? Are you willing to surrender those to the Lord today and take one step forward?
5. If nothing were holding you back—no fear, no lack—what would you do to advance God’s Kingdom? What is one small but significant step you can take today in that direction?

Pause and Pray:

Father, You created me on purpose—for a purpose. Thank You for placing me in this generation and gifting me with what I need to serve You. I confess that at times I've let fear, doubt, or distraction hold me back. Today, I surrender those things to You.

Show me where You're calling me. Teach me to listen closely and to follow boldly. Align my heart with what moves Yours, and give me courage to take the next step toward fully embracing the life You designed for me.

I want to live with purpose. I want to live unshakable.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*The thief comes only to
steal and kill and destroy.
I came that they may have
life and have it abundantly.*

John 10:10 ESV

CHAPTER 8

UNMASKING THE ENEMY

Exposing Satan's End-Time Strategy

In the 1920s, British evangelist Smith Wigglesworth was jolted awake in the dead of night. A suffocating darkness filled his bedroom—not merely the absence of light, but a presence, thick and malevolent. At the foot of his bed stood a demonic figure, its form radiating fear and intimidation.

Without flinching, Wigglesworth muttered, “Oh, it’s just you,” and then he rolled over and went back to sleep. He explained later, “When you know who you are in Christ, the enemy has no power over you.”

The demon fled.

It’s a powerful story. But it’s also a rare one.

Most of us will never see the devil physically appear at the foot of our bed. And that’s precisely what makes this chapter so urgent. Because the greatest threat in the last days is not the enemy you can see—it’s the one you don’t.

Satan doesn’t always show up in person. More often, he disguises himself. He deceives. He distorts. He whispers just enough truth to make the lie believable. He’s not just a destroyer—he’s

a master manipulator. And in this hour of great shaking, the danger isn't only that he will attack, but that he will mislead.

He is doing exactly what Jesus warned us he would do: sowing deception like seeds into the minds and hearts of both believers and unbelievers alike. And unless we recognize his schemes and arm ourselves with spiritual discernment, we may find ourselves swept up in his web without even realizing it.

I hear the Lord speaking to His Church: “Get ready for a season of intense warfare such as you’ve never seen before. The enemy is at the gates and, for many, already through them. The Holy Spirit is sounding an alarm. It’s time to wake up, armor up, and engage.”

While the Lord uses shaking to prune, purify, and reset His people, satan crawls into the center of the storm to tear apart what God is refining.

Satan is relentless. He doesn't just attack once. He circles like a lion, looking for every crack in your armor—every area of fear, pride, or unhealed pain. He sows strife in marriages with whispered accusations: “They don't value you.” He twists relationships with jealousy and suspicion. He tempts believers to cut corners in business, to lie just a little, to take a shortcut that no one will notice. He plants ideas like “God understands—you’ve carried this desire long enough” to justify sin. In moments of pressure, he offers escape that feels easier than obedience. His tactics are subtle and sinister—slow erosion rather than sudden collapse.

The days ahead will not only test our faith but will also expose the areas where we have failed to recognize the enemy's schemes. This is not a time for spiritual passivity or naïve optimism. The Spirit is warning: darkness is not just creeping in—it is

encroaching, infiltrating, and seeking to deceive even the elect. We are living in days of increasing spiritual pressure—days when darkness will not only press from the outside but also seek to infiltrate from within. And if we are not spiritually equipped, the enemy will exploit our blind spots to damage not only our walk with God but also the institutions and communities we’re called to build and protect.

Warfare in the Last Days

Spiritual warfare is not only about casting out demons or breaking generational curses. It is also the daily, invisible conflict between the kingdom of God and the forces of darkness. And in the last days, this conflict will intensify. The Apostle Paul warned, *“In later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons”* (1 Tim. 4:1).

We are not witnessing isolated attacks; we are witnessing a coordinated strategy to dismantle truth, divide relationships, seduce believers into apathy, and cause many to fall away. Jesus warned that because lawlessness will abound, *“the love of many will grow cold”* (see Matt. 24:12).

This is not a battle happening “out there” in politics or culture alone. It’s in our churches, our homes, and our minds. Satan’s goal is to wear out the saints, dull our discernment, and neutralize our spiritual authority. He will use offense to divide, fear to paralyze, lies to deceive, and compromise to erode holiness.

We must recognize the kind of warfare we are in—not to become fearful, but to become spiritually alert and victorious. This is not just a teaching—it is a trumpet call. Let those who have ears hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Five Frontlines of Warfare in the End Times

Let's examine some of the most strategic fronts where the enemy is advancing against the people of God.

1. The Spirit of Offense: Dividing Families and the Body of Christ

Jesus said that in the last days, *“many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another”* (Matt. 24:10 NKJV). The enemy is using offense like a weapon of mass destruction. He stirs up division between husbands and wives, children and parents, friends, colleagues, and churches. The smallest wound becomes a festering sore. Misunderstandings turn into separations. Pride insists on being right rather than being reconciled. The offended heart becomes a hardened heart. And a hardened heart loses sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Unresolved pain and rejection from childhood become a target for the enemy. Satan is relentless in his attack. This is especially true in our homes. I hardly know of a family that doesn't have a relational breach. I've heard heartbreaking stories. Parents estranged from their children for years. Grandchildren they've never laid eyes on, much less held in their arms. Siblings not talking to each other. Extended families split in half over politics, transgender issues, and religion. Even small disputes, when ignited by Hell, can spiral out of control and lead to separation and divorce—situations neither party initially ever desired or intended.

BEWARE! If we don't recognize offense for what it is—a demonic snare—we will justify it, protect it, and even spiritualize it. Offense is one of Satan's most subtle and successful strategies to isolate families and the family of God—thus tarnishing our testimony for Christ.

2. The Battle of the Mind: Fear, Doubt, and Apathy

The mind is one of the fiercest battlegrounds in spiritual warfare. Satan doesn't need to overpower you if he can outthink you. That's why he whispers: "This mountain is too big. Prayer won't work. God isn't interested in answering you. You're too broken. Too flawed. Too late."

These thoughts are not harmless—they are flaming arrows meant to wear you down until you cave in. That's why Scripture commands us to *"take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ"* (see 2 Cor. 10:5).

But the truth dismantles the lie. Jesus said that *"nothing will be impossible"* for those who believe (see Matt. 17:20), and James reminds us that *"the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective"* (James 5:16). God assures us, *"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know"* (Jer. 33:3). You are not too broken, because *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds"* (Ps. 147:3 ESV). You are not too flawed, for He says, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Cor. 12:9). And it is never too late, because God promises, *"I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten"* (Joel 2:25 ESV).

Fear is a liar. Doubt is a thief. And apathy is a slow spiritual death. These accusations may scream at you, but you don't have to believe them. You are not powerless—you are mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds (see 2 Cor. 10:4). You have the mind of Christ. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He didn't argue with the devil—He declared, *"It is written."* We must do the same. Declare the truth, and it will set you free (see John 8:32).

3. Deception: Twisting Truth Infiltrating the Church

Perhaps the most chilling warning from Jesus about the last days was this: *“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect”* (Matt. 24:24).

With so great a delusion, how will anyone stand against it? I suggest that we stay in fervent prayer and daily in the Word, and that we surround ourselves with other believers who are diligent in prayer and in the study of God’s Word. Deception isn’t just a problem “out there.” It’s happening in Christian circles.

In 2023, a mainline Protestant church in the Midwest made headlines when it unveiled its new “Gospel of Inclusion.” This revised version of Scripture removed references to sin, judgment, and repentance, replacing them with affirming language about self-love and spiritual exploration. The church’s pastor explained the change this way: “We needed a gospel that reflects today’s values—one that no longer offends.”

Passages like Romans 1 and John 14:6 were either removed or reinterpreted to eliminate any claim that Jesus is the only way to God or that certain behaviors are sinful. Sermons focused not on salvation through Christ, but on personal empowerment, social justice, and environmental stewardship.

The deception was subtle, cloaked in compassion—but it was a distortion of the gospel. In trying to avoid offense, the church had emptied the gospel of its saving power. What began as a desire to be “relevant” ended in apostasy.

As Scripture warns, *“Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light”* (see 2 Cor. 11:14), and Paul declared, *“Even if we or*

an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse" (Gal.1:8). Deception often wears the disguise of charisma, beauty, or even supernatural power—but it cannot stand against the eternal truth of God's Word.

The enemy isn't just sowing lies through media and culture. He attempts to sow lies through doctrines of demons, intent on infiltrating the body of Christ. Smooth words, flattering speech, and the voices of false or even well-meaning but misguided leaders can draw people into compromise, spiritual elitism, and emotional manipulation.

This is why we must sharpen our discernment. As John the Apostle warned, *"Test the spirits to see whether they are from God"* (see 1 John 4:1). We are to judge rightly. In fact, it will save your life to know truth from error.

4. Compromise and Lukewarmness: The Slow Fade

Revelation 3:16 delivers a sobering word to the church of Laodicea: *"Because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth"* (ESV).

Lukewarmness doesn't happen overnight. It begins when we make small compromises. When we stop developing intimacy with our Heavenly Father through prayer. When we excuse sin because "God understands, He loves me, and this little issue doesn't matter." When we lower our standards to avoid being labeled "radical."

Before long, what once grieved us no longer moves us. What once stirred our spirit now feels uncomfortable. We begin to embrace a form of godliness while denying its power.

The enemy rejoices when believers are no longer burning with holy fire. He doesn't need to get us to reject Christ—just to forget our first love.

5. Fatigue and Isolation: Wearing Out the Saints

Daniel prophesied that in the last days the enemy would “*speak against the Most High and oppress His holy people*” (Dan. 7:25). One translation says he will “*wear out the saints.*”

If satan can't destroy you, he will try to drain you. Fatigue is a tactic of the enemy. When you're emotionally and spiritually exhausted, you become vulnerable to deception and despair.

The enemy wants to isolate you—to convince you that you're alone in your struggle, that no one understands, that you should withdraw and keep quiet. Additionally, when you isolate yourself, you have no one to speak into your life, to challenge or test your beliefs. You may even come to believe that you alone have God's current revelation, or that you are part of an elite group of believers. Be aware: you are in dangerous territory.

But Scripture says, “*Two are better than one...If either of them falls down, one can help the other up*” (Eccles. 4:9a–10).

Don't retreat into spiritual loneliness. Find a mature group of believers and become accountable.

Standing in Authority and Purity

- Just as Wigglesworth demonstrated so well, we don't fight spiritual battles in our own strength—our authority flows from our position in Christ. We are seated with Christ in heavenly places (see Eph. 2:6).

- We are filled with the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead (see Rom. 8:11).
- We are clothed in His righteousness (see Isa. 61:10).
- We have authority over all the power of the enemy (see Luke 10:19).

But authority without holiness is dangerous. Purity is what preserves your power. A compromised believer cannot cast out what they entertain.

