

FOREWORD BY FRANKLIN GRAHAM

JACK HIBBS

NATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR

CALLED TO TAKE A

**BOLD
STAND**

RESILIENT & EFFECTIVE

FAITH FOR A GODLESS AGE

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**BOLD
STAND**



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AUTHOR'S DISCLAIMER

It is a safe assumption that what I am calling a disclaimer to you, the reader, is not typical for an author to write. Here is why: I believe it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of two events that converged in a most extraordinary way and ultimately gave birth to the book before you.

The first involves me being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ for nearly 50 years and receiving a wealth of Christian discipleship and teaching over those decades. Sound biblical doctrine and teaching are responsible for my bold faith in the veracity of the Scriptures and God's promise never to abandon anyone who trusts in Him.

The second is about how *Called to Take a Bold Stand* came to be. It emerged amidst the directives and mandates of so-called experts in the COVID era. During the ensuing drama, one thing was certain: God's Word must be obeyed at all costs as a witness and validation of biblical truth. That steadfast belief led me during those years in both my personal life and as a pastor responsible for the spiritual development of our congregation.

Many people from outside the congregation continue to say they're thankful for the bold stand I took and how my courage remains an inspiration. I feel uncomfortable hearing such words because I am not responsible for what looks like courage to others. I cannot take credit for what took place when it was God all along using His Word in my life. It was an act of sheer obedience to the will of God that led us to leave our church doors open and minister to tens of thousands of people, which has since grown to millions via radio, television, and other media platforms weekly.

In everything that has happened through the ministry at our church, all glory and honor belong to Jesus Christ and His incredible Word, the Bible.

WITH GRATITUDE

Much of the motive for publishing *Called to Take a Bold Stand* is to inspire and encourage the next generation of believers, and those uppermost in my mind are my grandchildren. Emelyn, Oliver, and Ames, you renew my determination to stand for righteousness's sake.

It goes without saying, but I must because of its absolute truthfulness—without my wife Lisa alongside me throughout my decades of ministry, I could not have endured the things that ministry requires of a man. Lisa is an accomplished servant of the gospel in her own right. Her steadfast love for me, knowledge of the Word, and strength in following Jesus have made this book possible.

I would also like to give a very special thanks to the congregation for which I've had the honor of pastoring these 36-plus years. They are my support team of prayer warriors and encouragers. I get attention from the media and others within the Christian community, but it is only because God has allowed me to pastor the most wonderful flock that a shepherd could ask for on this side of heaven.

Thank you to Judi McDaniels, who has been with me through every word, page, and chapter. I am not the easiest person to understand, yet you understood. Your expertise and editorial skills are matchless.

And finally, I want to thank you, the reader. It is your interest in a book such as this that serves as a profound encouragement. As you read what follows in these pages and find your faith being challenged, fortified, and enlarged, it will be because of God's grace as He uses His Word in your life. He alone is faithful.

Awaiting His return,
Jack Hibbs

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FOREWORD

FRANKLIN GRAHAM



Benjamin Franklin declared, “Write something worth reading.” Jack Hibbs has done this in *Called to Take a Bold Stand*. Pointing to God’s Word, he masterfully lays out God’s command to be bold and stand fully assured in all the will of God (Acts 4:29; Colossians 4:12).

Have you ever struggled with God’s plan and purpose for life, convinced that God’s will is a cliffhanger? Many try to uncover the mystery by going to church. Others satisfy themselves by reading a devotional or saying a prayer, hoping it will unlock the riddle. Some believe that doing good deeds to others in the name of Jesus fulfills the will of God. But as Jack points out, God has not hidden His will from us. He clearly tells us, “This is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). It is through this journey that we draw closer to Him and His presence in us is revealed: “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

The word *sanctification* strikes terror in a lot of people, who believe it to be an archaic process that has no place within our

churches and certainly not in our permissive society. Yet today's rap music doesn't cower in using this powerful word while defaming its meaning. But the word *sanctify* is holy and powerfully active. The Bible declares, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (1 Peter 3:15). This means to be set apart—separated from worldliness—for God's special use and purpose, unashamedly living for Him before an unbelieving world.

This book encourages us to embrace sanctification, not shrink back from it. Jack shares from his heart the thrilling purpose of God's transforming work that calls us to righteous and holy living. We carry within us the abiding presence of His Holy Spirit, leading us to take a bold stand and shine the light of God's truth in what the Bible calls darkened hearts (Romans 1:21).

Confusion about what it means to live for Christ comes from Satan, not from Christ. Satan does not want believers to walk righteously. Why? Because walking in God's righteousness is a strong testimony to His work in us—conforming us to His will. The lines are blurred only to those who are not living obediently in the strength and the truth of God's Word.

The Bible declares, "The grace of God...[teaches] us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live...righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people" (Titus 2:11-14).

When God calls us to be His special people, He uniquely equips us. As believers in Christ, we can walk in God's will knowing that it will lead to inner peace, giving us direction along our pathway and enabling us to live in a way that will bring others to salvation through the saving grace of Jesus Christ alone. This is how we can make a difference here and now in our calling to take a bold stand for Him.

