
PAGES OF EMPOWERMENT

VOLUME 3:
BORN TO BE HEROES

David McCracken

Pages of Empowerment

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Original version published 2003.

Published by David McCracken Ministries Inc.

Narre Warren North, Victoria, Australia

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MORE INFORMATION

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OUR VISION FOR PAGES OF EMPOWERMENT

- To see the local church strengthened and its commission to reach this world accelerated.
- To see this accomplished by the empowering of the individual members of that local church to become all that God has called them to be.
- To see the wounded restored, the despondent encouraged, the apathetic challenged, and those already valiant empowered to go to greater heights.
- To see every believer walking in intimacy with the King and daily reaching out to embrace the destiny that He has for them.
- To see the church make the transition from being a sheepfold into an army barracks. Not to neglect the shepherding of God's people but to have, at all times, the clear objective of that shepherding: the raising up of an army of faith-filled warriors to do the work of the kingdom.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

- As an individual devotional, reading one chapter at a time.
- As a group devotional, using the questions supplied as a basis for discussion.
- As a small book, read in one sitting, as a point of inspiration and empowerment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 5 |
| We are Braveheart | 6 |
| The Time Had Come | 10 |
| We Shall Reign | 14 |
| More Than Conquerors | 18 |
| An Awesome Promise | 22 |
| Faith's Declaration | 25 |
| Steps of Courage | 29 |
| His Faithfulness - Our Action | 32 |
| Prepare Now | 36 |
| The Battle is His | 40 |

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our third volume.

It is with great joy and gratitude that I see so many already being enriched by these volumes. In my heart I knew that the Lord had given me a clear word to start this project but to see it so clearly confirmed is most encouraging.

Friends, part of the dealings of God in my own life over the years has been to open my eyes to the paralysing effect of small-mindedness and false humility. If Satan cannot get us to live in pride and independence, his next favourite weapon against us is those belittling lies that deny the true calling that God has given us.

If we are ever to see Christians arise to their God-given potential and our nation taken for Christ, we must begin to arise out of intimidation and dare to believe that dreams can become reality.

As you read this volume, I want you to pray continuously for the Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart. Ask Him for a revelation of who you really are and how the Lord really sees you. Ask Him to open your eyes to that wonderful potential that lies within you, awaiting His ministry of release.

And, should He inspire you to do so, email or contact a few of your friends or colleagues concerning these pages of empowerment. Let us believe together for the Lord to cause His great army to arise. Not a small elite group of “super heroes” but ordinary people who discover the courage to believe that they are created by Him to achieve something significant with the life that He has given them.

We are talking about an army of Holy Spirit filled, fervently praying, and awakened ones. We are talking about the real-life, every-day, Monday to Friday heroes. People like you!

So, as you read, be encouraged, be inspired, and look to pass on that inspiration to others.

It's time to be empowered.

CHAPTER ONE: WE ARE BRAVEHEART

HAVING DISARMED PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS, HE MADE A PUBLIC
SPECTACLE OF THEM,
TRIUMPHING OVER THEM!

COLOSSIANS 2:15

Why is it that the film “Star Wars” was such an instant hit with secular audiences (and thousands of Christians!) all around the world?

Why is it that the book “Piercing the Darkness” was such an overnight success with tens of thousands of readers?

Why is it that films that involve the romantic notion that good will triumph over evil still get out the biggest audiences? They continue to do so even in an age when the media and world powers would have us believe the opposite. They say that graphic violence and sex is needed to “sell” a film, but the “good-over-evil” is still the appetite of the vast majority.

I believe that something deep down on the inside of us all yearns to have heroes of light that triumph over those villains of darkness.

Right from childhood, we enjoy our personal fantasies in which we gallop to the rescue and gain victory over impossible odds. In this awesome world of make-believe, we need no Mel Gibson; we are Braveheart!

We imagine deeds of incredible bravery, of undaunted courage, of unflinching endurance. Fear has no dominion and the larger the giant, the greater our exhilaration at the thought of his demise.

Such adrenalin-pumping moments know no cultural exclusions, no social considerations. They are common to all that dare to dream. But it is sad that, for the vast bulk of all those that so dream, such days of conquest are confined to the world of the dream itself.

There is always that cruel shattering, jarring reminder of the reality that is, in fact, our world.

