

WENDY PETER
FOREWORD BY PATRICIA KING

Just
Getting
Started

Stepping with Courage
into God's Call for the
NEXT STAGE OF LIFE

Just Getting Started

Stepping with Courage
into God's Call for the
NEXT STAGE OF LIFE

WENDY PETER



Chosen

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2021 by Wendy Peter

Published by Chosen Books
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55438
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Peter, Wendy, author.

Title: Just getting started : stepping with courage into God's call for the next stage of life / Wendy Peter.

Description: Minneapolis, Minnesota : Chosen Books, [2021]

Identifiers: LCCN 2021023547 | ISBN 9780800762117 (trade paper) | ISBN 9780800762513 (casebound) | ISBN 9781493433520 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Dreams—Religious aspects—Christianity. | Change (Psychology)—Religious aspects—Christianity.

Classification: LCC BR115.D74 P48 2021 | DDC 248—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021023547>

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ESV Text Edition: 2016

Scripture quotations identified AMP are from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.Lockman.org

Scripture quotations identified KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations identified NASB are from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.lockman.org

Scripture quotations identified NIV are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations identified NKJV are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations identified NLV are taken from the *New Life Version*, copyright © 1969 and 2003. Used by permission of Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, Ohio 44683. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations identified NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations identified TLB are from The Living Bible, copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Rob Williams, InsideOut Creative Arts, Inc.

Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

For Elizabeth,
who never stopped dreaming.



Contents

Foreword by Patricia King	13
Acknowledgments	17
Introduction	19
1. From Hidden to Visible	23
2. Your Destined Place	39
3. Moments of Lift	53
4. Defining Your Dream	71
5. Staging Your Comeback	89
6. Breaking Free and Shining Brightly	105
7. Positioned to Shine	123
8. Finding Your People	143
9. Taking Off the Limits, from Micro to Macro	167
10. Do Not Forget What Matters Most	181
Notes	197



Foreword

Many are living frustrated and unfulfilled lives in this hour. Failed dreams, projects that have fallen short of initial expectations, and the feeling of being stuck in a rut with no forward momentum are not uncommon evaluations in the lives of many on the planet today. There are copious opportunities and resources available in these fast-moving days of modern technology and information, so why are many experiencing these discouragements?

Wendy Peter is a woman I deeply love and respect. She is a woman of character and integrity. She is one who selflessly champions others and is probably one of the greatest cheerleaders for others that I know. Wendy genuinely desires to see everyone fruitful, multiplying, fully satisfied and fulfilling their destiny in life. As you read *Just Getting Started*, you will feel as though you have your own personal mentor and coach. Her insights are motivating, inspirational and practical, and that is why many catapult into successfully fulfilling dreams and opportunities after sitting under her ministry.

Your best days are ahead of you. No matter what setbacks or discouraging situations you have experienced in the past,

this is truly a new day for you to embrace. You were created to succeed. You were created to fulfill destiny.

One of my favorite examples of an individual committed to keeping his dream alive in the midst of much opposition and discouragement is Walt Disney. In his early days, he faced many discouragements. His first created character was stolen from him, and his next one was a mouse that no one was interested in. Many laughed at the very concept of using a mouse to capture the interests and affections of children. After all, mice are despised creatures. Why would anyone be interested in investing in a mouse as a star cartoon character? He faced one rejection after another as he submitted his dream to developers and investors, but his dream never faded. He believed in the mouse and its potential. Even after personal bankruptcy, his dream lived on.

Finally, his breakthrough day came and his persistence paid off. He found someone to see the potential of this mouse he named Mickey. The rest is history. The initial rejections and seeming failures were simply his starting point. Walt Disney passed away a number of years ago, but the mouse lives on. The creation of Mickey was only the beginning. He went on to create many more successful characters. One dream gave birth to many more. He created an entire experience for children of all ages called Disneyland, and another in Disney World. Multiple companies and franchises grew into global entities and are impacting the masses to this day. It all had a starting point that was marked by struggles and seeming failures.