We must walk in purity, reverence, and obedience—not just outward behavior, but an inward surrender to God’s Word. The fear of the Lord must govern our choices. As Proverbs says, *“The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death”* (Prov. 14:27).

Our weapons are not carnal. They are mighty through God: truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, the Word, and prayer (see Eph. 6:10–18). These are not metaphors. They are your lifeline in battle.

To stand firm in this battle, we must put on the full armor of God every day—not as a symbolic gesture, but as a spiritual reality. The belt of truth, God’s living Word, anchors us; the breastplate of righteousness (walking right with our Lord) protects our hearts; and the shoes of peace, acting as our umpire, give us stability. The shield of faith extinguishes the enemy’s fiery darts, while the helmet of salvation guards our minds from lies. And our only offensive weapon—the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God—enables us to strike back with truth. Prayer is what activates and empowers it all. This is not optional attire for the spiritually elite—it is survival gear for every believer in this hour.

Corporate-Level Warfare: Battling for Institutions

While much of spiritual warfare is deeply personal, there is also a strategic, high-level battle raging over our institutions—such as the family, education, government, media, and even the church itself. These societal pillars shape the beliefs, behaviors, and destinies of entire generations. The enemy understands this, which is why he aggressively targets them.

We see it in schools, where children are taught to reject biblical truth and embrace ideologies that are in direct conflict with God's design. We see it in government, where unrighteous laws are being passed and justice is perverted. We see it in the media, where deception is normalized and truth is ridiculed. We see it in churches, where leaders are falling into scandal and messages are diluted to avoid offense. Most of all, we are attacked in God's first and most important institution, the family, where covenant commitment is meaningless and God's original design is maligned.

This is not merely human error. It is spiritual warfare on a corporate level. Principalities and powers are at work behind the scenes to dismantle godly influence and establish strongholds of darkness. So, how do we respond?

First, **we pray strategically**. God has given us the Truth, His Holy Spirit, and the authority to bind and loose (see Matt. 18:18). We must pray and act as righteous leaders and rise to the exposure of corruption with truth. We must intercede for our schools, asking God to put in place godly school boards and teachers, to remove deception and lies, and protect children's hearts and minds. We must declare the truth over the media, and pray for revival in churches and reformation in government.

Second, **we act courageously**. Nehemiah didn't just weep over the broken walls—he rebuilt them. We must do the same. That

may mean running for local office, starting a prayer group in your school district, or standing for truth in your workplace with grace and love. Don't underestimate the power of showing up. God is looking for watchmen on the wall—those who will see, pray, and act.

Third, **we stay rooted in truth.** The only way to resist deception in every area of society is to resist it on a personal level first. If we tolerate compromise in our own hearts, we will have no authority to contend for truth in the world around us. Personal purity empowers corporate impact.

This kind of warfare is not won in a day. But it can be won by a faithful, discerning, and courageous remnant who refuses to bow to fear, deception, or convenience. We are not helpless—we are His ambassadors, His Ekklesia, called to stand in the gap for our community, state, and nation, and especially for the next generation.

You're in Charge: Be Unshakable

We are living in an hour that demands spiritual clarity, moral courage, and unwavering commitment to Christ. This is not the time to shrink back. This is the time to rise up, girded in truth, walking in purity, and filled with the fire of God.

Victory in spiritual warfare is not about striving but about standing in our spiritual authority—firm in Christ, secure in His Word, and yielded to His Spirit. The enemy will come to steal, kill, and destroy. But Jesus came to give life—abundant, victorious, unshakable life.

I hear the Spirit saying: “Do not retreat. Do not yield your ground. For I have given you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. I am raising up a remnant—refined by fire, unshaken by fear, and filled with the power of My Spirit. You were born for this moment.”

Do not think that if you do nothing, the devil will simply go away. We must actively resist him—in the name of Jesus, by the power of His blood, and with the authority we’ve been given as sons and daughters of the Most High God. “*Resist the devil and he will flee,*” we read in James 4:7.

Always remember, satan is a usurper, a rebel, and a thief who has no right to steal, kill, and destroy, but *will* if not stopped. We have been delivered from satan’s authority and given a higher authority in the name and through the blood of Jesus Christ.

So, stand your ground. War with truth. Reject offense. Resist deception. Rebuke darkness. Stay continually filled with God’s Word and the fire of His Holy Spirit. This is the battle for which you’ve been prepared.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57 ESV).

Reflective Questions:

1. Where have you allowed offense to fester rather than forgive?
2. What thoughts have you agreed with that contradict God's Word?
3. Are there areas where you've compromised purity or grown lukewarm?
4. Who are you walking with in this battle? Who is alongside you in these days of shaking to pray with and for you, and to speak truth into your life?

Pause and Pray:

Father, awaken me to the battle we are in. Expose every lie I've believed, every offense I've held, and every area where I've compromised. Cleanse me. Fill me with boldness, discernment, and unwavering love for truth. Help me to stand in purity and walk in the fear of the Lord.

Strengthen me with Your Spirit and surround me with true brothers and sisters in Christ. Teach me to take up the authority You've given me in Christ—to resist the enemy, to speak truth boldly, and to intercede with power and confidence.

I declare: I will not shrink back. I will stand, and, in Jesus' name, I will take back the territory satan has stolen from me, my family, and my nation.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

SECTION III

THE WAY FORWARD

*These things I have spoken to you,
that in Me you may have peace.
In the world you will have tribulation;
but be of good cheer,
I have overcome the world.*

John 16:33 NKJV

CHAPTER 9

ENTERING GOD'S REST

The Key to Overcoming in Tribulation

The telegraph operator's hands trembled as he typed out perhaps the most devastating message ever sent: "Saved alone." Anna Spafford had survived the shipwreck on a trans-Atlantic voyage to Europe in 1783. Her four daughters had not.

Back in Chicago, Horatio Spafford—already financially ruined by the 1871 Great Fire—now faced unimaginable loss. Yet sailing to meet his devastated wife, he asked the captain to notify him when they neared the spot where his girls perished. Standing over those dark waters, Spafford didn't rage or despair. Instead, he penned words that would one day become one of the church's most beloved hymns:

"When peace like a river attendeeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'"

This wasn't denial. Spafford had discovered something our anxious world desperately needs: a rest that doesn't depend on calm circumstances. A rest found in the very center of the storm,

UNSHAKABLE

not because the waves stop crashing, but because we're anchored in Someone unshakable, Christ Jesus.

We are living in a time when pressures are increasing on every side. The Greek word for “tribulation” in John 16:33 is *thlipsis*—literally being squeezed or crushed, like pressing grapes or olives. It’s pressure that feels like it will destroy you.

Yet Christ Jesus promises: “*In Me you might have peace.*” Not after the tribulation. Not when things improve. But in the midst of crushing pressure. This is what Spafford found—not the absence of sorrow, but the presence of a peace that transcended sorrow.

When the world is shaking, entering into God’s rest is not a luxury, it’s a necessity. It’s how we can position ourselves to hear from the Lord and remain unshaken in the face of pressure. And it’s available to every believer who will stop striving long enough to receive it. We are encouraged that in our stillness, we learn to know our loving and comforting God (see Ps. 46:10).

The Rest That Remains

The Bible speaks of a “*rest that remains for the people of God*” (see Heb. 4:9). This isn’t merely about taking a break or getting more sleep, although both are valuable. It’s about entering a posture of heart that ceases striving, anxiety, and self-reliance. It is a deep inner knowing that God is in control and that we are held in His unshakable hands.

The writer of Hebrews uses the Israelites as a sobering example. Though God had delivered them from Egypt and provided for their every need, they refused to enter His rest. Why? “*So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief*” (Heb. 3:19 NKJV).

They had witnessed miracles—plagues that freed them, a sea that parted, manna from heaven, water from rocks. Yet when

faced with giants in the Promised Land, they chose fear over faith. They hardened their hearts and wandered for forty years in a wilderness that should have been an eleven-day journey.

The same danger confronts us today. In seasons of pressure, we can harden our hearts or open them. We can give way to fear, or we can learn to abide in the peace of God, which surpasses understanding (see Phil. 4:7).

What Spafford discovered in his darkest hour was more than comfort—it was a divine peace.

Learning from the Master of Rest

From the very beginning, God modeled rest for us. After six days of creation, He rested on the seventh—not because He was tired, but because He was establishing a pattern. The Sabbath was His gift to humanity, to enjoy Him and His creation. He established a weekly pattern declaring: I Am God, I am creating you to enjoy Me as I enjoy you. “*Come, enter into My rest!*” (see Heb. 4:9–11).

But God is revealing to us not just a weekly Sabbath, but a bigger picture. He built rest into the very fabric of creation. In Leviticus 25, He commanded something that would challenge anyone’s trust in Him: the Sabbatical Year.

In the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard (Leviticus 25:4 NKJV).

Imagine the trust this required. No plowing. No planting. No harvesting. For an entire year. In an agricultural society, this seemed like economic suicide. How would they feed their

families? What about their livestock? What if the surrounding nations attacked while they were vulnerable?

Yet our faithful and loving God promised something extraordinary: *“I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years”* (Lev. 25:21 NKJV). The sixth year's harvest would sustain them through the Sabbath year and beyond.

This wasn't about agricultural technique, it was about trust. God was teaching His people that His rest isn't just about physical recovery. It's about our radical dependence on His supernatural provision.

The Just Shall Live by Faith—Not Fear

Here's what separates those who enter God's rest from those who remain in anxiety: trust. As Habakkuk declared, *“The just shall live by his faith”* (Hab. 2:4 NKJV). Not by sight. Not by circumstances. Not by bank account balances or political outcomes. By faith. It's all about a trusting relationship with our Heavenly Father and Creator.

During World War II, as German bombs rained down on London night after night, families huddled in air raid shelters, sleepless with terror. Yet one elderly woman became known for her peaceful slumber through every raid.

“How can you possibly sleep while the world is falling apart above us?” someone finally asked.

She smiled gently. “My Bible says the God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. There's no sense in both of us staying awake.”

This wasn't naivety, it was the truth lived out. She understood what the psalmist knew: "*He who keeps you will not slumber*" (Ps. 121:3 ESV). Her rest wasn't based on the absence of bombs but on the presence of God.

This kind of faith-filled rest stands in stark contrast to our culture's anxiety epidemic. We've never had more conveniences, yet we've never been more stressed. We've never had more information, yet we've never felt more uncertain. Why? Because we're trying to find rest in all the wrong places.

Jesus Offers a Different Way

Into our pressure-cooker world, Jesus extends an invitation that hasn't expired:

Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:28–30 NKJV).

Notice Jesus doesn't promise to remove all yokes. He offers to exchange them. The yoke of self-reliance for the yoke of surrender, allowing Him to pull the load alongside you. The burden of control for a trusting partnership. It's a divine exchange where we trade our crushing loads for His presence, taking up the heavier part of life and making it lighter.