There is always that awaking, that reluctant acceptance that our fantasies cannot last.

But does it have to be so?

Is it not possible that the dream is but a reality waiting for those who are bold enough to possess it? Is the conquering of evil forces by mere mortals such as you and I, actually a possibility?

Can we live in a realm where authority and dominion over grotesque and powerful agents of darkness, is an embraceable goal? Is it possible to be endowed by a power far greater than “the force” that will command our adversaries to their knees?

I say, yes!

Consider **Matthew 10:1**

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

There is no doubt that the Lord’s intention for all those who are His disciples is for us to exercise that kind of dominion. And, if it is His intention, then it must also be a most reachable goal.

But it starts with a dream, a desire: there has to be the creation of new hope.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Who were some of your childhood “heroes”? What was it about them that inspired you?

Who today would you consider a true hero of faith? Why?

What are some of the “enemy forces” that you, personally, would like to see put to flight? What makes you passionate about them in particular?

Jesus conquered all the powers of darkness on the cross. Who is it that now has the responsibility to enforce that victory?

How is that victory enforced?

Do you think all Christians will lead an overcoming life? What are some of the influencing factors?

CHAPTER TWO: THE TIME HAD COME

“NOW I WILL ARISE,” SAYS THE LORD;
“I WILL SET HIM IN THE SAFETY
(VICTORY) FOR WHICH HE YEARNs.”

PSALM 12:5

CHAPTER TWO: THE TIME HAD COME

In Joshua 1:1-11 we have the “church in the wilderness” poised to become possessors of the land. After a lifetime of dreaming that one day they would begin to live in the dignity and triumph of their God-given calling, the day had arrived.

In **Joshua 1:1-2** we read:

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying: “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them; the children of Israel.”

“Now therefore, arise!”

What an awesome moment.

They were the generation that would finally see fulfilled the prophetic promises given to many generations. An era had passed and a new one was about to dawn. Their God-given destiny, denied them for so long, was now within reach.

We too are poised at such a moment.

It is not an accident that so many of God’s prophetic voices today are referring to this as the “Joshua generation”. Joshua was, in many ways, our biblical version of “Braveheart”. He was the leader that would finally confront the giants that had kept the previous generation from inheriting all that God had intended for them. No longer intimidated by their size, Joshua had crossed a line in his spirit that it was finally the time to step forward. With a courage born of hearing the Word of the Lord, he rallied his people to believe in faith.

These giants had successfully kept God’s people in the wilderness of wishful hoping for forty years; always dreaming of days of conquering their adversaries but never seeing that reality. “Giants” can do that.

Giants are those overwhelming weaknesses and contradictions that undermine our faith and paralyse our spiritual initiatives.

Think for a moment of some of the “giants” that have robbed and plundered the lives of those you love. Perhaps the one plundered has been you.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TIME HAD COME

When I think of such giants there is a whelming up inside of me of holy indignation and determination. A determination to see them brought down! When I think of some of the plundered hours and days of my own life, it makes me committed to seeing every adversary destroyed, not only in my own life but in the lives of all that I love.

Let such an indignation rise within you!

Make a decision that every past defeat will not bring you under despair but goad you to make the enemy pay! Determine even as you are reading this that there will not be one more moment of uncontested defeat; not one more day of wandering in a “wilderness” of empty wishful thinking. The time has come to see things change, to finally cross your Jordan and possess the God-given future that lies before you.

For the Joshua company, there had to come an awesome moment of decision. They had to decide that forty years of disappointments would no longer be the determining factor. They had to decide that those years of disillusionment and dashed hopes would not prevail; they would reach out to embrace a new hope, a new potential, and a new dawn of promise.

Dear reader, so must you.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TIME HAD COME

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Identify people that you would consider a “giant-killer” because of having overcome a long-standing problem that was preventing God’s purposes being fulfilled in their life.

What was it that finally gave them their victory?

Do you see any parallels in your own life?

The remembrance of past defeat can bring you despair or indignation. Discuss how you can turn indignation into a new determination to serve the Lord.

Some would say: “If God is going to give me victory, then I must just wait and let Him do it.” Discuss the difference between positively acknowledging one’s dependence on the Lord and negatively embracing fatalism.

Consider this: His is the power but yours is the decision. Talk about the proactive role you must play in prayer in order to execute the will of God.

