

K I N G D O M

P U R P O S E

DISCOVERING YOUR CALLING IN GOD'S GREAT DESIGN

TONY EVANS

KINGDOM PURPOSE

TONY EVANS



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*This book is dedicated to God,
who revealed to me my kingdom purpose
and allowed me to help others discover theirs.*

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*“Your kingdom purpose is the customized life calling
God has ordained and equipped you to accomplish
in order to bring Him the greatest glory and achieve
the maximum expansion of His kingdom.”*

DR. TONY EVANS



INTRODUCTION

Victor was a Swiss scientist. Having experienced personal tragedy, he sought to address his pain by engrossing himself in an experiment—turning a lifeless object into a living being.

Scouring graveyards and funeral homes, Victor gathered all of the parts and pieces he needed to put together a massive creature that he chose to name after himself: Frankenstein. But the living being he created quickly turned into a monster.

Most of us have seen the movie, but do you know the real tragedy of the story? The monster—after he had been transformed from a lifeless collection of parts into a living being—turned on the very person who created him. In his independence, he turned against his creator, transforming him into a victim.

Christians are not ten feet tall and don't walk around with bolts or dismembered body parts sewn together, but the truth of the film resonates in many lives. Even though we were dead in our trespasses and God gave us life, creating something in us where there was previously nothing, many of God's children have turned on their Creator. Rather than live for Him, they choose to live for themselves—their own wants, desires, emotions, and will. As a result, lives disintegrate, and what had been created for something good quickly devolves into a debacle.

This shows up in the divorce rate as independent people become couples and try to live together. It shows up in the suicide rate as failures lead to

depression, hopelessness, and eventually a decision to throw in the towel altogether. It shows up in addictions as people try to numb their pain through chemicals, prescription drugs, overspending, or obsessions. It shows up in corporations or even in ministry as leaders neglect personal or family time and fill their schedules with meetings in order to somehow satisfy an emptiness caused by not living out a divinely ordained kingdom purpose.

When you live out your kingdom purpose, you don't measure what you have done according to what someone else has done. Nor is your purpose to be confused with a busy life. When your life is filled with purpose, you measure what you have done according to what you were created to do.

WHEN YOUR LIFE IS FILLED WITH PURPOSE, YOU MEASURE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU WERE CREATED TO DO.

Many people spend much of their lives trying to be somebody else. Yet this simply reveals that they don't know who they are supposed to be.

Companies often seek to exploit this through a marketing myth that says you can be someone else by buying and wearing a jersey with someone else's number on it, shoes that a celebrity says he or she wears, makeup that actresses say they use, or clothes that social media influencers are seen in. Somehow people think that if they can look like, act like, or talk like an influencer—or perhaps even get close to one—then they will somehow *be* a big-time influencer. The problem is that they have not yet discovered that they are already significant in their own right. You are a star. You already have your own jersey number. You have your own style. You are special.

Even worse, this seems to be just as prevalent among Christians as it is among non-Christians. Some people say they have a relationship with Jesus Christ and are on their way to heaven, yet they have a hole in them so big you could drive a Mack truck right through it. One of the main reasons people fail to live out their kingdom purpose is that they fail to understand why they were created and who created them. They fail to understand this because they fail to understand God's kingdom.

The Bible is not an anthology of random stories. The thread that ties the entire Bible together is the theme of the kingdom. God's goal is to see His rule and authority cover the earth through the expansion of His kingdom. That is God's purpose in history.

**GOD'S GOAL IS TO SEE HIS RULE AND AUTHORITY
COVER THE EARTH THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF HIS
KINGDOM. THAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE IN HISTORY.**

Scripture was penned in order to facilitate that one agenda. The unifying central theme of the Bible is the glory of God through the advancement of His kingdom. Every event, story, and personality from Genesis to Revelation is there to stitch that theme together. Without that theme, the Bible becomes a collection of disconnected stories that seem to be unrelated to one another. Similarly, when you don't recognize and incorporate the theme of the kingdom in your own life, your experiences will likewise seem disconnected, unrelated, and random. They will lack the cohesion that your kingdom purpose provides. Understanding and embracing God's kingdom is the secret to living with meaning, simply because your life is tied to His kingdom. God's kingdom agenda for you and for all others is based on His comprehensive rule over every area of life.