The Greek word for *easy* here literally means "well-fitted." Like a yoke custom-made for specific oxen, Jesus offers a life perfectly fitted to who He created you to be with Him alongside. No more striving to be someone else. No more carrying burdens you were never designed to bear.

The Rest That Transforms

The Jesus Movement taught us a vital truth about discovering God's rest. Thousands found genuine peace for the first time, trading anxiety for assurance. Yet when the movement's intensity faded, many returned to striving—not because God's rest was temporary, but because they hadn't learned to maintain it. The lesson? Rest isn't just a mountaintop experience—it's a lifetime of an intimate relationship with Christ and His Word.

This is the rest that transforms. It doesn't make you passive—it makes you powerful. When you're not wasting energy on anxiety, you have strength for your purpose and destiny. When you're not paralyzed by fear, you can move forward in unshakable faith in your Father's plan.

Practical Steps

If you're feeling the *thlipsis* right now—the pressure, the squeezing, the overwhelming weight—here are practical ways to enter His rest:

Start with honesty: Tell your loving Heavenly Father exactly where you're struggling. He already knows, but confession opens the door to freedom and His comfort.

Practice Sabbath: Start small. Take one hour, one evening, one day to cease striving—to “rest.” Turn off the notifications, TV, and internet. Step away from the demands. Simply take time with your Heavenly Father.

Meditate on His promises: Write out verses about God's faithfulness and post them where you'll see them. Let the truth of God's word displace worry and anxieties in your mind.

Find your rhythm: Jesus withdrew regularly to fellowship with His Father. Develop your own rhythm of withdrawal and engagement, work and rest, giving and receiving.

Join others: Often, rest is found in godly community. Find believers who understand this journey and walk together. Remember, we are made for community; we are not meant to walk alone.

Living from Rest, Not for Rest

Here's the paradigm shift: we don't work toward rest, we work from rest. We don't earn God's peace. We receive it and then live from that place of security.

Like Spafford standing over those tragic waters, we can face life's deepest sorrows and still declare, "It is well with my soul." Not because we're strong, but because we're held. Not because life is easy, but because God is faithful and our relationship with Him is unshakable.

The invitation stands. In a world of increasing pressure, Jesus offers an unshakable peace that surpasses all understanding (see Phil. 4:7). In a culture of constant striving, He provides supernatural rest. The question isn't whether it's available, it's whether we'll stop long enough to receive it.

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9 NKJV). Will you enter in?

Reflective Questions:

1. What areas of your life feel like *thlipsis* right now—where are you experiencing crushing pressure? Be specific with God about these burdens.
2. What prevents you from entering God's rest—fear, control, unbelief, or something else? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the barriers.
3. How would your daily life change if you truly trusted God could handle things without your constant striving? Picture living from rest instead of for rest.

Pause and Pray:

Father, I confess that I've been carrying burdens You never asked me to bear. I've been striving when You've invited me to rest. I've chosen anxiety over trust, control over surrender.

Today, I accept Your invitation. I cast all my anxiety on You—the financial pressures, the relationship struggles, the uncertainty about tomorrow. I choose to believe that You are working even when I'm resting.

Teach me the rhythm of grace. Show me how to work from rest, not for it. Help me trust You like that woman in the air raid shelter; like Spafford over those dark waters.

I declare that in You, I have peace. In this world, I will have tribulation, but You have overcome the world. Therefore, it is well with my soul.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands
is not quickly broken.*

Ecclesiastes 4:12

CHAPTER 10

THE POWER OF FAMILY & COMMUNITY

Creating Covenant Relationships
That Can Endure the Storm

The knock came at midnight.

In Nazi-occupied Holland, a midnight knock meant only one thing—someone was running for their life. Corrie ten Boom hurried down the narrow stairs of her family’s residence above their watch shop in a small Dutch town. Through the door’s peephole, she saw a woman clutching a baby, terror etched on her face.

“Miss ten Boom, I’m told you help people. My husband has been arrested for hiding Jews. They’re coming for me next. Will you take my baby?”

Corrie didn’t hesitate. At fifty years old, unmarried, living with her elderly father and sister, she had every reason to protect their quiet life. Instead, she opened the door.

This single act of covenant love would transform their home into “The Hiding Place,” part of an underground network that would save over 800 Jewish lives. But the ten Booms didn’t act alone. Their survival—and the survival of those they protected—depended on something our isolated age has largely forgotten: the power of covenant community.

UNSHAKABLE

A baker down the street provided bread without demanding ration cards. A government clerk risked execution to forge identity papers. Farmers outside the city created a pipeline of safe houses. Ordinary Dutch families became an extraordinary network of preservation. They weren't connected by social media or organizational charts. They were bound by something deeper—a commitment that said, “Your life matters more than my comfort. We stand or fall together.”

When the Gestapo finally discovered the ten Boom operation, they arrested the entire family. At the police station, the Nazi officer gave Casper ten Boom, Corrie's 84-year-old father, one last chance: “Old man, if I let you go home, will you stop this dangerous work?”

Casper's response revealed the heart of covenant community: “I will open my door to anyone who knocks for help.”

He died ten days later in prison. But the network survived. The refugees hidden in the ten Boom home were never found. The community that had formed in crisis proved stronger than the forces trying to destroy it.

What the ten Booms understood—what cost them everything and saved hundreds—is a truth written into the very fabric of creation: we were never meant to survive alone. In times of shaking, when institutions fail and dangers multiply, it's not the isolated who endure. It's those bound together by covenant love who weather the storm. This isn't just a wartime principle. Historians William Strauss and Neil Howe observed this pattern throughout Western history. During every major crisis—which they term a “Fourth Turning”—the same truth emerges: “...each person will realize the need to belong to something larger than self. Family, community, and faith will matter more than ever.”

We are entering such a time. The foundations are shaking. The familiar is failing. And just as in Holland during the war, our survival—spiritual, emotional, and perhaps even physical—will depend not on our individual strength but on the communities we build and the covenants we keep.

The question is: Are we building networks of convenience that dissolve under pressure, or covenant communities that endure through any storm?

The Resilient Design of Community

Long before sociologists began studying social networks, before historians identified generational patterns, God had already hardwired the importance of community into the human story. In fact, the very first “not good” in the Bible wasn’t sin—it was solitude. “*It is not good for the man to be alone*,” God said in Genesis 2:18. And from that moment, a thread of togetherness—family, tribe, covenant, and spiritual community—began weaving through every page of Scripture.

The Early Church modeled this powerfully. As persecution raged and believers faced unimaginable pressure, what did God build? Not just casual relationships. Not just impersonal gatherings. He built committed community—His Ekklesia.

All the believers were together and had everything in common.... They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts (Acts 2:44,46b).

They became a spiritual family, bound together not by blood, but by the Spirit of Christ and their shared calling. Their strength didn’t come from perfect circumstances—it came from shared faith and sacrificial love.

But the foundation for this kind of unity was laid long before the institution of the Church was built. To understand the power of community, we must first return to the Garden—to God’s original design for family.

God’s Original Design for Family and Community

In the Garden of Eden, before the Fall, we see the blueprint for both family and community. God formed Adam in His own image—not to be isolated, but to walk in relationship with Him. And because *“it is not good for man to be alone,”* God created Eve—not just as a companion, but as the beginning of family (see Gen. 2:18). Family wasn’t just God’s original relational design—it was His first survival structure. Long before nations or churches existed, God built a household.

A strong family won’t shield us from every storm, but it will anchor us when everything else is shaking. When households are rooted in faith, covenant, and purpose, they become places of spiritual legacy, emotional safety, and generational strength.

Flowing from God’s design for family is His vision for community—starting with the idea of a “neighbor.” In Scripture, the Hebrew word *rea* means more than just someone who lives nearby. It speaks of deep connection—shared life, mutual care, and covenant friendship.

When Jesus said the greatest commandments are to love God and love our neighbor, He was pointing us back to this original order: walking closely with God and with one another.

In ancient Israel, community was built around family. The twelve tribes weren’t just regions—they were extended families,

descended from Jacob's sons. Each tribe had a unique identity, yet they were united by covenant and purpose. They camped together, worshiped together, and went to battle together.

And the same is true for us. If we want to build communities that are unshakable, we must strengthen the households that hold them together. This begins with our own families—imperfect though they may be. It means investing in relationships, pursuing unity, and walking in covenant love with one another.

Healing What's Been Broken

Are there relationships in your family that need forgiveness, healing, or mending? Don't put this off. God is calling all of us to be reconcilers—to forgive, to reach out, to restore. The restoration of families is a prophetic key to enduring what's ahead and becoming a guiding light to others.

I've witnessed miraculous family restorations when people choose humility over pride, forgiveness over bitterness. One man I counseled hadn't spoken to his brother in fifteen years over a business dispute. When he finally picked up the phone—not to rehearse grievances but to repent for his own hardness of heart—it began a process that not only restored their relationship but united their families in Christ-centered faith.

This is why reclaiming the power of family is essential in preparing for uncertain times. Our homes must become more than places of rest—they must become altars of prayer, centers of discipleship, and lighthouses of hope in a culture of chaos.

Families That Endure the Storm

As we face the turbulence of our times, this original blueprint becomes more than a theological ideal—it becomes a survival strategy.

As Strauss and Howe observed, during times of national crisis, it's the family that holds society together. In *The Fourth Turning*, they note: “When all else seems lost, it's the family unit that becomes the refuge—the last trusted institution in a world unraveling.” This principle echoes Scripture.

In Deuteronomy 6, God instructed the families of Israel to share the stories of His faithfulness from generation to generation—not in a synagogue or temple alone, but in our homes.

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6:7).

The home becomes the first place of discipleship, the primary culture-shaping institution. As the Psalmist declares: “*I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders*” (Ps. 78:2b–4 NLT).

But how do we practically establish these rhythms in our modern, busy households? My wife, Cheryl, addresses this very question in her book *Fire on the Family Altar: Experience the Holy Spirit's Power in Your Home*. She provides practical guidance for creating consistent times of family worship, prayer, and discipleship that fit real family life. Just as the ten Boom family's daily altar

prepared them to become a refuge during crisis, your family altar can become the foundation for weathering any storm.

Finding Your Tribe—Before the Storm Hits

Crisis has a way of stripping away the non-essential and reminding us of what truly matters. Community isn't a luxury; it's a lifeline.

This is the hour to return to biblical community—what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “life together.” In his classic book by the same name, Bonhoeffer wrote, “The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer.” He penned those words while leading an underground seminary during Nazi Germany—a time of great shaking. His point still stands: when evil rises and systems collapse, real Christian community shines.

What does that look like practically? It looks like small groups praying in homes and churches. It looks like shared meals and shared burdens. It looks like calling out the Christ-likeness in one another and refusing to let a brother or sister walk alone. It means building up one another in love and encouragement.