If you are without vision for your life at this moment or you are struggling today with failed vision, feeling like you are stuck in a rut with no forward momentum, it is only the beginning. Your best days are ahead of you. You are just getting started! Don't be afraid to dream big—bigger than you have previously. Get excited as you watch God partner with you.

Foreword

This book is designed to encourage, build and establish you in your potential. Take your time as you read it. Meditate on its encouragements and teachings, and then activate. You will be amazed as you watch the life-transforming fruit materialize.

Patricia King, author, minister, television host



Acknowledgments

Thank you to Chosen Books and Baker Publishing Group for believing in me as an author. Thank you for the opportunity to share this message with people around the globe who want to launch their dreams but are not sure where to start.

David Sluka, meeting you was a divine encounter that changed the trajectory of my work as an author. Your kindness, patience and mentorship have had a deep impact on me in ways that I can never repay. You truly live your life as a “man for others” and demonstrate the teachings of Jesus in all that you do. I will be forever grateful for your influence in my life.

Patricia King, thank you for all of your wisdom, guidance, true friendship and love that you have poured into my life. You have inspired me to dream bigger, think higher and take steps of faith into the unknown again and again. I would not be where I am today without you.

Duane and Tamara Siemens, Russ and Brenda Alder and everyone at The Wave Church in Canada, thank you for your ongoing friendship, your support and your belief in me. You helped me build a foundation of godly character and Kingdom

Acknowledgments

priorities within the local church. To every woman at The Wave Church who participated in my workshops when they were in the experimental stage, your willingness to dream big at any age was a part of the inspiration for this book. Thank you for sharing your lives with me and for trusting me to lead you during my time at The Wave.

To my team at Women on the Frontlines, this has been a challenging season, and you all have risen to the challenge of dreaming new dreams with me and stepping out to make a difference. Thank you for all the love and support you have given unconditionally to me as a friend and a leader.

My sister Elizabeth Thacker Atkins, you never stopped dreaming, even in the face of a terminal diagnosis. You traveled and celebrated, living life to its fullest during the time you had left. You were still making plans on the day of your departure. You reminded me throughout the writing of this book what really matters the most.

To my husband, Murray, and my children, Dayne, Blake, Grace, Mel and Jessica, you are my partners in dreaming and in living life to its fullest. Your ongoing support and love have given me wings to soar and eyes to see as I have launched into a whole new assignment during a time that has traditionally been seen as the retirement years. Thank you for who you are and all that you give me.



Introduction

In every one of our lives there are beautiful moments that seem frozen in time due to the deep and lasting impact they have on our hearts and minds. Much like a scene in a glass paperweight, we pick up the memory again and again. We look at it from every angle, revisit the moment and consider the ways that it has informed the person we have become.

Some years back after a season of personal failure and deep discouragement, I was at a very low point emotionally and spiritually. If you had asked me what my expectations for my future were, I would have replied, “What future?” Yet into that dark and empty scene in my life came a friend who had come back from her own time of failure but was now thriving.

When I told her of my inner emptiness, she replied, “Wendy, you just need to dream.”

“I don’t have any dreams left,” I said.

She reached out, gently placed her hands on the sides of my face and stared deeply into my eyes. I could see in that moment that she had been where I was presently, and she understood the depth of my pain.