We celebrate our country and our citizenship by reciting the pledge of allegiance and singing the national anthem. But if you have been born again through Jesus Christ, you are part of an even greater kingdom. You are a citizen of the kingdom of God.

Understanding what the kingdom is and how it impacts you is vitally important because it explains your life and purpose. It shows you how things blend together to create an integrated whole. It gives your life meaning. Apart from the kingdom, the events and aspects of your life remain unattached to each other and cannot produce their intended results.

Butter by itself doesn't taste very good. Nutmeg by itself doesn't taste very good. Flour by itself doesn't taste very good. Salt by itself doesn't taste very

good. None of these ingredients by themselves would be enough to tempt anyone to taste them. But when a baker measures them and mixes them together for an intended purpose, putting them in the heat of the oven...the smell of the freshly baked bread is enough to lure anyone into the kitchen.

When we believers do not make our lives all about God's kingdom, we segment our lives into various components rather than allowing God to blend them all together toward a greater good. We often quote Romans 8:28: "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called *according to His purpose*."

However, the part of the passage that is most often quoted is simply, "All things work together for good." The problem is that all things do not work together for good. To only quote half the verse is to miss the whole meaning. The things that work together for good are those that happen to people who love God and are called according to His purpose. God's purpose is His glory and the advancement of His kingdom as we are conformed to the image of His Son.

When you are living your life according to God's purpose, He will cause all the things in your life to blend together for His good purpose in your life. Otherwise, "all things" that happen to you won't be intentionally connected and used to work toward His good for you.

Today, if you feel as if your life is like butter or flour or nutmeg, begin turning it into something savory by loving God and seeking His kingdom purpose for you. When you are committed to Him above all else, He will measure everything in your life—the good, bad, and the bitter—and blend them into something divine. I hope this book will be a practical guide that helps you discover and enjoy the purpose God has planned specifically for you.



PART 1

**THE IMPORTANCE
OF YOUR PURPOSE**



CONCEPT

The great Italian sculptor, painter, architect, and poet Michelangelo once said, “In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it.”

In every imperfect, jagged-edged, bulky, unshaped block of marble Michelangelo set his eyes on, he saw the treasure within. He once described the process this way: “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.” Michelangelo could do this because he didn’t see what the marble was; he saw what the marble would be.

He saw a masterpiece.

Friend, you are a masterpiece. In the book of Ephesians, we read this about another Artist: “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

The Greek word translated *workmanship* in this verse refers to you, me, and every other child of God. It is *poiēma*, from which we get our English word *poem*. This word denotes a work of art or a masterpiece.¹ You have been made as a work of God—you are His *poiēma*. You weren’t created on the assembly line or as a random object thrown together to fill up space or time. When God made you, He went to work—intentionally and delicately crafting your

personality, looks, passions, skills...even allowing your imperfections and planting your dreams all into one magnificent work of art. In fact, God did more than plant your dream inside of you. God dreamed a dream for you. Did you know that God has a dream for you? He does.

You are His masterpiece. You are God's dream. What's more, you were made with a purpose. That purpose includes responsible stewardship of God's authority. It includes expanding His dominion. It includes more than merely showcasing your talents. It involves impacting your world for good by ruling the realm where God has positioned you.

DESTINY AND AUTHORITY

When God set about to create Adam and Eve, He said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule" (Genesis 1:26). Theologians often refer to this passage as the initiation of the *dominion covenant*. It reveals that God placed humanity on earth to serve as His stewards over His creation. He placed us here and gave us dominion—the authority to rule. David echoes this covenant in Psalm 8:4-6:

What is man that You take thought of him
 And the son of man that You care for him?
 Yet You have made him a little lower than God,
 And You crown him with glory and majesty!
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
 You have put all things under his feet.