If we have learned anything in recent years, it is that we can't go it alone. The illusion of self-sufficiency has crumbled. We were never meant to navigate uncertainty in isolation. And in times of shaking, your tribe—your spiritual family—can be the difference between collapse and endurance.

You may have heard the phrase “find your tribe,” usually in social settings or among those seeking community. But spiritually, it means something much deeper. It's not about preference—it's

about alignment. God is positioning His people in relational fortresses, not just for fellowship, but for purpose and function.

Each fall from my office on the campus of Arizona Christian University, I see students searching for more than classes or roommates—they're seeking community. Some are far from home or come from broken families. But something beautiful happens. Groups form. Friendships deepen. They begin to create their own spiritual families—places where they can pray together, share burdens, practice vulnerability, and know that someone has their back. In doing so, they discover what we're all ultimately longing for—true spiritual family. Whether you find your tribe in a small group at church, a homeschool co-op, or a community Bible study, the point is this: you're not meant to do life alone. God will lead you to people who strengthen you—and He may call you to be that strength for someone else.

Communities of Light in Dark Times

One of the most prophetic insights I've heard recently came from a woman who had a profound encounter with the Lord during a near-death experience. In that moment between Heaven and Earth, Jesus showed her what was coming—waves of spiritual upheaval sweeping across the globe. And right in the middle of it, He revealed communities of light—believers rooted in Christ and in one another. “These communities,” she heard Him say, “will be like arks in a time of flood—not to escape from the world, but to preserve life and truth until the waters recede.”

That image stays with me.

In these arks of refuge, she saw families opening their homes, believers praying fervently, sharing meals and meeting needs, young people being discipled, and spiritual gifts flowing freely.

These weren't perfect people. But they were present. Available. Accountable. And because of that, they became unshakable.

The Bible offers a blueprint for this. Remember Goshen? It was the region in Egypt where God sovereignly placed His people during a time of national crisis. Located in the northeastern part of Egypt's Nile Delta, Goshen was a fertile and well-watered land—ideal for Jacob's family and their flocks. Genesis 46–47 tells how Jacob (also called Israel) and his descendants settled there by divine provision.

While plagues and judgment struck the rest of Egypt, Goshen became a refuge. When darkness covered the land for three days, there was still light in Goshen (see Exod. 10:23). When chaos and destruction fell on Egypt, God preserved peace, provision, and protection for His people in the place He had appointed.

Goshen is a prophetic picture of what God does for His people in times of shaking. He gathers them, covers them, and releases His presence among them. But Goshen didn't build itself. It was cultivated by God's people through relationship, obedience, and faith.

And that's what God is calling us to do now—not to withdraw in fear, but to build Goshens right where we are. Whether in homes, churches, or neighborhoods, we are to create pockets of light, safety, and spiritual readiness for what's ahead.

How to Build Unshakable Community

So, what does this look like practically? How do we prepare ourselves and our communities to be Goshens in the coming days?

Here are six characteristics I believe every unshakable community must have:

1. Covenant Relationships, Not Casual Ones: Real community is in loving relationships; not just a building. It takes more than convenience; it requires commitment. Covenant relationships say, “I’m not walking away when it gets hard.” These bonds are built in the Spirit of Christ, not just through shared interests. Like the ten Boom network, they’re willing to sacrifice comfort for each other’s survival.

2. Prayer That Shapes Atmospheres: These communities pray—and not just before meals. Seeking God and worshipping Him together becomes the oxygen of the community—as the Holy Spirit breathes life, health and strength into His people. In these times, they discern what God is saying. It’s how they intercede for one another, hear strategy from Heaven, and stay aligned with God’s purposes.

3. Shared Burdens and Shared Resources: In Acts 2, the early believers “*had everything in common.*” They didn’t stockpile; they shared. Whether food, money, wisdom, or time—everyone contributed, and no one was left behind. In today’s world, that kind of generosity stands out like a lighthouse in a storm.

4. Focus on Discipling the Next Generation: These communities make Christian discipleship a central priority. They intentionally raise up children and youth in the Word of God, equipping them with biblical truth, a genuine relationship with the Holy Spirit, and the confidence to stand firm in their faith—even when others fall away.

5. Partnership Beyond Themselves: The Early Church didn't operate alone. They built trust and support with communities in other regions. We must do the same—standing together, offering help, accountability, and shared mission. No community is an island.

6. An Outward Focus: Communities that turn inward become stagnant. True Goshen communities reach outward with the hope of Christ. This is not a time to hide and hoard, but to arise and shine. Like the ten Boom home, they become places where anyone who knocks finds help.

When we find our spiritual family, we're not just meeting emotional needs—we're stepping into God's design for a global move of His Spirit. What He's building in living rooms and small groups today is preparation for something much greater. To reap the coming harvest, the Lord is preparing His people as a great "fishnet," one able to hold the massive harvest that is coming. The stronger the relationships, the stronger the net will be. This net is already forming in neighborhoods where believers are hearing God's summons to prepare.

A Modern-Day Example

In Gig Harbor, Washington, one church took the call to build community seriously—and strategically. Their town is connected to the mainland by an aging bridge, and leaders realized that if a disaster ever caused the bridge to collapse, residents could be completely cut off. Instead of waiting for a crisis to strike, they developed a proactive plan.

The congregation was divided into neighborhood-based small groups that regularly meet for prayer, meals, and fellowship. Each group has a designated team leader equipped with a

satellite phone to stay in communication should the power or cell towers fail. These groups have stored food, water, and emergency supplies—not only for their own use, but to assist neighbors in need. They are prepared, not just logistically, but spiritually and relationally. In a time of shaking, this church isn't just aiming to survive—they're positioned to share and shine.

We must return to this kind of community—not out of fear, but out of faith. The days ahead may bring greater challenges, but they will also bring greater opportunity to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and love.

A Prophetic Call to Rebuild

In Nehemiah's day, the people of God were scattered, weary, and under constant threat. But when the call to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem went out, families responded. Each household took a section of the wall and rebuilt—side by side, shoulder to shoulder. The Bible says, *"The people worked with all their heart"* (Neh.4:6b).

We are in a Nehemiah moment. As families and communities, we are being called to rebuild—not just physical structures, but spiritual walls of protection, purpose, and presence.

This is not the time to retreat into personal comfort or spiritual complacency. This is the time to link arms, rebuild what has been broken, and prepare places where God's presence can dwell in strength.

Like the ten Boom family who opened their door at midnight, we must decide: Will we protect our comfortable isolation, or will we risk everything for covenant community? Will we

build networks of convenience that crumble under pressure, or relationships that can endure any storm?

Your living room can become a sanctuary. Your dinner table, a place of discipleship. Your family, a light that guides others home.

The knock is coming. The question is: Will your door be open?

Reflective Questions:

1. Who are the people God has placed around you to walk with in this season? Are you actively investing in those relationships, or are there connections that need to be strengthened?
2. Are there relationships in your family or community that need healing, forgiveness, or reconciliation? What would it look like to take a first step toward restoration?
3. What practical steps can you take to build or join a “Goshen community”—a place of refuge, prayer, and shared purpose—in your home, church, or neighborhood?
4. Which of the six characteristics of unshakable community is weakest in your current relationships? How can you begin to strengthen it?
5. If crisis came tomorrow, who would you turn to? Who would turn to you? Are those relationships covenant or convenience?

Pause and Pray:

Father God, thank You for Your perfect design—for creating us not to walk alone, but in relationship with You and with one another. In a world that is shaking, draw me back to the foundation of family and community. Heal what is broken in my home. Restore what has been lost in my relationships. Teach me to live in covenant love—with grace, humility, and truth.

Show me who You're calling me to link arms with in this season. Give me courage like the ten Booms to open my door, wisdom like Nehemiah to build strategically, and faith like the Early Church to share generously.

Strengthen my home to become a place of prayer and peace. Help me build community that reflects Your kingdom—where the hurting find hope, the isolated find connection, and the next generation finds faith.

Lord, show me where You are calling me to forgive, to reconcile, and to rebuild. Let my family burn bright with Your presence and become a light in the darkness.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastati-
ons; they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.*

Isaiah 61:4 ESV

CHAPTER 11

DISCIPLING REBUILDERS FOR THE FUTURE

Preparing a Generation to Restore What We've Lost

In 1900, a researcher named A.E. Winship decided to trace the bloodlines of two men who lived at the same time in colonial America. His findings would reveal one of the most powerful truths about generational impact ever documented.

The first man was Jonathan Edwards—the brilliant preacher whose sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” helped spark the Great Awakening. The second was Max Jukes, a frontiersman and contemporary who rejected faith in God and lived for himself.

Winship traced nearly 1,400 descendants of Jonathan Edwards. Among them he found:

- 13 college presidents
- 65 professors
- 100 lawyers and 30 judges
- 66 physicians
- 80 holders of public office, including 3 governors, 3 senators, and 1 vice president

UNSHAKABLE

The legacy reads like a “Who’s Who” of American leadership—men and women who shaped education, law, medicine, and government for over a century.

Then Winship turned to Max Jukes’ lineage. Among his 1,200 documented descendants:

- 310 died as paupers
- 150 were criminals
- 7 were murderers
- 100 were drunkards
- More than half the women were prostitutes

The cost to the state? Over \$1.25 million in 19th-century dollars—while the Edwards line had contributed immeasurably to society.

What made the difference?

Every evening, without fail, Jonathan Edwards spent an hour teaching and praying with his eleven children. Despite pastoring a church, writing theological works that would influence centuries, and later serving as president of Princeton—he never let success steal his family legacy. His children were his first congregation, his home his primary ministry.

Edwards understood something our generation is in danger of forgetting: what we build in our children outlasts what we build anywhere else. You can lose your fortune, your reputation, even your life—but what you deposit into the next generation compounds for centuries.

But here’s what the Lord has been showing me. Edwards wasn’t just raising godly children. He was raising rebuilders. Each

generation of his descendants didn't merely maintain what they received—they expanded it, applied it to new spheres, and rebuilt broken systems around them. They were prepared not just to survive their times but to shape them.

This is the prophetic call of this hour. We stand at the edge of a great shaking, and many of us who are older may not see its completion. The rebuilding may extend beyond our lifetime. But that doesn't excuse us from responsibility—it intensifies it. We are not just preparing the next generation to weather the storm. We are preparing them to architect what comes after.

A Generation Born for the Ruins

My wife, Cheryl, and I have spent decades walking alongside young people in various seasons of life. At ACU, we've mentored countless students and young adults. Beyond the campus, we've invested in young leaders just starting their careers and ministries, teachers shaping the next generation in classrooms, and young families trying to build something lasting in a crumbling culture. We've sat across from them in our living room, taken them to lunch, prayed with them through crisis phone calls at midnight, celebrated their victories, and wept through their defeats.

