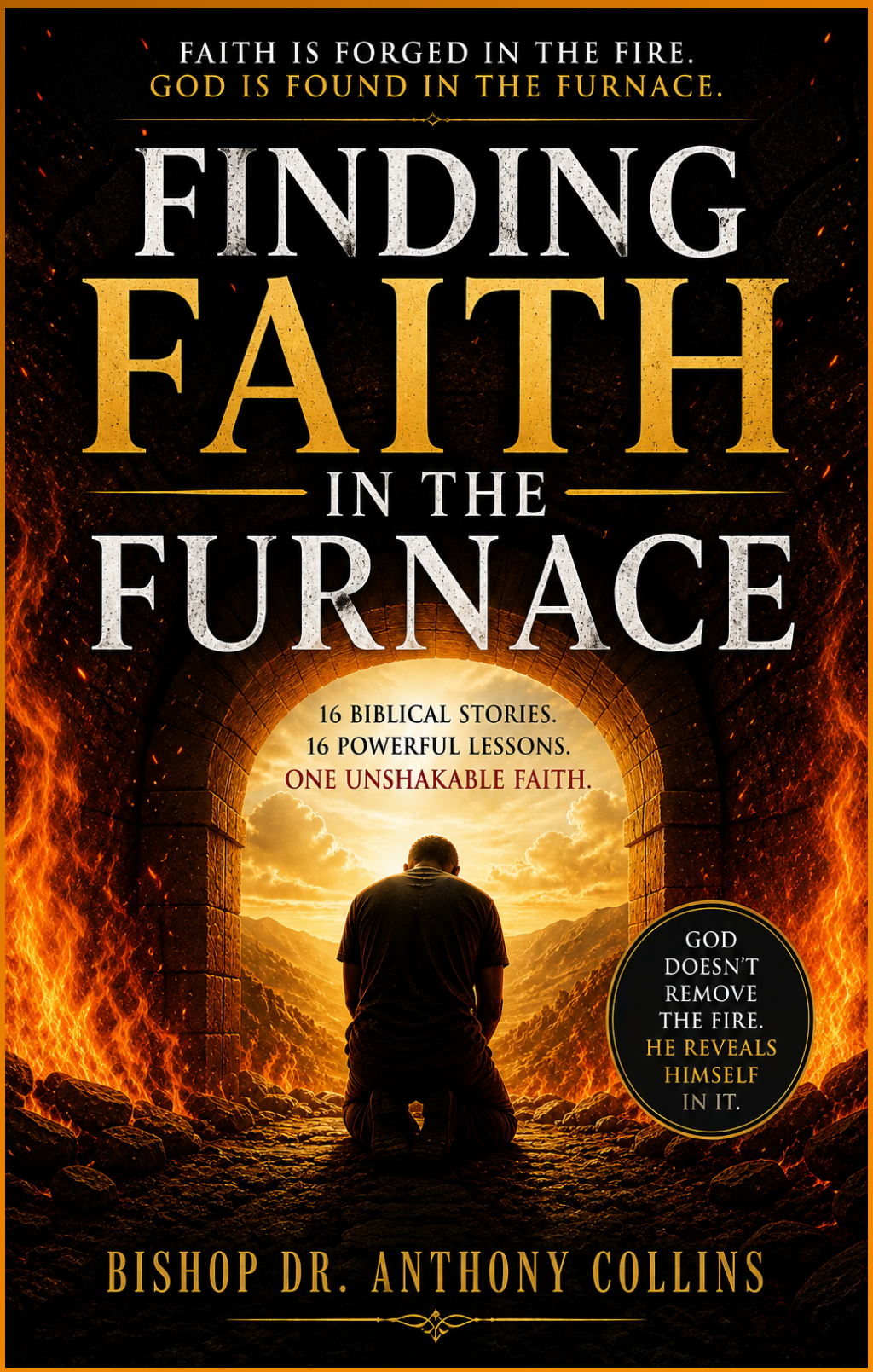

FAITH IS FORGED IN THE FIRE.
GOD IS FOUND IN THE FURNACE.
FINDING
FAITH
IN THE
FURNACE
16 BIBLICAL STORIES.
16 POWERFUL LESSONS.
ONE UNSHAKABLE FAITH.
GOD DOESN'T REMOVE THE FIRE. HE REVEALS HIMSELF IN IT.
BISHOP DR. ANTHONY COLLINS

*All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.*

*If these resources have encouraged your walk with Christ or strengthened your ministry, we invite you to partner with us. Your tax-deductible donation enables us to continue developing and distributing these materials free of charge to individuals, churches, and ministries worldwide.*

*Thank you for helping us make disciples who make disciples - for the glory of God.*

# Finding Faith In The Furnace

Developing Unshakable Faith

**By**
**Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins**

Copyright © 2026 Anthony Collins
All rights reserved worldwide.

Published by:
Tony Collins Ministries
811 Loblolly Court
Palm Coast, FL 32137

www.TonyCollinsMinistries.com
www.HOWICP.org
https://www.youtube.com/@BishopCollins1
https://www.facebook.com/TonyCollinsMinistries




Any part of this book **may be** reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means without the written permission of the author.

The contents of this document **may not be altered** in any way for any reason.

*"To help people know Christ deeply, walk with Him daily, and represent Him faithfully through lives transformed by the presence of God."*

## OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We are coming to You recognizing that You are sovereign, faithful, and good; that You are God on the mountaintop and You are God in the furnace; and that You are deserving of our trust whether or not we understand what You are doing.

Lord, as we start this journey of *Finding Faith in the Furnace*, we desire that You prepare our hearts for both information and for transformation. Give us the courage so that Your Word may examine our faith and reveal our fears. Help us to face our unbelief, and show us the places where we have placed our trust in ourselves rather than in You.

Teach us to understand the furnace from Your perspective. Whenever we are being tested, teach us to obey. Whenever we are afraid, teach us to be strong. When we are uncertain, teach us to trust. When we are tempted to go ahead of You, teach us to wait. When we are distracted, teach us to stay focused. When we fall, teach us to repent and return to You. When surrender involves a cost, teach us to say, **"***Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done."* And when the struggle goes on longer than we had expected, give us the faith to say, *"I will not let You go."*

Pull us away from a faith that functions only in comfortable circumstances, and help us to develop a covenant faith—a faith that endures when all around us is in turmoil. Help us to have a faith that chooses to obey even when obedience is difficult, a faith that continues to worship even though the answer has not yet arrived, and that stays faithful even when heaven appears to be silent. *Let us remember that Your silence is not a sign of Your absence.*

In each furnace, cause us to remember who You are: You are our Provider, You are our Protector, You are our Keeper, You are our Shepherd, You are our Shield and our exceeding great Reward; You have promised never to leave us nor to forsake us. When fear urges us to run, let us stand instead.

When we are told that defeat is certain, remind us of Your faithfulness. Whenever our feelings conflict with Your Word, grant us the discipline to bring

our feelings into agreement with the truth. Whenever the enemy suggests that You cannot be trusted, once again settle our hearts upon the unchanging nature of God. *May the Lord prevent us from wasting our furnace.*

Make the most of each trial to purify our motives. Make the most of each delay to develop our patience. Make the most of each battle to strengthen our faith. Make the most of each disappointment to increase our dependence upon You. Make the most of each season of pressure to remove from us whatever cannot go with us into the next dimension of Your purpose.

We are not content to ask You only to pull us out of the furnace; we ask You to carry out Your intention in the furnace. Strengthen us and make us wiser. Make us humble. Make us holy. Make us obey at all times. Help us rely more on Your presence. Help us become more like Jesus.

Let there be clear proof that we have been with You when we come out. May our faith be shown to be true—more valuable than gold. May our lives serve as a testimony that the furnace did not destroy us because You were with us in the fire.

We give this journey over to You, and will receive whatever You show us. No matter what you decide, we will surrender. No matter what you require, we will obey.

We will follow wherever You go and choose faith no matter what the cost. Whenever the furnace is hot, whenever the pressure is great, and whenever all that is within us urges us to give up, remind us once more that You are still God. Your Word is still true. Your presence is still enough. Your grace is still enough. And You are still faithful.

We pray that all that is accomplished through these pages may strengthen Your people, promote the advancement of Your Kingdom, and bring about the greatest possible glory to Jesus Christ.

*Ad Gloriam Christi — For the Glory of Christ.*

In the mighty and matchless name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

## DEDICATION

To those who have found themselves in the crucibles of life. To the ones who did not choose the pressure, but were forever shaped by it.

To the ones who have wrestled with doubt, fought through fear, and stood when it would have been easier to walk away.

To those who have been tested in silence, refined in obscurity, and stretched beyond what they thought they could make it through.

To those who have cried without any warning, to those who have prayed without any words.

This book is for you.

To every believer who has ever asked: “How did I get here?” “God, where are You?” Yet, somehow discovered, sometimes slowly, sometimes painfully, that He was closer than ever before.

To the faithful who refused to bow; to those who intentionally chose obedience over convenience; to those who held on when everything around them said let go.

To the next generation of men and women who will not settle for surface-level Christianity; to those who will not compromise truth for acceptance, who will not trade God’s presence for cultural approval - may you find faith in your furnace.

And above all, to the One who stands with us in the fire, who refines but never abandons, who tests but never forsakes—To Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith…

This book is for His glory, and His glory alone.

**THE BISHOP'S NOTE**

Some books inform. Some books inspire. And then *some books confront. Finding Faith in the Furnace* belongs in the third category.

This is not a comfortable read. It is not designed to encourage you. It is designed to challenge you. To challenge your understanding of faith. To challenge your perception of God. To challenge the way you respond when life does not go as planned.

In a time where much of modern Christianity has drifted toward convenience, comfort, and alignment with culture, this message calls us back to something deeper: *authentic, tested, proven faith.* The kind of faith that:

- Stands when it is easier to bow
- Waits when it is easier to act
- Obeys when it is easier to compromise
- Surrenders when it is easier to control

This book does not avoid difficult truths. It addresses fear, unbelief, compromise, spiritual deception, the danger of religious form without power, and more. But it does so with clarity, conviction, and a deep commitment to the Word of God. Each chapter builds on a biblical foundation, revealing that the furnace is not an exception in the life of faith. It is *central to it*.

More importantly, this book does not leave the reader in the fire. It points them to the One who meets them there. The God who delivers, refines, strengthens, and reveals Himself in the crucible. As you read, you will find that this is not just a collection of teachings. It is a call. A call to:

- Rise above fear
- Reject compromise
- Embrace truth
- Walk in faith

And ultimately, to live a life that honors God, no matter the cost. The question this book leaves you with is not whether you will face a furnace. It is whether your faith will be strong enough to stand in it.

Ad Gloriam Christi,
Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue ……..11
Introduction …….. 13
Chapter 1: When Fear Tries to Fulfill What Faith Was Supposed to Trust ……..17
Chapter 2: The Test That Reveals Your Faith ……..24
Chapter 3: Faith That Chooses When It Doesn't Know ……..31
Chapter 4: When God Calls You Beyond Your Capacity ……..36
Chapter 5: Standing When Everything in You Wants to Run ……..41
Chapter 6: When It's Time to Stand, Speak, And Be Raised ……..47
Chapter 7: Faith That Refuses to Bow Under Pressure ……..54
Chapter 8: When Faith Remembers What Fear Forgets ……..60
Chapter 9: When Faith Confronts What Evil is Trying to Destroy ……..64
Chapter 10: When Confidence in Yourself Collapses ……..68
Chapter 11: Faith That Stays Focused in the Face of Distraction ……..72
Chapter 12: When Fear Causes You to Move Too Soon ……..76
Chapter 13: When Faith Refuses to Take What God Has Not Given Yet ……..80
Chapter 14: When Fear Enters Through A Lie ……..85
Chapter 15: The Furnace of Surrender ……..90
Chapter 16: When Faith Refuses to Let Go ……..95
Appendix A: Faith Quotes ……..102
Author Note ……..104
Collins Discipleship Institute ……..105
Author Bio ……..107

## PROLOGUE

Certain seasons in one's life have a way of changing everything. This is not because we had anticipated or desired these times. Rather, it is because they occurred. And once they occurred, they revealed what was actually there.

The book isn't based on theory; instead, it originated in observation, experience, and Scripture. It originated in the clear pattern that runs throughout the Word of God, namely that faith is not developed in comfort but *in fire.*

Scripture reveals men and women who have encountered God not in ease, but in pressure. Examples are:

- The Hebrew boys who met God in a furnace
- Abraham and Isaac on a mountain of sacrifice
- A shepherd boy who faced a giant no one else would oppose
- Queen Esther who risked everything to save her people
- Daniel who prayed under threat of death
- King Saul who failed because he moved ahead of God
- Peter who collapsed in self-confidence and rose in God-confidence
- Jesus who surrendered in a garden under crushing weight

They are not just stories; rather, they are patterns, and these patterns reveal something important—that every believer will have to go through *a furnace.* The issue isn't whether or not we're going to have a furnace experience; the question is whether or not we're going to *find faith in it. T*he furnace has a purpose—namely, to bring out what is false, to refine what is true, to get rid of what cannot stay—and it shows us who God is in a way that we cannot experience anywhere else.

This is a book that takes you through those moments, each chapter depicting a different type of furnace:

- The furnace of testing

- The furnace of decision
- The furnace of calling
- The furnace of opposition
- The furnace of deception
- The furnace of surrender

In all of them, we will find the same truth: y*ou can end up stronger or you can end up broken; the difference lies in faith.*

I don't merely pray that you read this book; I pray that you *see yourself in it, that you acknowledge the stage you are at, that you grasp what God is doing, and that you then react in a different way as a result of this new understanding.*

The object is not to avoid the furnace; it is to discover God in it and to yield to His presence. Once you have done this, you will come across something that makes all the difference: t*he fire was never intended to destroy you, since its purpose was to prepare you, to show you who you are, and in the end to define you—that is, to build you*.

*"Whatever we use as the basis for our decisions has already become our master - whether money, the approval of others, fear, or faith in God's word.*

## INTRODUCTION

Some seasons in life we do not choose. We didn't choose them because we never would. They are too difficult, too challenging. We didn't pray for them. We didn't plan for them. We didn't prepare for them. In fact, we would have done almost anything to avoid them. But yet, they find us.

They interrupt our daily rhythm, disrupt our positive expectations, and challenge everything we thought we knew about God, about faith, and even about ourselves.

One moment we may be walking in clarity, confidence, and consistency, and the next, we find ourselves surrounded by trouble and challenges (the heat) we cannot control. These are the seasons I call **the furnace**. It is a crucible. This tests our faith. It is deep. It is personal. It brings us to the brink of who we are and makes us evaluate our ideas about who God is, who we are in Christ, and what comes next in our lives. This furnace challenges us to reveal the difference between what we say and what we do. There is no wiggle room in the furnace. There is no faking it in the crucible. The pressure of the environment will show anyone who can see exactly what we are made of spiritually.

The furnace is not always visible. It is not always dramatic. Sometimes it looks like loss. Sometimes it feels like delay. Sometimes it sounds like silence. And sometimes it shows up as pressure so intense that it forces us to confront what we truly believe about God and ourselves.

The pain that is brought by the furnace will shake everything that can be shaken until all that is left is that which is unshakable. Then all that is left is the real us, not who we profess to be on Sunday, but the core of who we are spiritually. The furnace is a clarion call to stand, to change, and to become more than we have ever been in Jesus. This is not a moment of punishment, but a moment of revealed preparation. It is a life-changing moment – one way or the other.