When God gave us dominion, He said it came with two conditions. First, our authority is an extension of His authority. By charging humanity with dominion, God relinquished His direct rule over the things of the earth and now rules through mankind. In essence, He made mankind managers over His creation. Managers don't carry out their own processes, procedures, or initiatives. They oversee tasks and people in a manner that reflects the goals and vision of their superiors. God is our Superior, and we have been placed on earth to manage His creation under Him.

The second condition of the dominion covenant is that if you rule according to God's intentions, you will receive God's provision. In other words, He will supply all that you need when your decisions are based on His principles and purpose.

However, the reverse of that is true as well. God gives you the freedom to rule your world according to your own goals apart from Him, but if you do, you will lack His provision and His backing, just as any manager would lack the provision of his company should he choose to carry out his own goals and not those of his leadership.

God has designed you to have all that you need to productively rule your world. Yet in spite of this provision, many people today are being ruled by their world rather than ruling the realm in which they have been placed. This can be due to their own personal sin, someone else's sin, or even something as seemingly negligible as setting their own goals above God's. Anytime you operate outside of God's kingdom purpose for your life, you will experience the consequences of ruling on your own, such as relational, social, emotional, or financial chaos. Things no longer function as smoothly as they would under God.

.....

**GOD HAS DESIGNED YOU TO HAVE ALL THAT
YOU NEED TO PRODUCTIVELY RULE YOUR WORLD.**

.....

I am not saying that if you live according to the will of God, you will never face challenges. There will always be challenges. Even if you do what is right, you will face trials simply because you live in a sin-soaked and fallen environment. In addition, God often uses trials to strengthen and develop you. But Jesus said that if you follow Him, those trials will not overpower you. They will not shake you. In spite of them, you will feel secure and peaceful. "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

In other words, the chaos around you shouldn't override the calm within

you. Living out your kingdom purpose simply means living according to God's divine design within you. It means carrying out the full authority you have been granted and ruling in the realm where He has placed you. It entails fully developing and maximizing the masterpiece known as *you*.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A MASTERPIECE

You Are Rare

Several characteristics make up a masterpiece. The first one is that a masterpiece is rare. In order for something to be a masterpiece, it cannot have duplicates all over the place. Replicas or prints may exist that reflect the unique nature of the original, but there is only one masterpiece—just as there is only one you. In all of God's family, no one else is like you. You are unique. You are rare, which is exactly how you were designed to be. Knowing that truth should free you from trying to be like someone else, to look like someone else, or to adopt someone else's skills, calling, purpose, or personality. God already has someone else. If you become like someone else, who is going to be you? He made only one you, and *you* are that one.

Maybe as you grew up you were told or you felt that you were the wrong gender, the wrong race, or the wrong height. Maybe you felt as if you were born in the wrong place or placed in the wrong family. Perhaps you felt as if you weren't smart enough, skilled enough, fast enough, strong enough, or vocal enough. You may have felt as if you didn't have enough raw potential. But let me tell you something about you. You are a masterpiece—one of a kind. When God created you, He chose every piece about you and planned for you to use it to fulfill your destiny. You are exactly who God intended you to be. And God often uses the weaker and less likely people in this world to accomplish the greatest things. That way He gets the glory, and He knows you will depend on Him to do it. As a masterpiece, you are rare. You are one of a kind.

You Are Special

A masterpiece is special—just like you. In fact, you are so special that God sent His own Son to live for you, die for you, and rise from the dead for you so you can be all that He intended you to be.

You are a masterpiece. Yet until you start believing that you are special, you will not be all that you were created to be. You will not understand that you are qualified to rule. How can you rule your world if you don't think you have the ability to do so? How can you rule your realm if you don't see yourself as a ruler?

Once upon a time, a queen's daughter was slouching in her dining room chair. The queen told her to sit up straight, and she did—only to later slouch back down again. This went on for quite some time until finally, after several rounds of telling her daughter to sit up straight, the queen said, "Sit up, my child. Don't you know who you are?"