This has been our life's work—not just our profession, but our calling. Yet I want to be clear: this isn't a special calling reserved only for those in vocational ministry or education. This is the calling of every believer who names Christ as Lord. We are all commissioned to invest in the next generation through relationship and discipleship. Whether you're a businessperson mentoring a young colleague, a grandmother teaching her grandchildren to pray, or a neighbor who opens your home to the teenagers on your street—we all have a part to play in raising up the rebuilders.

And through these decades of walking with young people, Cheryl and I can tell you with certainty that this generation is different. They carry a peculiar mixture of brokenness and destiny. They've inherited a world already shaking—broken families, corrupted institutions, confused identities. Yet I see in their eyes something I've rarely seen before: a hunger for authentic rebuilding.

They're not interested in propping up failing systems. They want to build something new, something true, something that lasts. But here's the tragedy. While they have the calling, most lack the foundation. They have passion but not preparation. They have vision but not wisdom.

Recently, during prayer, something clicked that changed how I see everything. This emerging generation—they're not just picking up where we leave off. They're like a Joshua generation to our Moses. We may see the promised land of restoration from a distance, but they are the ones who will actually enter it and build there. They will inhabit the land and dispossess the giants.

We are living in a time of prophetic urgency. The prophet Joel saw this moment: *"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions"* (Joel 2:28 NIV). Notice the generational partnership—not just young or old, but both together. The older generation dreams of what could be; the younger see how to build it. But this only works well when we're connected. Because then there's synergistic transfer, and relationship bridges the generations.

The Ancient Path of Life-Transfer

God never intended discipleship to be a classroom exercise. In the Hebraic model, you couldn't separate learning from living, knowing from applying, teaching from relationship. When Jesus called His disciples, He didn't say, "Attend my seminar." He said, "Follow Me."

For three years, they lived together, ate together, and ministered together. They watched Him pray *before* they heard Him teach on prayer. They saw Him serve *before* He taught them about servanthood. They witnessed His tears over Jerusalem *before* He explained God's heart for the lost. The teaching flowed from living together in relationship.

Somewhere, we lost this ancient wisdom. Teaching became lecturing. Mentoring turned into a curriculum. Daily life together dissolved into a series of scheduled events. And our children? They're drowning in activities and information while starving for formation.

I think of our daughter, Nicole, and son-in-law Marco, who have made their home a place of life transformation. They don't wait for perfect moments—they invite young men and women into the chaos of real life. Their door is always open, their table always has room for one more, and their lives are transparently shared in a Christ-like manner.

Marco has a particular burden for young men who were never truly fathered. Many of them grew up without a strong male role model and never learned basic life skills—how to use power tools, write a resume, or change the oil in a car. But even more than these practical gaps, they carry deep questions about manhood, identity, and purpose.

That's why Marco meets with them regularly for intentional discipleship. Together, they identify the areas where these young men need to grow—not just spiritually, but practically. Life itself becomes the practicum. They pray about how to navigate problems when life falls apart. They discuss work ethic, calling, and career paths. Around a meal, honest conversations unfold—about wounds, dreams, and what it means to be a man of God.

It's not a formal program. It's discipleship through relationship. It's doing life together. And little by little, these young men are receiving what they never had: a model of mature manhood, rooted in faith, forged in real life, and shaped by love.

Learning from the Jesus Movement's Wake

During the Jesus Movement, thousands of young people encountered Christ in powerful, transformative ways. I watched this firsthand—young men and women on fire for God, ready to change the world. But here's what breaks my heart: many of their children and grandchildren today don't know Christ. Why? Because the older generations failed not only to transfer the fire but to build a strong biblical foundation in the next generation.

The movement produced converts, but not always disciples. It created experiences, but not always rebuilders. When those passionate young believers became parents, they often didn't know how to pass on what they'd received. They could tell their testimony, but struggled to demonstrate daily discipleship.

This is why our calling to raise rebuilders is so urgent. The next generation needs more than our passion—they need our preparation. They need to see faith that not only experiences

God but also knows how to build lasting structures that transfer truth to generations beyond them.

This is the lesson for our moment. Yes, we must prepare the next generation for the crisis ahead. Yes, they need to know how to stand when everything falls. But even more, they need to know how to build when the dust settles. They need not just survival skills but architectural wisdom. They need to understand not just what failed but why it failed, and how to build better.

Raising Architects, Not Just Survivors

Here's what the Spirit has been impressing on my heart: we're not just raising children—we're raising rebuilders. We're not just transferring faith, we're transferring the ability to apply that faith to broken systems. We're not just preparing them to maintain—we're preparing them to restore, and make disciples.

My friend, Steven, who previously taught as a professor at Grand Canyon University, understands this well. One semester, he noticed that Carsten, one of his brightest students, was not only on the brink of failing his class but was also flunking out of the university altogether. He realized Carsten's problem wasn't lack of intelligence—it was lack of God-inspired motivation and purpose.

Instead of giving up on him due to an academic expulsion, Steven reached out in caring relationship to encourage, counsel, and speak life into Carsten even though he had returned home to Los Angeles. Carsten made the commitment to follow Steven's encouragement to return to school when eligible. Through close personal relationship involving conversations about personal discipline, God's calling, and what it means to live with vision,

UNSHAKABLE

Carsten graduated with a BS in Computer Science with the highest GPA.

Carsten has subsequently landed a high-paying job with amazing opportunities, married, and started a family; but most importantly he's committed to seek the Holy Spirit in following God's design for his life and guiding his family.

What made the difference? Not a better textbook or a stricter deadline—but a person who cared enough to disciple him through real life. Steven and Carsten continue to walk together to this day. This is the kind of relational investment that shapes future rebuilders.

Sometimes the word “*mentoring*” is perceived as a program—mechanical and impersonal. But true Spirit-led mentoring is so much more than that. It's about genuinely caring for someone—sacrificially investing time and resources, walking with them through challenges, to see God's plan fully unfold in their life. That's the heart of the gospel passed from one generation to the next. That's legacy.

Our young people need this kind of spiritual and practical mentorship to prepare them to be rebuilders of culture today. They'll need to rebuild educational systems that have abandoned truth. They'll need to restore business practices that honor God and serve people. They'll need to reconstruct family structures that reflect God's design. They'll need to create new media that carries light rather than darkness. This is why our discipleship must be holistic—encompassing the whole life.

I think of Daniel and his three friends—young men prepared for such a time. They knew the Scriptures, yes. But they also excelled in “*every kind of literature and learning*” (see Dan. 1:17). They walked with integrity, humbly stood in the king's court,

and spoke wisdom that surpassed the best thinkers of their culture. They didn't just survive Babylon—they influenced it.

But here's the key: this preparation to transform culture occurs through intentional, godly relationships. Young people need to see biblical truth lived out, not just taught. They need mentors who are actually building in these spheres, who can say, "Come walk with me and I'll show you how God's wisdom applies to this challenge."

The Compound Legacy

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of raising rebuilders is this: we must teach them to think generationally. The rebuilding after this shaking may take multiple generations. What they start, their children may need to continue. What they lay as foundations, their grandchildren may complete and pass on.

This is why we must teach them not just to be disciples but to make disciples. Not just to rebuild but to raise rebuilders. Not just to receive but to transfer.

I've witnessed this multiplication mindset in action through my son-in-law's father, Pete, who has hosted an annual Father-Son campout for over forty years on a Northern California beach. Men, who once came as boys with their fathers, now bring their sons. Some are already planning to bring their grandchildren.

What makes this so powerful is the wholeness of it—fathers and sons doing life together. They play ball, prepare meals, struggle to start campfires, and laugh when pancakes burn. They also worship the Lord under stars and pray together.

Many fathers say, “I learned to be a better father by watching other men lovingly interact with their sons.”

This is generational transfer in action, life caught more than taught. Every moment becomes formative, whether casting fishing lines or praying at sunrise. They’re not just making memories; they’re transferring a way of modeling godly fatherhood.

This is the multiplication mindset. Paul captured it perfectly: *“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others”* (2 Tim. 2:2 NLT). Four generations in one verse—Paul to Timothy to reliable people to others.

Jonathan Edwards understood this. He wasn’t just raising godly children, he was launching a generational movement. Each child became a carrier of God’s kingdom culture, passing it on and expanding it. The compound effect over centuries is staggering.

But it started simply—fathers and mothers living their faith openly before their children. Every conversation, every decision, every prayer witnessed, became a seed that would bear fruit for centuries.

The Urgency of Now

As I write these words, I feel the weight of urgency. The shaking has begun. The foundations are already trembling. We may have years, or we may have less. But this we know: the generation rising needs us now.

Most of all, they need to see faith that builds, as well as faith that believes. They need to witness wisdom that creates, not only wisdom that critiques. They need examples of believers who excel in every sphere while maintaining spiritual integrity.

The Lord spoke to me recently in prayer: “Many of My people are preparing to survive the shaking. But I am calling them to prepare the rebuilders. These will be like Joseph—storing up wisdom for the generation that must lead when the famine comes. These will be like Moses’ parents—preparing deliverers even while in bondage. These will be like Mordecai—positioning Esthers for their moment of influence.”

This is our calling. Not only to weather the storm but to prepare those who will rebuild after it passes. Not just to maintain our faith but to transfer the wisdom to rebuild. Not just to disciple converts but to raise architects that impact the world and build on the only foundation that lasts. *“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 3:11).

Your Part in the Generational Story

Look around you. Whom has God placed in your sphere of influence? Your children, a niece, or nephew? A young person at work? A family in your neighborhood? The next generation is everywhere, waiting for someone to show them the biblical model of restoration and rebuilding.

Start small. Invite a young person to coffee. Take the time to hear their story and share yours—not just your successes but your failures and what God taught you through them. Include them in your work, your ministry, your daily life. Let them see

how faith functions in the real world. Your investment will pay off.

Remember Jonathan Edwards, who made his children his priority despite enormous ministry demands. Yes, he spent that dedicated hour teaching them, but more importantly, he invited them into his life. They learned much from watching him handle rejection and criticism from his former colleagues. They absorbed faithfulness in the living Christ by living alongside him. What looked like simple family life was actually generational investment. The return was immeasurable—generations of leaders who shaped a nation.

The ruins await rebuilding. The fractured foundations call for restoration. But it won't happen automatically. It happens when one generation decides to pour into the next, when relationship bridges the years, when wisdom transfers through life. Some of us may not live to see the rebuilding completed. Like Moses, we may only glimpse the promised land from afar. But like Moses, we can prepare the Joshuas who will lead the people in. We can transfer God's blueprints, share His vision, impart His wisdom, and demonstrate His way.

This is perhaps our most sacred assignment in this hour of shaking—not only to stand firm ourselves but to prepare those who will rebuild when the shaking ends. Not just to preserve the faith but to transfer the wisdom of God. Not just to survive but to ensure that what rises from the ruins reflects God's design rather than man's.

The question is not whether this generation will rebuild—they will. The question is: Will they rebuild on the Rock, or on sand?