CHAPTER THREE: WE SHALL REIGN

YET IN ALL THESE THINGS
WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS
THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US!

ROMANS 8:37

CHAPTER THREE: **WE SHALL REIGN**

Although this was a wonderful, long-awaited day for Israel, there was one snag; the giants were still there!

Why?

Why, after seeing His people wandering in the desert for forty years because of these giants, had God's indignation not poured out fire on them to utterly destroy them? Why risk yet another generation being turned back by their intimidation and size?

Surely God knew of the battles that would have to be fought, the constant challenges to faith that His people would be presented with. The sword and the spear seemed to be such a contrast to a "land flowing with milk and honey" as promised.

This is where we must understand God's objective, for it is the same today with you and I.

From the very beginning of time, God has always had the power to destroy the devil and his hordes. There has never been a time when the Lord and His angels could not have hurled every last demon into the lake of fire and left them there. Our God is sovereign and His authority is absolute.

Why then has He tolerated this sin-blighted world and the demons that so ravage it?

The answer is found in knowing God's ultimate intention for those of the human race that have chosen to serve Him as undisputed Lord. Consider the clear declaration of these scriptures:

Revelation 5:10

"And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 20:6

"...and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

CHAPTER THREE:
WE SHALL REIGN

But there is one more scripture that brings even more understanding:

2 Timothy 2:12

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.

The capacity to reign, the authority to rule, is not a gift; it is a developed spiritual muscle. It is only as we exercise it that it develops.

If we are ever to be the overcomers that we all desire to be, that will not be because the Lord has removed the potential of conflict from our path. It is quite the opposite. It is the very process of being confronted and having to decide to exercise our God-given authority in prayer that actually develops that spiritual dominion within us.

If we see this clearly, we realise why it was so necessary for those giants to be left alive, awaiting God's people. It also tells us why it was that Jesus did not remove all evil from the earth at the time of His triumph at calvary.

Let me declare it simply and plainly.

Demons exist to be conquered by you and I! They are our fuel for growth.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Discuss the popular perception of the Christian life as one of being blessed by the absence of pain and challenge. Why is this so contra to God's objectives in and through His church? Can you think of scriptures that support your thoughts on this?

Consider various muscles of the human body and discuss what types of exercise will cause them to be strengthened. Now apply this to elements of your Christian life and discuss some of your "spiritual muscles" (attributes) and what it is that will cause them to be strengthened.

Do you see yourself as lacking in some of these necessary attributes? Then be encouraged! We are all on this journey together and God's attitude towards us all is that of loving perseverance, not condemnation.

Remember always that it is through sincere prayer and calling out to God in our weakness that His strength is released in and through us.

CHAPTER FOUR: MORE THAN CONQUERORS

“ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN
TO ME IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH.”

MATT 28:18

There is no dispute that our King utterly annihilated Satan's legal rights to rule and express evil on the Earth.

Colossians 2:15-16

"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." (the cross)

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

So, that is established. But it is the next statement in Matthew 28 that says it all: "Go ye therefore"! In other words, "I paid the price to purchase all dominion and rule, but it is you that must now enforce that and see it acknowledged on a daily basis by the enemies of the kingdom."

The legal document that guarantees us our potential victory over the flesh and the devil is the declared word of God. It alone is the truth.

What our past failures declare and the lying suggestions of the accuser declare are not the truth; they are highly persuasive, very convincing, unrelenting lies from the father of all lies. But the tragedy is that everything that is human in us reaches out to accept their logic and the apparent reasonableness of their suggestions.

We also must be more discerning when it comes to accepting as truth some of the tantalising philosophies being declared today by misguided Christians.

One of note is the thought that in order to be free and overcoming, we must continually deal with the sins of our forefathers and remove "generational curses". Somehow those who have lived before can reach into our present reality and paralyse our effectiveness on an ongoing basis. I see absolutely no scriptural foundation for any such philosophy being applied to a born-again Christian who has repented and is now living passionately for the Lord.

I am not denying that specific areas of vulnerability and weakness, received through the family line, may have to be confronted and broken but this can be done in one decisive act of applying the blood of Christ in the power of His name.

Any thought that denies the full atonement of the shed blood of Christ and its power to set an individual 100% free, is totally counter-productive to God's purposes in you as a "new creation" empowered for His service.