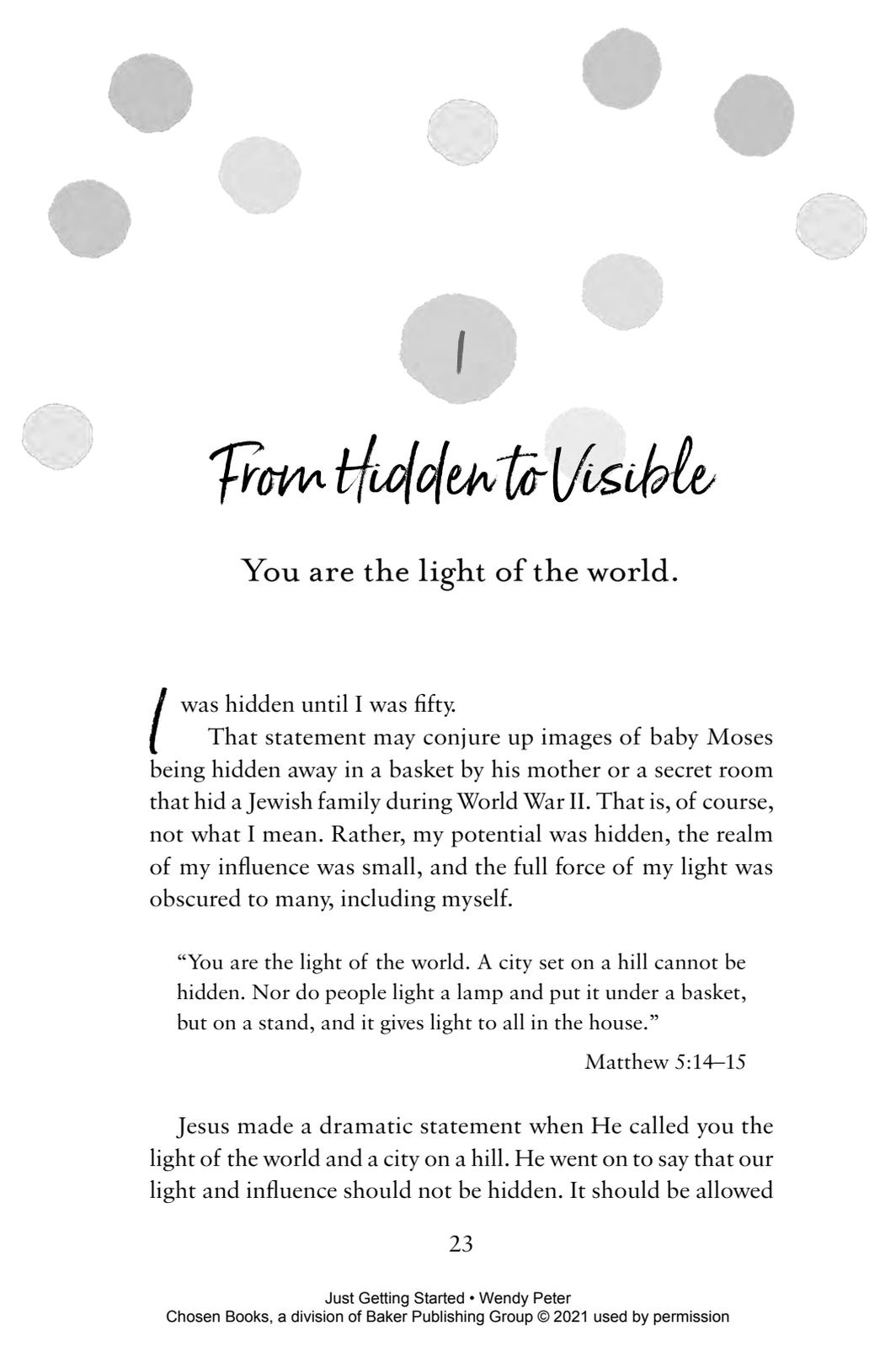
Introduction

She whispered, “Wendy, I’ll dream for you.”

This book was birthed out of that beautiful moment, and it is my way of reaching out to you, wherever you are and wherever you have been, to say, “Don’t give up. I’ll dream for you.”

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:13–16



From Hidden to Visible

You are the light of the world.

I was hidden until I was fifty.