And if we walk with God long enough, we will face our furnace. Not because we have necessarily failed. Not because God has abandoned us, but because some things can only be formed in fire, through difficulty, hardship, and pain.

**The Reality We Don't Talk About**

We live in a culture that celebrates victory but avoids process. We like testimonies, but we skip the trials that produced them. We admire strength, but we rarely examine the pressure that developed it. We want the power of God, but we are often uncomfortable with the process God uses to prepare us to carry it. But the truth is this: *Faith that has never been tested is faith that cannot be trusted, because perhaps it is not faith at all.*

There are dimensions of God we will never experience in comfort. There are revelations of His nature that are reserved for moments when everything around us is uncertain. There are depths of trust that can only be developed when we finally understand that we no longer have control, because we never had control. Human control is a spiritual illusion – it's a deception.

**A Biblical Pattern of Fire**

The furnace is not optional in the life of a believer. It is inevitable. This is because righteousness provokes an attack from our enemy. When we examine Scripture, we begin to see a pattern emerge. God does not avoid the fire. He uses it. Light is always challenged by darkness.

**Our Furnace Has a Purpose**

If you are in a season right now where the pressure feels intense, where the heat feels overwhelming, where the outcome feels uncertain - you need to understand something: *You are not in the furnace by accident.*

God is not improvising with your life. He is intentional. Let me say it again - He is intentional. He is forming something in you. He is removing something from you. He is revealing something to you. And there is something He is about to reveal *through you.*

**The Danger of Misinterpreting the Fire**

One of the greatest mistakes believers make is mislabeling the furnace. We call it:

- "God left me"
- "God is punishing me"
- "Something went wrong"

But what if nothing is wrong? What if this is part of the process? What if the fire you are trying to escape is the very place where God is trying to develop you? If we misinterpret the furnace, we will resist what God is trying to use. But if we understand it, we can endure it.

Our natural tendency is to get out of the fire, the furnace, the pain – as quickly as we can. We pray to God to stop the pain, to remove us from the furnace. But in God's economy, pain has a purpose. If we are removed from the fire – the pain, before we are changed by the process – before we achieve God's divine purpose, we will only set ourselves up for another crucible in the days to come. Let us pray instead that Christ will help us to gain His purpose in the furnace, regardless of the pain.

**From Survival to Transformation**

God is not just trying to bring us out of the furnace. He is trying to bring us *through it and bring us out different than when we went in*. Stronger in faith. Deeper in our level of intimacy with Him. He wants us more anchored in God's Word, and more refined in the Gospel.

God wants us not just to survive His process, but to be promoted. He wants to cause the very system that tried to destroy us to be forced to acknowledge the God we serve. This is the pattern:

- Pressure produces revelation
- Revelation produces confidence

- Confidence produces influence

Some of the clearest examples of this are found in the lives of Abram, David, Joseph, Daniel, and the Three Hebrew Boys.

**A Call to Stand**

So, the question was never: "Will we face a furnace?" The question has always been: *"How will we respond when we do?"*

Will we compromise to avoid the pressure? Will we retreat when things get difficult? Will we question God when He doesn't remove the fire immediately? Or will we stand? Will we trust that even in the heat, God is working? Will we believe that even in the uncertainty, He is present? Will we hold our position, knowing that what is being formed in us is greater than what is happening around us?

Hear me clearly: The furnace does not mean we are losing. It may be the clearest sign that God is working at a level we have not yet experienced. Do not run from the fire. Do not resent the process. Do not misinterpret the pressure. Stand. The call to stand is a call to surrender – everything. We must trust Him in all things – especially this. Look for Him in the furnace, because He is there. And allow Him to do in the furnace what cannot be done anywhere else. Because when we come out, *and we will come out*, we won't just have a testimony of what God did for us. We will carry a revelation of **who He is** that no one can take from us.

This is where faith is not just declared. This is where faith is defined**.**

*"We can expect God to fulfill His promise, even when all roads leading to it are closed."*

## When Fear Tries to Fulfill What Faith Was Supposed to Trust

*"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai."*
*Genesis 16:1-2*

There are seasons in life where waiting becomes painful. Not because God has failed. Not because the promise is unclear. But because time has passed… and nothing seems to be changing. This is one of the greatest furnaces of faith: **The furnace of delay.**

### When Waiting Turns into Pressure

God had already spoken to Abram. The promise was clear:

- A son would come
- A nation would be born
- A covenant would be established

But there was a problem. Time passed. And the longer the delay continued, the more pressure intensified because delay has a way of exposing what is really happening inside of us.

### The Danger of Misinterpreting Delay

One of the greatest mistakes believers make is assuming that delay means denial. But God's timing and man's timing are rarely the same. And when people do not understand this, they begin to: Grow impatient - Question God's faithfulness - Look for alternatives. This is exactly what happens in Genesis 16.

**Fear Begins to Interpret the Situation**

Sarai says something revealing: "*The LORD hath restrained me*…" Notice what has happened. Instead of interpreting the situation through faith, she interprets it through frustration. Delay has affected perspective. And once perspective shifts, fear begins to speak.

**The Battle to Keep Believing - The Weariness of the Furnace**

One of the greatest spiritual battles is not external opposition. It is internal exhaustion. The moment where we are: Tired of waiting - Tired of fighting - Tired of hoping - Tired of standing.

And in that moment, the temptation is not always rebellion. Sometimes the temptation is **to quit.** Pastor John Hagee says that there comes a time in everyone's life when "*quit looks good*."

The furnace has a way of draining people- emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. There are seasons where you can feel discouraged, frustrated, and forgotten. And if we are not careful, weariness will begin to affect our perspective.

**When Delay Tests Faith**

One of the hardest realities in the life of faith is this: God does not always move according to our timeline. Sometimes the answer does not come when we want; the healing is delayed, and the breakthrough takes too long. And during that delay, faith is tested deeply. Because delayed answers force us to confront a painful question: "Will I still trust God if this takes longer than I expected?"

**The Danger of Emotional Christianity**

Many believers build their relationship with God around emotion. As long as they feel inspired, feel encouraged or feel motivated, everything is great. They remain

strong. But emotions are unstable. And if your faith is built on feelings, the furnace will expose it quickly. True faith is not sustained by emotion. It is sustained by conviction.

**The Voice of Fear Always Offers a Shortcut**

Fear hates waiting. Faith can wait. Faith can trust. Faith can endure process. Fear cannot. So, fear looks for faster solutions, easier answers, and human alternatives. And this is where Hagar enters the story.

Sarai presents a plan. A reasonable plan. A culturally acceptable plan. A practical plan. But it was not God's plan. And this is the danger in the furnace: You can create something through human effort that looks successful, but was never born from faith.

One phrase in this passage reveals the instability of fear-driven decisions: "***It may be*** *that I will obtain children by her*". This is uncertainty disguised as strategy. Fear never speaks with confidence. It speculates:

- "Maybe this will work"
- "Maybe this is the answer"
- "Maybe this is what God meant"

But faith stands on what God already said.

**Abram's Silence**

One of the most sobering parts of this chapter is Abram's response. Or rather, his lack of response. There is no resistance. No correction. No reminder of God's promise. He agrees. And sometimes, one of the greatest failures in the life of faith is not rebellion. It is silence in moments where truth should have been spoken.

**When Trouble Steps into the Room**

We get into trouble in the same way Abram and Sarai did. We get into trouble whenever we reject God's voice for another voice. Sarai rejects God's voice in favor of the voice of doubt and compromise. She puts down God's voice and picks up the voice of "Plan B". She seriously doubts that what God said will actually happen the way He said it would. Abram gets in trouble when he rejects God's voice for his wife's.

It is sin whenever we know what God's word says but respond in faithlessness instead of faithfulness. Sarai is afraid that God is not going to do what He said He would do. The enemy has whispered a lie to her, and she has panicked, and Abram has joined her in the panic. Whenever we panic, the flesh takes over. We know this to be true because there is no panic in the Spirit. God does not panic. The purpose of fear is to cause us to panic. When we panic, we do not respond in the Spirit, but in the flesh. When we respond in the flesh, we always reject the voice of God. When we reject God's voice, we also reject His promises. And when we reject God's promises, we always attempt to take our fate into our own hands. And this ultimately leads to disaster. This was definitely the case with Abram and Sarai.

**Faith Must Resist Pressure**

Pressure is dangerous because it pushes people toward compromise. Not always immoral compromise. Sometimes emotional, spiritual, or faith compromise. The pressure to "do something" becomes stronger than the commitment to trust God.

This is a pattern throughout Scripture. Whenever faith weakens, flesh steps in. Flesh says: "Help God out" - "Make it happen yourself" - "Take control".

But God does not need our manipulation to fulfill His promise. He needs our trust. Our unbelief is a slap in the face of God. Our unbelief challenges God's Godship. It discounts God's wisdom and power. When we say that we are followers of Christ but do not believe His word to the point of application, we reveal that we have a form of Godliness, but are literally denying His holy power.

**What Ishmael Represents**

Ishmael was real. He was born. He grew. He existed. But he was not the promise. This is critical. Because not everything that succeeds naturally is born spiritually, you can produce: Ministries - Relationships - Decisions -Opportunities. All outside of God's timing and still call it "a blessing." But if it was birthed through fear instead of faith, it carries consequences.

**The Consequences of Fear-Driven Decisions**

The moment Hagar conceives - conflict begins. Pressure did not disappear. It multiplied. Because flesh-created solutions never solve spiritual problems. They complicate them. And what started as impatience created strife, jealousy, division, and pain.

One of the greatest lessons in this chapter is this: *Just because something can happen does not mean God is in it.* Open doors are not always divine doors. Opportunities are not always assignments. And fast results are not always God's favor.

**The Furnace of Unfulfilled Expectations**

Sarai's pain was real. Disappointment is difficult. Waiting is difficult. Watching time pass while prayers remain unanswered is difficult. But difficulty does not permit us to abandon faith.

We must never forget that the furnace has a divine purpose. The crucible tests us, reveals us, and prepares us. God's purpose has a process, and the pain of that process has a purpose that is designed to bless us and not destroy us.

In the midst of our furnace, we need to be reminded of the love of Jesus revealed upon His blood-drenched Cross. When doubt and anxiety look to creep in and tear away at our faith, we must once again take pause and accurately survey the Cross. It is there that we are reminded of the love of God, the power of God, and the faithfulness of God. It is impossible to be too extravagant in our response to

the Cross, in our love for Jesus, in our faithfulness to God, when we rightly survey the Cross. We will automatically come to the only appropriate conclusion: God loves us, and He is working on our behalf, even in the midst of our furnace.

**Is My Faith Really Faith**

What if what we call faith, God doesn't call faith? Just because men call it a church doesn't mean that God calls it a church. Just because we call it a marriage doesn't mean that God calls it a marriage. Just because men call it worship, love, or fasting doesn't mean that God calls it the same thing that we do. What if what we call faith God does not call faith?

Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please God". God's picture of faith is the picture of Abraham embracing the voice of God above all things and obeying God's voice without hesitation - even though it meant destroying the thing he loved the most. What if real faith, from God's perspective, is putting at risk the things we love the most in response to us embracing the voice of God, thereby embracing the promises of God, which imparts to us the favor of God? What if the greater the risk, the greater my faith? Perhaps this is why it is impossible to please God without full surrender to His voice in our lives.

God is looking for us to be not just faithful in the small things - but to be bold in our faith - as bold as a lion.

*"The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion."*
*Proverbs 28:1*

This is the faith call of every blood-washed believer.

**God Never Forgot the Promise**

Even after Abram and Sarai made their decision, God did not abandon His covenant. Because God's faithfulness is greater than human failure. Eventually,

Isaac came. Not through manipulation. Not through striving. Not through flesh. But through promise.

**The Difference Between Ishmael and Isaac**

Ishmael was produced through human effort. Isaac was produced through divine promise. One was born from pressure. The other was born from faith. And this is the question every believer must ask: *What in my life is Ishmael… and what is Isaac?* What have I forced? What have I manipulated? *What have I produced because I was tired of waiting?*

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be in a season where:

- God has spoken
- The promise feels delayed
- Pressure is increasing

And fear is whispering: "Do something." "Make it happen." "Take control." But God is saying: *"Trust Me."*

Hear this clearly: ***Do not allow fear to fulfill what faith was supposed to trust.*** Do not force what God promised. Do not create alternatives because waiting became uncomfortable. God is not late. God is not confused. God has not forgotten what He said. Wait on Him. Trust His process. And refuse to let pressure push you into decisions that faith was supposed to overcome.

Because what is born from fear creates struggle. But what is born from faith carries promise.

*"Repentance and Faith will produce obedience and practical holiness."*

# Chapter 2

## The Test That Reveals Your Faith

*"After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering…"*
*Genesis 22:1-2*

There is a kind of pressure that does not come from the enemy. It does not originate in opposition. It does not come from attack. It does not come from circumstance alone. It comes from God. And if we misunderstand it, we will resist the very thing that was designed to reveal our faith.

### The Furnace of Testing

There is a difference between trials that come *against us* and tests that come *from God*. Both feel intense. Both carry pressure. Both expose what is inside of us. But a test has a purpose that goes beyond survival. It is designed to *prove*, to *refine,* and to *reveal*.

In Genesis 22, we are introduced to one of the most profound tests of faith in all of Scripture: *"Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham*…" Notice carefully that God tested him. This was not random. This was not accidental. This was intentional.

### From Failure to Formation

If we closely examine Abraham's journey before this moment, we will see a man who failed a test of faith. Years earlier, under pressure and impatience, he agreed to produce what God had promised, *but in his own way*. Through Hagar, he attempted to fulfill a divine promise with human effort. And the result was exactly what happens when faith gives way to fear:

- Strife
- Division
- Broken relationships
- Long-term consequences

Fear will always push us to *manufacture what God told us to wait for*. But now, decades later, nearly 40 years removed from that failure, God brings Abraham back to another test. This is because failure is not final when God is involved. God will give us another opportunity to get right what we once got wrong.

*Faith is the currency of heaven; it is the currency for miracles.*

**The Honor of Being Tested**

We often view testing as something negative. We pray to avoid it. We resist it when it comes. We question God in the middle of it. But Scripture presents testing differently. To be tested by God is not punishment - it is *an invitation*. An invitation to: Grow - Mature - Demonstrate what has been developed in us. Consider those who were tested:

- Job was tested in his suffering
- Jacob was tested in his identity
- David was tested in obscurity and pressure
- Even Jesus was tested in the wilderness

Testing is not a sign that something is wrong. *It is often a sign that something is ready to be revealed.* Everyone will be tested.

**The Nature of the Test**

When God tests Abraham, He does something that seems almost unthinkable: He asks him to take Isaac, the promised son, and offer him as a sacrifice. Not

something random. Not something insignificant. To take something he loves, something he loves dearly. And it's not just that Abraham would say it is acceptable for Isaac to die, but it is that Isaac must die by Abraham's hand. This takes trust to a completely different level.

This reveals a critical truth about faith: *Real faith is always tested at the level of what you value most.* God will never ask us to surrender something meaningless. The test is always connected to: What we love - What we trust - What we have waited for.

For until God has access to what we value most, He does not fully have our heart.

**Faith Requires Action**

Abraham's response is what separates belief from faith. The Bible says: "*So, Abraham rose early in the morning…".* No delay. No negotiation. No partial obedience. This is how real faith moves. It does not just agree; it acts.

Many people say they trust God, but their actions reveal hesitation, fear, and reservation. But Abraham demonstrates a different kind of faith:

- He prepares the wood
- He takes the journey
- He climbs the mountain
- He builds the altar

Step by step, he moves toward obedience.