The next generation is watching. What will they see? What will they learn? What legacy will you leave?

The time is now. The stakes are eternal. And the God who commanded us to make disciples promises to be with us always, even to the end of the age. Let us rise to the call—not just to survive the shaking, but to shape what follows. To raise sons and daughters who will build on the unshakable foundation of Christ.

After the shaking when the dust settles, may it be said of us: they did not shrink back. They prepared a generation who knew their God, who rebuilt the ruins, and who left a legacy that could not be shaken.

Reflective Questions:

1. Whom has God placed in your life from the next generation—starting with family, neighbors, or those in your sphere of influence? How might He be calling you to invest in them as future rebuilders?
2. What wisdom has God taught you through your failures and successes that needs to be transferred to the next generation? Who needs to hear your story? Are you willing to hear theirs?
3. How can you shift from information transfer to life transfer in your relationships with younger believers? What would it look like to include them in your real life and work?
4. Are you thinking generationally—preparing not just the next generation but teaching them to prepare the generation after them? How can you instill this multiplication mindset?

Pause and Pray:

Father, You are the God of generations, the One who sees the end from the beginning. You're not just concerned with my survival but with what I build and who I raise up to continue building.

Lord, give me the wisdom to leave a lasting legacy for the generations to come. Use me to prepare the next generation, not just as survivors, but as rebuilders.

Help me transfer more than information, but Your life. Make my daily walk a living demonstration of Your faithfulness for those coming behind me. Like Jonathan Edwards, help me see that my greatest legacy isn't in what I accomplish but in who I invest Your life into. Give me the courage and humility to invest today so that You will have a harvest tomorrow.

Raise up a generation of rebuilders who will restore the ruins, repair the broken cities, and demonstrate Your kingdom. And let it begin with me, in my sphere, with those You've placed in my path.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*These who have turned the world
upside down have come here too.*

Acts 17:6 NKJV

CHAPTER 12

TURNING THE WORLD RIGHT SIDE UP

How Everyday Believers Can
Transform Culture—Everyday

In 1732, two young men boarded a ship bound for the West Indies with an unthinkable plan. They would sell themselves into slavery.

Johann Leonhard Dober was a master pottery maker. David Nitschmann was a carpenter. They were ordinary craftsmen from a small Moravian community in Germany—refugees who had found refuge on Count Zinzendorf’s estate. But during a powerful move of God’s Spirit in their community, they’d been gripped by one burning question: How could they reach the slaves on Caribbean sugar plantations with the Gospel?

The answer seemed impossible. No missionary could access those plantations. No preacher would be allowed near the slaves. So these two young men chose the only path available—they would become slaves themselves.

As their ship pulled away from shore, their fellow believers on the dock began singing. The two missionaries called out what would become the Moravian motto: “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering!”

This radical act sparked something unprecedented. The Moravians pioneered a revolutionary approach to missions. They went not as professional clergy but as skilled workers. Potters, carpenters, teachers, merchants—ordinary believers who carried the Gospel into every sphere of society through their trades. Within thirty years, Moravian businesses and missions had spread to five continents. Their excellence in craftsmanship opened doors. Their integrity in business built trust. Their lives demonstrated the Kingdom of God in action.

They weren't trying to impose religion on culture. They were demonstrating what culture looks like when aligned with God's design. In other words, they weren't turning the world upside down—they were turning it right side up.

This is still our calling today.

Throughout this book, we've seen the shaking, built unshakable foundations, and prepared for what's ahead. Now we arrive at this truth: God didn't prepare us merely to weather the storm. He prepared us to transform culture with truth. Every believer. Every sphere. Every workplace, neighborhood, and industry.

The Moravians understood what we must reclaim: you don't need a pulpit to change the world. You need a potter's wheel, a laptop, a classroom, a boardroom—whatever tool God has placed in your hands. You need to show up where God has planted you, filled with His Spirit, excellent in your work, and ready to demonstrate the principles of God's Kingdom.

The World That Needs Righting

Let's be honest with each other. Our world today is upside down in so many ways. We see it in the brokenness of families, the

corruption in our institutions, the confusion about basic human identity, and the persistent attempt to build a society without Christ Jesus at its center.

This isn't new. It's the same fallen world the Early Church faced—just with different clothing. They encountered idol worship; we face materialism. They dealt with Roman imperial power; we navigate through power-crazy corporate and technological giants. They confronted philosophical arguments against God's Truth; we address relativism in a postmodern, post-truth era that clamors at our self-importance.

Yet here we stand at a critical moment in history—what we've been discussing throughout this book as the “fourth turning”—a time of crisis and rebuilding. As foundations shake, we have an opportunity that only comes once in 80-100 years: to demonstrate God's better way. Not through human efforts or worldly strategies, but through lives transformed, work so excellent, and communities so life-giving that the world can't help but notice and be drawn to the light of God in you.

The early Christians were accused of turning the world upside down because they lived as if Jesus were Lord of everything. Not just Lord of their private spiritual life, but Lord of their families, their businesses, their security, their relationships. They took Him at His word when He said, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*” (see Matt. 28:18).

The Book of Acts: A Blueprint for Cultural Transformation

The Book of Acts isn't just a fascinating historical account—it's a blueprint for how ordinary people filled with God's extraordinary Spirit can transform culture from the inside out. Let's relook

at what made these early believers so effective at turning their world right side up:

1. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus ascended, He told His disciples to wait for the promise of the Father. He said, *“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me”* (Acts 1:8a NKJV). Everything that happened in Acts flowed from this reality—ordinary people, living extraordinary lives when filled with God’s Spirit, pointing to the living reality of the Risen One, Christ Jesus (see Acts 4).

This wasn’t just for special occasions. Being *“filled with the Holy Spirit”* (see Eph. 5:18) was to be their continuous state. They didn’t compartmentalize the Spirit’s work to religious activities. He empowered them to proclaim His goodness, yes, but also empowered their daily work, problem-solving, and relationships. A Holy Spirit-filled life naturally overflows into every sphere of cultural influence.

2. They formed genuine community. Acts 2:42–47 shows believers devoted to one another in teaching and living out God’s Word, in fellowship, in breaking bread, and in prayer. They shared their possessions, met needs, and enjoyed God’s favor. This wasn’t a program—it was authentic relationship that attracted others.

Their economic practices alone were revolutionary. In a world of extreme inequality, they created communities where *“there was not a needy person among them”* (see Acts 4:34). This wasn’t socialism—it was God’s love in action. They maintained private property but held it loosely, ready to meet any need. Their radical generosity was a living sermon that turned economic assumptions right side up.

3. They demonstrated supernatural power. These believers healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead. These weren't self-promoting exploits; they were genuine expressions of God's kingdom breaking into a broken world.

But notice—miracles followed mission. They didn't seek signs and wonders for their own sake. They proclaimed God's Kingdom, and His Spirit confirmed the message with demonstrations of power. When the culture saw blind eyes opened and lame legs strengthened, they understood the God these Christians served was real, present, and powerful.

4. They spoke truth boldly regardless of the consequences. Whether before hostile crowds or government officials, these believers courageously proclaimed the message of Christ Jesus without compromise. Peter and John's response to the Sanhedrin's threats captures their spirit: *"Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:19–20 NLT).

5. They went everywhere. The gospel spread to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth—just as Jesus commanded. Nearly all of Asia, Asia Minor, and parts of Europe were transformed by the message of Christ Jesus between the first and fifth centuries. They understood that the Gospel must engage every sphere of society, not retreat from it.

Making Disciples in Every Sphere

When Jesus told us to *"go and make disciples of all nations"* (see Matt. 28:19), He wasn't just thinking about maps and borders. The Greek word for "nations"—*ethnē*—speaks to people groups, cultures, and social structures. In other words, He was commissioning us to disciple entire spheres of life—not just

individuals, but to bring the transforming truth to systems and every culture.

This is where the history of the Jesus Movement of the 1960s and '70s offers both inspiration and instruction. They understood that following Jesus meant bringing His lordship into every area of life. Christian musicians didn't just sing in church. They created a new genre of music and took their musical message to the streets. Artists painted murals on city walls. Business owners ran companies on Kingdom principles. Teachers brought God's truth into the classroom.

Christian musician Larry Norman asked the pivotal question: "Why should the devil have all the good music?" That question applies to every sphere. Why should the enemy have all the influence in the media? Why should godless philosophies dominate education? Why should corruption define business practices? Why should broken values shape the government?

The answer isn't to create Christian ghettos—separate but inferior imitations of worldly institutions. It's to bring excellence, integrity, and God's Kingdom values into existing spheres while creating new Christ-like expressions outside our religious walls.

I hear the Spirit of God say, "Take My Way, Truth, and Life into every sphere of culture, and I will transform hearts and lives and nations."

So, let's begin with His first institution...

Family: In a culture confused about love, identity, and commitment, God calls us to model His design for family. As we raise children in awe and respect for God, demonstrating love and sacrifice for our spouses, we model how to honor God and one another. Strong families create strong communities. When

neighbors see marriages that last, children who honor authority, and homes filled with peace, they witness the reality of a living God who cares, provides, and establishes His Kingdom. Every reconciled relationship, every forgiven offense, every act of faithful love turns the cultural narrative about family right side up.

Education: Whether you're homeschooling, teaching in public school, serving on a school board, mentoring students, or simply helping your child with homework, you're shaping minds and hearts. The sphere of education desperately needs believers who excel academically while maintaining the integrity of biblical truth. We need scientists who see God's handiwork in creation, historians who recognize His hand in human events, and literature teachers who understand the themes of redemption woven through great works. Excellence in education with a Kingdom perspective transforms how entire generations think.

Business and Economics: Imagine workplaces where people are valued as image-bearers of Jesus, not just production units. Where integrity shapes every deal, where profit *serves* purpose rather than *becoming* the purpose, and where business creates jobs, strengthens families, and builds communities. The Moravians showed us this is possible. Every ethical business decision, every generous act, every excellent product or service turns the culture right side up.

Arts and Media: God is the ultimate Creator, and He has given His people creative gifts to reflect His beauty and truth. We need Spirit-filled artists creating excellent work that points to eternal realities. Not propaganda, but profound beauty that makes people hunger for godliness. Excellence attracts attention. When that excellence carries Kingdom DNA, it transforms culture.

Government and Law: Joseph in Egypt. Daniel in Babylon. Esther in Persia. Nehemiah in the Persian court. God has always placed His people in positions of governmental influence. We need believers who understand that righteous governance is a biblical principle, that justice reflects God's character, and that protecting the vulnerable is His Kingdom work. This doesn't mean theocracy. It means God's servants in government who work for justice, resist corruption, and speak for those without a voice.

Science and Medicine: Many of history's outstanding scientists were believers who saw their work as "thinking God's thoughts after Him." Kepler, Newton, Faraday—they understood that science explores God's creation. Today, we need researchers, doctors, and innovators who bring both excellence and ethics to their fields. In an age of bioethical challenges, we need voices that honor God's design. Every healed body, every breakthrough discovery that serves humanity, every ethical stand turns this sphere right side up.