That statement may conjure up images of baby Moses being hidden away in a basket by his mother or a secret room that hid a Jewish family during World War II. That is, of course, not what I mean. Rather, my potential was hidden, the realm of my influence was small, and the full force of my light was obscured to many, including myself.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”

Matthew 5:14–15

Jesus made a dramatic statement when He called you the light of the world and a city on a hill. He went on to say that our light and influence should not be hidden. It should be allowed

to shine without hindrance so that our lives can have a life-changing impact on others.

Yet this did not match my reality as I turned fifty. I had carried big dreams and ideas inside of me for years and had made several attempts to step into the destiny that everyone in the Church seemed to be preaching about. I had done my best to serve my local congregation with a sincere heart and a strong work ethic, yet there was still a disconnect between some of the preaching that I heard and the reality of my actual experience. As I transitioned into my fifties, that disconnect was fast becoming a place of divine dissatisfaction within me, and I was not willing to keep my light under a basket any longer.

I had been asking a lot of hard questions about women, the Church and New Testament realities. One of those questions was, How is it that I have received so much good identity teaching and have been in many church services where God was moving, yet I still seem to be under such a false ceiling in terms of the dreams I carry? I was also asking myself why I was not experiencing the miraculous realm that Jesus spoke about to the degree that He promised His followers.

It seemed apparent to me that my reality was not living up to what was being preached, and it was becoming harder to reconcile the dreams that I carried within that reality. I had prayed for the sick for years and had seen some healed, but I wanted to experience more. The Bible was clear that Jesus had given His disciples (first the twelve, then the seventy and then all of His followers) the power to walk in a miraculous realm of authority where supernatural events happened on a regular basis. I longed to see that in greater expression in my life.

We can find this in the book of Luke in the Bible. “And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9:1–2).

And we can also see that Jesus called them to step into a greater realm of faith for daily provision than most of us would be comfortable with. “And he said to them, ‘Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics’” (Luke 9:3).

Jesus’ disciples were dependent entirely on God, and they likely felt exposed and vulnerable. Their results, however, demonstrated that their light was shining with full force and was producing amazing results.

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.”

Luke 10:17–19

I had no idea at the time that in some aspects of my faith I was functioning more as a spectator than as a full-on participant in the Body of Christ. Like many around me, I was very involved in church. In fact, I was a leader in my church. To the outside observer, it may have appeared that I was fulfilling my calling as a Christian.

The reality was, however, that I had bigger dreams within me. My full potential was hidden at the same time that I was showing a dimmer version of it to others. I realize now that we can remain in the shallows of the call of God. We can keep ourselves busy with work that requires very little personal risk or faith while acting as a spectator of others who have waded deep with God into the realm of the miraculous, the realm of evangelism or any other realm beyond where most Christians are comfortable.

When you consider the contrast between your life and the following verse, what comes to mind? “And he said to them,

‘Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics’” (Luke 9:3).

A Life without Much Risk

Perhaps like me you find it hard to imagine setting out on a journey with absolutely no visible provision or plan. In our modern society it is easy to live a life where we are not required to risk much in the area of faith. We can remain largely dependent on our jobs, our doctors, our credit cards and our weekly church attendance as a substitute for risking it all.

Think for a moment about how the people around you would react if you decided to go on a journey to preach the Gospel and heal the sick, but you took nothing for your journey. What would they say? How would you respond to their reactions?

I am not suggesting that God requires that of us all, or that this book is about leaving home with nothing. I simply want to emphasize the contrast between the early disciples and us. Was their greater experience of authority and power connected to their greater willingness to risk everything to shine their light?

You see, my journey from hidden to fully visible required me to recognize that I had a very subtle root system of belief that was keeping me under a false ceiling (or a basket, to use the metaphor of our Scripture verse). This belief system hindered me from stepping into the fullness of my potential.

My mind was filled with vague ideas and uneasy questions such as, *Maybe I should not rock the boat too much. Maybe I am lacking the humility that I need. What if my desire to fulfill these big dreams is selfish ambition? Surely, going somewhere with no staff, bag, bread, money or extra shirt would be irresponsible, right?*

This kind of thinking was just enough to keep me where I was, somewhat hidden and somewhat unfulfilled, shining a

bit of light but living below the radical impact that Jesus demonstrated in the gospels.