Faith is not proven in what we say. *It is proven in what we do.* One of the greatest actions we can take in our crucible moment is to worship the One True Living God. Worship sets the correct priority and immediately brings God into our environment.

The actions we take must be aligned with the word and process of God. It must be aligned with God's will for me in my response to the furnace. Action taken outside of faith has zero power in the Kingdom of God.

**The Cost of True Faith**

There is no such thing as costless faith. In 2Samuel 24:24, David declares: "*I will not offer… to the LORD my God that which costs me nothing*."

That principle is consistent throughout Scripture. If it costs nothing, it requires no faith. If it requires no faith, it does not please God. If it requires no faith, it does not produce a divine outcome - divine transformation.

The greater the value, the greater the sacrifice. The greater the sacrifice, the greater the proven faith. And the greater the sacrifice, when offered in faith, the greater the move of God.

We have got to stop trying to offer God things that did not cost us anything. No leftovers for God. No longer giving God things that are of little value to us. Now is the time to withhold nothing from God and to give Him all that we have and all that we are so that His purpose and plan for our lives will be fulfilled.

**The Crisis of Fear**

One of the greatest threats to passing a test of faith is not lack of knowledge. It is *fear*. Fear will delay obedience, distort perspective, and cause us to protect what God is asking us to release. We have been commanded not to fear, yet many believers are ruled by it. We become afraid of losing, letting go, trusting fully, and obeying completely.

And in doing so, we end up afraid of the wrong thing. Instead of fearing disobedience, we fear surrender. Instead of fearing distance from God, we fear loss of control. But true faith reorders our fear. It causes you to say: "*I would rather obey God and trust Him with the outcome than disobey Him and try to control it myself."*

**Trusting God for What We Cannot See**

As Abraham and Isaac walk up the mountain, Isaac asks a question: *"Where is the lamb?"* And Abraham responds with one of the most powerful declarations of faith in Scripture*: "God will provide."* At that moment, there was no visible provision. No ram. No alternative. No clear outcome. Just a word from the Lord. This is where faith reaches its highest expression: *When we trust God not because we see the answer, but because we know His character.*

**The Moment of Revelation**

Just as Abraham is about to complete the act of obedience, God intervenes. The test is complete. And in that moment, provision appears. A ram caught in the thicket. What is the pattern?

- Obedience first
- Provision second

Not the other way around. Many people wait to see provision before they obey. But God responds to *faith in motion.*

Once we stand on the Word of God, once we take action based upon God's Word - leave the rest up to Him. Do everything that God told you to do, the way He told you to do it - then leave the rest up to Him. Don't try to rush Him or manipulate Him. Just wait on Him. And if He hasn't done what He said He was going to do yet, if you are not satisfied with His response to your obedience - don't panic. Just wait. He's on His way to your situation right now.

**What Happens When You Pass the Test**

When Abraham passes this test, several things are released:

1. Supernatural Provision - God reveals Himself as Jehovah-Jireh—The Lord Who Provides.

2. Divine Confirmation - The promise is reaffirmed, now with greater clarity and weight.

3. Spiritual Authority - Abraham's faith is no longer theoretical; it is proven.

4. Our vision is elevated. We see what we have never seen before and understand God in a way we never have before.

This is the pattern throughout Scripture:

- Job endured—and received double
- David was tested—and never lost a battle
- Jesus obeyed—and was given the Name above every name

Faith that passes the test produces a supernatural release. When we exhibit God's faith in our furnace, He will provide His vision, provision, favor, promotion, and prosperity. When we pass our furnace faith test, a divine power is released to bring about the revelation of all that is needed for Christ to get maximum glory from our lives. Expect a miracle.

**Faith in the Furnace**

The furnace is not just about enduring pressure. It is about responding correctly under pressure. When your faith is tested:

- Will we obey even when it costs us?
- Will we move even when it's unclear?
- Will we trust even when it's painful?

Because in that moment, everything is being revealed. Not just to God. He already knows. But to us.

**A Call to Respond**

Something in our life right now is the thing God is putting His finger on. Something valuable. Something significant. Something that matters to you. And the question is simple: Will you trust Him with it? Will you release it? Will you obey Him? Will you move in faith even when you don't understand? Because when you pass the test, something is unlocked.

Hear this clearly: Our test is not meant to break us. It is meant to reveal who we are and to prepare us for our next spiritual promotion. To reveal:

- What we truly believe
- What we truly trust
- Who we truly belong to
- Who we really are

Do not shrink back. Do not delay. Do not allow fear to rob you of what only faith can produce. Step forward. Obey God. Trust Him for the rest. And watch what He releases when our faith is proven in the furnace.

Faith is not just what we confess in comfort. It is what we demonstrate when everything is on the line.

*"Divine courage does not depend upon favorable situations or perfect plans. This courage does not need for others to unanimously agree. Divine courage only needs one thing, and that is the word from the Lord. And it is rewarded with victory every time.*

# Chapter 3

## Faith That Chooses When It Doesn't Know

*"For we heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordon, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." – Joshua 2:10-11*

There are moments in life where everything changes. Not because of time. Not because of pressure, but because of a *decision*. A single choice. A moment where we either respond in fear or respond in faith.

And what makes that moment so critical is this: *We don't always have full information when we have to decide*. We don't have certainty. We don't have guarantees. We don't have clarity on the outcome. We only have what we've heard and what we choose to believe.

### The Furnace of Decision

Not every furnace is fire. Some furnaces are *decisions*, but it is still a trial. Moments where we are forced to choose:

- What we believe
- Who we will partner with
- What risk we are willing to take

During such moments, everything is at stake. Because if we respond in fear, the result is predictable: Ruined relationships - Strife - Confusion - Pain. But when we respond in faith, something entirely different is released: Revelation - Provision - Favor - Exaltation - Greater faith.

**This is the furnace of life-altering decisions**. One of the most powerful examples is found in Joshua chapter 2.

**A Decision Built on a Rumor**

Rahab was not a prophet. She was not part of Israel. She did not grow up in covenant. She did not have a history with God. What she had was a report. The Bible says she had *heard* about what God had done:

- The parting of the Red Sea
- The destruction of Egypt
- The defeat of kings Sihon and Og

These were not fresh events. Some of them had happened decades earlier, when Rahab was a child. Yet the report remained. And here is what is remarkable: *She believed it.* Not because she saw it. Not because she experienced it. But because she heard it and chose to accept it as truth. In a world full of rumors, speculation, and competing voices, Rahab made a determination that would change her life forever: *She believed the report of the Lord.*

**What You Believe Shapes What You Choose**

Every decision flows from belief. If you believe fear, you will act cautiously. If you believe uncertainty, you will hesitate. If you believe God, you will move, even when it doesn't make sense.

Rahab's faith began with something simple but powerful: *She took what she heard and treated it as reality.* This is the power of the Word of God. As the 1Peter 1:23 reminds us, we are born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word, something that lives and abides forever.

Faith is often born not from seeing, but from hearing and choosing to believe what we have heard about God.

**Faith That Takes Risk**

Belief alone is not enough. Faith always moves. And when Rahab acted on what she believed, it placed her in a position of extreme risk. She wasn't simply making a quiet internal decision. She was taking visible, dangerous action:

- She sheltered spies during wartime
- She hid the enemy of her own people
- She lied to the king's men
- She positioned herself as a traitor

The cost of this decision was clear*: Death.* She risked everything: Her livelihood - Her reputation - Her safety - Her future.

She believed that being aligned with God, even at great cost, was better than staying where she was.

**Faith Is Proven by What You Risk**

There is no such thing as risk-free faith. Faith will always require us to step outside our comfort zones, reject conventional wisdom, and trust God over visible reality.

Rahab's story forces us to face a difficult question: *What are we willing to risk to align ourselves with what we believe God is doing?* Because many people say they have faith, but when the moment of risk comes, they retreat. They protect what they have. They preserve their comfort. They avoid exposure. But Rahab did the opposite. She proceeded into uncertainty because she trusted the God she had never seen.

**Faith That Rewrites Identity**

Rahab's past did not disqualify her. In fact, Scripture is very clear in identifying her: *She was a harlot.* And yet, her faith did something notable. *It rewrote her future.*

In Hebrews 11:31, she is listed among the heroes of faith. In James 2:25, she is affirmed as justified by her actions. And beyond that, her story does not end in Jericho. She becomes part of the lineage that leads to Jesus. Think about that. A woman defined by her past becomes a participant in God's redemptive plan. This is because of one decision established in faith.

**The Reward of Faith**

When Jericho falls in chapter 6, everything is destroyed. Everything. Except Rahab. Actually, not just Rahab, but everyone connected to her who came under the covering of her faith. This is one of the most powerful elements of faith: *It does not just affect you - it affects everyone connected to you.* Her decision brought deliverance, preservation, and transformation. Here is an incredible truth: *Belief in God's Word means that we will not perish.* Her faith created a future not only for herself, but for her family.

**God Is Still a Rewarder**

Faith is never wasted. It may feel costly in the moment. It may require risk and sacrifice. It may demand everything from you. But God responds to faith.

As He declared in Genesis 15:1: "*I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward."* What a powerful statement - that God is our guard against fear and God is our exceeding great reward. This tells us that His presence is all that we need as we face our furnace.

Rahab believed before she saw. She acted before she knew. And she received what only God could provide.

**The Furnace of Choice**

Right now, you may be standing in a moment where a decision has to be made. You have heard something from God. You have sensed a direction. You have been presented with an opportunity to cooperate with Him. But it doesn't make sense. It feels risky. It feels unsure. It feels costly. And the question is the same: *Will you believe enough to act?*

Hear this clearly: *Faith is not only about what you feel.* It is about what you choose. Rahab did not have perfect information. She did not have a full theological framework. She had a report, and she made a decision. And that decision changed everything. Do not wait until everything makes sense. Do not wait until the risk disappears. Do not wait until you feel completely ready. Choose faith. Act on what you know about God. And trust Him with what you do not know.

*Because one decision, made in faith, can rewrite your life and the lives connected to you - forever.*

*"We do not learn obedience by complying with commands we believe are in our best interest. We learn obedience by complying with instructions even when they seem to be to our detriment."*

# Chapter 4

## When God Calls You Beyond Your Capacity

*"The Lord said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over Me, saying, "My own hand has saved me." Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead."….. And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand…" - Judges 7:2-3, 7*

There are moments when God will call us to step into something that feels completely beyond ourselves. Not just difficult. Not just uncomfortable, but impossible. Moments where our immediate response is:

"I can't do this."
"I'm not ready for this."
"I'm not enough for this."

And yet, the call remains. This is another kind of furnace. Not the fire of loss. Not the fire of testing alone. **But the furnace of being *called to rise when you don't believe you can.***

### The Call That Exposes Our Limitations

In Judges 7, we find Gideon standing at the edge of a moment like this. God has called him to lead Israel into battle against an overwhelming enemy. The Midianites are not a small threat. They are vast, oppressive, and dominant. And yet God calls Gideon to fight. But what happens next is not what you would expect.

God's strategy is not our strategy. God begins to *reduce* Gideon's resources. At first glance, Gideon has an army. But God says something that reveals His intent: "*The people who are with you are too many…*"

Too many? In a natural sense, we would think:

- More people = greater strength
- Greater strength = better odds of victory

But God is not operating according to human logic. He is operating according to divine purpose. *God is not just trying to give us victory - He is trying to get glory.* And sometimes, what stands between God and glory is our dependence on what we have instead of who He is.

**When God Reduces What We Rely On**

God tells Gideon to send home those who are afraid. Thousands leave. This is because fear and faith cannot occupy the same space. Those who are fearful are not qualified to inherit the glory of those who are faithful. We cannot trust God and be ruled by fear at the same time. Faith is the currency of heaven, but fear will always distort our perception, diminish our confidence, and undermine our obedience.

So, God removes it. But He doesn't stop there. He removes all except those that are true worshippers. Their behavior gave them away when they lapped the water like a dog (*Our behavior always gives us away*). God reduces the army until only 300 men remain - against an enemy numbering in the tens of thousands. The odds are staggering—approximately **450 to 1**. From a human perspective, this is not strategy. It is surrender.

**The Purpose of Impossible Odds**

Why would God position His people in a situation where failure seems inevitable? Because: *The greater the impossibility, the greater the revelation of God.* When victory comes through overwhelming strength, people celebrate their strength. But when victory comes through weakness, limitation, and impossibility - *People say, "That had to be God."*

God is after something deeper than our success. He is after our complete dependence.

**Who Gets to Stay in the Battle**

As God refines Gideon's army, He is not just reducing numbers; He is revealing qualities. Two groups are removed:

1. The Fearful - Those who are afraid are dismissed, because fear disqualifies you from standing in faith.

2. The Unfocused Non-Worshipper - Those who lack discipline and awareness - those who aren't focused first on God are also separated.

This is because God is not just looking for participants. He is looking for those who are alert, engaged, and spiritually positioned correctly. In other words, He is looking for *true worshippers*.

As the Gospel of John 4:23 declares, "*the Father seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth*." Because worship is not just singing. Much more importantly, it is alignment - it is surrender. It is a posture that says: *"God, I trust You completely - even here."*

**What the Enemy Already Knows**

Before the battle even begins, something remarkable happens. God tells Gideon to go down to the enemy's camp and listen. And when he does, he overhears a conversation. The enemy is afraid. They are already speaking of defeat. They already believe that God has given Gideon the victory. Think about that. *The enemy knew what Gideon was still struggling to believe.*

This is one of the greatest challenges in the furnace: *Not that the victory isn't real, but that we don't fully believe it yet.*

**Faith Aligns Us with What God Has Already Done**

"*Because you did rely on The Lord, He delivered your enemies into your hand." 2Chronicles 16:8*

*"One man of you shall chase a thousand: for The Lord your God, He it is that fights for you as He promised." - Joshua 23:10*

Scripture repeatedly affirms that when we rely on God, He fights for us. In 2Chronicles 16:8 and Joshua 23:10, we are reminded that the Lord delivers enemies and fights on behalf of His people. Victory is not something we create. It is something we *step into by faith*. But to step into it, we must align our belief with what God has already declared.

In our furnace, when we commit to follow the process of God, to do it exactly His way, God begins to fight for us - immediately. And odds don't matter when God is on our side. The moment we commit to follow God's process, exactly as He said we should, the victory is given to us. Our enemy is completely and utterly defeated in that moment.

**God Doesn't Need Our Strength - He Wants Our Faith**

One of the most important truths in this chapter is this: *God does not need our help to win.* The Cross already settled that. But He invites our participation. This is because, it glorifies Him, it strengthens us, and it develops our faith. Victory is always available, but it must be pursued God's way. Not through self-reliance. Not through human strategy, but through surrendered faith.

**The Outcome of Trust**

When the battle unfolds, the 300 men do not win through conventional warfare. There is no display of superior strength. No tactical brilliance. Just obedience. And in that obedience, God moves. The enemy turns on itself. Confusion breaks out. Victory is secured. What seemed impossible becomes undeniable.

Faith-born obedience brings satisfaction. When we trust God and step into what He has called us to do, something happens inside of us. Not just around us. We are fulfilled, strengthened, completed, and satisfied.

As declared in Psalms 36:7–8, those who trust under the shadow of His wings will be abundantly satisfied. This is because faith does not just produce outcomes. It produces *transformation.* It makes us prosperous, spiritually first, and then in every other way.

**The Furnace of Calling**

You may be in a moment right now where God is calling you higher. Calling you to step out, lead, obey, or move forward. And everything in you is saying: *"You can't."* But what if the point is not that you can? What if the point is that **He can**?