I greatly commend my friend Pastor Jack Hibbs for writing this book. It's needed today because it points us right back to the Bible. God's message to us convicts and comforts, encouraging human hearts and redeemed souls to bear the fruit of sanctification to those who believe, practice, and obey His will.

—**Franklin Graham**

President and CEO

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

Samaritan's Purse

Boone, North Carolina

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PART 1

YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

CHAPTER 1

THE REAL YOU



Wars and rumors of wars are one of the signs that Jesus gave regarding the end of the age. Depending on your background, the idea of war will conjure up different images. I was raised in a military family—my dad was a Marine—and I grew up understanding the dynamics of war. But soon after becoming a Christian, I learned that war is not limited to nations fighting one another. There are also spiritual conflicts that manifest themselves in the physical world. That means faith, as the Bible describes it, is at war.

According to the Bible, the Christian's battle is against three great spiritual enemies—the devil, the world, and the flesh. We battle against Satan, our invisible but powerful adversary, the ever-present influence of a fallen world, and the fleshly desires that lurk deep within each of our hearts. All three of these enemies conspire with two primary goals: subdue and conquer.

Clearly identifying the enemy is an all-important component in waging war, but winning it requires a strategy. In developing a strategy, it is wise to use historical facts to form a strong foundation from which to move forward. Military institutions do this by studying history as it pertains to war. I appreciate this dedication because

history can tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of combatants, the driving forces behind the conflict, and the way forward to victory. History also shows us where we have come from and where we could be headed if we're not careful.

Once you've done your due diligence, developed a strategy, and confirmed your resources, it is time to take a stand. Why do I stress the need to take a stand? And what kind of stance or position am I referring to? Our biblical beliefs are under full-scale attack, and it is time to take a biblical stand because history teaches that there can be no neutrality when it comes to war. Hostile aggression demands decisive action. For us to be victorious, we must know ourselves and the One who has enlisted us into this bold faith.

YOU ARE CALLED TO STAND

It is hard to imagine World War 2 without the United States's involvement, but it nearly happened. While Hitler's army rolled unchecked through Germany's neighboring countries, US politicians argued about what role, if any, this country should play. Many believed there was no clear mandate for engaging in what they knew would be costly, hard-fought battles. Others thought it best to follow a plan of isolation and appeasement. After all, wasn't it a foreign war?

Despite pleas from its European allies, America waited and watched from a distance. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's warning, "We well know that we cannot escape danger, or the fear of danger, by crawling into bed and pulling the covers over our heads,"¹ seemed to fall on deaf ears.

Situated between two vast oceans, America believed it could play it safe and remain neutral—until the morning of December 7, 1941. Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor finally ended the debate. War had come to American soil. The following day, Congress declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy—Japan's allies—responded by

declaring war against the United States. With evil rising on the other side of both the Atlantic and Pacific, neutrality was no longer a luxury or option. That “foreign war” was now our war. It was time to get involved.

Would history have been different if the US had acted earlier? Considering the horrific loss of life—innocent civilians, soldiers, and the estimated six million Jews who perished—this is a valid question. There is little doubt that the outcomes could have been different.

Today, too much of the professing church resembles America at the start of World War 2—content to look the other way out of fear or apathy or both. When you consider the unwillingness of the church to engage enemies of the gospel inside its walls and outside its gates, the comparison is striking. American leaders could see the warning signs but did not take them seriously. Likewise, some Christians feel that their congregation or organization is insulated or isolated from evil influences, saying, “It’ll never happen here.” And others believe that through appeasement, they’ll be left alone. I think we need to be reminded of Roosevelt’s words of warning regarding the futility of hiding because whenever fear disables action, there will be consequences. Like it or not, war has come to our doorstep.

At this moment, the stakes in this all-out war are higher than ever. The time for complacency, as if there ever was one, is long past. It is time to engage those warring against biblical Christianity by taking a bold stand. And by a bold stand, I mean living out a biblically based passionate bold faith—resilient, immovable, and incredibly effective in the last days. Doing anything less neutralizes the church, rendering it ineffective in fulfilling its calling to spread the gospel and make disciples of Jesus Christ. It causes our faith to cease being relevant, useful, or capable of being salt and light. In a word, bold!

Today, the challenge for every Christ-follower is this: Are you willing to take our Lord at His word, believe what He says, and take a stand? Will you decide to make a difference? I urge you to say yes

for this reason: However small your efforts may appear, heaven takes a far different view. Believe me when I say that what you do now matters in eternity.

Formulating a strategy for a bold and courageous stand requires a clear understanding of the strength and vitality of what you've become in Christ—the very things you will read in the following pages. We will only scratch the surface of what the Father has afforded us in Christ Jesus, but I pray that what you read galvanizes you into action. As you encounter biblical truth, may you make honest assessments and, when needed, pray, “Lord, please work this characteristic or that way of thinking into my life. From this day forward, help me to never back down or surrender in the fight to uphold the truth of Your Word. O Lord, make me courageous. Help me to develop a bold faith that is equal to taking on these darkening days.”