Church and Spiritual Life: The Church isn't just another sphere—it's meant to be the training ground and sending center for transformation in all spheres. When churches equip believers to live out their faith every day, not just on Sundays, they multiply God's Kingdom impact. We need churches that forge warriors—where action replaces ritual, and every believer is trained and launched into the mission field of daily life.

The Power of Ordinary Faithfulness

You might be thinking, "This sounds overwhelming. I'm just an ordinary person trying to live my faith."

That's exactly the point.

The people in Acts were fishermen, tax collectors, and tentmakers—ordinary people who simply took Jesus at His word and allowed His mighty Spirit to work through them. They didn't transform their world through elaborate strategies or massive resources. They did it through ordinary faithfulness in their everyday contexts.

Consider Lydia in Acts 16—a businesswoman whose heart God opened. After her conversion, she opened her home and likely used her business connections to advance the gospel. Or consider the anonymous believers scattered by persecution who shared Christ wherever they went, eventually establishing the church in Antioch that would launch Paul's missionary journeys.

The question isn't whether you have extraordinary gifts or position. The question is whether you're available to the extraordinary God who works through ordinary people. Right where you are!

Starting Where You Are

So how do we begin this work of turning our world right side up? Let me suggest practical steps:

Seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit daily. Jesus promised that the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask (see Luke 11:13). Begin each day by surrendering to His control. You cannot transform culture in your strength, but in Him you can do all things.

Build authentic community. Find a few others who share this vision. Meet regularly for prayer and to explore how the Lord can impact your shared spheres of influence. The Moravians' power came from their united community that sent them out.

Identify your primary sphere of influence. Where has God already positioned you? Your workplace? School board? Neighborhood? Focus your initial efforts there. You don't need to change the whole world—be faithful in your assigned territory. God will give you favor and promotion (see Ps. 5:12; 75:6–7).

Become excellent and faithful in your field. Daniel influenced Babylon partly because he was ten times better than his peers (see Dan. 1:20). Excellence and faithfulness earn you a voice (see Prov. 3:3–4). Work *“as unto the Lord”* and watch how God opens doors.

Speak truth with both courage and kindness. Our culture needs truth-tellers who aren't afraid to stand against the current, but who do so with genuine love rather than angry rhetoric. *“Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ”* (Eph. 4:15).

Look for practical needs to meet. The Early Church gained favor by caring for the marginalized. As a community, identify areas in need of healing and bring Christ's healing presence there. Actions often speak louder than words.

Pray for cultural transformation. Ultimately, turning the world right side up is God's work. Our role is faithful obedience; the results belong to Him. Pray for your sphere, your community, your nation. Ask God to use you as His agent of transformation.

The Long View

Cultural transformation doesn't happen overnight. When Paul arrived in Ephesus, it was dominated by the cult of Artemis. Two years later, the silversmiths who made idols complained

that *“throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people”* (Acts 19:26 NKJV).

We’re playing the long game here. We may not see the full fruits of our labor in our lifetime. But we can be faithful with the part we’ve been given. Remember, the kingdom of God grows like a mustard seed—starting small but eventually providing shelter for many. It works like leaven—gradually but thoroughly transforming the whole loaf.

The Cost and the Crown

I would be dishonest if I didn’t acknowledge the cost. When you start turning the world right side up, expect resistance. The early Christians faced ridicule, legal troubles, beatings, imprisonment, and for some, even death. Jesus promised tribulation in this world.

But He also promised something greater: *“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33b NKJV). We are only here on a journey, acting as His Ambassadors (see 2 Cor. 5:20).

This is why we can be truly unshakable. We serve a risen King who has already won the decisive victory for us (see Rom. 8:37). Death could not hold Him. No power on earth can thwart His purposes. And He promises that the gates of hell will not prevail against His advancing church.

So we work from victory, not for victory. We rebuild on the foundation of what Christ has already accomplished, confident that He will complete what He has begun.

Your Place in the Story

As we close this book, I want to speak directly to you. Yes, you—the one reading these words right now.

The Lord of all Heaven and Earth has placed you in this time, in your specific location, with your particular gifts and influence, for a purpose. You are not an accident of history. You are part of God's redemptive story.

Throughout this book, we've seen the shaking around us. We're building foundations that cannot be moved. We've prepared our hearts and homes for what's ahead. But all of this preparation has been for a purpose—not just to survive, but to thrive as God's agents of transformation.

The Moravians on that ship in 1732 couldn't have imagined how their sacrifice would ripple through history. They simply obeyed. They took their trades, their skills, their lives, and placed them at God's disposal. The result? Continents transformed.

The question is: Will you embrace your role, your calling? Will you allow God to use you to turn your corner of the world right side up?

It won't be easy. It might cost you comfort, reputation, or opportunities. But when you stand before your King, you'll never regret having spent your life on what matters eternally.

The early Christians were accused of "turning the world upside down" because they lived as if Jesus was actually Lord of everything (see Acts 17:6–7). They took Him at His word. They believed His Spirit could work through them. They applied His truth to every dimension of life.

And they changed their world.

Now it's our turn...you and me.

I once heard a wise leader say: "If you know what time it is, you know what to do." Do you know what time it is? It's time for harvest. The shaking all around us is not a sign to shrink back—it's a divine setup. The Holy Spirit outpouring isn't dropping out of the sky—it's flowing out of you. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The fields are white for harvest. The world is groaning for the manifestation of the sons and daughters of God. The systems built on sand are collapsing, and people are looking for something solid.

You have been prepared for such a time as this. You have the Holy Spirit. You have the Word. You have a sphere of influence. You have a part to play in God's redemptive story.

Let's rebuild on the unshakable foundation. Let's apply God's truth to every sphere of culture. Let's make disciples of all nations, cultures, and systems. Let's turn this upside-down world right side up again—for His glory and for the good of generations yet to come.

The Lamb who was slain deserves the reward of His suffering. Let's make sure He receives it. *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it"* (Psalm 127:1 NKJV).

Commissioning Prayer:

Lord Jesus,

I hear Your call. I sense Your urgency. I receive Your mantle. I choose to arise—not in my own strength, but clothed in Your Spirit. Fill me afresh. Baptize me with holy fire. Ignite a boldness in me that no fear can silence, no compromise can quench, and no resistance can break.

Show me my sphere. Lead me in my assignment. Let Your glory shine through my daily obedience. Use my voice to speak truth, my hands to serve with love, and my life to reveal You.

Make me a living flame that turns this world right side up.

Here I am, Lord. Send me.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

*Therefore, since we are receiving a
kingdom that cannot be shaken,
let us be thankful, and so worship God
acceptably with reverence and awe.*

Hebrews 12:28

AFTERWORD

WHEN THE DUST SETTLES, WILL YOU BE STANDING?

Imagine being warned with absolute certainty that a massive earthquake will strike your city in three months. What would you do?

Human nature says, "It won't happen to me." But wisdom says: "I will reinforce my foundation today."

This book has been your wake-up call. The shaking has begun. God is allowing this divine disruption not to destroy us, but to awaken us.

So now that you've read this book, what will you do? Will you return to life as usual, or will you respond to what the Spirit has stirred in your heart?

We are in a time of mercy. God is giving us time to become unshakable before the storms intensify. Because when the shaking grows fierce and the dust finally settles, only those rooted in Christ will still be standing.

Will you be one of them?

The Full Circle Journey

As I shared in Chapter 1, I saw the ruins—devastation, confusion, and a people bewildered and in shock. But there's a part of the vision I haven't shared until now. Out of the rubble, the Lord spoke:

“I will raise up My people to restore and rebuild what has been destroyed. But not with the failed patterns of man—with My blueprint.”

This reminds me of Isaiah 43:19:

*“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up;
do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the
wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”*

God is not calling us to rebuild the past. This is a call to rise—refined by the shaking, awakened to our assignment, and aligned with Heaven's design.

He is restoring His beloved. But He's not stopping there. He is commissioning us to step into the rubble of a broken world—not with old methods, but with Kingdom clarity—to help others rebuild their lives, their families, and their future on foundations that will not fail.

Hidden Architects of What Comes Next

Before we rebuild what has crumbled around us, God is doing something deeper within us—quiet, holy, and essential for what's coming. I sense the weight of this even as I write these final words.

You may think you're just:

- Building a strong family altar
- Creating authentic Christian community
- Living in the fear of the Lord
- Learning to hear God's voice
- Becoming unencumbered
- Walking in your purpose
- Discipling the next generation

But Heaven sees something more. You're becoming a hidden architect of what comes next.

Every prayer with your children fuels a holy fire that will ignite the next generation. Every authentic connection you cultivate sets enduring patterns of righteousness. Every young person you mentor is being armed with truth to restore what's been broken when the shaking subsides. Every moment you spend tuning your heart to God's voice sharpens your spiritual discernment—so you can lead others through the darkness.

Right now—in your daily acts of obedience—you are being refined, renewed, and ignited to shine as a blazing beacon, a wellspring of hope, a carrier of Heaven's fire.

Your prepared family will stand as a refuge. Your covenant community will become a spiritual ark. Your life will prove that God's ways bring stability when man's systems collapse. And what you're faithfully building in secret will emerge as a blueprint for a godly nation.

The Sacred Appointment

You were born for more than survival. You were born for a sacred assignment.

Throughout Scripture, when God is about to shift history, He first prepares a person. And often, that preparation looks hidden, painful, and ordinary—until the moment destiny calls.

Consider how personal preparation reshaped nations:

- Joseph was prepared in prison before saving a nation.
- David was refined in caves before taking the throne.
- Daniel was a faithful servant in Babylon before influencing empires.
- Esther was positioned in a palace before delivering her people.
- The Early Church gathered in homes before turning the world upside down.

Each one thought they were simply being faithful. In reality, they were being positioned for a divine appointment with history.

So are you.

Nothing in your life has been wasted. Every scar has shaped you. Every valley has trained you. Every night season has deposited something eternal. God has been preparing you through the pain—not in spite of it.

That business failure? It taught you to build on the Rock.

That broken relationship? It revealed the power of covenant.

That confusing season? It made you desperate to hear God's voice.

Now, the preparation is becoming purpose. The hidden season is giving way to your holy assignment.

Personal Word

I'll be honest—writing this book has marked me. The urgency I feel isn't driven by fear but by holy anticipation. Out of the shaking, I see a generation rising from the rubble—not just surviving, but standing tall: flexible, faithful, and ready for what many believe will be the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit in history.

And I think of you, holding this book. Maybe you're asking, *"After the dust settles, will I still be standing? Will I be prepared to help others rebuild? Will I be ready to disciple the coming harvest?"*

Here's what you need to know: If something in these pages has stirred your spirit, then you're already answering His call. The very hunger you feel is God's confirmation: to rise, rebuild, and lead others when the dust finally clears.

