



THE
PROMISE
NO ONE WANTS

JOEY BONIFACIO

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To my wife, Marie, and sons
Joseph, David, and Joshua:
Thank you for making my life
such a pleasure and delight.

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PREFACE

This is a small book
about breakthrough.

The key to breaking
through is found in a promise
in the Bible.

A promise that continues
to change my life and the lives
of countless others.

It is the promise no one wants,
but one, God knows,
we all need.

FOREWORD

There's nothing more life changing than a great message with practical applications for real life. *"The Promise No One Wants"* is such a message.

Just as in real life this book pulls no punches. Yet there's comfort in knowing that there is a loving, heavenly Father whose good purpose for our lives will ultimately prevail.

I have seen this promise at work many years ago, but nobody has expressed it better than my friend Joey Bonifacio. He has done a good job of making us who have read his book fully embrace and welcome the promise no one wants.

So I encourage you to read it.
Then go get some copies for your friends!

Ray W. McCollum

Austin, Texas

Chapter 1

THE PROMISE

I thank God for the man who taught me how to read the Bible. He said that the Bible is filled with promises, and that God is a promise-keeping God. He explained that my understanding of God's Word would depend on how I viewed God Himself. Today, after twenty years of reading the Bible, I have found him to be right.

God's Promises Are Always For Our Good

Joshua 21:45 affirms this truth.

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“Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.”

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God did everything He said He would do. His promises are absolutely reliable and they are for our benefit. His reliability is based on who He is. His person assures us that He can, and will fulfill His promises.

A valid promise requires two ingredients:

1. The integrity of the promise giver, and
2. The promise giver's ability to fulfill his words.

1 Kings 8:15 tells us,

“Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his own hand fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David.”

With his hand God fulfilled what He stated with His mouth. God always fulfills his promises. We can rely on God’s promises not only because He is capable but also because He is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23,
“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”

Through the years, my wife, Marie, and I have seen God fulfill a variety of promises-promised offspring, promised land, promised provision, promised protection, promised health, promised joy, promised strength, and even part of the promised eternal life while we are still on earth.

Among the different promises, one stands out. It is the promise I have grown to call “The Promise No One Wants.” The moment I discovered this promise in the Bible, I did not want it. But like every promise of God, I realized, this too will be fulfilled. We can only wait as God brings it to completion.

Hebrews 12:26-27 records this promise that no one wants:

“ At the time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.”

The verses indicate the removing of what is temporary – the created things that fall away during shaking – so that what cannot be shaken will remain.

The Promise of Shaking

The promise that no one wants is an ever-present reality, as declared in active form – “now”. God will shake what can be shaken today and everyday. It continues with the declaration, “Once more I will shake”, which is to say that He will keep shaking every time shaking is necessary, until only what cannot be shaken will remain. God is so faithful that He wants to remove everything that will prevent us from achieving all that He has prepared for us.

God’s intent is not to shake and break us, but also to bring us to greater levels of life in him.

Over time, Marie and I have learned the value of this promise of shaking. God does not shake and break us merely for the sake of doing it. His intent and desire is to bring us to greater levels of life in Him. To breakthrough to a higher level of life requires power – supernatural power that humans, in our own strength, are incapable of producing.

God removes (shakes) what cannot bring us to where He wants to take us. He replaces it with what has the power (that which is unshakable) to take us to His ordained destiny for us. Only He is capable of fulfilling this awesome promise.

Chapter Two

SHAKE & BREAK

Shortly after World War II, the United States Air Force began the intensive development and testing of airplanes that could fly higher, faster, and longer. The objective was to fly at the speed of sound and beyond.

First espoused by Austrian physicist Ernst Mach, the speed of sound was said to be at 660-760 miles per hour, depending on the airplane's altitude. The physicists designated this number as Mach 1. Such advances meant entering into the future of air travel and possibly space exploration.

Tests to break through the sound barrier were conducted at the Muroc Army Airfield (present day Edward's Air Force Base). Many of the experts at the

With the greatest breakthroughs come the most violent shaking and turbulence.

time believed that the sound barrier was impenetrable. No one had flown past Mach 1 before. Many believed it was impossible.

Violent Shaking

Initial test flights proved to be challenging. They found that between Mach .90 to Mach .99 a violent shaking would occur on the fuselage of the plane. So violent were the shaking and turbulence that these could overwhelm the test pilots. Pilots would be inclined not to breakthrough the barrier because of the potential danger. The shaking could cause disorientation and the loss of one's sense of direction.

A Man Named Chuck

It was a sunny California morning on October 14, 1947 when historians recorded the flight that had broken through the sound barrier. A young test pilot ushered in the first flight to travel at Mach 1 speed. His name was Chuck Yeager.

Like everyone else, he experienced the same violent shaking, the same disorientation, dizziness, and loss of direction. The only difference was that, in the midst of the shaking and turbulence, he stayed the course for a few seconds longer.