Hear this clearly: God will never call us into something that we can accomplish on our own. If we can do it without Him, it does not require faith. And if it does not require faith, it will not produce the kind of glory God is after.

Do not shrink back because of your limitations. Do not measure the call by your capacity. Do not allow fear to disqualify you from what God has already assigned to you. Rise and trust Him. Step forward, even when the odds don't make sense. Because when God is in it, the impossible immediately becomes possible. We are not called because we are capable. We are called because God is faithful.

*"Making excuses for why we do not obey the commandments of God will forever guarantee that we reside in the land of spiritual poverty."*

# Chapter 5

## Standing When Everything in You Wants to Run

*"And there, came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him……And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid."*
1Samuel 17:4-7, 10-11

Every believer will face a moment when the battle is no longer theoretical. It becomes personal. It becomes visible. It becomes confrontational. It becomes unavoidable. And in that moment, we are forced to decide: Will we stand with God or will we shrink back in fear? **This is the furnace of *standing*.** Not waiting. Not deciding. But standing.

### The Battle You Cannot Ignore

In 1Samuel 17, Israel is confronted with a problem they cannot avoid. A giant named Goliath. He is not just large. He is overwhelming.

- Nearly 9 feet tall
- Armored with over 100 pounds of protection
- Carrying weapons designed to intimidate before they ever strike

But the true power of Goliath is not just his size. It is what he represents. *Goliath is the embodiment of fear.*

**The Inward Enemy**

Before Goliath ever defeats anyone physically, he defeats them internally. This is because the real battle is not on the field. It is in the *mind*. It is the battle for identity, for spiritual confidence, for faith, and for revealed spiritual victory.

Israel had already been given a promise. They were already God's people. They had already seen His power - Egypt, the Red Sea, deliverance after deliverance. And yet, here they stand, paralyzed because of fear. This is because when identity is lost, faith is weakened. And when faith is weakened, fear rises, and defeat becomes inevitable. The real enemy is not just external opposition. It is internal surrender.

**The War Between Flesh and Spirit**

This is not just Israel's struggle. It is also ours. There is a constant tension between *what our flesh feels and what our spirit knows*.

*"But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith…." - Galatians 5:22*

Our flesh responds to fear. Our spirit responds to truth. As Galatians 5:22 reminds us, the fruit of the Spirit includes faith, but it manifests only when we walk in alignment with the Spirit. If the flesh dominates, fear governs. If the Spirit leads, faith rises.

We can love Jesus, but because of fear, still live a defeated life. We can allow fear to manipulate us into disobeying God's Word, thereby aborting the victories God has for our lives. Our behavior reveals whether we are operating by the flesh/fear or by the Spirit/faith.

**The Voice That Paralyzes**

Goliath does not just stand. He speaks. He taunts. He challenges. He mocks. Day after day, his voice fills the atmosphere. And eventually, that voice

begins to shape perception. The Bible says that when Israel heard him, they were dismayed, terrified, overwhelmed. Fear does not need to be logical to be effective. It just needs to be repeated. Over time, fear can:

- Shatter our confidence
- Drain our will to fight
- Silence our faith
- Steal our God-ordained victory

Evil seeks to paralyze us and stop us from taking action that most honors God. It seeks to dismay us and shatter our hope and our will to fight the good fight of faith. The voice of evil wants us to become greatly afraid, to have an abundance of fear, to become terrified, petrified, and ultimately to panic. Evil desires for us to have more reverence for what we see, hear, and think - than we do for God's word.

**When You Fear the Wrong Thing**

At the root of Israel's paralysis was misplaced reverence. They feared Goliath more than they feared God. They gave more weight to what they saw, what they heard, and what they felt. They gave more respect to these things than to *what God had already done*. And this is where many believers lose the battle. Not because God has failed them, but because they have forgotten Him.

As Psalms 78:42 declares, they "*remembered not His hand*." They forgot the Red Sea, the miracles, and God's deliverance. And when memory fades, when we forget who God is and what He has done, our fear grows. We must never forget: *the devil roars, but Jesus reigns.*

**Fear Is Passive—Faith Moves**

Fear will keep you still. Fear is lazy. It always takes the easy way path. It tells us to sit and do nothing. It will convince us not to act, not to step out, and not to confront what needs to be confronted. Fear is comfortable with delay. Faith is

not. *Faith* takes action even when it is uncomfortable. Even when it is risky, even when it stands alone, faith compels us. Faith pushes us to respond positively to God's word, to His voice.

**One Man Who Refused to Bow**

In the middle of an entire nation paralyzed by fear, one man responds differently. His name is David. He is not the most experienced. He is not the most equipped. He is not the most recognized. But he is the only one who sees the situation correctly. While everyone else sees a giant, David sees an opportunity for God to be glorified. While everyone else hears intimidation, David hears blasphemy. While everyone else retreats, David steps forward. He steps forward because he is upset about what is upsetting God.

David has righteous anger. David is not passive. He is offended. Not personally - but spiritually. He is disturbed that something is opposing God openly and no one is responding. This is a missing element in many believers today. We tolerate what God is opposed to. We remain silent when we should be stirred. We tremble at the wrong thing. But David's response is different. ***He refuses to accept what dishonors God.***

David's spiritual confidence is not rooted in arrogance. It is rooted in memory. He recalls the lion, the bear, and the many victories God had already given him. And he makes a connection: *"The same God who delivered me then will deliver me now."*

Faith is strengthened by remembering what God has already done. Fear thrives when we forget. And so, because of David's divine memory, he decides to attack the thing that is attacking him.

**Refusing the Conventional Way**

When David prepares for battle, he is offered armor. It looks right. It feels appropriate. It matches expectations. But it is not for him. So, he refuses it. Faith does not always conform to what is conventional; it aligns with what is

God-ordained. David chooses: A sling - Stones - What he knows God has already used.

Faith does not need to look impressive. It needs to be *aligned*. As 1Timothy 6:12 declares: "*Fight the good fight of faith*…" Faith is not passive. It contends. It confronts. It disrupts. It engages. And sometimes, that fight will put you in direct opposition to fear, the culture, expectations, and even other people. But if you are standing with God, we are never standing alone.

**The Outcome of Standing**

David steps onto the battlefield, not with overwhelming strength, but with unwavering faith. And in a moment, everything changes. The giant falls. Not because David was stronger. But because God was greater. And what no one else was willing to confront becomes the very thing that brings God the greatest glory.

David was the only one to say "no" to evil and "yes" to God. He was the only one to get angry enough to do something about it. He was the only one who was offended by what offended God. He was the only man willing to confront evil and put it all on the line. He was the one to choose faith over fear. He was the one who remembered God's faithfulness, and as a result, David was the only one to get the victory; the only one to be exalted; the only one that proved himself righteous; the only one to bring God the maximum glory, and the only one that proved himself worthy of the favor of God.

**The Furnace of Standing**

You may be in a moment right now where something is standing in front of you. Something intimidating. Something overwhelming. Something that feels impossible to defeat. And everything around you is saying: "Stay back." - "Be careful." - "Don't risk it." But something inside of you is saying: "Stand."

Hear this clearly: *We cannot claim faith if we are unwilling to stand*. There will be moments where we are the only one willing, where we are the only one speaking, and where we are the only one moving forward.

Stand anyway. Do not allow fear to silence you. Do not allow intimidation to control you. Do not allow the voice of the enemy to override the truth of God. Stand with God. Fight the fight of faith. And watch what happens when one person chooses faith over fear. Because it only takes one person, fully aligned with God, to change everything.

*"Obedience without struggle doesn't tell us much about whether we are really surrendered to Christ. When we don't want to obey a command and yet we obey any way, our commitment to our risen King is revealed."*

## Chapter 6

## When It's Time to Stand, Speak, and Be Raised

*"Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" – Daniel 3:15*

There are moments in life when faith is no longer quiet. No longer internal. No longer private. It becomes visible. It becomes potentially costly. It becomes confrontational. In that moment, we face a decision: Will we stand even if it costs us everything? In these moments, we are tempted to try to take control of the situation and the outcome. But we are encouraged, by the Word of God and the Spirit of God, in these challenging moments to trust in the character and word of Jesus Christ.

### When We're in a Place We Didn't Choose

In Daniel 3, we encounter three Hebrew men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—living in a reality they did not create. They are in exile. Taken from their homeland. Placed in a foreign system and surrounded by a culture that does not honor their God. And it is critical to understand this: *They were not in this situation because of personal failure.*

They are commanded to bow before an image that represents a system opposed to the God they serve. They refuse. Their refusal is not emotional. It is rooted in conviction. They are not reacting in the moment. They are standing on what they already believe.

They were in a difficult place, not because of anything they had done wrong, but because of circumstances beyond their control. And sometimes, that is exactly where the furnace begins.

**The Pressure to Conform**

The king establishes a system of control: Music plays. A command is given. Everyone bows. It is organized. It is cultural. It is normalized. And in that moment, standing becomes dangerous. Because when everyone else bows, standing makes us visible. Standing makes us different. Standing makes us a target. And yet, that is exactly what these men do. They stand.

This was not a spontaneous act of courage. This was the result of preparation. Everything they had been through, the exile, all the pressure, the testing - everything had prepared them for this moment. These things had been forming something inside of them. Faith does not rise in the moment. It is revealed in the moment. And the question we must ask ourselves is: *What has God been preparing us for?*

Moses, David, Esther, and even Jesus all had these moments. Moments in our lives are not random. They are appointed. As Esther 4:14 reminds us: "*Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this*?" Do not miss your moment.

**The Voice of the Enemy**

These Hebrews do not align with the environment of evil. Can you imagine hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people bowing to the king's command, but these three men standing all alone? They are "*outside of the box*". They are both socially and politically incorrect. They are spiritual disruptors. They are causing a huge disturbance, simply because they are responding in faith, instead of fear. When these men refuse to bow, the pressure intensifies. They are brought before the king. And once again, the opportunity is presented: "Bow… or burn." This is how the enemy operates. He roars. He threatens. He intimidates. He attempts to force a decision through fear. But notice what happens next.

**Faith That Refuses to Bend**

Perhaps everything that these men had been through spiritually up to this moment was preparation for what was happening now. It was training for the furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond with clarity: "*We have no need to answer you in this matter*." In other words: "We've already decided." There is no negotiation. No hesitation. No internal debate. They continue: "*Our God can deliver us… and He will deliver us… but even if He does not—we will not serve your gods*."

This is one of the most powerful expressions of faith in all of Scripture. It is not conditional. It is not based on outcome. It is rooted in conviction. These men had what many believers lack today: ***Spiritual boundaries they would not cross.*** There were things they would not do:

- No matter the pressure
- No matter the cost
- No matter the consequence

And this raises a critical question*: What are our non-negotiables?* We must have some spiritual non-negotiables, some spiritual "No-Can-Do's". What have we decided in advance that we will not compromise, we will not bow to, we will not surrender?

We all need some things that we won't do. We need some Christian commitments. We must have Godly principles worth dying for. *I'm not doing that - you can fine me, jail me, or kill me - but I'm not doing that.* Because if we don't decide before the pressure comes, we will fold when it arrives.

*"Fear usually comes dressed up as an excuse."*

**Silencing the Enemy**

The enemy's goal is to dominate the conversation. He desires to fill our mind with fear, doubt, and intimidation. But faith has a voice too. As Psalm 8:2 declares, "*God has ordained strength to silence the enemy"*. One way He does that is through our response. When we stand in faith we silence fear, we shut down intimidation, and we declare that God has the final word.

The only way we can stand in faith is by the Word of God. Romans 10:17 reminds us that *"faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* We stand by silencing the voice of the world and exalting the voice/word of God. The Word makes blasphemers shut up, and believers speak up.

And so, the three Hebrews stand. And because they refuse to compromise, they are thrown into a furnace. Not a symbolic one, but a real one. A furnace heated so intensely that it kills the men who throw them in.

Now here is where most people misunderstand the story. We focus on the miracle of their survival, but we often overlook the reality of their situation: *God did not stop them from being thrown into the fire.* He did not shut down the system. He did not remove the threat. He did not change the king's mind before the trial began. He allowed the furnace.

**The Theology of the Furnace**

This is where our understanding of God is either strengthened or shaken. Because if our faith is built on the idea that God will always prevent difficulty, then the moment difficulty arrives, our faith begins to collapse. But if we understand that God is not just the God who delivers *from* the fire, but also the God who reveals Himself *in* the fire - then everything changes. The furnace is not evidence of God's absence. It is often the environment of His revelation.

**What the Fire Reveals**

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are thrown into the furnace, something unexpected happens. The king looks into the fire and says, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" Then he answers his own question: "I see four men… and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

What changed? Not the fire. Not the situation. Not the pressure. *What changed was the revelation of who was with them in the fire, in their crucible with them.* We will never encounter aspects of God's presence until we are placed in situations where He is all we have. In comfort, we may know God as provider. In peace, we may know Him as shepherd. But in the furnace, we come to know Him as *present*. Not distant. Not theoretical. But present.

When the three men come out of the furnace, the Bible makes a fascinating observation:

- The fire did not consume their bodies.
- It did not burn their clothes.
- It did not even leave the smell of smoke on them.
- You could not tell that they had ever been in the fire by looking at them

But something *did* burn. The ropes that had them bound were gone. This is one of the most powerful truths about the furnace: *The fire is not designed to destroy you. It is designed to free you.*

There are things attached to our lives - fear, pride, wrong dependency, and false identity. These will not fall off in comfort. They have to be burned off in pressure. What the enemy meant to use to destroy us, God uses to refine us.

**Faith Under Pressure**

Before they were thrown into the furnace, these men made a statement that defines real faith: *"Our God can deliver us… but even if He does not, we will not bow."* This is not casual faith. This is not conditional faith. This is *committed*

*faith*. Faith that says God can deliver me, God will deliver me, but even if He doesn't do it the way I expect, I will not compromise who I am or dishonor who I belong to. This is the kind of faith the furnace is looking to reveal. Not shallow belief that only survives when life is easy, but deep conviction that stands when everything is at stake.

Another powerful detail in this story is that they did not stand alone. Three men. One conviction. There is strength in unity. As Hebrews 10:23–25 teaches, we are called to hold fast together, encouraging one another, especially in difficult times. Isolation weakens faith. Community strengthens it.

**From Standing to Being Raised**

After they stand, they are thrown into the furnace. The fire is real. The heat is intense. The threat is immediate. But something unexpected happens. The king looks into the furnace and sees not three men, but four. And the fourth looks like the Son of God. What was meant to destroy them becomes the place where God reveals Himself most clearly.

The same king who was filled with anger is now filled with awe. What changed? Not the system. Not the fire. Not the pressure. God's faithfulness as He responded to faith released supernatural power that changed the environment - completely.

When we stand in faith, we create space for God to reveal Himself in ways that shift the atmosphere. When they come out of the furnace, they are unharmed, they get promoted, and they are elevated.

They receive what seemed impossible just moments before. This is because faith flips the outcome. What looked like defeat becomes victory. What looked like loss becomes gain. What looked like destruction becomes elevation. Their faith turned anger into awe. It reveals the faithfulness of God.

Access to the great things of God will only come through the revelation of our faith in the furnace. It is this faith that shines the light of God's glory and that builds legacy - both spiritual and otherwise.

Many people want promotion. They want elevation. They want influence. They want blessing. But they are unwilling to stand when it matters. And here is the truth: ***We cannot be raised if we will not stand up.***

God honors those who honor Him. When we stand for His Word, His name, and His people - He responds. We receive what God had for us the entire time. He was waiting for us to respond to our furnace moment in faith. And the blessings are going to be BIG!