Knowing who you are changes your posture. You act differently, think differently, talk differently, walk differently, and live differently—because you *are* different. You are rare; you are special. In fact, you are so special that you are the only you that will ever exist. There will never be another you just like you. You are not an off-the-rack you—you are a custom-made you. You are special.

You Are Valuable

A masterpiece is also valuable. People pay a lot of money to own a masterpiece. In fact, most masterpieces are carefully locked away in secure and protected locations, such as museums and art galleries. Michelangelo's masterpiece *David* stands towering safely in Florence at the Accademia Gallery. The average person could not afford to own it. In fact, the average person cannot even afford to travel to Italy just to view it. Recently, when an activist tried to draw attention to himself by seeking to ruin the Mona Lisa, he was unable to do so. The most he could do was throw cake at the protective glass surrounding the masterpiece. The cake never reached the art. This is because the Mona Lisa sits securely behind an enclosure.² That speaks volumes to the value of a masterpiece.

I hope you know that it also speaks volumes about you.

The things people said about you when you were growing up—what your mom may have said or your dad, grandparents, or siblings—they don't matter. The things your teachers said or your friends and neighbors said don't matter. Were you always blamed for trouble or consistently ignored, dismissed, or overlooked? It doesn't matter. Regardless of the way others have viewed you, my friend, God has already said what you are: You are His workmanship.

You are His masterpiece. Where others see a block of marble with flaws and jagged edges, God sees the treasure within.

He sees you.

He sees that you are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14).

You Are Named

Artists and sculptors who create masterpieces give their creations names that reflect their meaning and purpose. You also have a name. It points to your kingdom purpose. Your name expresses the divine reason for your existence.

Scripture tells us that one day, those who overcome will receive new names. Each one will be known only to the one who receives it.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and *a new name* written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it (Revelation 2:17).

To be given a new name assumes that a name has to already exist. You have a name on earth. Your name reflects your purpose, destiny, and divine reason for being. It could be your given name, a spiritual name, a nickname, a title, or some other name that best reflects you.

To better understand the significance of a name, consider some names in the context of biblical cultures. In biblical times, a name involved more than nomenclature. Instead, a name frequently indicated the nature, purpose, and makeup of the individual. For example, Abraham means “the father of many,” and Joshua means “Yahweh is salvation.” A name often determined the expectations for what a person would become. Sometimes a person’s name was changed to better reflect his or her purpose on earth, as when God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Do you know your name? If not, ask God to show you. Ask Him to reveal the name that defines who you are, because God has named you.

You Are Known

You are not only named but also known by the One who names you. A masterpiece is frequently known in connection with its creator. We listen to

Handel's *Messiah* or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. We look at Michelangelo's *David* or Monet's *Sunflowers*. A masterpiece is rarely known simply by its own name but also by the one who made it—the master of the piece. As a child of God, you are uniquely created by Him. He desires to be connected to you, and He wants others to know you in connection with Him. He wants those who see you to say, “I know her—she's God's Sarah,” or “I know him—he's God's Matt.” “There goes God's _____.” (Fill in the blank. You are known by your connection with Him.)

YOU ARE A MASTERPIECE

As a masterpiece, you are rare, special, valuable, named, and known in connection with your Creator. But this brings a challenge. Satan does not want you to know that you are a masterpiece with a divinely ordained destiny because if you do, you will view yourself in a new way. You will naturally change the way you plan, think, walk, talk, dress, dream, treat others, treat yourself, and act.

And please remember that a masterpiece is often protected in highly guarded settings so that people who walk by won't feel free to touch it, grab it, or put their hands all over it. A masterpiece is so valuable that it is touched only by the one assigned to care for it—the one who knows how to handle it in a way that respects and retains its beauty and worth.

You are a masterpiece. A painting. A poem. A song. A statue. A work of art.

Think of yourself that way. Embrace yourself that way. Honor yourself that way. In so doing, you are honoring Him who made you.

Now, I can hear you saying, “But, Tony, I don't feel like a masterpiece.” And that's okay because I'm not talking about your emotions right now. I'm talking about you.