The breakthrough flight could not have been more dramatic. The ground crew monitoring the flight watched the speed gauges as Yeager inched through Mach .97, .98, .99, and then came an explosive kaboom!

Startled, the crew thought that Yaeger's plane had exploded and that he had failed just like everyone else.

It was the first time a plane would create a sonic boom.

As a plane flies faster through the atmosphere, airwaves build up on its fuselage, causing the violent shaking. The sonic boom is the sound generated by the peak accumulation and release of that pressure as the plane breaks through the barrier.

Chuck made history that day. Air travel would never be the same again.

His triumph teaches us a parallel spiritual truth: With the greatest breakthroughs come the most violent shaking and turbulence. Disorientation, dizziness, loss of direction, and even fear and discouragement can occur just before a breakthrough.

Chuck discovered that past Mach 1, planes tend to fly higher, faster, and are more stable. This gives us yet another important spiritual parallel: Breakthroughs mean deeper levels in the Spirit, which means a faster ability to respond to the things of God, resulting in greater stability in life.

Chuck also proved that to break through, one has to stay the course regardless of the situation. This is similar to the spiritual truth we find in Hebrews 10:36

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“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.”
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The old adage is true: when the going gets tough, the tough get going. To avoid the shaking and breaking is to postpone your breakthrough.

Chapter Three

A STORY OF BREAKTHROUGH

Among the most revered stories in the Bible is the story of Joseph. His life is a story of breakthroughs. He experienced breakthroughs in his career, his relationships, and his personal life, and fulfilled the calling God had for him. Yet at the same time, Joseph's life was riddled with shaking and turbulence.

People tend to think that breakthroughs are a once in a lifetime occurrence. Breakthroughs don't just happen once. We continue to break through as we mature and grow into the person God wants us to be.

God removed from Joseph's life the things that could have hindered him from fulfilling his destiny. God shook away the "shakable things", so that only what could not be shaken would remain.

Often, we orient shaking with sin and our failure to do all that God asks of us.

Often, we orient shaking with sin and our failure to do all that God asks for us. I find people saying, "God is shaking me because I did or did not do this or that." We find the exact opposite in Joseph's life.

The book of Genesis tells the story of Joseph and his breakthrough. He was a man of vision. He had a dream of his life – not one born out of a selfish ambition, but a dream that came from God. Joseph was also an honest man who spoke the truth about what he saw. He was too forthright when he told his family about his dreams, which they misunderstood to be arrogance.

Joseph was a faithful man. He faithfully tended the family flock with his brothers. He was an obedient son, and gladly checked on his brothers for his father while they were grazing the flocks in Shechem. Joseph displayed perseverance when, having not found his brothers at Shechem, he inquired about them and willingly followed them to Dothan.

I have heard good people asking, “What have I done to deserve this situation?” referring to present turbulence in their lives. While we have obviously done things that bring bad consequences into our lives, the real cause of shaking is God – He is shaking what can be shaken. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, and he went from being the favorite son to becoming a lowly slave. What did Joseph do to deserve such shaking? Nothing. Just as in Joseph’s life, our shaking is part of a promise God will fulfill.

Our ideas and ways are so far from God’s thoughts and purposes. As it is written in the book of Isaiah:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

We have mistakenly believed that our talents, abilities, resources, and even our religion can take us to where God wants us to go. In his faithfulness and love, He has vowed to shake off our false notions. Like in Joseph’s life, this is necessary to draw our attention to that which is unshakable, to allow us to willingly let go of the powerless things we hold on to, and to enable us to freely receive, appropriate and maximize the power He has to offer.

For the remainder of this book, we will study the four things God shook out of Joseph’s life. We will also look at four things that remained after the shaking that helped Joseph break through into his destiny.

Chapter Four

HIS FATHER'S FAVORITE

Joseph had an unfair advantage over his brothers. He was his father's favorite. His father, Jacob, made him a richly ornamented robe, which symbolized his privileged position. It was obvious that Jacob loved Joseph more than his siblings.

It is important to note that Joseph did nothing to earn his father's favor. He did not manipulate or wiggle himself into this position. Jacob loved him more than the others simply because Joseph was the son of Rachel, the woman he loved most, and because he was born in his old age.

This would be the first thing God would shake in Joseph's life – the favor of man. Out of envy and jealousy, Joseph's brothers stripped away his beautiful garb, the symbol of his father's favor. His brothers also sold him into slavery, removing his link to Jacob, the source of his favored position.

God knew that Jacob did not have the ability to bring his son to his destination. Jacob was overwhelmed by the magnitude of God's plan for Joseph. He questioned Joseph's dream and vision for his life. But to his credit, Jacob kept Joseph's dream in mind. Nevertheless, he did not have the power to give Joseph his breakthrough.

Shaking the Favor of Man

Man's favor is an enticing shortcut to success. For Joseph, it was his father's favor. To others, it may be favor from a boss, a professor, a partner, an associate, a golf buddy, or even a spiritual mentor, or pastor.