You've come this far—not by accident, but by divine appointment. The question now isn't whether God is calling you. He is.

The question is: **How will you respond?**

Your Next Step

You've reached a threshold moment.

What you do next will determine whether this book becomes a missed invitation—or the spark that ignites your divine calling.

Will you walk away merely inspired—or fully ignited?

Will these pages fade into memory—or will they mark a turning point in your life?

Don't let this moment pass. Before you close this book, make a declaration:

I will rise. I will rebuild.

I will take my place in God's unfolding story.

I've prepared something to help you take the next step.

Turn the page to begin your journey from revelation to transformation.

Until He comes,

Dr. Hal H. Sacks

P.S. If you're awakened in the night by a holy stirring, don't just lie there. Get up. Pray. Write down what God shows you. The 3 a.m. awakening isn't interrupting your sleep—it's initiating your assignment. Your sacred appointment has already begun. Turn the page to take your first decisive step.

YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOMING UNSHAKABLE STARTS NOW

You've just finished reading *Unshakable*. You understand the shaking that's coming. You've seen the foundations that need rebuilding. You know what's at stake.

But knowledge without action—changes nothing.

That's why I've created something special just for you, a practical tool to empower you to apply everything you've learned.

Introducing Your FREE 30-Day Action Guide

This isn't just another devotional. It's your personal roadmap to building an unshakable life—one day at a time.

Each day includes:

- Focused scripture and teaching that expands on the book's principles.
- Practical action steps you can implement immediately.
- Deep reflection questions to solidify your transformation.
- Powerful prayers to anchor your faith.
- Evening check-ins to track your progress.

Weekly Goals:

- Week 1: Strengthen your foundation with Father God.
- Week 2: Build life-giving, godly relationships and community.
- Week 3: Discover and embrace your Kingdom purpose.
- Week 4: Advance as an agent of transformation.

Get Your Free Guide in 30 Seconds



Simply scan the QR code with your phone's camera app, or visit the website below.

<https://link.bridgebuilders.net/u30dg>

When you download your guide, you'll also receive:

- Weekly encouragement emails during your 30-day journey.
- Invitation to our Unshakable community.
- Exclusive video teachings that go deeper into key concepts.
- Updates on revival prayer clusters forming in your area.

Why 30 Days?

Research shows it takes approximately 30 days to form a new habit.

That means in just one month, you can reshape the rhythms of your life—and your family.

Will you just read about becoming unshakable, or will you actually become it?

Start your 30-day journey today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With heartfelt gratitude, I first lift my eyes to my magnificent Lord, Jesus the Messiah. Every insight in these pages flows from His wisdom and grace, and to Him alone belongs all glory.

To my good friend, Arlyn Lawrence, at Inspira Literary Solutions—your expert editorial guidance shepherded this project from seedling idea to finished manuscript. Your partnership turned possibility into print.

To Zachariah Green—a creative mind and true collaborator—thank you for your research, writing assistance, and for clothing the message in beauty through the striking cover and interior design. Your artistry, excellence, and insight brought the vision to life in ways I could not have imagined.

To my executive assistant, Audrey Blanco—your keen editorial eye and meticulous proofreading ensured that every sentence serves the reader with clarity and care.

To my faithful intercessory prayer team—your unwavering prayer covering and discernment opened doors no pen could. This book is the fruit of your intercession.

And to my beloved wife, Cheryl—your faithful love, prayers, writing assistance, and steadfast support have been the quiet strength behind every page. Thank you for walking with me through every step of this journey.

This work is a labor of obedience,
sustained by a faithful God and faithful friends.
Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory.
(Ps. 115:1)

NOTES

1 Barna, George. Survey Reveals Significant Shifts in Faith Allegiance and Growing Confusion about Moral Truth. American Worldview Inventory 2025, Report No. 5. Glendale, AZ: Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, May 1, 2025. Accessed July 1, 2025. https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AWVI-2025_Report-05_Shifts-in-Faith-Allegiance-and-Moral-Truth-Sources.pdf.

2 Pew Research Center. “Religious Attendance and Congregational Involvement: Findings from the 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study.” February 26, 2025. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/02/26/religious-attendance-and-congregational-involvement/>.

3 Pew Research Center. “Decline of Christianity in the U.S. Has Slowed, May Have Levelled Off.” February 26, 2025. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/02/26/decline-of-christianity-in-the-us-has-slowed-may-have-levelled-off/>.

4 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. “The Employment Situation - December 2009.” News release, January 8, 2010. Accessed July 1, 2025. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empstat_01082010.pdf.

5 RealtyTrac. “Year-End and Q4 2010 U.S. Foreclosure Sales Report.” News release, February 24, 2011. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://mytowncryer.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/realtytrac-year-end-2010-foreclosure-sales-data-final.pdf>.

- 6 Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. Public Law 110-343. 122 Stat. 3765 (2008).
- 7 Office of the New York State Comptroller. “New York City Securities Industry Bonus Pool.” February 23, 2010. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/press/pdf/bonus-chart-2009.pdf>.
- 8 Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission. *The Financial Crisis Inquiry Report: Final Report of the National Commission on the Causes of the Financial and Economic Crisis in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011.
- 9 U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. “Fast and Furious: The Anatomy of a Failed Operation.” 112th Cong., 2nd sess., 2012. H. Rep.
- 10 CBS News. “Border Patrol Agent Gunned Down in Arizona.” December 15, 2010. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/border-patrol-agent-gunned-down-in-arizona/>.
- 11 H.R. 711, 112th Cong. (2012).
- 12 Stein, Sam. “Eric Holder Won’t Be Prosecuted for Contempt Charge, Jay Carney Says.” HuffPost, June 29, 2012. Accessed July 1, 2025. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/eric-holder-contempt-charge-prosecution_n_1638420.
- 13 New York Reproductive Health Act. S. 240, New York State Senate (2019).

- 14 The Washington Times. "One World Trade Center Lit Pink in Celebration of New York Abortion Law." January 23, 2019. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/jan/23/one-world-trade-center-lit-pink-celebration-new-yo/>.
- 15 Kingson, Jennifer A. "Exclusive: \$1 Billion-Plus Riot Damage Is Most Expensive in Insurance History." Axios, September 16, 2020. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.axios.com/2020/09/16/riots-cost-property-damage>.
- 16 Beckett, Lois. "At Least 25 Americans Were Killed During Protests and Political Unrest in 2020." The Guardian, October 31, 2020. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/31/americans-killed-protests-political-unrest-acled>.
- 17 NPR. "Burr Steps Down as Intelligence Chairman During Probe of Stock Sell-Off." May 14, 2020. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/14/856089179/burr-steps-down-as-intelligence-chairman-during-probe-of-stock-sell-off>.
- 18 Associated Press. "California Church That Defied COVID Rules Threatened with \$1.2M in Fines." August 20, 2021. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/covid-california-church-fine-6daddfd8325e7d-63b9828092a69eca8a>.
- 19 Zbick, Jim. "Churches Closed but Strip Clubs Open?" Times News Online, December 21, 2020. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.tnonline.com/20201221/churches-closed-but-strip-clubs-open/>.

20 CBS Pittsburgh. “Pittsburgh-Area School District Parents Challenge 12 School Library Books.” CBS News. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/pine-richland-school-district-parents-challenge-12-school-library-books/>.

21 The American Mind. “What I Saw at Drag Queen Story Hour.” Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://americanmind.org/features/the-revolt-of-the-kids/what-i-saw-at-drag-queen-story-hour/>.

22 Vision Radio. “Professor Fired for Stating Biological Fact.” Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://vision.org.au/read/articles/professor-fired-for-stating-biological-fact/>.

23 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “CMS Alerts Hospital Providers on Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation.” Press release. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-alerts-hospital-providers-protecting-children-chemical-and-surgical-mutilation>.

24 Drug Enforcement Administration. “Fentanyl Flow to the United States.” DEA Intelligence Report DEA-DCT-DIR-008-20, January 2020. Accessed July 1, 2025. https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/DEA_GOV_DIR-008-20%20Fentanyl%20Flow%20in%20the%20United%20States_0.pdf.

25 CNN. “Doctor Accused of Severing Babies’ Spines with Scissors in ‘House of Horrors.’” March 4, 2013. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/03/04/us/pennsylvania-gosnell-trial>.

26 Barna, George. “CRC Study Shows Younger Generations Reject Biblical Worldview, Ushering in New Morality.” Arizona Christian University, May 28, 2024. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/2024/05/28/crc-study-shows-younger-generations-reject-biblical-worldview-ushering-in-new-morality/>.

27 George Barna, “Millennials Have Radically Different Beliefs About Respect, Faith, and America,” American Worldview Inventory 2020, Release #10 (Glendale, AZ: Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, September 22, 2020), Accessed July 1, 2025, https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CRC_AWVI2020_Release10_Digital_01_20200922.pdf.

28 Barna Group. “What’s on the Minds of America’s Pastors.” February 3, 2020. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.barna.com/research/whats-on-mind-americas-pastors/>.

29 Jackson, Wayne. “Questions for God.” Christian Courier. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/questions-for-god>.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hal H. Sacks is a visionary leader, passionate mentor, and co-founder of BridgeBuilders International Leadership Network. Since 1981, he and his wife, Cheryl, have mobilized prayer and cultural transformation initiatives that have impacted millions—equipping pastors, law enforcement, legislators, and marketplace leaders to invite God’s heart into every sphere of society.

A respected voice in spiritual leadership, Dr. Sacks currently serves as President and CEO of BridgeBuilders. He is known for designing strategic prayer initiatives that address urgent societal challenges—from border violence to threats against schools and families—mobilizing millions of believers in united intercession. His book, *Two Nations, One Prayer*, available in English and Spanish, was part of a historic prayer movement that led to the apprehension of scores of top cartel leaders and demonstrated the power of intercession to impact even the darkest strongholds.

The success of this initiative brought the attention of international news media and law enforcement, opening the door for Sacks’ involvement in the Phoenix Police Department, DEA, ANOA and the Arizona FBI.

Raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, Hal encountered his Messiah during the Jesus Movement of the 1970s—a transformational moment that launched him into a life of ministry and cultural engagement. At the time, he was working in the television and motion picture industry in Hollywood and was asked to help document the historic revival breaking out at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California. That assignment not only immersed him in one of the most significant spiritual awakenings in American

history, it confirmed his lifelong calling to communicate the Gospel and spark spiritual awakening across the nation.

He later attended Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas, where he also worked for Gordon Lindsay and helped design the school's communication center. He went on to earn a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree.

In *Unshakable*, Dr. Sacks shares hard-learned lessons from decades of ministry and spiritual leadership. With clarity and compassion, he shows how individuals and communities can cultivate resilience, deepen faith, and stand firm amid life's storms. His message is rooted in decades of experience in cultural transformation, deployed with measurable results.