You are a masterpiece whether you feel like one or not.

You may feel like a failure, but God says you are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. That's the reality you need to focus on when your feelings tell you something else. God will raise your feelings up to your destiny; don't lower your destiny down to your feelings. Every day, recite to yourself what God says about you. This is one of the most important things you can do until your feelings catch up to the facts.

FUNCTIONING LIKE A MASTERPIECE

You can help yourself begin *feeling* like the masterpiece you are by *functioning* like the masterpiece you are. God created you for a purpose. He didn't create you just so you could look good in the mirror, turn heads, stimulate minds, make a lot of money, or make people laugh. He gave you your gifts, personality, and strengths so you can fulfill your calling. You are created for good works. You are here to fulfill your destiny.

You will not fully realize how masterfully you have been made until you begin fulfilling your destiny because that is when you will experience the fullness of who you are. In other words, you will feel like a masterpiece when you function like a masterpiece. Likewise, as long as you can be kept from functioning like a masterpiece, you can be kept from feeling like one.

YOU WILL FEEL LIKE A MASTERPIECE WHEN YOU FUNCTION LIKE A MASTERPIECE.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins by addressing a foundational need in all of us, and that is to identify why we are here. It asks, what is the chief end of man? And then it gives the answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. How do you glorify God? One way is to fulfill His intended purpose for your life.

Jesus acknowledges this. "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). How did Jesus glorify God? By completing the work God sent Him to do. The same is true for you. You bring glory to God as you walk in His intended kingdom purpose for your life and fulfill it. You glorify God when you choose to live out your destiny—intentionally pursuing the works God has prepared for you.

Fortunately, you don't have to carry the burden of creating your kingdom calling. No statue, painting, or song ever had to create itself. God has already determined the destiny for your life. Your job is to walk in it.

When we looked at Ephesians 2:10 earlier, we saw that you were "created in Christ Jesus for good works, *which God prepared beforehand.*"

Anyone who has worked with me knows that I love to approach things from the end and work my way back. I like to uncover the bottom line first and then take steps backward in the planning and discussion to see how we will get there. Sometimes that proves to be a challenge, but it is the way I like to function.

The book of Isaiah reveals that God provides the supreme example of starting at the end of something and working backward to make sure it actually happens.

Remember this, and be assured...
 Remember the former things long past,
 For I am God, and there is no other;
 I am God, and there is no one like Me,
Declaring the end from the beginning,
 And from ancient times things which have not been done,
 Saying, "My purpose will be established,
 And I will accomplish all My good pleasure" (Isaiah 46:8-10).

God works from the end back to the beginning. This is similar to the way a carpenter builds a house. He doesn't start nailing pieces of wood together and hope that he eventually comes up with a house. No, first a designer determines what the house will look like. Measurements are included, along with a plan that shows where critical components will be placed, such as wiring, plumbing, and ducting. Only when the carpenter can see the finished work on his blueprint does he begin digging the foundation and ordering the materials.

When God says He declares the end from the beginning, He affirms that He has already completed a spiritual blueprint of what you are to physically accomplish. He knows your destiny. His goals for you are already set. His desires for you have already been determined. He has already dreamed His dream for you. Now He is simply rolling back through time, empowering you to cooperate by walking in what He has already prepared in advance.

.....
**GOD HAS ALREADY COMPLETED A SPIRITUAL BLUEPRINT
 OF WHAT YOU ARE TO PHYSICALLY ACCOMPLISH.**

We see this play out in Scripture all the time. God gives the end result to a person—we call it a vision—and then strengthens that person to walk in it. He told Moses that He was going to deliver the Israelites through him, but Moses had to take the steps in order to do it. He told Abraham that he would be a great nation, but Abraham had to get busy with Sarah, despite their ages or how they may (or may not) have felt. He told Nehemiah that the walls of Jerusalem would be rebuilt, but Nehemiah had to ask his king for a leave of absence in order to do what God had declared would be done.