Winning man's favor can lull us into believing that we have won God's favor. While God's favor may cause

Winning the favor of man lull us into believing that we have won the favor of God.

others to favor us we should not mistake man's favor with God's. Moving towards our destiny using man's favor may lead us away from where God wants to take us.

Jacob's favoritism could have misled Joseph into believing that he had broken through into his destiny. Your boss liking you does not automatically mean that you are where God wants to bring you.

The compliments from friends, praises from peers, and promotions from superiors do not necessarily mean you have experienced God's breakthrough.

In one of my travels I found myself in a flight sitting beside a physicist from Florida State University.

I asked him about Chuck Yeager and the sound barrier. His thoughts were insightful.

He explained how regular airplanes (like the one we were in) always flew just behind the sound barrier. He said the closer we get to the barrier, the more intensely we would feel shaking and turbulence. Commercial flights fly at a comfortably reduced speed to avoid the shaking and the turbulence.

Trusting in the favor of man is like sitting in an airplane in a position just outside the sound barrier. Applying this in a spiritual situation, we may be advancing and moving forward, yet we will not experience true breakthrough. The favor of man traps us into a comfort zone of false security, and is unable to take us where God alone can.

Chapter Five

THE FATHER'S FAVORITE

The shaking in Joseph's life can be described in one word: violent. His brothers betrayed him, threw him into a cistern, and sold him as a slave. Then they took his robe and covered it with animal blood and presented it to their father.

Jacob believed his sons' deception. He was certain that Joseph was dead. The intensity of this shaking was necessary to ensure that Joseph would not and could not rely on the favor of men. Instead, he would find a more powerful, stable, and consistent source of favor—the God of his dreams.

In time, Joseph found himself sold to an Egyptian official whose name was Potiphar, a captain in the King's army. There in Potiphar's house, Joseph would have his first taste of a different kind of favor. He would discover something more powerful than what he was used to—the favor of God.

God can, and does, bestow His favor on us by granting us favor with men. The real issue boils down to this: Who or what is the source of the favor? Is it truly God or our own maneuvering?

So strong was God’s favor in Joseph’s life that Potiphar saw that the LORD had given him success in all that he did. Eventually, Joseph found favor in Potiphar’s eyes who put him in charge of everything he had. Joseph ran his home and fields. He became the CEO of Potiphar Holdings. Here Joseph experienced his first breakthrough. He experienced the favor of God.

Grace has the power to take us to where we are unable to go.

Grace: The Favor of God

More of you, less grace, less of you, more grace.

A common word used to describe the favor of God is grace. Many theologians have defined grace to mean the unmerited favor of God. Grace is the basis of the Christian faith and is the only mans to eternal salvation. Ephesians 2:8, 9 expresses it this way,

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from ourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Another definition of grace is God doing for you and me what we are incapable of doing. Grace has the power to take us where we are unable to go.

Too often, we believe in receiving our salvation by grace but fail to realize that our whole life must be lived by grace. We somehow get lured into this worldview that God can save us for eternity but while we are on earth, it is all about our works.

The older we get, the more we find that there is so much that we are incapable of doing. The more we mature as Christians we realize that we thrive solely by His grace.

It's Not About You

The key to accessing the grace of God for our lives lies in our understanding that this is “not from ***yourselves***” (Ephesians 2:8). It's not about you. If you are given to formulas, here is one to live by: More of you, less grace, less of you, more grace.

A good picture of this is the X-1 plane that Chuck Yeager piloted to break through the sound barrier. The plane had the power to fly at higher levels, was faster and relatively more stable than any other plane of its kind and time. Now imagine that instead of sitting inside the plane, Yeager decided to sit on top of it and flap his arms to make it fly. Isn't that ridiculous? Yet that's how we try to live our lives almost everyday.

Picture the engine, the mechanisms, the instruments, and everything else in the plane. Picture all that the plane is capable of. God has given us all the power to live our lives to the fullest (John 10:10). Instead, we choose to flap our feeble arms that neither have the power nor the ability to sustain our lives.

God shakes our trust in the favor of men in order to draw us into a far greater source of strength—the favor of God—God’s grace.

The other problem with doing things in our own strength is that we enter into the idea of works: “I did it.” When things become about us, boasting is not far away. Ephesians 2:8, 9 says,

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“This is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”
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God removes men’s favor in our lives to bring us to the place of humility.

To access grace, we need to walk in the advice of scripture that says, “God opposes the proud but **gives grace** to the humble.” (James 4:6). When we humble ourselves, God pours out the grace we need to break through.

Chapter Six

SHAKING UNGODLINESS AND THE FEAR OF MAN

Joseph had experienced his first taste of break through. From being a slave, he became the head of Potiphar's household. He was excited. Things were finally looking up for him. Unknown to him, God was preparing another shaking that was necessary to bring him to his destiny.