At times it can be a major challenge to believe in God's integrity and that of His word, turn your back on all that persuasive human reasoning, and declare: "we are more than conquerors through Christ!" (Romans 8:37) and "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens (empowers) me." (Philippians 4:12-14)

Does it take faith? Absolutely. But He has already placed that faith within you. It is by your decision that you must draw upon that faith and determine to live by it. It is as you cry out to Him in prayer and claim the power of His word that faith is released.

In future volumes we will speak much more of this process of establishing our spiritual authority. We will see clearly from scripture, and the lives of contemporary heroes of the faith, that such an overcoming life is not for a few elite superstars but for everyday followers of Jesus like you and me.

Forgive me if I get a whole heap excited about that!

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Read John 19:28-30 and then discuss these two phrases: “Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished” and “It is finished!” What are some of the “all things” that were accomplished?

Psalm 149:5-9 tells us that we have been given a “two-edged sword” and that we are to “execute the judgement written”. Discuss the powerful potential of the scripture to be a weapon of great authority when quoted in prayer from a pure and fervent heart.

To be “more than a conqueror” declares plainly that there will be ongoing battles and challenges. Discuss the nature of some of these battles and the appropriate response from one convinced of this scripture.

Remember, we not only serve an overcoming warrior king, but one that is also “touched with the feelings of our infirmities”. He knows about your struggling humanity and still loves you. The Holy Spirit was His empowerment in His humanity and He reminds you again of the availability of that same power today.

CHAPTER FIVE: AN AWESOME PROMISE

“LET US GO UP AT ONCE AND
TAKE POSSESSION, FOR WE ARE
WELL ABLE TO OVERCOME IT.”

NUMBERS 13:30

In the first 11 verses of Joshua, God begins the process that will eventuate in His people finally inheriting the promises that they have held in their hearts for generations.

Friends, I sense that we have come to an hour of great significance; the ushering in of an era that will, for many, finally see their prophetic destinies brought into reality.

It's a scary time. A time of excitement for some, yet a time of apprehension for others. For some, a time of reaching out to take hold of, for others, a time of reassignment, a change of life. But for all, a time of great challenge and a time of great change. A time for courage.

There now comes a cry to move on, to pass over our Jordans, both individually and corporately, and possess new horizons in God. As such we become a people pregnant with potential; a people poised to become "possessors of the land!"

The greatest moment in Israel's history had arrived! "One day" had become "this day".

Now let us examine the process that God embarked upon. Firstly, He grants them an awesome promise.

He tells them that He will be with them and that He will make them victorious, that no man will be able to stand before them.

Joshua 1:5

"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."

As Israel possessed the land through conquest, they (and the nations around them) acknowledged that their victory was entirely attributable to the God that they served. Nations feared the God of the Israelites! Victory for them, then, was a declared intention of God's heart: an intention that all of the heavenly host would support and the Holy Ghost would empower.

CHAPTER FIVE: **AN AWESOME PROMISE**

As indeed it is for you today!

God has declared His intention for you. Defeat or unbelief will not bring Him honour but vanquishing your foes and conquering your Jericho will! As I cry out to Him in my weakness and receive His supernatural strength, the life of Christ within is released to become an overwhelming force that shatters the enemy's intentions at that time.

If I am His ambassador (one that accurately represents), then my success brings Him honour. His declared intention is to gain Himself His intended victory by granting you and I the power to overcome. When it is the result of dependence upon the Holy Spirit, our triumph is His triumph!

Just think of the promises He has already given you, both personally and in His declared word. Every one of them confirms this one thought: we are born to overcome.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Do you have dreams of the heart that you believe have been given to you in past times by the Lord? Do you still see them as such? If so, are they biblical and do they honour God's commission in your life? If so, do you need to freshly acknowledge them and declare your availability to the Lord?

Think of some of the bible's heroes of the faith and discuss what their life declares to you about who God really is.

With these thoughts in mind, now ask yourself what your attitude should be about the call of God in your own life. What attitudes towards your future will honour Him?

"Overcoming conqueror" and "frail and dependent servant" seem to describe two very different people. Discuss why both these expressions equally apply to a Holy Ghost empowered Christian.