God's purposes for you are already complete. He has already blessed you with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Your blessings are already there. The victory is already won. Your destiny already exists. If you aren't feeling like a person of purpose, you probably have not yet started to function as a person of purpose.

If you will grasp the truth that you have been intentionally created in Christ Jesus for good works that God has already prepared, it will change your life. It will change the questions you ask. Instead of trying to figure out everything, you only have to figure out one thing: What is God's plan for you? When you focus on that, you will walk in what God has already prepared for you.

God has been to the end and back again. He has the blueprint of the house. Now He asks only that you walk with Him by faith as He builds the house with you. You don't need to fix it. You don't need to force it. You don't need to construct it. You don't need to arrange it. You don't need to maneuver in order to get it. But you do need to follow God's direction and walk in it.

A MASTERPIECE LIKE NO OTHER

Unfortunately, though, many of us try to live out other people's purposes instead of our own. That is why so many Christians live unfulfilled and unsatisfying lives. They pursue purposes that were never designed for them. They see someone else's purpose and like it so much that they try to make it their own. But God hasn't equipped you to fulfill someone else's purpose. He has

a kingdom purpose just for you. You will never be completely satisfied until you are fulfilling your own purpose.

What is your purpose? The choice is not yours to make. Instead, it is a reality that is yours to discover. For example, an appliance doesn't choose what it will do. A refrigerator doesn't decide to refrigerate. A stove doesn't decide to heat. The manufacturer makes that decision. And if a refrigerator tries to heat, you will find a completely ineffective refrigerator, and everyone who tries to use it will be frustrated. The refrigerator would be trying to function outside of its intended design.

Friend, God has a purpose for you. He has a divinely ordained purpose just for you. It includes various things, such as your passion, your personality, skills, dreams, and hurts. All of these merge together to empower you to fulfill your kingdom purpose.

Your kingdom purpose is *the customized life calling God has ordained and equipped you to accomplish in order to bring Him the greatest glory and achieve the maximum expansion of His kingdom*. Keep in mind that your purpose isn't just about you. It's about God and His kingdom agenda.

.....

**YOUR PURPOSE ISN'T JUST ABOUT YOU.
IT'S ABOUT GOD AND HIS KINGDOM AGENDA.**

.....

And another thing—your purpose may be closer than you think. It is not far away in an obscure location, hidden until you find it. Neither is it something you will dread having to do. The apostle Paul explains that your purpose is in you already. “It is God who is at work *in* you, both to *will* and to *work* for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

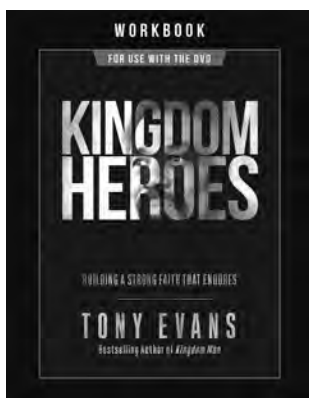
God is already working in you, giving you both the desire (the will) and the direction (the work) to live out your destiny. You already have it. You don't need to go searching for it. The closer you get to God and the more you are able to discern His voice and leading in your life, the closer you are to living out your purpose. It's already in you.

You have already chosen to take an important step toward discovering and

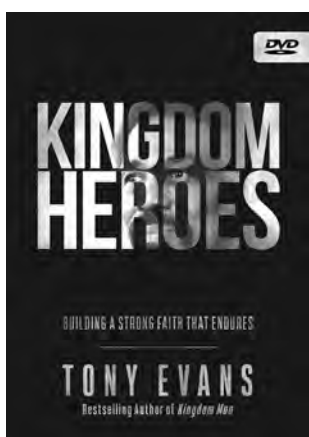
living out your kingdom purpose by exploring what God's Word says on the matter as we look at it together throughout these pages. I high-five you, fist-bump you, and applaud you for that, and I'm eager to go on this journey with you. Nothing is more exciting than to see someone truly enter, own, and experience his or her purpose. I want that for you. Let's go.