While Joseph lived a righteous life, his newfound success was adulterated with potential compromise. Potiphar's wife lusted after him. God's grace gave Joseph an initial breakthrough, but ungodliness could destroy what grace had given him.

Ungodliness Diminishes a Person's Potential

From presidential aspirants, company executives, and clergy, to husbands, wives, and youth, acts of ungodliness put a cap on what people can achieve. Joseph could have been de-maximized because of the temptation that threatened his initial success. While Joseph was not the initiator of ungodliness, God knew it endangered his destiny.

Here are some of the ways that ungodliness diminishes us:

Guilt

When we allow small acts of ungodliness to infiltrate our lives, we will ultimately lose our ability to lead or our authority to judge situations because of the guilt that comes from our misdeeds. It minimizes our ability to address issues because of the nagging accusation that says, “What about that thing you did?”

Faulty Vision

Ungodliness impairs our vision. We begin to see things through a filter of compromise. When we compromise in certain areas of our life, we justify our position by saying that what we’re doing is ok because everyone else is doing it. Hence, we ignore the standards of God.

Acts of ungodliness have placed a cap on what people can achieve.

Fear

Nothing can be as paralyzing as fear. The Lord Jesus’ Parable of the Talents tells us of the third servant who was paralyzed by fear and did nothing with the talents entrusted to him. His

response to the Lord’s accounting was, “I was afraid . . .” The fear of being exposed will paralyze and diminish us.

When we compromise godliness in our lives, we short circuit our ability to have strong faith. If Joseph did not believe that God was watching him while he was with Potiphar's wife, he would not have the faith to believe that God could see him while he was in the dungeon.

Every time we compromise, we place ourselves in a position of losing more faith. This cycle of faith reduction spirals to make us believe that things are just fine. Not only are we losing faith, we are setting ourselves up for more encounters with ungodliness.

While sin diminishes us, its real threat and destructive force is its impact on future generations. Ungodliness has a way of finding its way in the generations to come. Remember Abraham and how he lied about Sarah being his sister? The Bible tells us that his son Isaac did exactly the same thing.

Our acts of ungodliness and compromise do not just happen and go away. If left unattended, they become part of the family heritage. Fortunately, as in Joseph's life God promises to shake ungodliness from our life.

Often ungodliness is rooted in the fear of man. The Bible warns us that:

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

Proverbs 29:25

Joseph was caught between a rock and a hard place. Nothing could be more dangerous than finding yourself enmeshed with a crazy boss’s wife. If Joseph entertained the “liaison,” it would only be a matter of time before Potiphar finds out and he would be in trouble.

If he stiff-armed her she could frame Joseph and make trouble for him just the same. And that’s exactly what she did. Joseph found himself in between a rock and hard place.

And God knew that if he was to become the leader He intended Joseph to be, there should not just be any semblance of ungodliness and he needed to be free from the fear of man.

Chapter Seven

THE OTHER WING

Chuck Yeager broke through the sound barrier on a plane that had two wings. An airplane that has only one wing cannot fly. And even if it did fly, it would be unstable. It would be lopsided and would not be able to fly straight; it would be like a bird flying around in circles.

Grace: The First Wing

Joseph had experienced grace and had seen its power to bring an initial breakthrough. Joseph had grace – the first wing. While he enjoyed success and prosperity, it came with the dangers and threat of ungodliness. Relentlessly, Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce and manipulate young Joseph into going to bed with her.

Joseph had no godly advisers in sight. There was no family to turn to. Joseph was alone. He needed supernatural power to overcome the temptation that came with success and prosperity. Will he give in to ungodliness and sin? Joseph needed a second wing.

As God shook the ungodliness around him, he was being set up for the ultimate test. Will he give in to ungodliness or will he embrace the fear of God? It was the test that would determine if he was ready for the next breakthrough.

The Bible records the amazing response that Joseph gave his boss's wife:

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No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. ***How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against my God?***

Genesis 39:9

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It could have sounded like this: “Hey, listen, I am very successful. Your husband really likes me and business has been good. I know you are his wife (though you’re weird) and you have some say in this house. There’s just no way I’m going against God. Quite frankly, I am more afraid of Him than you or even Potty himself.”

The Fear of the Lord: The Second Wing

Breaking through the next level requires a second wing. That wing is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord gives us a supernatural ability to pass toughest tests, as well as overcome the wildest of Satan’s schemes. The fear of the Lord clarifies and crystalizes the way to go when the enemy clouds the path.

Do you want clear instructions on how to get to your destiny?

“Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.”

Psalm 25:12

Do you want wisdom that ushers a breakthrough?

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Proverbs 9:10

Do you want a breakthrough in your health in order to live a long life?

“The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.”

Proverbs 10:27

Do you want a sure foundation for your life?

“He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.”

Isaiah 33:6

Do you want a secure life for you and your children?

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“He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.”

Proverbs 14:26

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Do you want to be spared of every snare and trap mounted against you?

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“The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.”