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be in a moment right now. The pressure is real. The culture is loud. The expectation is to conform. And everything around you is saying: "Just bow." - "Just go along." - "Just compromise this once." But something inside of you knows: You can't.

Hear this clearly: This is your moment. Do not bow. Do not compromise. Don't let fear dictate your response. Stand. Even if you have to stand alone. Stand on God's Word. Stand, even if it costs you greatly. Stand! Even if the outcome is uncertain. Because when we stand for God, He will stand with us. And when He stands with us, everything changes. This is the furnace where faith is proven, the enemy is silenced, and the faithful are raised.

*"We are doomed to live a life of spiritual impotence when we speak faith, but act in fear."*

# Chapter 7

## Faith That Refuses to Bow Under Pressure

*"Therefore, King Darius signed the document and injunction. When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before His God, as he had done previously." – Daniel 6:9-10*

Some faith isn't tested by circumstances alone. It is tested by *opposition*. Not just difficulty. Not just pressure. But targeted, intentional resistance. The kind of resistance that is designed to silence your voice, stop your devotion, and undermine your commitment to God.

**This is the furnace of *persecution***. If we live for God long enough, we will most certainly face it.

### When Righteousness Becomes a Target

In Daniel 6, Daniel is no longer a young man trying to survive in Babylon. He has been elevated. He is respected. He is influential. He is second only to the king. The Bible describes him as having an *excellent spirit*. That is exactly what made him a target. Because righteousness will always attract resistance.

Daniel's enemies could not find fault in his work. They examined his conduct. They searched his leadership. They analyzed his decisions. And they found nothing. So, they shifted their strategy. If they could not attack his performance, they would attack his *faith*. They created a system designed to criminalize his devotion to God. A decree was issued: No one could pray to any god except the king. And anyone who disobeyed would face death. This was not random. This was targeted.

Righteousness is under attack today. We see story after story of how the Church, Christianity, and anything and everything holy is under attack by the culture. Faithfulness toward God is under attack. The attack is designed to bully,

to silence, to destroy those who say they stand on the Word of God. The attack looks to have us negotiate or compromise our commitment to Christ. If we honor Christ, we will be attacked. The attack wants us to think the way they think and act the way they act, and if nothing else – do stand in faith on God's word.

We can also see that the attacks have increased and intensified over the years. The reason is that when our enemy launched his attack of fear, we did not respond in faith. In essence, the attack worked. We responded to the fear campaign with fear. We responded based upon what we felt and how we thought, instead of responding in the power of the Word of God. And so, as a culture, fear became stronger, and faith became weaker. This is why there is so much chaos and disaster in the world, because the righteous have not responded to evil in faith – we did not stand.

**When Faith Is Forced into the Open**

There are moments when our faith can remain private, quiet, unseen, and unchallenged. But then there are moments when faith is forced into the open. Moments where we cannot remain neutral. We either stand for God or compromise our convictions. And in those moments, everything becomes clear.

**The Reality of Persecution**

Jesus made it clear in the Gospel of Matthew 5:10–11: "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake*…" Persecution is not a sign that we are outside of God's will. It is often a sign that we are walking *directly in it*. Evil does not resist what it controls. It resists what it cannot dominate. Make no mistake: *there is pressure on the authentic child of God to compromise*. Daniel had options. He could have:

- Prayed in secret
- Adjusted temporarily
- Compromised quietly

After all, this was a political issue. This was a strategic moment – a dangerous situation. But Daniel understood something deeper: *Compromise is not just about what we avoid. It is about what we lose.* When we compromise, we lose integrity, consistency, and alignment with God. And once that happens everything else begins to weaken.

**Faith That Remains Consistent**

The Bible says that when Daniel heard about the decree, he did something remarkable. He went home. Opened his windows and prayed. Not differently. Not cautiously. Not secretly, but *consistently* - just as he had done before. This is the mark of mature faith: *It does not change under pressure.*

**Fade or Flower**

When pressure comes, we have two options. We can fade, or we can flower. We can retreat, compromise, and blend in. Or we can stand, remain faithful, and trust God. Daniel chose to stand. Not aggressively. Not defensively - but faithfully.

God wants us to flower. When the pressure of the crucible comes, the whole world is waiting to see how we will respond. Imagine placing a flower on the hot pavement and stepping on it. Not just stepping on it, but putting your full weight upon it. All expectations are that once you removed your foot, the flower would be crushed. The petals would be broken and smashed. It would be unfit for its original use. But imagine if the flower you stepped on did not fade. Imagine for a moment that instead of being smashed when you removed your foot, it became even more vibrant than it was before. Imagine that it had budded and blossomed. Imagine that it looked much more beautiful, much stronger, than it did before you stepped on it. That is God's plan for His people. That the pressure of the furnace makes us stronger, more powerful, more vibrant than we ever would have been had we not experienced the crucible.

**Victim or Victor**

Many people see opposition and immediately assume they are victims. But Scripture teaches something different. In Romans 8:37, we are told that we are *more than conquerors* through Christ. That means:

- We are not powerless
- We are not defeated, but victorious
- We are not at the mercy of the attack

This means that as we obey God's Word, not only do we win, but we use the thing that our enemy was attempting to use to destroy us - to destroy him. We already have what we need to stand and win. When we stand on God's Word, we will automatically win.

Isaiah 54:17 tells us, "*No weapon formed against us shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD*…" This is a promise for the saints of God that He is always protecting us as we walk in obedience to Him from evil, hurt, harm, and danger – even those who speak against us.

**The Weapons of Faith**

Daniel did not fight this battle with force. He fought it with faith. As 2Corinthians 10:4 reminds us: "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but might through God to the pulling down of strongholds (fear, hate, deception)*". This is not a natural battle. It is spiritual. And spiritual battles require spiritual alignment, spiritual discipline, and spiritual conviction.

The decree was signed. The trap was set. The consequence was clear. But something greater was at work. As Isaiah 54:17 declares: "*No weapon formed against you shall prosper*…". Notice it does not say the weapon will not be formed. It will be formed, but it will not succeed.

We must stand firmly on the Word of God and determine that fear will not determine our behavior. We must determine that, based on the Word of God, we have everything we need for Christ's victory to reveal itself in our situation. We shout victory before the battle fully engages, because we know the character of our God.

We offer no response. We do not seek to defend ourselves. We have One that comes along beside us and fights for us. We are not afraid to go by ourselves, because we are never by ourselves.

**The Outcome of Faithfulness**

Daniel is thrown into the lion's den. The lions are hungry. Food has been intentionally withheld from them so that they are prepared for this very moment. The threat is real. The danger is immediate. The outcome seems certain. But God intervenes. The lions are shut down. God supernaturally shuts the mouth of the lions. The danger is neutralized. The man of faith is preserved. And in that moment, everything shifts.

**From Attack to Exaltation**

Daniel has acted in faith. As long as men act in faith, God will respond. Daniel has put something very significant on the line to honor God. Now God is honoring His word and the man who stands on His word. God always honors those who honor Him. What was meant to destroy Daniel becomes the very thing that elevates him. His enemies are exposed. God is glorified. Daniel is promoted.

The event makes the king tremble at the power of Daniel's God. The king declares the greatness of Daniel's God to the entire kingdom. This is significant because here is a man who has no real knowledge of God other than this one event – yet it is enough to make him tremble. This is significant: *Many of us in the Church have much more information about the greatness of God, but we will not tremble at His Word or His presence. Instead, we tremble at almost every other thing. We have taken that which is holy and called it common.*

Don't miss it. Look closely. There is a pattern. Faith invites opposition. Opposition creates opportunity. Opportunity reveals God.

**The Impact of Righteousness**

Righteousness does not just affect us. It affects everything around us. As Proverbs 11:11 declares: "*By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted*…" When we stand in faith, we elevate environments, we shift atmospheres, and we create opportunities for God to be revealed.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be facing opposition right now. There is pressure to compromise, pressure to be silent, and pressure to conform. The question is not whether the pressure is real, because it is. The question is: *Will we remain faithful in the middle of our furnace?*

Hear this clearly: Your faith is not proven when it is easy. It is proven when it is opposed. Do not allow the attack to intimidate you. Do not allow the pressure to silence you. Do not allow the threat to change you. Stand. Pray. Remain consistent. And trust that the same God who shut the mouths of lions is still able to preserve, protect, and promote those who honor Him. Because when faith stands under pressure, God is revealed in power.

*"The strategy of success through obedience is the giving of all that we have and are to God. Once He has it, He will bless it supernaturally."*

# Chapter 8

## When Faith Remembers What Fear Forgets

*"But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it." Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." So, they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land …"*
*Numbers 13:30-32*

A dangerous pattern shows up in the lives of believers. Not because God has failed. Not because the promise is unclear. Not because the path is hidden, but because *memory fades under pressure.* And when memory fades, faith weakens. **This is the furnace of *perspective***.

In Numbers 13–14, Israel finds itself at a defining moment. They are no longer in bondage. They are no longer wandering without direction. They are standing on the edge of what God has already promised. The Promised Land is there. The opportunity is real. The promise is within reach. Yet, they hesitate.

### Forgetting What God Has Already Done

This is not a people without history. God had already:

- Brought them out of Egypt
- Destroyed their enemies
- Gave them the wealth of Egypt
- Provided for them in the wilderness
- Revealed His presence among them

They had seen signs, wonders, and miracles. They had experienced His might firsthand. And yet, in this moment, something changes. They forget.

Spiritual amnesia is dangerous. Psalm 16:8 declares: *"I have set the LORD always before me… I shall not be moved."* But Israel did the opposite. They allowed what they saw in the present to override what God had done in the past. And when that happens, fear gains ground. Because fear thrives when we forget God's faithfulness, when we minimize His power, and when we disconnect from His presence. Faith, on the other hand, is strengthened by our remembrance.

**Two Voices, One Decision**

When the spies return from the land, they bring back two reports. One from Caleb: "*We can take the land*." And one from the majority: "*We cannot do it*." Same land. Same opportunity. Same God. Different perspective. Elevating the wrong voice has negative consequences. The majority report was not rooted in truth. It was anchored in human perception.

- "The people are too strong." (verse 28)
- "The cities are too fortified." (verse 28)
- "We are like grasshoppers in our own sight." (verse 33)

Notice that last statement - *"…in our own sight."* Before they were defeated externally, they were defeated internally. This is what happens when we elevate the voice of man above the voice of God.

God had already said: "The land is yours." That should have settled it. But instead of anchoring themselves in what God said, they let what they saw, heard, and felt influence them. And in doing so, they revealed something deeper:

- A focus on the natural over the spiritual
- A lack of confidence in their identity
- A mindset driven by problems instead of solutions
- A greater fear of man than reverence for God

The people did not just voice concern. They adopted a mentality. They adopted a spirit that said: "We can't." And that spirit spread quickly, because fear is contagious. Doubt is persuasive. And before long, an entire nation is ready to retreat from what God had already given them.

When we follow the voice of man, we become limited by what man can see. When we follow the voice of God, we are aligned with what God has already declared.

**The Power of Right Alignment**

But Caleb stands up. And he speaks differently. This is because his perspective is aligned with God. He is not ignoring reality. He is simply interpreting reality through the lens of faith. He understands:

- The natural odds may be against him
- The challenge may be real
- The opposition may be strong

But ***God is greater***. As 1John 4:4 declares: "*Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*." This is not just a consoling statement. It is a core truth. If we believe it, it changes how we see everything.

- We stop magnifying the problem
- We stop fearing the opposition
- We stop doubting our ability to move forward

Because we understand that the power within us is greater than the pressure around us.

**Forgetting Who God Is**

At the root of Israel's failure wasn't just forgetting what God had done. It was forgetting **who God is**. They neglected His holiness - His power - His promise - His purpose. And when we forget who God is, we begin to question everything else. We question His leading, His timing, and His plan. We begin to resist what He is trying to do. When we refuse to trust God, it is not just hesitation. It is rebellion, and rebellion is dangerous. Because we are effectively saying: "I don't trust Your way." "I don't want what You have for me." "I would rather go back than go forward in faith." And there is a sobering reality in this: *If we reject what God is offering, He will give it to someone else.*

In the Gospel of John 14:6, Jesus declares: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* He does not adjust to our perspective. He defines reality. He determines what is true, what is right, and what is possible. Faith agrees with Him. Fear resists Him.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be standing at your own "promised land" moment. There is an opportunity, a calling, a step forward. And voices are speaking: "You can't." "It's too much." "You're not ready."

But there is another voice. The voice that is fully aligned with the Word of God. This is the voice of God. And the question is: *Which voice will we believe?*

Hear this clearly: Faith remembers. It remembers what God has done, what God has said, and who God is.

Do not allow fear to rewrite your perspective. Do not allow doubt to override your memory. Do not allow the voice of man to silence the voice of God. Set the Lord before you. Anchor yourself in His Word and go forward with conviction. Because when faith remembers, fear loses its power.

> *"We will never learn faith in comfortable surroundings."*

## Chapter 9

## When Faith Confronts
## What Evil Is Trying to Destroy

*"Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" – Esther 4:13-14*

There are moments when faith is no longer about survival. It becomes about *confrontation*. Not because we went looking for the fight, but because the fight found us. In some seasons, evil does not hide. It becomes bold. It becomes aggressive. It becomes intentional. And in those moments, the question is no longer: "Will we endure?" The question becomes: *"Will we engage?"*

### The Enlargement of Evil - Its Nature

In the account surrounding the fourth chapter of Esther, we find a dangerous escalation. Haman, a man driven by pride and hatred, is elevated to a position of influence. And with that promotion, his evil expands. Because evil, when empowered, does not become passive. It becomes *bolde*r.

This is a lesson that we must be forever mindful of today: Evil is always looking to expand, to enlarge itself. The eyes of evil are always looking to destroy. Evil cannot be satisfied. It cannot be contained. It must be destroyed. Don't play with it. Don't ignore it. We must destroy it, no matter how small, wherever we encounter it.

Haman's hatred is not random. It is targeted. He hates Mordecai, not because of what Mordecai has done wrong, but because Mordecai refuses to bow. This is a consistent pattern: *Evil is offended by righteousness.* Evil resists God's Word, God's people, God's plan, and God's authority. And it does not stop on its

own. As Proverbs 27:20 declares: "*Hell and destruction are never full…"* Evil is never satisfied. It always wants more.

**The Illusion of Avoidance**

Many believers think they can avoid confrontation. They make a plan to stay quiet, stay neutral, and stay out of it. But the truth is: *We cannot avoid a battle that is assigned to us***.** We can delay it. We can try to ignore it. We can pretend it is not there. But eventually, it will demand a response.

We are not here by accident. We are not positioned randomly. Our life has purpose. And part of that purpose is this: *To respond to what opposes God.* To respond in faith – not in anger or pride. To do what honors God the most, even when it carries risk - dare I say - especially when it carries risk.

**The Cost of Avoiding the Fight**

There is a dangerous tendency in many believers: *Avoid conflict at all costs*. Stay comfortable, stay agreeable, stay passive - at least about spiritual things. But avoidance comes with a price. When we refuse to confront what is wrong, we allow it to grow. What we ignore today will become stronger tomorrow.

**The Reality of Spiritual Conflict**

Jesus made it clear in Matthew 11:12: *"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."* This does not speak of physical aggression. It speaks of spiritual determination. True faith is not passive. It presses. It contends. It takes hold of what God has promised. The promise is given by God, but taken by men of faith.

As the First Epistle to Timothy 6:12 declares: "*Fight the good fight of faith*…" And as 2Timothy 4:7 reminds us: "*I have fought a good fight… I have kept the faith…."* This is the posture of those who walk with God - *spiritual warfare*.