CHAPTER SIX: FAITH'S DECLARATION

“FOR WITH THE HEART ONE
BELIEVES... AND WITH THE MOUTH
CONFESSION IS MADE!”

ROMANS 10:10

CHAPTER SIX: FAITH'S DECLARATION

But is it enough? Does receiving the promise make you a possessor of the land? The answer is, of course, that it does not.

So, God not only gave His promise, but He also gave them clear instructions.

He tells them that they are to do all that He has previously commanded Moses, and that they should not allow His word to depart from their mouth.

Joshua 1:7-8

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Once again, He has given us the exact same instructions.

He has told us to make the written word the governing directive of all that we seek to do. And, going further, He has told us to make sure that it does not depart from our mouth!

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

Romans 10:10 tells us that: “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

We will never become “possessors of the land” unless our tongue becomes the instrument of declaration and expression for that word that He has placed in our hearts.

It only becomes that living, creative word when it is declared in prayer with faith!

Just imagine the challenge. Joshua had to put aside all the memories of those forty years, all the times when he had seen this people fail the expectations of their God and their leader, Moses.

CHAPTER SIX: FAITH'S DECLARATION

Somehow he had to put aside all logic and reason and believe God when He declared that this time it would be different.

Joshua had to believe the word of the Lord rather than his five senses. So must we. He had to believe it enough to not only carry it in his heart, but to place it upon his lips. That too is our challenge.

There is something wonderfully empowering when one verbally acknowledges the written word of God with faith. You can literally feel the lift in your spirit.

If we are to fulfil the God-given commission upon our lives, then we must take our confession seriously. We must, in fact, take it one step further. As God confirms our calling through the wisdom of our oversight and/or our spiritual peers, we must dare to declare that the dreams that we carry are, in fact, born of God. It's scary but it's vital.

By this, I do not mean running around telling all of your associates in some sort of undisciplined verbal indulgence. However, from a heart of humility and one that acknowledges your dependence upon God's grace, your faith must find verbal expression.

The essential thing is that you not only believe in your heart that your dreams are born of God but that you have the courage and trust in God to declare them in prayer and, when necessary, before people.

So, God gave them some sound instructions.

CHAPTER SIX: FAITH'S DECLARATION

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Discuss what it means to “meditate day and night” on:

- A) The written word.
- B) The clearly confirmed commission that God has given to you personally.

Talk about the power of words and their impact upon people. Think of examples where the outcome has been both good and bad.

Discuss the principles that will help govern your speech to become both godly and in harmony with God’s call upon your life.

Always remember: in order to be bold in your confession, you must first be fully persuaded that God has spoken to you. This, of course, means that you have made yourself available to hear in sincere prayer and crying out to Him with a hungry heart.

CHAPTER SEVEN: STEPS OF COURAGE

“BE OF GOOD COURAGE,
AND LET US BE STRONG...”

2 SAMUEL 10:12

CHAPTER SEVEN: **STEPS OF COURAGE**

But is it yet enough? Does receiving the promise and instructions make you a possessor of the land?

The answer is, of course, that it does not.

So, God gives them a faith challenge.

In verse 3 He tells them that they will have to tread upon the land before it actually becomes theirs.

Joshua 1:3

“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you.”

As Peter the fisherman of old found out, to walk upon the water requires one getting out of the boat and placing one’s security firmly in the faithfulness and integrity of the Lord. Hope must be demonstrated in order to become living faith. We will never possess that which we have not “walked upon”.

What does this mean in practical terms? It means to have sufficient inner-confidence in what God has told you to do, that you take tangible and deliberate steps towards seeing it become a reality. Not steps that can be easily reversed with a minimum of cost and concern, but steps that have the feeling of “going beyond the point of no return” about them.

I never cease to marvel at what some people call a “step of faith”. They have carefully weighed up the facts and predictable statistics; they have calculated the possibilities of success or failure; they have arranged all potential areas of backup. Having then diligently reduced all possibility of failure to zero and put in place security nets for every contingency, they step out in “faith”.

Friends, unless it is impossible humanly, we don’t even need a miraculous intervention! And God does not respond when He simply is not needed.

When Peter, in Matthew 14:29, stepped out of that boat on to that tormented, storm-driven sea, it was neither logical nor sensible.