Proverbs 14:27

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Flying on a single wing never works. Many people freely embrace the grace of God, but do not have the accompanying fear of God that brings stability. These people end up running around in circles wondering why the grace of God has failed them.

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“It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. The man who fears God will avoid all extremes.”

Ecclesiastes 7:18

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Grasping the wing of grace while holding on to the fear of the Lord will help us avoid all extremes. True, God is our father who loves us and his mercy is new every morning. However, He is also the Sovereign Lord God, the creator of heaven and earth—holy, holy, holy is His name. And we should fear Him.

Like a plane in the midst of turbulent winds, we can remain stable by grasping grace and not letting go of the fear of the Lord. When the enemy condemns us that we will never get out of the pit and that we have not performed enough, we can lean on the wing of grace that has the ability to keep us in peace.

When the enemy accuses us, we can lean on the fear of the Lord. We settle in our hearts that He is our Lord, Master, the Ruler of our lives. His will be done!

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Matthew 10:28

Chapter Eight

THE ASSISTANT CUPBEARER

Joseph's refusal to sleep with Potiphar's wife landed him in prison. Yet the favor of God followed him there. Just as it was in Potiphar's house, Joseph found favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

While in prison, two VIPs from Pharaoh's employ had offended the ruler and were put in the same place where Joseph was confined. Both men were assigned to Joseph's care.

One night, both of them had a dream. Having been advised of this, Joseph offered his interpretation, believing that God would give him wisdom. He had correctly predicted that the cupbearer would be restored to his favored position, while the chief baker would be hanged. Both prophetic interpretations were fulfilled.

By now, Joseph had learned to depend on God's grace. He had learned that God's grace had the power to grant him favor and sustain him in any situation, even in prison. He also had a holy fear of God.

However, there was another thing God wanted to shake in Joseph’s life in order to bring him to his destiny.

Prior to the fulfillment of the cupbearer’s and chief baker’s dreams, the Bible records an interesting plea Joseph made to the cupbearer:

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“But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.”

Genesis 40:14

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What as Joseph’s motive behind this request? Why was he asking the cupbearer to help him get out of prison?

The words in Genesis 40:15 reveal Joseph’s perspective on the situation:

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“For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being in a dungeon.”
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My translation: “I have done nothing to deserve being in prison. I don’t know I should be here. This can’t be God’s will for me . . .”

Thankfully, he had enough fear of the Lord to restrain himself from verbalizing how he may have felt given his situation: “If God is really in control and since I have done nothing to deserve this, why in the world am I here? Why did He allow this to happen to me. Why hasn’t He done anything to get me out of here?”

I am convinced that at this point, Joseph had learned that God’s favor had greater power than that of man’s. I don’t believe he was retreating to the limitations of the favor of men again. Rather, he was getting impatient. Joseph was a visionary and a dreamer.

He knew he was going somewhere. The question at this point was: Will he be patient to wait on God’s timing and for God’s way?

God knew that Joseph could not break through into a deeper level in his faith with impatience. God was faithful and committed to his promise to Joseph becoming the ruler. He was just as faithful and committed to His other promise of shaking what can be shaken.

For God to bring Joseph to the next level of breakthrough, He first had to shake impatience out of him.

Impatience has a way of luring us into the arm of the flesh. It makes us think of ways to “help God along.” It makes us revert to old practices unwittingly. It’s resounding declaration is: “What’s taking so long?”

How can you tell when impatience has gotten the best of you? It is usually accompanied by stress. It is characterized by being driven no matter what the cost. It is often tinged with manipulation and deception. Occasionally, it reveals an accusing spirit.

I can’t help but wonder . . . What if Joseph succeeded in getting out of prison through the auspices of his new benefactor—the cupbearer? What if he succeeded through his own strength and timing? Yes, he would have the freedom. Yes, he would still have landed in the same place he was destined for: Pharaoh’s palace. But instead of walking the palace halls as governor, he would merely be an assistant to the cupbearer, forever indebted to his boss!

The danger with impatience is that we may end up getting less than what we have been destined for!

How often have we impatiently gone ahead of God, only to end up with the good rather than the best that God has in store for us? Impatience almost cost Joseph his destiny and inheritance.

Genesis 40 records that the cupbearer did not remember Joseph's plea and had forgotten about him. As it turned out, this was a good thing. In His sovereignty, God saved Joseph for a higher calling! His "delay" was for a divine purpose.

Chapter Nine

FAITH TO SEE

Joseph’s great grandfather, Abraham, was known for his remarkable faith. Joseph’s father, Jacob did not have the faith and patience of Abraham. Instead, he was known for his impatience, which manifested itself in the form of manipulation and deception.

Jacob was destined to be greater than his brother Esau. When his mother, Rebekah, inquired of God about her pregnancy, she was told that she was having twins. She was advised that the younger child (Jacob) would be greater and that the older (Esau) would end up serving the younger.