The great portion of our spiritual assignment here on earth is to glorify Jesus Christ and respond to evil in a way that most honors God. This means that we operate in faith. The kind of faith that moves heaven.

People of faith are not risk-averse. We do not desire to avoid conflict, because we know that we cannot avoid the fight. The fight is coming to us whether we want it or not, because we are authentic children of God. So, we do not avoid the conflict; instead, we respond to it.

2Corinthians 10:4 reminds us that "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."* We know that in Christ Jesus we have both the authority and the power to respond to evil in a way that honors Christ and advances the Kingdom of God.

**When Promotion Meets Purpose**

Esther's position was not accidental. She was placed in the palace. She was given influence, access, and favor. But it all came with responsibility. Promotion is never just for our benefit; it is for God's purpose.

When Mordecai sends word to Esther about the coming destruction, the reality becomes clear: This is her moment. Not tomorrow. Not later. Now. And the message is direct. If you remain silent, deliverance will come from somewhere else, but you will miss your purpose. This is a sobering truth: *God's plan will not fail, but we can miss our place in it.*

She had been made ready for exactly this moment. Everything Esther had been through: the process, the preparation, and the promotion. Everything was leading to this moment. And the same is true for us. We've walked through things that didn't make sense at the time. Some seasons felt unnecessary. Some moments felt difficult. But they were preparing us.

**Faith Moves Toward the Risk**

Esther's decision was not safe. It was dangerous. Approaching the king without an invitation could cost her life. But faith does not run from risk. It moves toward it when that risk aligns with God's purpose. There are positive consequences for obedience. When Esther responds in faith:

- The plan of the enemy is exposed
- The people of God are preserved
- The enemy is destroyed
- Mordecai is elevated

What was meant for destruction becomes a pathway to deliverance. This is not isolated. This is consistent. Joseph declared in Genesis 45:5: "*God sent me before you to preserve life."* Also, the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 was always about impact beyond himself. Our life is not just about us. It is about what God wants to do through us.

**The Furnace of Engagement**

You may be facing something right now that requires more than endurance. It requires action. A situation where silence is no longer an option, neutrality is no longer possible, and avoidance is no longer effective. And the question is clear*: Will we step into our assignment?*

Hear this clearly: *Faith does not hide from what opposes God. It confronts it.* Not recklessly. Not arrogantly. But obediently. Do not allow fear to keep you silent. Do not allow comfort to keep you passive. Do not allow risk to keep you from purpose. Step forward. Engage. Trust God with the outcome. Because when faith responds, evil is exposed, God is glorified, and lives are changed. We were not just saved to survive. We were positioned to respond. God will prove us.

*"Don't be afraid of any perceived consequence that comes from absolute obedience to God."*

## Chapter 10

## When Confidence in Yourself Collapses

*"And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he too is Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter." – Luke 22:59-61*

A furnace does not always begin with pressure from the outside. It can begin with *confidence on the inside*. Not confidence in God. Not confidence in His Word. But confidence in ourselves. Our strength. Our knowledge. Our commitment. And the danger of self-confidence is this: *It feels like faith, but it fails when it is tested.*

Every believer will eventually face a defining choice: Will we live *self-confident* or *God-confident*? They may sound similar. They may even look similar in times of comfort. But when the furnace comes, the difference proves undeniable.

### The Confidence That Sounds Right

In Luke chapter 22, Peter makes a bold proclamation: *"Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."* The Gospel of Matthew 26:35 records Peter as saying, *"Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You."* In essence, Peter is saying "*death before denial*." This is not casual language. This is strong, emotional, and most convincing in the moment. Yet, it is completely misplaced. Within a short span of time, before the pressure even fully develops, Peter does the unthinkable. He denies Jesus. Not once. Not twice. But three times. We must be careful not to allow our words to outrun our reality. The same man who declared unfaltering loyalty now distances himself completely. This is because *self-confidence cannot survive the furnace.*
We must be careful not to become more interested in how we feel or what we think than we are in God's word. If we are not careful, our feelings, our emotions will cause us to bypass the Word of God.

**The Problem with Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence is rooted in personal strength, personal understanding, personal resolve. It says: "I can handle this." "I know what to do." "I won't fail." But the problem is this: *We are not built to shoulder the weight of our own faith.* When pressure comes, emotions shift, fear rises, and circumstances intensify. And what seemed strong begins to collapse. Within thirty verses, Jesus proved that Peter had lied about his fidelity to Him.

Peter's failure wasn't just a moment of weakness. It revealed the foundation of his faith. He was:

- Flesh-focused instead of faith-focused
- Emotionally driven instead of spiritually anchored

Peter had a kind of faith built on feeling. It responds strongly in moments of passion, but disappears under pressure. This is not true faith. This is *emotionalism.*

Another layer of Peter's failure is what many would call a "spirit of religion." He is outwardly committed and verbally confident, but internally unprepared. This is what it looks like in practice when religion replaces relationship, even for a moment. It is possible to sound right, look right, and even believe we are right, and still collapse when we are tested. *True faith is not proven in what we say; it is proven in what we do under pressure.*

Emotionalism acts on feelings instead of faith. It looks to mimic the Holy Spirit, but it cannot handle the pressure of the furnace. The problem is not that the boat is in the water. The problem is that the water is in the boat.

**The Sifting Process**

Jesus warned Peter: *"Satan has desired to sift you as wheat…"* This is critical. The furnace is not random. There is a process happening. Sifting reveals what is real, what is weak, and what cannot remain. And in that process, Peter's self-

confidence is exposed. But Jesus does not stop with the warning. He says something powerful: *"I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail."* This changes everything. Because Peter's failure was real, but it was not final. His faith was covered by Christ's intercession.

**The Moment That Changes Everything**

After Peter denies Jesus, something happens that shifts the entire trajectory of his life. *Jesus looks at him*. And Peter saw Jesus looking at him. This is the moment that changed everything for Peter. At that moment, Peter remembers. He remembers the words of Jesus, the warning of Jesus, and he remembers the truth. And the Bible says: He wept bitterly. Those tears were not weakness. They were repentance. They were the breaking of self-confidence. The admission of failure. The surrender of pride. This is where transformation begins. Not when we defend ourselves. Not when we justify our actions. But when we are broken enough to say: "I was wrong."

**From Self-Confidence to God-Confidence**

Peter's story does not fail. It transitions. He moves from "I know what I will do" to "God, I will do what You say." This is the shift. God-confidence says:

- "I don't have all the answers—God does"
- "I don't trust myself—I trust Him"
- "I will be in line with His will, not my own"

**The Restoration Process**

God restores Peter. Not just privately, but publicly. And the man who once denied Jesus becomes the man who boldly proclaims Him. In the Book of Acts, Peter preaches, and 3,000 people are saved. In Acts 4:13, people observe his boldness and recognize something irrefutable: *He had been with Jesus.* What Changed? Not his personality. Not his background. Not his calling. What

changed was his *confidence*. He was no longer relying on himself. He was now relying on God.

**The Furnace of Failure**

You may be in a place right now where you've failed, you've fallen short, and you've disappointed God and yourself. The temptation is to think that "it's all ended". Listen carefully: if there is still faith then failure is not the end.

**God Is Still Your Confidence**

As Psalm 71:5 declares: *"You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my confidence…"* Not our strength. Not our ability. Not our consistency - but God's.

Listen carefully: self-confidence will let you down—each and every time. God-confidence, on the other hand, will support you. Each and every time. Even if you fall. Even when you are struggling, even if you don't get it right the first time, do not base your faith on yourself. Rather, base it on Him.

Let your failures make you humble, but do not let them define you. Let your repentance bring you back. Let your confidence rest in the One who never fails. Because when self-confidence dies, true faith begins to live.

*"When fear overcomes faith, we always quit. We quit on our spouse. We quit on our children. We quite on ourselves and we even quit on God. In this world with all of that is going on around us, with all that is happening to us, we are going to have to fight to maintain our faith in Jesus Christ and His Holy Word."*

# Chapter 11

## When Faith Stays Focused in the Face of Distraction

*"Sanballat and Geshem set to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you." – Nehemiah 6:2-3*

Not every furnace is fire. Some furnaces are *distractions*. Not obvious destruction. Not open opposition. But subtle, persistent attempts to pull you away from what God has called us to do. And if we are not discerning, we will lose ground—not because we were overpowered, but because we were diverted. In Nehemiah 6, Nehemiah is not wandering. He is not searching for purpose. He is not unsure of his calling. He has been sent from exile back to Jerusalem with a clear assignment: *Rebuild the wall*.

This was not just construction. It was restoration. It was protection. It was purpose. And when God sends us on assignment, there is always something at stake.

**The Reality of Kingdom Assignment**

Nehemiah was not sent into a comfortable situation. There was no natural protection, no established leadership, and no secure environment. And yet, he was sent anyway.

This reflects a consistent pattern in Scripture. In the Gospel of Luke 10:3, Jesus says: *"I send you forth as lambs among wolves."* And in the Book of Acts 26:16, purpose is clearly defined: *"I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness."* God does not send us where it is easy. He sends us where it is necessary.

**When Purpose Attracts Opposition**

The moment Nehemiah begins the work, opposition appears. Not passively, but aggressively. Because when you align with God's purpose, you will inevitably confront what opposes it.

The enemy has a strategy. Nehemiah's enemies—Sanballat and Tobiah—use multiple tactics:

- Deception: "Come, let us meet…" (a trap disguised as opportunity)
- Intimidation: Threats designed to create fear
- False accusation: Lies meant to damage credibility
- Spiritual manipulation: Attempts to make him act outside of God's will

This is how the enemy operates. He rarely operates through obvious destruction alone, but through distraction, distortion, and deception. At the core of every tactic is fear. It is our enemy's number one weapon of choice. Fear that says "You're in danger". "You need to stop". "You need to protect yourself"

But Nehemiah responds differently. He refuses to be moved. This is because he understands something critical: *When we are on God's assignment, God is responsible for our outcome.* As Deuteronomy 3:22 declares: "*The LORD your God… shall fight for you*."

**The Discipline of Focus**

Nehemiah's response to distraction is one of the most powerful statements of focus in Scripture: Nehemiah 6:3 - *"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down*." This is not arrogance. This is clarity. He understands what he has been called to do, what matters most, and what cannot be compromised. And because of that, he refuses to be pulled away.

Every distraction carries an invitation: "Come down." Come down from: Your calling - Your focus- Your position. Come down into: Debate - Fear - Confusion. But every time we come down, we lose ground.

One reason Nehemiah succeeds is that he is not operating on natural reasoning alone. There were moments when the enemy's suggestions sounded logical, appeared reasonable, and made sense on the surface.

But something deeper was at work. Not everything that makes sense is from God; some things make sense naturally but contradict what God is doing spiritually.

**The Holy vs. The Common**

There is a difference between what "seems right" and what is "God-led". Nehemiah refuses to act on what merely appears logical. He filters everything through his reverence for God. And this is where many believers miss it. They make decisions based on comfort, logic, and emotion - instead of prayer, discernment, and alignment with God.

**Maintaining Reverence in the Middle of Pressure**

Nehemiah remains unshakable, unbreakable, and focused. This is because his reverence for God never wavers. He does not lose his awe of God, his devotion to God, or his awareness of God's presence. And when reverence remains intact, faith remains strong.

**The Assurance of God's Favor**

When we maintain our unwavering reverence for Christ, our identity in Christ is secure. We do not operate based upon emotion. We rely on God's presence. We maintain our awe of God, our devotion to Christ, our astonishment at His ways. We never stop being amazed at His love that is shown on the blood-drenched Cross. We know in our Spirit that God is ready to make a move. And we are ready for God's move because in us is a place where His presence is pre-eminent.

Even though the enemy tries to stop Nehemiah, they do not succeed. As

Psalms 41:11 declares: *"By this I know that You favor me, because my enemy does not triumph over me."*

And as the Jeremiah 1:19 reminds us: *"They shall fight against you, but they shall not prevail…".* Notice: They will fight. But they will not win. In our alignment with Jesus Christ, we are as Nehemiah was - unshakable, unbreakable - focused and committed to relying upon the presence of God.

**The Furnace of Focus**

You may be in a season right now where you are on assignment, you are moving forward, and you are building something God has called you to build. And suddenly, distractions increase, opposition rises, and opportunities appear that pull you away from your mission. And the question is not: "Is this real?" The question is: *"Will you stay focused?"*

Hear this clearly: Not every opportunity is from God. Not every voice deserves our attention. Not every invitation should be accepted. If we are going to walk in faith, we must learn to say: "I cannot come down." "I'm going to stay on the wall." "I'm going to stay in position."

Stay aligned with what God has called you to do. Don't let distraction steal what obedience is building. Because when we remain focused, the work gets finished and God gets the glory.

Faith is not just about starting strong. It is about staying focused until the work is complete.

*"Despair whispers, "give up". Cowardice says, "Retreat". Impatience says, "Do something". Arrogance boasts, "Do anything and expect a miracle". Faith cries, "Stand firm on the word of God and see the salvation of the Lord."*

# Chapter 12

## When Fear Causes You to Move Too Soon

*"He (Saul) waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering before him. So, Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Micmash, I said, "Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself, and I offered the burnt offering." And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly…."*
*1Samuel 13:8-13*

Not every failure in the furnace comes from refusing to act. Some failures come from acting *too quickly* and moving ahead of God. Responding out of pressure and doing what seems right instead of what God said. **This is the furnace of *premature action*.**

In 1 Samuel chapter 13, two different spirits are at work:

- Jonathan, operating in faith
- Saul, operating in fear

And what becomes immediately clear is this: *Faith gets attention not just from God… but from the enemy*. When Jonathan steps out in faith, opposition rises. Pressure builds. The situation intensifies. And in that moment, Saul is faced with a test.

**The Root of Saul's Problem**

Saul's issue was not just external pressure. It was internal weakness. He was:

- Thinking like the enemy instead of trusting God
- Overwhelmed by the odds
- Unclear about who God truly is

And when those things combine, fear takes control. When we lose sight of who God is, we are in a dangerous situation. When we lose sight of: God's power - God's faithfulness - God's authority, we are in trouble. We begin to evaluate situations based on what we see, what we think, and how we feel. We decide on humanism instead of what God has said. And in that moment, faith begins to weaken. Faith begins to fail.

**The Test of Waiting**

God gives Saul a clear instruction: Go to Gilgal. Wait seven days. Samuel will come and offer the sacrifice. These directions are simple, clear, and direct. But waiting is one of the most difficult tests of faith. Because waiting requires trust, patience, and surrender. And when pressure increases, waiting becomes uncomfortable. As the days pass, the enemy gathers, the people scatter, and the pressure builds. And Saul begins to panic, because pressure reveals what we trust. Pressure does not create weakness. It reveals it.

Saul makes a decision. He offers the sacrifice himself. We must be careful not just to do what feels right, but what is right from God's perspective. From a natural perspective, it makes sense. The situation is urgent. The people are leaving. The enemy is approaching. But here is the problem: *It was not what God told him to do.*

**The Danger of Rational Disobedience**

Saul's failure was not rebellion in the obvious sense. It was *justified disobedience.* He had his "reasons". The people were scattering. The enemy was advancing. Samuel did not come when expected.

And this is where many believers fail. They disobey God, not because they want to rebel, but because they convince themselves that their reasoning is better. Ultimately, it is because they feel like it. They feel like it will be better for them to disobey than to obey the Word of God. At the core of Saul's decision was self-will. He trusted his judgment. He prioritized his perspective. He acted without humility.