Divine Dissatisfaction

Divine dissatisfaction is a wonderful thing. It is an uncomfortable feeling in our spirit that helps us change, because we do not enjoy feeling that way. So if you, too, are feeling divinely dissatisfied in the difference between your current reality and your full potential, do not tamp those feelings back down. Allow God to stir them up as you read this book. He wants to call you up higher into a realm of greater effectiveness and satisfaction.

The season of divine dissatisfaction and frustration I experienced as I turned fifty was pulling me out of the shallows of where I had been and into a place of divine risk and excitement. I was heading toward a greater understanding of the unfettered glory and light that God wants to pour out of us and into the world. He wants to cause us to be such a contrast to the darkness around us that people can clearly see Jesus when they see us. For that to happen, we cannot stay hidden in the shallows of Christianity or keep our gifts and our light locked down. We need to take the risk to live out of our full potential, or we will not look much different from the world around us.

In our modern society it is easy to live in a place where we do not risk much in the area of faith.

“You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). The Greek word for *light* used here in the gospel of Matthew is the word *phós*, which is defined by Strong’s Concordance as “the manifestation of God’s self-existent life; divine illumination to reveal and impart life, through Christ.”¹

According to this verse, we are called not only to shine and be visible to others, but we are to reveal and impart the pathway to life in Christ through the light we carry.

Jesus reenforced this idea in the book of John by saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

He went on to heal a blind man shortly after making this statement, creating a physical demonstration of what it means to be a light and to open people’s eyes to God. With His actions, He put on display His statement, “I am the light of the world.”

God’s expectation for all Christians is that we, too, are to be the light of the world just as Jesus is. We are to be fully visible rather than hidden, and people are to see us shine in our full potential. Through the above verse, He is telling us that our lives are to be lampposts that reveal divine illumination. All over the world, people are stumbling around in the dark and are confused as to what matters most, both now and in eternity. They need us to be the light that reveals His deep love to them.

That thought should be freeing to those of us who have remained hidden because of feelings of intimidation or worthlessness. While Jesus calls us the light of the world, it is not our assignment to manufacture the light. Rather, the Gospel at its core is that Jesus died so that we could receive His Spirit within us, and His Spirit is the light. Paul wrote about this when he said,

For God, who said, “Let there be light in the darkness,” has made us understand that it is the brightness of his glory that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. But this precious treasure—this light and power that now shine within us—is held in a perishable container, that is, in our weak bodies. Everyone can see that the glorious power within must be from God and is not our own.

2 Corinthians 4:6–7 TLB

So when I am talking to you about stepping out of hiddenness and launching a new dream, I am not asking you to manufacture a new and amazing personality or to create supernatural outcomes through your own ability. I am inviting you to consider the fact that God wants to shine through you and color your confidence, your ideas, your choices and your future in new ways.

Like an individual piece of stained glass, you have a brilliance that is yet to be revealed. As you come out of hiding and let the full force of the light that is within you begin to shine without measure, you will color the world around you.

Where Did the Basket Come From?

When I look back at the early years of my upbringing, I can see some clues as to why I remained hidden as an adult. My family did not follow Christ beyond a cultural celebration of religious holidays, and because of this, Bible teachings on shining our light and living by faith were not shared with me. Also, the beliefs and messages that empower children to step past opposition and remain resilient in the face of rejection were missing. While my parents certainly loved their children, somewhere along the way in my family line certain relational tools had become lost or broken, and as such, they were not passed down. In fact, I experienced what some would describe as an old-school upbringing.