Although destined to be greater, Jacob could not wait for God’s way and timing. He cheated his brother, and with the help of his mother, he deceived his father into giving him his brother’s blessing. The result forced Jacob to flee from the wrath of his family, triggering a series of tragic events that were definitely not the best that God had in store for him.

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Chapter 37:2
“This is the account of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending flocks with his brothers . . .”
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Great faith is often accompanied by great patience.

The account of Jacob was a chronicle of the life of Joseph. In many ways, Joseph's life was a reflection of Jacob's. Young Joseph may not

have personally witnessed the manipulative and deceptive tendencies of his father, but his father's traits (both good and bad) found their way into his life. This included Jacob's impatience.

Impatience is a manifestation of a lack of faith. Faith in its simplest form is the ability to believe God's promises while patiently waiting for them. Hebrews 6:15 declares,

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"And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised."
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Receiving God's promises requires waiting for God's timing. Great faith is often accompanied by great patience.

To bring Joseph to his breakthrough, God needed to shake his impatience and replace it with the same kind of faith that Abraham had. Faith is the fuel that powers the plane. Without the fuel, the wings, engine, and instruments will not function.

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“For it is by grace you have ben saved, through faith . . .”
Ephesians 2:8
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Without faith, we will run out of power to break through.

Faith breeds patience. The more faith we have, the more patience we will have. This happens because faith allows us to trust that God will ultimately fulfill His promise, regardless of what the present circumstances look like and no matter how long it takes. Armed with this truth, we patiently wait for Him to come through.

I have always ben amazed at how the cupbearer had forgotten about Joseph, only to remember him after two full years had passed.

In reference to time, the Bible uses three different words from the Greek language. The first is kronos, which is defined as “the passage of time.” This is where we get the word “chronograph” from. The second is “kairos”, which is defined as the opportune time.” Many Christians know of this, but only a few know of the third Greek word, pleru, defined as “the fullness of time.”

For our purposes, let us look at pleru, the fullness of (God’s) time. One of the most significant verses in the Bible pertaining to pleru is found in Galatians 4:4,5:

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“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”
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The fullness of God’s time is in a class of its own. It has the distinction of causing events to be unstoppable once it’s time has come. Such is the case when God sent his Son. The devil, Herod, or even the most powerful army at the time could not stop the coming of Jesus. Nothing can stop the fulfillment of God’s plan once the fullness of His time has come.

The fullness of God's time is in a class of its own.

This too, was the case with Joseph. When God's two full years had come, Pharaoh had a dream. Genesis 41:14 says,

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"Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh"
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A quick shave and change of clothes and Joseph was standing in front of his destiny. Nothing could stop him now.

Joseph was commended for his faith in Hebrews 11:22:

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"By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones."
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It is interesting to note that his faith involved something that was to happen 400 years later when he gave instructions to the Israelites about where to bury his bones. He learned his lesson after God shook his impatience and replaced it with faith.

Chapter Ten

THE FINAL SHAKING

As governor of Egypt, Joseph had made it! He married into royalty, had a lovely wife, and had two sons. At the prime of his life, he had position, wealth, stature and fame. He was finally living out his destiny; the completion of the dream God had given him. It seemed that his vision had been fulfilled. But God was not quite done—he had one more shaking. Let's see the events unfold . . .

Severe famine had struck the land. Back in Canaan, Joseph's father, Jacob, and his brother heard that there was food in Egypt. Unknown to them, God had begun to move. They had no choice but to go there. When they arrived in Egypt and were brought before Governor Joseph, he immediately recognized them. But they had no clue that the governor in front of them was the brother they had cruelly mistreated, sold, and abandoned.

Imagine the tumult of buried emotions that rose within Joseph. What thoughts raced through his mind as he stood face to face with his betrayers?

Have you ever been in a place where you knew what was right but you felt like doing what was wrong anyway?

Before him was his very own flesh and blood, who were responsible for his years of suffering.

Who knows what scenes flashed before him: the pain of rejection, the darkness of prison, the torturous bouts of

loneliness and despair, the longing for his father, the anger, and desire for revenge?

While we may only guess or assume what Joseph may have been thinking and feeling at the time, the Bible does give us an insight on how the encounter was affecting Joseph. Genesis 45:1 tells us,

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!"

What an overwhelming experience for Joseph! Genesis 45:2 tells us that Joseph wept so loudly that his neighbors heard about it and they told Pharaoh. Joseph was so shaken that he did not care what his neighbors, attendants, and the rest of Egypt thought.

Have you ever been out of control? Ever been rejected? Unjustly mistreated? Wondered why things had to happen the way they did? Ever battled over the thought of paying people back for the evil they have done instead of forgiving them? Have you ever been in a place where you knew what was right but felt like doing what was wrong?

Shaking Joseph

First, God shook the favor of man out of Joseph's life. Then he shook any form of ungodliness that would limit Joseph. He went on to shake Joseph's impatience. But there was one more thing that needed shaking, probably the one that was the hardest to shake. God was shaking Joseph himself.