He prioritized self-will over surrender to God's Word. This is the opposite of faith. Faith says: "*I will obey God, even when it doesn't make sense*." Self-will says: "*I will do what I think is best*."

**Irreverence Disguised as Urgency**

Another layer of Saul's failure is this: *He feared people more than he feared God*. He saw the people scattering, and he responded to them. Instead of leading them in faith, he followed them in fear. This is a dangerous place to be, because when we prioritize people over God we lose authority, we lose clarity, and we lose direction.

Saul also stepped into a role that was not his. He took on the responsibility of the priesthood. And in doing so, he revealed a lack of reverence. Because when we lose reverence for God's order, we begin to operate outside of His will.

As soon as Saul finishes offering the sacrifice, Samuel arrives. The timing is not accidental. It reveals something powerful: *If Saul had waited just a little longer, he would have succeeded.* But he moved too soon. How many of us can this be said about – "If only we had waited a little longer"

Samuel confronts Saul with a sobering truth: "*You have done foolishly*." And then comes the consequence: His kingdom will not endure.

**We Choose the Actions but God Determines Outcomes**

This is one of the most important principles in the life of faith: *We can choose what we do. But only God determines what comes from it.* Saul's decision did not just affect him. It affected his legacy, his family, and his nation. God chose Saul. God anointed and appointed him. He was given an opportunity. But because he failed in the furnace, he lost what could have been. His kingdom was given to another. His legacy was cut short. His purpose was unfulfilled.

And the tragedy is this: *It didn't have to be that way.* In Christ Jesus, we have the power to respond to our furnace in faith. This is not just Saul's story. It is a warning. Because we all face moments where pressure increases, waiting becomes difficult, and obedience feels inconvenient. And in those moments, we are tempted to move ahead of God. As Mark 14:38 reminds us:

*"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*."

We are encouraged in Ecclesiastes 12:13 to: *"Fear God, and keep His commandments…".* This is the foundation of faith.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be in a place right now where God has spoken, instructions have been given, but the pressure is increasing. And everything in you is saying: "Do something." "Fix it." "Act now." But God is saying: *Wait.*

Hear this clearly: Delayed obedience is dangerous. But moving ahead of God is just as destructive. Don't let pressure push you ahead of God. Do not allow fear to dictate your timing. Do not allow logic to override obedience. Wait on Him. Trust His timing. Honor His instruction. Because when you move with God, you step into purpose. But when you move ahead of Him, you risk losing what He intended to give.

*Faith is not just about doing the right thing. It is about doing it at the right time.*

*"Faith turns a promise into a prophecy."*

# Chapter 13

## When Faith Refuses to Take What God Has Not Given Yet

*"Then Abishai said to David, "God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice." But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down in battle and perish. The LORD forbid that I should put out my hand against the LORD's anointed." - 1Samuel 26:8-11*

Some testing doesn't come from opposition alone. It comes from opportunity. Not the opportunity to suffer, but the opportunity to take control. To force what God has promised. To accelerate what God has spoken. To secure what God has not yet released. **This is the furnace of *premature possession*.**

In 1 Samuel 26, David lives in a tension that many believers struggle to understand. He has been chosen by God, anointed by the prophet, and identified as the future king. And yet, he is not sitting on the throne. He is running for his life.

David's reality does not match his calling. Instead of ruling, he is hiding. Instead of being honored, he is being hunted. Instead of walking in promise, he is living in pressure. And the question that naturally arises is: *"Did I really hear God?"*

- If I'm called, why am I suffering?
- If I'm chosen, why am I struggling?
- If this is my future, why does my present look like this?

This is the crucible.

**The Spirit of Saul vs. The Spirit of David**

Saul represents something deeper than just a failed king. He represents a *religious spirit*. He looks right externally, but he lacks true spiritual power, and he seeks the approval of people over the approval of God. This spirit is dangerous because it prioritizes image over integrity, tradition over truth, and comfort over conviction. And it will always resist the genuine work of God.

**When the Anointing Is Attacked**

David had done nothing wrong. He had served faithfully, honored the king, and won battles for the nation. And yet, Saul is trying to kill him. This is because religious flesh cannot tolerate spiritual authenticity. When the anointing is present, it exposes what is false. And what is false will always try to eliminate what is real.

**Waiting on God's Timing**

David knows what God has said. He knows what has been spoken over his life. But he is in a season where he must wait. And waiting is one of the hardest parts of faith. Because waiting provokes questions:

- When will it happen?
- How will it happen?
- What if it doesn't happen the way I expected?
- What if it doesn't happen at all?
- Did I hear God correctly?

In this chapter, David is given what seems like a perfect opportunity. Saul is vulnerable, exposed, defenseless, and within reach. And David's companion, Abishai, says something that sounds spiritual: "God has delivered your enemy into your hand." In other words: "This is your time." Not every opportunity is from God. Some opportunities are tests. Tests to see:

- If we will trust God's timing
- If we will honor God's process
- If we will obey God's principles

Because it is possible to do the right thing, at the wrong time, in the wrong way. And still be outside of God's will. David is standing in a moment where multiple voices are speaking:

- Logic: "This makes sense."
- Opportunity: "This is your chance."
- Emotion: "End this now."
- Pressure: "Don't miss this moment."

And then there is the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is the real question: *How do we discern God's will at key moments?* The answer is not found in popular opinion, logical reasoning, or emotional reaction. It is found in being led by God the Holy Spirit.

**The Heart of True Righteousness**

David does not kill Saul because he is unable to do so, but because he will not break God's command. He realizes a key point: *it is impossible to achieve a destiny ordained by God by using ungodly methods.* David decides to be restrained and to uphold honor. He chooses to obey. Even when it costs him, it delays him, and it complicates his situation.

Faith in truth is not all about attaining the promise, it's about the means by which we achieve it.

**The Danger of Double-Mindedness**

As James 1:6–8 teaches, "*A double-minded person is unstable in all his ways."* And instability leads to confusion, compromise, and missed opportunities. David remains single-minded. Focused on honoring God above all else. Double-mindedness leads to rebellion. Saul's life warns of this truth.

As 1Samuel 15:23 declares: "*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is an iniquity and idolatry…".*

We must be careful that we do not stubbornly reject God's word and go our own way, but attempt to call it something other than what God calls it. God calls it rebellion. When we do, we risk being rejected by God because we have rejected Him. Saul lost everything, not because he lacked opportunity, but because he lacked obedience. Obedience is the fruit of faith.

**The Power of the Anointing**

David understands that the anointing will: open doors, break yokes, and establish God's will. As Isaiah 10:27 reminds us: "*The yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing*." Not because of manipulation. Not because of force, but because of the presence of God.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be in a season where:

- You know what God has promised
- You see opportunities to take control
- You feel the pressure to act

And everything is saying: "Take it." "Make it happen." "Secure your future." But God is saying: *"Trust Me."*

Hear this clearly: What God has for you cannot be taken; it must be given. Do not force what God has not released. Do not take what God has not yet provided. Do not compromise your integrity to accelerate your destiny. Wait on Him. Trust His timing. Honor His way. Because when God gives it, no one can take it. Faith is not proven by what we can take. It is proven by what we are willing to wait for.

*"We do not learn obedience by complying with commands we believe are in our best interest." We learn obedience by complying with instructions even when they seem to be to our detriment."*

# Chapter 14

## When Fear Enters Through a Lie

*"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden." - Genesis 3:6-8*

Not all fear begins with circumstances. Some fear begins with a *thought*. An idea. A suggestion. A whisper. Something that sounds reasonable, feels convincing, but is completely false. ***This is the furnace of deception***.
In Genesis 3, we see the origin of a pattern that still affects believers today. The enemy does not begin with force. He begins with a *conversation*—a suggestion designed to shift perception.

Eve was not overpowered. She was deceived. The serpent presents an idea that appeals to what she hears, what she sees, and what she feels. He appeals to her humanism. And in that moment, truth is challenged. Not directly denied – but *reinterpreted*.

**The Lie Behind the Fear**

At the core of the deception were several lies about God:

- "God is holding something back from you"
- "God cannot be fully trusted"
- "God's intentions are not completely good"

And once those lies were accepted, fear entered. Because when we question the character of God, we destabilize our faith. Fear does not just affect how we feel. It affects how we *see* God. Instead of:

- Provider… you see restriction
- Protector… you see limitation
- Father… you see competition

This is exactly what happened in the garden. Eve began to believe that God was not for her. And once that belief took root, her decision followed. Fear corrupts our spiritual sensitivities. It always looks to be validated. It looks to take the easy way out. Fear looks to follow that which does not most honor God.

**The Power of What We Entertain**

Deception always begins with what we entertain. A thought we don't reject. A voice we don't question. An idea we allow to remain. As 2Timothy 3:13 warns: "*Evil men and seducers will grow worse… deceiving and being deceived."*

And in Deuteronomy 11:16, it cautions: *"Take heed… that your heart be not deceived."* Because once deception enters the heart, it begins to influence decisions.

The spirit of entertainment that is in the modern church is a demonic spirit that seeks to enter us and detain us from the pursuit of holiness and the presence of Christ. This spirit is a religious spirit that pursues self-gratification. Beware of that which would allow you to serve Christ, but never be inconvenienced.

**When Fear Leads to Disobedience**

Eve's deception led to action. She ate. Not because she was forced. She ate because she believed something that was not true. This is the danger: *Wrong belief produces wrong action.* When fear enters, it dulls our ability to discern.

What is right becomes unclear. What is true becomes questionable. What is obvious becomes confusing.

As the Epistle to the Galatians 3:1 asks: *"Who has bewitched you…?"* Because when fear takes hold, it feels like something has come over us - because it has.

**The Difference Between Deception and Unbelief**

Adam's failure was different. He was not deceived in the same way. He faced a choice. Follow God or follow Eve. And in that moment, fear influenced his decision. He hesitated because he doubted. He ultimately chose unbelief. Unbelief does not just affect our thinking. It affects our position. It removes us from alignment with God, confidence in His Word, and sensitivity to His presence. And ultimately, it leads to separation. Nothing restricts the move of God more than unbelief.

**When Fear Replaces Faith - The Truth About Fear**

After their disobedience, Adam and Eve do something they had never done before. They hide. And when God calls out to them, Adam responds: "I was afraid…" Fear had entered. And with it came shame, distance, and separation. As 2Timothy 1:7 declares: *"God has not given us a spirit of fear…"* Fear is not from God. Our enemy introduces it, and we must resist it. As Ephesians 4:14 teaches, we are not meant to be: *"tossed to and fro… by every wind of doctrine…".* Faith anchors us. Truth stabilizes us. God's Word grounds us.

**The Attack on God's Word**

At the root of all of this is an attack on two things: The *Word of God* and The *Character of God*. Because if the enemy can get us to doubt what God said and question who God is, he can influence everything else.

The inconvenience of God's Word reaches us all. And when it does, we can either change and make decisions in alignment with His Word, or we can reject the

Word of God. Our rejection is based upon how we feel, and it is a direct attack from the enemy upon the character of God.

One of the key takeaways from this moment is this: When we make decisions based on what we see - what we hear - what we feel, without anchoring ourselves in God's Word - destruction is inevitable. Emotion is not a reliable guide. Faith is.

Unbelief does more than create distance. It opens the door for confusion, bondage, and spiritual compromise. And it does not just affect us. It affects those connected to us.

**The Question of the Last Days**

In Luke 18:7–8, Jesus asks: *"When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"* This is not an unintentional casual question. It is a challenge. Because in a world full of deception, maintaining faith demands deliberate agreement with truth.

God's Word says that "*faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*." We must understand that God's Word is the only word or voice that matters - at all. If it does not agree with the voice of God, it is simply irrelevant. When we attach our beliefs and our behavior to God's Word, we will always have victory; we will always have success. So, the question is perpetually, "What did God say?" God has already declared:

- We don't have to be afraid - He is with us
- He is our shield and our reward
- He will not fail us or forsake us
- He is for us - He is our Protector
- He is our Provider - He is our Keeper
- He is the enemy of our enemies
- His hand is upon His children for good
- His children are the apple of His eye

- He is our stronghold in the day of trouble
- He surely will deliver us
- Our only help is in the name of the Lord
- He is my shepherd - I shall not want

These are not suggestions. They are truth. Faith trumps facts. Fear because of unbelief will remove us from the presence of God. It will abort our spiritual destiny and open the door for evil to have access to operate in our lives and in the lives of those we love.

Faith equals great spiritual works and great spiritual rewards. It puts us squarely in the presence of God and the will of God. It causes us to prosper and manifests the victory of Jesus Christ in all areas of our lives. Be warned: *the favor of God that is produced by our faith is offensive to those who walk in fear*.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be facing thoughts right now that are not aligned with God. You may have doubts about His goodness, questions about His plan, or fears about your future. And the question is: *Will we believe the lie or stand on the truth?*

Hear this clearly: Every battle with fear begins with a battle for truth. Do not entertain what contradicts God's Word. Do not accept what distorts His character. Do not allow deception to take root in your heart. Reject the lie. Embrace the truth. Stand on what God has said. Because when truth is established, fear has no place to live.

*Faith is not just believing in God. It is believing God over every lie.*

*"God has chosen opposition as a catalyst to our faith and holy service. Combat comes before victory."*

# Chapter 15

## The Furnace of Surrender

*"And He (Jesus) came out and went, as was the custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him. And when He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done." And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." - Luke 22:39-44*

There is a place every believer must come to. Not a physical location. Not a stage of comfort. Not a place of understanding. It is a place of *surrender*. It is a place where our will is no longer the priority, a place where our desires are no longer the center of our lives. This is the place where our lives are no longer our own. This is the furnace that defines everything else.

We are living in a time where culture has attempted to redefine what matters. To label the things of God as optional, unnecessary, or non-essential. And what is alarming is not just the lie, but how many have agreed with it. When the Church begins to:

- Value convenience over conviction
- Fear men more than God
- Replace the supernatural with the natural.

It reveals something deeper: *A crisis of faith.*

**The Subtlety of Bondage**

Sin rarely presents itself as destruction at first. It appears manageable. Acceptable. Even beneficial. But over time, it establishes control. It creates a "new normal." A way of living where:

- Compromise feels comfortable
- Disobedience feels justified
- Distance from God feels acceptable

And before long, people no longer recognize they are in bondage. Faith does not adapt to culture. Faith confronts it. Faith refuses to accept what dishonors God, what contradicts His Word, or what diminishes His power. Because the believer's call has never changed: to stand on the Word of God in the presence of God.

**The Place of Surrender**

In Luke 22:39–46, Jesus enters a place called Gethsemane. The name means: *Oil press***.** It is a place of crushing. It is a place of pressure—where something is extracted. And here Jesus faces the ultimate test. Gethsemane is not just a historical location. It is a spiritual reality. It is the place where we are tested, we are stretched, and we are pressed. And the question becomes: *Do we have a place where we meet God in surrender?* Just as Abraham had his altar in Genesis 22:9, we must have our place.

Jesus knew what was coming: Betrayal - Arrest - Suffering - Crucifixion. And in that moment, He had a choice. Not between good and evil. But between His will and the Father's will.

**The Purpose Behind the Pain**

The Cross was not random. It had purpose: To satisfy the wrath of God against sin - To redeem humanity from bondage - To restore human authority through faith- To reveal the love of God.

As declared in the Book of Genesis 45:5: *"God sent me… to preserve life."* So, what was suffering for Jesus was actually salvation for us.