Receiving hugs, saying “I love you” and having calm discussions about our poor choices were pretty rare, and children were not asked for their opinions. Sharing your opinion as a child was called back talk in those days. In this environment, I was not encouraged to explore my own dreams, and any of my desires that were outside of the path of my parents (and their parents before them) were subtly discouraged. Those messages

I referred to earlier—stay hidden, do not rock the boat, maybe it is a lack of humility or selfish ambition to really put yourself out there—were rooted in the generational environment of my family. This may be true for you, too. The subtle messages that we all receive in our childhood can have the effect of dimming our light, our exuberance and our willingness to take risks, and it can be very hard to move past the beliefs and ideas that have been held for generations.

As I have taught dream-coaching workshops around the world and have asked people to identify the family messages that have kept them hidden or steered them to avoid taking risks, I have listened to people share many similar messages to those I heard in my childhood: Keep everyone happy; take the safe path or you will get hurt; avoid anything that puts the spotlight on you; do not travel too far or risk too much because that would be irresponsible; do not try to find a greater purpose beyond what we have shown you; no one in this family has ever _____ (fill in the blank with your dream).

Those early messages had an impact on me in ways I did not recognize at the time. As I became a young adult, I was not even aware that I was allowed to take a different path or to engage with a different belief system than what my parents had embraced. To use the words of Henry David Thoreau, we were, without realizing it, encouraged to “lead lives of quiet desperation.”² We were to take our song to the grave and not place our light on a stand. We were, instead, to keep it hidden.

I recognize that there are those who want that hidden kind of life, but deep down I wanted more. So instead of inspiring me, my parents and their beliefs had limited me.

I know from talking to many people of my generation that this was not an unusual or extreme family experience. Some of the things that we experienced would be considered downright abusive in this day and age of helicopter parenting, therapy

horses and “Do you want the red cup or the blue cup?” But my family’s dynamic was typical of many homes of the era.

One result of this was that many from my generation found themselves following in the steps of their parents, while at the same time not knowing what to do with the dreams they carried that did not fit the accepted pattern of their family. So many of those dreams were put on a shelf or downgraded into acceptable forms of expression.

We did, however, give voice to those hidden dreams through the messages we conveyed to our children or to our nieces, nephews and Sunday school kids. We wanted them to experience a level of freedom and actualization that we felt unable to attain. So we raised them with deep wells of self-esteem, confidence and a litany of messages that communicated that they could do anything, be anyone or go anywhere they wanted.

And for a time as we were doing this, our nests were full, our bank accounts were stretched, our energy resources were maxed out and our schedules were bursting with dance classes, hockey practices and filling lunch boxes. It was both fulfilling and enough to simply tell our children to let their lights shine and to sing “hide it under a bushel—oh no!” while taking our turn in the Sunday school class. We could tell ourselves we had done our part in terms of raising the next generation.

It is and should be the work that we are most proud of. But for some of us, the day comes when the kids have grown up or moved out and we find ourselves sitting in the middle of our tidy nest that we have spent so many years feathering with Pinterest-worthy decor schemes. Our time is freed up, our resources are less limited, and we begin to long for the same sense of freedom and empowerment that we have communicated so enthusiastically to the children in our lives.

We assured them that they could do anything, be anything and go anywhere, but we failed to offer ourselves the same

opportunities. In those moments as we look around at our well-built lives, we cannot help but ask, “What about me? Is this all there is for me?”

Perhaps those dreams you have carried for so long could be taken off the shelf and looked at again. Or perhaps you are re-examining your dreams through no choice of your own. You may have been impacted by a natural disaster, a global pandemic or another circumstance, and you find yourself looking for a new job or a new income stream as a result of events beyond your control. If that is the case, not only is this a moment in your life when change is at hand, but it is also an opportunity to come into greater alignment with a dream that will allow the light that God has placed within you to shine with greater force in your next season.

Like an individual piece of stained glass, you have a brilliance that is yet to be revealed.

Whether you are in your twenties, forties, sixties or even your eighties, I hope that as we journey together through this book you realize you are never too young or too old to reinvent your life, step into a new dream or get started on a new project!