As God shook him, things from the past were revealed. His hurts, wounds, anger, and bitterness were exposed. These personal hurts and struggles could poison God's purpose in Joseph's life. God is so committed to His people that He wants to remove everything that can be shaken in us so He can put in that which will last. His desire is not simply to take us to our destiny, but to allow us to enjoy it when we get there.

Joseph had broken through into his destiny. Yet God had to shake him one final time. He had to shake Joseph himself to ensure that all the wealth, power, success, and fame would neither intoxicate him nor would bitterness from the past poison him.

His Will Be Done

Shaking Joseph meant shaking his emotions, desires, and even his dreams. How many times have we missed God’s will for our lives because of an offense? Or when things don’t align with what we want? Maybe our expectations have remained unfulfilled.

Genesis 45:4,5 records Joseph’s ultimate response to the situation before him:

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Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.”
When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, ***because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.***”
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God shook the “I” in Joseph to remove his view from his personal life in order to see God’s perspective.

Joseph needed to realize that God’s purposes were far greater than just his personal success. His purpose and destiny were intertwined with the lives of many. Most of all, he needed to learn that God’s purpose will always prevail.

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“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

Proverbs 19:21

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Chapter Eleven

THE PAPER CLIP

Imagine having the most powerful plane complete with both wings and all the fuel you need, but heading in the wrong direction.

Most people know the importance of living with a purpose. But the real question is, “How do we discover God’s purpose for our lives?” Some years ago, I had an interesting revelation about purpose. It came through a paper clip.

Consider the paper clip. Paper clips come in different colors: from blue, yellow, pink, and green to copper, chrome and bronze. There are small, medium and big paper clips. There are paper clips made of plastic and there are ones made of metal. There are even specialty paper clips, from Mickey Mouse and Hello Kitty to German and French paper clips. Despite this variety, all paper clips have one purpose. And—you guesses it—it’s to clip paper.

As a young boy, I fashioned a paper clip into a tool to engrave my name: “Joey was here!” Sometimes, I twisted it to form a makeshift key to open drawer locks. On occasion, I have used it as an impromptu screwdriver, electrical wire, cutter. . . even a finger nail cleaner (ouch!).

However, the paper clip was not designed to do any of these. While it may work as an engraver or as a makeshift key it does not do the job as efficiently. As a nail cleaner, it could hurt its user. It can usually remove only one screw before it is deformed and rendered useless. Worst of all, the paper clip can no longer clip paper. Having been bent out of shape, it no longer serves the purpose for which it was created.

We can glean two truths from the paper clip. First, it has one purpose and that is to clip paper. Second, we have to use it according to its purpose.

When we use something outside its purpose, it becomes inefficient and ineffective. Using something out of purpose can hurt us, and worse, it can harm others. Why? Simply because we are using it for something that it was not designed or purposed for.

All of us have one purpose - to glorify God.

These two simple truths can be applied to our lives. First, all of mankind has only one purpose. And that is to glorify God. All too often, we are focused on the wrong priorities.

Will I be a wealthy businessman, a popular singer, a successful lawyer, or a world famous chef? Will I enter the world of sports, business, politics, or education? The fact is our careers do not constitute our purpose.

Just like the paper clip whose sole purpose is to clip paper, all of us have one purpose—to glorify God. It is irrelevant whether a paper clip is clipping a world changing treaty, a multi million dollar contract, or even a musical score to a Broadway hit. Whether it is clipping scented paper, linen paper, colored art paper, or gas and grocery bills, all paper clips have just one purpose—to clip paper.

What's the lesson here? Clip paper no matter what your papers may be. Glorify God in whatever you are doing and in every stage of your life. That's what Joseph did. He glorified God in his father's home, in the pit, in Potiphar's household, and in prison. God saw that Joseph was faithful and trustworthy at every stage and place He placed him. In time, He promoted Joseph to the palace. Most of all he glorified God when he became powerful and successful.

While we are concerned about the kind of paper we are clipping. God is concerned about whether we can even clip two pieces of paper. He wants to see if we will be faithful with the small and seemingly insignificant.

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“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”

Matthew 25:21

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He wants to test the attitude of our hearts to see if we will despise clipping the gas and grocery bills.

God promises us that:

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“Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be.”

Job 8:7

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He wants to be sure that we can clip even the insignificant, and that we will be faithful to stay clipped.

Chapter Twelve

THE PROMISE NO ONE WANTS

In Chapter 9, I mentioned a verse found in Genesis 37:2:

“This is the account of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending flocks with his brothers . . .”

What is stated to be the account of Jacob’s life is mainly a chronicle of the life of his son Joseph. We saw how Jacob unknowingly passed his impatience onto Joseph. But Jacob bequeathed more than just impatience. The things God was shaking off in Joseph’s life were those that were not shaken from Jacob’s. Jacob relied on the favor of man, starting with his manipulative move to get his father Isaac’s blessing. He then tried to win, his father-in-law, Laban’s favor with his work. When faced with no recourse but to meet his brother Esau, he sought his favor by presenting him with gifts. Jacob never fully understood the favor of God – grace.