CHAPTER SEVEN: **STEPS OF COURAGE**

It was the simple act of obedience to the voice of the Master that said “Come!” There was no tipping one’s toe in to see what would happen, just the abandonment of one that had clearly heard the King’s command.

That is the simplicity of true faith. It is obedience to a clear word of command. It is that illogical, irrational, almost reckless courage that doesn’t consider the challenges long enough to be daunted by them.

However, let me stress that it is not superficial and irresponsible presumption. It is not some whimsical, pride-driven thought of doing something spectacular. It is neither for the carnal nor the prayerless; it is for those who have received a creative word born out of their intimacy with God in prayer.

True faith is that Holy Ghost inspired word that can transform even the most timid of heart into a hero of faith.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

What is the essential difference between presumption and true biblical faith?

What are some of the realities that could cause you and I to get our eyes off the Master when He challenges us to step out in a venture of faith?

Discuss the difference between an act of obedience that may not require faith for the miraculous (but will demand commitment of heart), and those steps that are impossible without God’s intervention.

Discuss the connection between one’s sense of personal security in their relationship with God and their capacity to respond to challenges of faith.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HIS FAITHFULNESS - OUR ACTION

“FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD!”

JAMES 2:20

Faith is a conviction that produces action.

Without action it remains but mental assent. And mental assent without consequent action is, in fact, disobedience.

To acknowledge that one has had a word from God but to do nothing about it is an act of unbelief that questions the integrity of the God that gave you that word. It declares loudly that our God may be good at giving commands but unpredictable in His faithfulness. This, of course, is not so. He is utterly dependable in all matters of character; including His faithful provision for all that He has asked you to do.

I remember the first time that he challenged Margaret and I on a major missionary step of faith.

We had responded many times to missionary faith challenges in the past but always as pastors of a local church. When God challenged, we knew we could count on the collective faith and giving of the congregation. This time it was to be different. We were no longer pastoring a church but were, ourselves, itinerant ministries relying on God for His daily provision.

Whilst in prayer early one morning, I felt the Lord clearly say that Margaret and I were to go to Tanzania, East Africa and get the pastors of the different churches and denominations together in a place called Arusha.

With Margaret's confirmation, we acted upon this and contacted the local missionary who informed us that the leaders would not gather together unless we paid for all their expenses to do so. We were talking about all conference costs, food costs for the several days, and even reimbursement of some travel costs. We were talking about a large sum of money!

We estimated about 100 people would attend and committed ourselves on that basis.

Have you ever discovered that sometimes God gets you over the line of obedience before actually revealing the fuller picture of what He has in mind? Well, this was such a case.

A short time after our initial commitment, I received the email to say that the number had now grown to over 150! Did we wish to proceed? Well, had God spoken or not? Was His faithfulness in any way restricted to a certain number? We told them “Yes, go ahead!” Then came the next email. The number had grown to 200! How did we feel about the zeroes that were being added to the budget?! Then the next email - It was now over 300!

We were already out of the boat believing the Lord to miraculously provide for 100 or 200, why not 300! We were utterly sunk if He didn't come through either way. We said “Yes, proceed with as many as you can get there!”

We committed to send the first amount of finance on a certain date and booked our airfares with our visa. And we prayed! Not religiously toned, well cultured, articulate, intelligent prayers; but more like “God heeeeelllp!!” Not in anxiety or panic but with an incredible excitement and anticipation. Not “if” but simply “how”.

To cut a long story short, the phone began to ring, the letters began to arrive, people felt led to come and see us. In it all came. The last \$2000 came in the day before we flew out to East Africa! God is a God of the eleventh hour.

The conference and the entire trip turned out to be a miraculous time of intervention for that region, with on-going fruit to this very day.

That was but one of such trips and similar challenges of financial impossibilities that the Lord has led us through. In many years of God-reliant ministry we have never had to be a day late in payment of an account due to finances. Now, that is a God of faithfulness!

Like Joshua of old, we must be those who have forged a non-negotiable conviction concerning the integrity of God.

There will never be a time when stepping out in true faith does not cause a sense of trembling within. As one highly decorated war veteran said at a rally I attended: “true courage is not the absence of fear, it is the conquering of that fear”.

I have been in this spiritual war now for many decades and I still get those “butterflies” in the stomach when God challenges me to put aside the logic and simply step out in obedience. Hey! Sometimes those butterflies inside feel like eagles!