**The Price of Surrender**

Surrender is not easy. It is costly. This is true for us as we follow Christ. Our relationship with God is not easy if we are doing it correctly. The world is against Christ. When we align our lives with His Word, we should expect persecution. Yet, God has promised that we will be successful in our battle against the world. In Gethsemane, Jesus experienced mental distress, physical pressure, and spiritual anguish.

This was not symbolic. It was real. Because true surrender requires us to lay down our desires, deny our preferences, and yield completely to God.

At the center of this moment is one of the most powerful statements in Scripture: *"Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done."* This is the highest expression of faith. Not: "God, do what I want." But: "God, I will do what You want."

Jesus warns His disciples: *"Pray, lest you enter into temptation."* Because the greatest temptation in the furnace is this: *To abandon what honors God the most*. To walk away. To compromise. To choose comfort over obedience. Surrender leads to transformation. It requires us to become nothing in ourselves, and to become everything in obedience.

As Isaiah 53:11 reveals, *"through His suffering, many would be justified."* Surrender always produces something greater.

1 Corinthians 7:23 declares: *"You were bought with a price…".* Our life is not our own. Our purpose is not self-defined. Our calling is not self-directed. We have been bought with a great price. We owe a great debt. Christ became as nothing to honor His Father. Jesus asked not to be considered, that only the will of God the Father would be considered. This is the price that we owe - that we are not considered. The price is that only the will of God will be considered for my life, as it is revealed in His holy word.

**The Church Then vs. Now**

The early Church understood this. They faced persecution, endured suffering, but refused to compromise. They did not close their doors, or silence their message, nor retreat from their mission. They moved forward, boldly, faithfully, and unwaveringly. Those believers were marked by boldness, conviction, and dependence upon God. They believed in the power of God, in the authority of His Word, and in the necessity of obedience. They were not controlled by fear. They were driven by faith.

We must be careful. Because it is possible to: *Love God in word - But abandon Him in action*. It is possible to speak the truth, but avoid living it. This is where faith must be proven.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be standing in your own Gethsemane. A place where: Pressure is real - The cost is clear - The decision is unavoidable. And the question is: *Will you surrender?*

Hear this clearly: Faith reaches its highest form in surrender. Not when you receive. Not when you succeed. But when you submit. Do not resist the pressing. Do not run from the cost. Do not abandon the call. Instead say: "Nevertheless." Trust God's will above your own. And step forward in obedience. Because surrender is not the end of faith. It is the place where faith is perfected.

*"Sing the song of victory before the battle is fought. Miracles are performed through spiritual power, and our spiritual power is always in proportion to our faith."*

# Chapter 16

## When Faith Refuses to Let Go

*"And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." So, Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." - Genesis 32:24-28, 30*

There comes a moment in every believer's life where faith is no longer emotional. It becomes intentional. Not because the pressure disappeared. Not because the answers suddenly arrived. But because something inside of you makes a decision: *"I will not let go of God."* **This is the furnace of *perseverance***.

**The Difference Between Casual Faith and Covenant Faith**

Many people love God when life is comfortable, prayers are answered quickly, doors are opening, and emotions are high. But true faith is revealed when heaven feels silent, the struggle continues, the pressure increases, and nothing changes immediately. Because anybody can praise God in victory. But it takes real faith to hold onto Him in the middle of pain.

Throughout Scripture, we see people who refused to let go. People who endured: opposition, delay, suffering, uncertainty. And yet remained anchored in God. Why? Because they understood something critical: *God's silence does not mean God's absence.*

**Jacob at Peniel**

In Genesis 32, Jacob wrestles through the night. And during that struggle, he makes a statement that defines perseverance: "*I will not let You go unless You bless me.*" This is not casual faith. This is desperate faith. Determined faith. Faith that refuses to release God even while wrestling with pain. Jacob entered the encounter one way and left another. Because the struggle changed him, this is one of the great mysteries of the furnace: *The thing that feels like it is breaking you may actually be transforming you.*

Jesus teaches this same principle in the Gospel of Luke 18 through the parable of the persistent widow. She kept coming. Kept asking. Kept pressing. Why? Because faith persists. Faith continues. Faith refuses to surrender to discouragement.

**The Enemy Wants Us to Quit**

Understand this clearly: The enemy does not always need to destroy you. Sometimes he only needs to discourage you enough to make you stop. To stop praying. To stop believing. To stop obeying. To stop standing. Because if he can make you quit prematurely, you may never see what God intended to do.

Jesus says in the Gospel of John 15: "Abide in Me…" The word "abide" means: Remain - Continue - Stay connected. This is the essence of perseverance. Not perfection. Remaining.

**Faith Beyond Feelings**

Feelings don't care about our faith. And faith doesn't care about our feelings. They are at war against each other. Despite our different seasons in life, we must make sure our feelings align with our faith. God's Word tells us how we should feel. Our feelings don't tell us anything about God's Word. We will have seasons where we do not feel strong, we do not feel confident, and we do not feel victorious. But faith is not based on how you feel. Faith is based on who God is. And God does not change.

As James 1:12 declares: Blessed is the man who endures temptation. Endurance produces something: Strength - Maturity - Depth - Stability. The furnace develops what comfort never could.

**The Furnace of This Moment**

You may be in a place right now where you are exhausted. Still praying, still believing, and still waiting. And part of you wants to let go.

But hear this clearly: Do not quit in the middle of the process. Do not walk away before the breakthrough. Do not surrender your faith because the timeline became uncomfortable.

Hold on even when it hurts, even when it delays. Even when you do not understand, keep praying. Keep trusting. Keep standing because God is still working—even when you cannot see it. And what He began in you He is faithful to complete. Faith is not proven by how loudly you praise in victory. It is proven by whether you still hold on in the struggle.

*"Full understanding can wait. Full obedience cannot. Many of God's commands won't be understand until after we obey them. Our reward is always greater than the cost of our obedience."*

# FINAL CONCLUSION

## The Faith That Remains

At the end of it all, after the pressure, after the testing, after the waiting, after the fire, one thing remains. **Faith.** Not the kind of faith that is spoken easily in moments of comfort. But the kind that has been tested, pressed, and proven. The kind that does not collapse when circumstances change. The kind that does not disappear when answers delay. The kind that does not compromise when pressure increases.

### What the Furnace Was Really Doing

As you reflect on everything we have walked through, one truth should be clear: The furnace was never random. It was intentional. Every moment of pressure was shaping something. Every challenge was revealing something. Every test was proving something. God was:

- Removing what could not remain
- Strengthening what needed to grow
- Revealing what had been hidden

### What You Gained in the Fire

If you have walked through your furnace with faith, then you have gained more than you realize:

- You know God differently
- You trust Him more deeply
- You see situations more clearly
- You stand more confidently

Because there are things you learn in the fire that you cannot learn anywhere else.

**The Danger of Going Back**

After the furnace, there is always a temptation: To return to comfort. To relax your conviction. To lower your guard. But you cannot go back to who you were before the fire. You have seen too much. You have experienced too much. You have learned too much.

**The Call Moving Forward**

Now that your faith has been tested, the call is simple: **Live from it.** Let your faith guide your decisions, shape your responses, and anchor your life. Do not just remember what God did. Live in the reality of who He has revealed Himself to be.

At the end of this journey, one question remains: When the next furnace comes, will you respond the same way? Because it will come. Another test. Another challenge. Another moment that demands faith. But this time, you are not the same.

**Final Charge**

*"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may be found to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." - 1Peter 1:6-7*

No one enjoys living in the furnace. No one enjoys the pain, the pressure, or the uncertainty that comes with prolonged testing. Yet Peter 1:6–7 reminds us that time in the crucible reveals the genuineness of our faith. Faith is easy to profess when obedience costs little, but surrender is not truly tested until something significant is at stake. The greater the cost, the greater the challenge.

We are not truly challenged in yielding to the will of God until obedience demands sacrifice. This is why testing is so important. There is no such thing as partial surrender. Either Christ is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. We cannot honestly know whether we are fully surrendered until we are severely tempted to withdraw our commitment, compromise our convictions, or abandon our trust in God altogether.

At its core, the enemy seeks the answer to one question: ***What will it take to bring our commitment to Christ to an end?*** What pressure, what loss, what pain, what delay would cause us to walk away?

God may allow Satan a measure of access in our lives - not to satisfy divine curiosity, nor to gratify the enemy, but so that we ourselves may discover that our faith has no price. As in the case of Job, the testing may become intense and deeply painful, yet the final product is "*more precious than gold.*"

As James 1:2–3 declares: *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."*

God never places His children in the crucible without divine purpose. Though we may never fully understand the depth of His intentions, we can trust that He is using the furnace for our good. Through testing, He strengthens perseverance, exposes the authenticity of our surrender, and forms within us a faith that is steadfast, enduring, and genuine.

So, be careful to stand on the Word of God. Trust God when it doesn't make sense. Obey Him when it is difficult. Wait on Him when it feels delayed. Surrender when it costs you. And remember: You are not alone in the fire. The same God who:

- Was with the Hebrew boys
- Strengthened David
- Preserved Daniel
- Restored Peter
- Empowered Esther
- Sustained Jesus

This same God is with you. And when your faith is anchored in Him, no furnace can destroy you - it will only reveal you.

*"We will become stronger by overcoming them, rather than if there had never been any giants to defeat. We will always emerge victorious through the strength of Jesus Christ."*

## APPENDIX A: FAITH QUOTES

*1. "There has never been, there will never be, because there can never be, an appropriate substitution for obedience to the word of God."*

2. *"Be on guard against a demonic spirit that seeks to direct your behavior based upon fear. Do not make decisions based upon fear, but instead upon the word of God. For you have not been given a spirit of fear."*

*3. "Thank God for the battle. We will receive from the conflict a spiritual discipline that will greatly strengthen our faith and establish our spiritual character."*

4. *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord."*

5. *"Christ may delay coming to us in our times of distress, but it is simply so our faith may be tested and strengthened. His purpose is that our prayers will be more powerful, our desire for deliverance will find its rest in Him, and when our deliverance finally arrives, we will appreciate it the more."*

6. *"Faith can change any situation. God is still on the throne and He can turn defeat into victory in a split second, if we will only trust in Him."*

7. *"Unbelief looks at God through the eyes of circumstance. Faith looks at God through the promise of His word."*

8. *"When we obey God's voice and surrender to Him whatever we hold precious, He multiplies it many times. The moment of our greatest sacrifice will also be the precise moment of our greatest and most miraculous blessing."*

9. *"Wait for God's promise until He meets you there, for He always returns by the path of His promises."*

10. *"The faith that God responds to does not require explanation."*

11. "*Our faith is what activates the power of God."*

12. *"Great faith must endure great trials."*

# FINDING FAITH
# IN THE FURNACE

## Study Guide

**Download the Finding Faith in the Furnace Companion Workbook at HOWICP.org**

**Use with the Companion Workbook for best results.**

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Thank you for reading "*Finding Faith in the Furnace"*. If this book encouraged, challenged, or strengthened your walk with Christ, would you consider leaving a brief review? Your review:

- Helps other believers find this resource
- Extends the ministry of the message
- Supports Christian authors sharing biblical truth

Even a few sentences make a meaningful difference. Visit our website TonyCollinsMinistries.com and go to the "contact" page and leave a review. Thank you for partnering in ministry through your support.

Blessings,
Bishop Anthony Collins

*All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.*

*If these resources have encouraged your walk with Christ or strengthened your ministry, we invite you to partner with us. Your tax-deductible donation enables us to continue developing and distributing these materials free of charge to individuals, churches, and ministries worldwide.*

*Thank you for helping us make disciples who make disciples - for the glory of God.*




In Matthew 28, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Church its mission, its vision, and its process for reaching the world. We know it as the Great Commission.

Jesus commanded His followers to go *and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching *them to obey everything He had commanded*. This is not one ministry among many; it is the mission of the Church. It is the one assignment that every believer, every local church, and the Church universal has received directly from our risen King.

Sadly, much of the modern Church has neglected this divine responsibility.

Many who stand behind the sacred desk have never themselves experienced intentional biblical discipleship. Consequently, they have little vision or passion for discipling others. This stands in direct opposition to both the command and the example of Jesus Christ.

Disciple-making is rarely easy. It is often inconvenient, time-consuming, and personally demanding. It requires patience, commitment, and sacrifice. But the Kingdom of God has never been advanced through convenience. It has always been advanced through faithful men and women who were willing to invest their lives in others.

We cannot fully accomplish biblical discipleship from the pulpit alone. Preaching is essential, but it is only one part of the process. Neither can we effectively disciple someone through occasional meetings or brief conversations. Jesus did not simply teach crowds; He invested deeply in twelve men. He walked with them, answered their questions, corrected their misunderstandings, modeled obedience, and allowed them to observe His life day after day.

That remains the biblical pattern.

Discipleship is life shared. It is walking alongside another believer, allowing them to see how we respond to life's victories, disappointments, temptations, and trials. It is opening God's Word together, praying together, encouraging one another, and holding each other accountable to grow in Christ.

For us, intentional discipleship means meeting regularly - ideally at least once each week - for meaningful conversation centered on Scripture, spiritual growth, and the practical challenges of living faithfully in a fallen world. It is helping believers develop the spiritual disciplines that deepen their intimacy with Jesus Christ and strengthen their walk with Him.

The goal is not simply to produce knowledgeable Christians. The goal is to develop mature disciples who, in turn, become disciple-makers themselves.

This is the multiplication strategy of the Kingdom.

At **Collins Discipleship Institute (CDI)**, our passion is to equip individuals, churches, and Christian organizations with practical, biblically sound resources that cultivate mature, vibrant, and Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus Christ. We desire to strengthen believers in the essential areas of Christian life and ministry, so they can faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. We do not exist to produce better church members. We exist to produce mature disciples who make mature disciples.

We believe that the future strength of the Church will not be determined merely by the size of our congregations, but by the depth of our disciples. When disciples make disciples, churches become healthier, families become stronger, communities are transformed, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ advances.

The Great Commission has never been rescinded. It remains the calling of every believer. May we not merely admire it, but may we obey it.

Contact us at info@HOWICP.org for more information. All discipleship resources are free.

Beyond The Veil,
Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins

## Author Bio

**Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins** is a former pastor, a teacher, author, and international ministry leader committed to equipping believers to live with purpose, power, and spiritual authority.

Over 20 years ago, he co-planted a non-denominational, multi-cultural church that continues to impact lives today. A strong emphasis on discipleship, spiritual maturity, and the practical application of Biblical truth marks his leadership. Bishop Collins has also led international ministry efforts for more than a decade, with work spanning Mexico, Central America, Russia-Ukraine, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and regions of Africa.

Bishop Collins is the founder of **Houses of Worship International Christian Partnership (HOWICP)**, a ministry focused on supporting churches, developing leaders, and advancing the Gospel globally. Through this work, he also oversees initiatives such as **Children for Christ Ranch** in Yucatán, Mexico, an outreach dedicated to feeding, discipling, and caring for children while building sustainable, Christ-centered community impact.

He is also the founder of the **Collins Discipleship Institute**, an organization that exists to glorify Jesus Christ by forming faithful disciples who love God wholeheartedly, love people sacrificially, handle God's Word accurately, shepherd His Church with humility, and reproduce disciple-makers throughout the nations.

Bishop Collins is passionate about mentoring pastors and spiritual leaders, helping them grow in spiritual depth, clarity of calling, and effectiveness in ministry. His teaching consistently calls believers beyond routine religion into a life marked by God's presence.

Through his writing and ministry, he challenges the Church to return to what matters most - *intimacy with God, alignment with His will, and the power that flows from His presence.*

"*Until every believer is a disciple, every disciple is a disciple-maker, and every nation has faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ - Ad Gloriam Christi*."