Jacob was impatient. But most of all, his life was mainly about him and less about the purposes of God. We find him in Genesis 42 as a very old man. We know he was, since Joseph was born to him already in his old age.

Add to that seventeen years of Joseph's life with him, the thirteen years it took for Joseph to get to Pharaoh's palace, and the seven years of plenty. Jacob, indeed, had aged.

After years of striving, manipulating, ungodliness, and impatience, he was in the sunset of his life and facing a severe famine that threatened to wipe out everything he had worked for.

When his sons returned from Egypt to buy some grain, he was told that they could not get more unless they brought the youngest son, Benjamin, with them. Upon hearing this Jacob was shaken and declared, *"Everything is against me."* Again, it was about him.

Finally, as their food supply dwindled, Jacob knew that he had to send his sons back to Egypt. Having been told that it would be futile to leave without Benjamin, the summary of all his fears surfaced. All he had wrestled for all his life could be lost.

Realizing that he had no choice, he agreed. Just as he had done in the past, he prepared an elaborate gift to buy the governor's favor. Helplessly, he resigned to his fate and said, *"If I am bereaved, I am bereaved."* It was still about him.

Jacob wrestled all his life, even with the things of God. Now worn out by the years of struggle, he had no energy left to fight.

Sadly, he had often trusted in the favor of men that he missed God's favor coming. He declared that everything was against him, when in reality all things were working for his good. He was bereaved that he had lost Joseph and was afraid he might lose Benjamin, too, when in fact God was about to bring Joseph back to him.

I often wonder how Jacob responded upon his son's return from Egypt. Each one was wearing the world's finest suits. They came with animals and carts, equivalent to the best cars and SUVs today, to pick him up, and with that, all of the finest goods from Egypt, as gifts for him. But the greatest shock was when they said, "Joseph is alive and, guess what? He is the governor."

Jacob was stunned at the news. He could not believe it. "Are you sure? How can that be? I thought he was dead!" The harder he tried to understand, the more he couldn't.

So Jacob traveled to Egypt to be united with the son he thought he lost. On his way there, Genesis 46:3,4 tells us that God met Jacob and repeated the promise He made to him, the same one that he told Jacob's fathers.

"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

In Egypt, he experienced the overwhelming grace and sovereignty of God. God's will and plan was far above what he could ever ask or imagine. I can just see Jacob dropping to his knees in amazement, overwhelmed by God's faithfulness to fulfill his promise. At last, he realized the power of aligning himself with the purposes of God.

The Ultimate Breakthrough

The story of Jacob is the story of God's faithfulness to a man who insisted on doing things his own way. On the other hand it is also the sad story of a man who could have had God's best when he was younger.

In his final moments, a wiser Jacob blessed Joseph's children. When Joseph saw his father laying hands on the younger son rather than the older, he tried to correct him. At that point, Jacob was finally in tune with God's Spirit and said, "No, this is how God would have it."

More significantly, Jacob became the first person to accurately prophesy the coming of the Messiah through the line of Judah.

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"The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his."

Genesis 49:10

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The man who previously failed to see the hand of God move, in his final days, correctly foretold the greatest event that would happen thousands of years beyond his earthly life. He agreed with God, thus experiencing the ultimate breakthrough, a revelation of God's plan for eternity.

Conclusion

When Chuck Yeager broke through the sound barrier, it opened the way for others to follow. Initially, others replicated what he had accomplished. Eventually, others went beyond the record (including Yeager himself who broke his own record). Soon pilots began breaking into Mach 2, Mach 3, and on. With one breakthrough came another—higher, faster, smoother. Not long after, man broke through outer space and made history.

If our generation will allow God to shake what can be shaken, we will break through our own destinies and inspire others to follow.

The spiritual parallel is exciting. If one generation breaks through, the succeeding generations will not only break through, but will take it to even greater levels. If our generation will allow God to shake what can be shaken, we

will break through our own destinies and inspire others to follow. What an awesome promise for us and for our children!

The challenge for us is: Are we willing to become spiritual “Chuck Yeagers”? Are we willing to hold on like Joseph even in the midst of our darkest prison? Are we willing to freely receive God’s promise to shake what can be shaken so that what can be shaken will remain?

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However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”

1 Corinthians 2:9

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There is a promise from God for virtually every area of life. It has been said that the Bible contains over 6,000 promises. These often quoted promises range from God's faithfulness and spiritual blessings to physical well-being and divine favor.

However, there is a promise that is seldom mentioned and very rarely claimed, one that holds the key to seeing our destinies fulfilled. It is The Promise No One Wants. This little book will help you understand and receive this precious promise.

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CHURCH
STRENGTHENING
MINISTRY