You are not alone in the journey, and the answer that you are looking for is not out there somewhere. It is contained in the light within you, and it is waiting to be uncovered in this season. Everything you need to step into your new dream is within you, because God is within you. And He has a plan for your next steps.

Unexpected Change

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is found in the book of Jeremiah. It was written to a group of people who had gone through a very difficult time. They found themselves exiled

from Jerusalem, which was the home they had always known, and separated from the future they had expected to have. They were deported from their home country and carried off to a foreign nation where the customs were entirely different. This journey included having their houses burned to the ground and being forced to march to an unknown land with very few, if any, possessions or money. Life as they had known it for generations had evaporated before their eyes. I am sure that many of them struggled with feelings of hopelessness, uncertainty, loss and fear.

Certainly, some of them would have felt too old to be starting over. They had already built careers and homes, and many would have come to a point in their lives where they felt that their best years were behind them. Yet Jeremiah sent a message telling them to start over, even when it looked as though they had lost everything they had ever known. His message to them was to multiply and not decrease, to build houses, have children, plant gardens and start businesses. They were not to listen to the false prophets who would tell them it was all over.

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 29:4–9

Jeremiah ends his message from God with these amazing words: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (v. 11).

Like the Israelites in this story, you may have recently gone through a time of crisis or loss. The Oxford dictionary defines *crisis* as a time when “important decisions must be made.”³ In the New Testament, the Greek word for *crisis* is the word κρίσις, and it is used several times to describe separating, selecting and making important judgments.⁴

The idea that a crisis is also a time of opportunity or a time to start over can be revolutionary. If everything in your life has been shaken and upturned, you may want to use these events as a time to sort through and decide what is worth giving your future effort to and what is not.

If this is what you are going through, I believe God’s word of encouragement for you in this moment is the same message that He spoke to the Israelites through Jeremiah: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

The Stirring of Your Heart

You may have questions, and you may have fears about starting over or launching a new dream. You may feel that you are too old (or too young), that you have lost too much, or that you do not have the skills, education or background to match the dreams that God has placed in your heart. This is where I found myself as I was turning fifty. I had all of these questions swirling through my mind: *Why do I have these crazy dreams in the first place? Is my own ambition a divine call? Do I remain hidden, or do I need to press through into greater visibility and launch these dreams?*

I finally came to the conclusion that God was stirring these questions within me. He was calling me to step up and confront the false ceilings that I found myself under, and He was urging me to act as a trail blazer through an organization called Women on the Frontlines. He wanted me to call women out of their comfort zones and into greater places of influence where they could say with certainty, “This is what I was created to do.”

And so, as we journey together through this book, it is my desire that you will find the answers to those important questions, as well as the inspiration and tools to shine your light as never before.

I want to end this chapter by telling you that it is not strange or weird that you have ideas, dreams and flashes of inspiration in which you see yourself in another life. It is also a good thing if you are unsatisfied by the gap between your daily reality as a Christian and the miraculous things you read about in the Bible. Those flashes, ideas and areas of dissatisfaction are the stirrings of your heart asking to be heard. My prayer for you is that those stirrings, which you may have been tamping down for years, will become too loud for you to ignore in the next few weeks and months.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14–16

Questions for Journaling or Discussion

1. What are some ways you can see that your Christian experience does not have as great an impact on the world around you as the lives that Jesus and the first disciples lived in the gospels?
2. In Luke, Jesus sent out many disciples on a mission trip. He told them, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt” (see Luke 9:3). Why do you think He positioned them that way?
3. What are some of the subtle messages you have received throughout your life that taught you to hide your potential?
4. Do the people in your life encourage you to take risks, live out your dreams or expect the supernatural? If not, what is the message you are hearing from others around you?

5. What do you want to tell yourself after reading this chapter? In a few sentences, write yourself an encouraging note about your potential to shine your light and make an impact.