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

True faith must be established upon sound biblical knowledge. However, many Christians today who have that knowledge and say they believe it fervently do not live as if they do. Discuss in what areas of life you see this as most common.

Discuss those characters in the bible that you feel stand out as those of uncommon faith and courage. What is it about them that makes you feel that way?

The difference between the timid and the heroic is but the willingness to die. Not necessarily to die a physical death (although it can be in certain nations today) but perhaps to die to one’s pride or reputation.

Discuss how the importance of other people’s perception of us can play a role in paralysing our potential for faith in action.

CHAPTER NINE: PREPARE NOW

“THEREFORE, WHEN
I WAS PLANNING THIS,
DID I DO IT LIGHTLY?”

2 CORINTHIANS 1:17

CHAPTER NINE: **PREPARE NOW**

So, now Israel has a promise, instructions, and a faith challenge.

I have no doubt that, at this stage, Joshua and the people were getting very excited and were anticipating the joyous fulfilment of becoming possessors of the land. They could see those armies fleeing before them and the bounties of the land becoming their own.

But was it yet enough? Knowing what God wants to do, believing that it will take place; is it enough? Would this now mean that victory was assured?

The answer is, of course, that it does not. Preparation had to be made.

Verses 10-11a:

“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, pass through the camp and command the people, saying, prepare!” In chapter 3:5 they are told to “sanctify themselves and make themselves ready.”

The message is: “Prepare!”

The promise, instructions and faith are not enough; preparation must be made.

Before any army proceeds with conquest, strategies have to be forged. When the battle commences it is too late. Before any athlete competes, strategies have to be forged. When the race has commenced it is too late.

What will the coming year be for you?

Will it be dreams that remain dreams? Will it be a glorious future that one continues to talk about but never realise?

Or will it be the year of fulfilment, the reality of the dreams, the possessing of the land?

I want to suggest to you that if it is to be the latter, then you must begin now! The preparation for tomorrow's triumph begins even as you read this narrative.

Procrastination is a deadly and effective foe.

It's a principle!

The attitude one goes to sleep with determines how they arise the next day; the attitude one closes a week with determines how they begin the next.

I believe that this principle applies to you and I right now. Your future has already begun. It has begun in your heart, in your attitudes, in your expectations.

It starts now. It won't just suddenly happen on the day of conquest.

But where does preparation begin?

For the Christian, strategies are to be given by the Holy Spirit. You need to clearly identify what land it is that you are to possess. But the Holy Spirit, in turn, awaits a request. He waits for that individual to cry out in fervent prayer. At no time does He impose Himself without the individual making sincere and fervent invitation. He awaits that which is the beginning point of every successful spiritual endeavour: the beckoning hunger of the human heart.

How does one commence the preparation process to become a possessor of the land? With hunger! Pay the price to hear God's voice. Call out to Him with a heart that is unconditionally surrendered, without a pre-set agenda. Hunger has no agenda; it has passion! May God grant you such hunger as you set your heart to become one of His heroes of faith.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Discuss those that have taken on significant faith challenges and see if you can see the process that we have discussed: God giving them a promise, instructions, and a faith challenge.

What is the attitude that you feel you should now have towards your own future Christian walk?

Are you one of the vast majority of people that will need others to help you when trying to translate the passion of the vision into tangible strategies to possess it? If so, who do you feel you can confide in? Are you willing for counsel and adjustment?

In a moment of honest self-appraisal, determine if you need to cry out to God right now for an increase in spiritual hunger. Most people do!

Always remember that He has said to “come boldly before the throne of grace”. That is His open invitation. He does not condemn you, he beckons you!

One more time I would remind you of our closing statement in each volume...

THE BATTLE IS HIS

I have called this volume “Born to be Heroes” but we all must acknowledge that the greatest of all heroes is the saviour that walked up that hill of the skull, Golgotha.

Without His sacrifice, His resurrection, His overcoming life, His gift of the Holy Spirit to empower us, we would most miserably fail.

However, with that life now within us and our free access to His commands and empowerment, we too can stand with the saints of old that are now numbered with the heroes of faith.

God bless you as you hunger for His voice
and receive the courage to obey.

Your friend,
David.

DAVID McCRACKEN MINISTRIES

For more details on training or resources, please visit our website:

www.davidmccracken.org