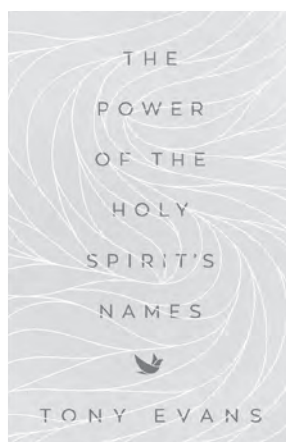
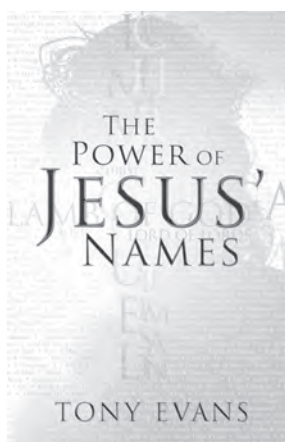
Join Dr. Tony Evans as he looks at people listed in the Hall of Faith—Old Testament heroes who trusted God—and discover or be reminded again how their journeys can help you understand what it means to walk in faith. *Kingdom Heroes* will encourage you to stop relying on your own strength and experience God's unlimited power in your life.

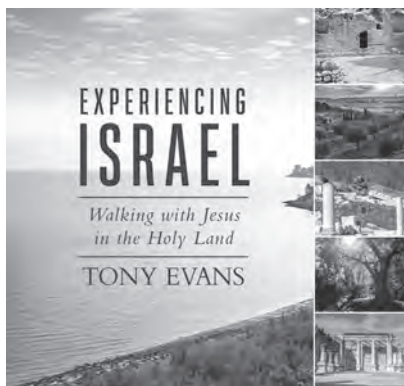
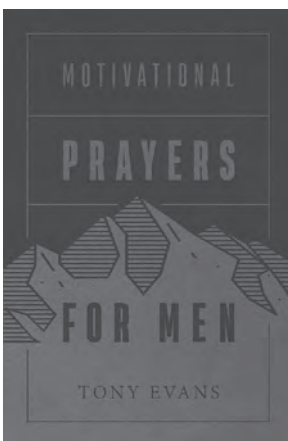
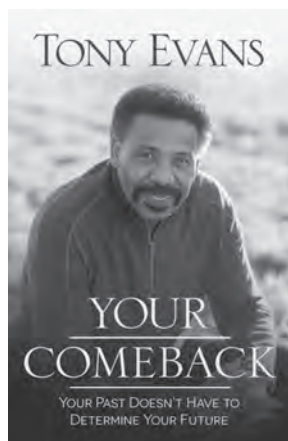
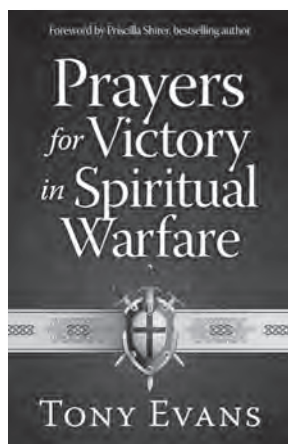
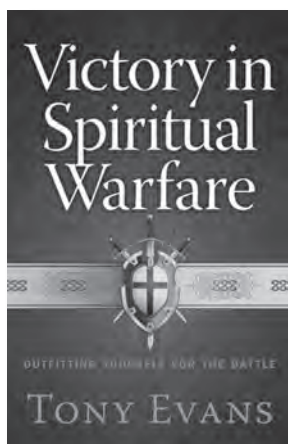


You must grow in your faith to keep harvesting its fruits. But what does this look like in everyday life? In the *Kingdom Heroes Workbook*, bestselling author Dr. Tony Evans invites you to examine how you can experience God's blessings by refining your reliance on His strength.



Join Dr. Tony Evans on a six-week journey with the heroes of the Old Testament whose acts of trusting God are spotlighted in Hebrews 11. The *Kingdom Heroes DVD* will help you radically rely on God—and you'll be amazed by how He changes your life!





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