YOU ARE IN CHRIST

When someone turns to you and says, “Look at what you've become,” what are they saying? And how are they saying it—with admiration, or sarcasm? Are they witnessing a changed life?

For better or worse, people will make assessments about us based on what they observe regarding our Christianity. That truth should encourage you to ask yourself, *Has my faith changed me?* To help you answer that question, how would your family, friends, or employer say that God has changed you? Those who live with us and around us should experience this firsthand.

If my neighbor texted me a picture of oranges from his tree and asked if I wanted some, I'd say yes because I know they are consistently juicy and flavorful. But suppose he sent me two unremarkable photos, one of a man and the other of a woman, and asked if I would vouch for their character? What could I discern about either of them? Nothing. Could I determine their worldview or what they

believe about Jesus? No. Is there anything that I could expect from them? Again, the answer is no. I couldn't expect anything from either of these people because I don't know them.

I cannot determine anything about these two individuals unless I get into their world and live with them. But, if I lived with them 24 hours, seven days a week, for a month, I could tell you a whole lot about each. I could tell you if she's insecure or not. It would be apparent that he's a gamer or mathematically gifted—brilliant, in fact. She likes to paint in her free time, and he plays soccer every weekend. He looked subdued in his picture, but he has a bad temper when pushed. And she has issues when it comes to trusting people.

Now, what if someone stepped into my life? What would they conclude about my Christianity? Do my claims about my faith match what others see? How about yours? When you say that you are a believer, what does that mean? To answer those questions, let's start with what it means doctrinally.

YOU HAVE A NEW NATURE

The title of *Christian* means that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. There is no doubt as to His deity; Jesus is both God and Savior. The apostle Paul made this clear in Colossians 1:15-21:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.

Being a Christian means that your faith is in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. And like others before you, you can attest, “No good thing dwells in me, but thankfully Jesus died for sinners like me, of which I am chief” (see Romans 7:17; 1 Timothy 1:15).

The moment you acknowledge your personal sins, repent, turn to God, and confess your need before Him, your salvation is secure, and you have “obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1). You and I share the exact same precious faith as every single believer who ever came before us and those coming after. God never favors one of His children above another. I want you to notice the definite article *the* in that verse because it tells us why our faith is precious. Our faith is in Jesus’ righteousness—His righteousness has become ours—and that makes our faith extremely valuable. The Hope Diamond and all the gold of Fort Knox cannot compare to the value of the faith that has the power to transform you and me.

God sees you and me in a whole new way, and it should be reflected in how we live. In other words, you and I should conduct ourselves in accordance with God’s viewpoint and His directives for us. Colossians 3:3 says, “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” When you came to Christ, you died to the old order of things and faith was born. “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe

in His name” (John 1:12). Your life is now centered in Christ. He is in full possession of you. When your faith is in Jesus Christ, you are hidden in Him.

One day my grandson was helping me fill a large storage bin with books. Once it was full, I relocated the container to another room, emptied it, and went outside for a few minutes. When I came back inside, I heard my grandson saying, “Papa, Papa.” So, I went into the room, but I didn’t see him. I could hear him, yet he was nowhere to be seen. Unnoticed by me, he had folded up his arms and legs and climbed inside the bin. He was hidden until out he popped!

I could hear and recognize my grandson’s voice even though he was hidden away. When you and I speak, people should recognize our voice, but in a sense, what we say should be coming out of our relationship with Christ. They should hear Jesus and see our lives as a representation of His life lived out through us. That is what it means to be hidden in Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Over the years that I’ve been a pastor, people have told me, “I accepted the Lord ten, twenty, or thirty years ago.” And often, my response is, “Great! In those years, have you welcomed the day saying, ‘Jesus, here I am? Take all of me’”? If they reply, “Oh no. I don’t need to do that. I did that back then,” one of my first thoughts is that they might not be a Christ-follower. I wonder if they believed in Jesus only in a historical sense, much like the man who confessed to me, “I believe in Jesus. I own a Bible and go to church. Yet there’s been no change in my life. I still drink and use drugs. I still have a temper. And, if I’m honest, I regularly take it out on my spouse. I’ve alienated my kids. I feel so guilty every day.” Ladies and gentlemen, those lifestyle behaviors betray the real message and power of biblical Christianity! They are not biblical or of God.

If you claim to know Christ but you're still living life as you wish, beware. Jesus warned, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). You can protest, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" (verse 22). Yet Jesus will declare, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (verse 23).

You cannot say you know Jesus and that your life is under His authority and yet have your life remain the same. If Jesus cannot change us from what we used to be, then what is the difference between what He does and what is accomplished through a self-help seminar? But we know there should be a distinct difference in a true believer because Jesus truly changes lives! "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

You've Been Transformed

The prospect of facing spiritual battles can seem daunting, but as a believer, you have what it takes. To prove it to you, let me introduce you to Peter.

Although this isn't a book about the apostle Peter or his words, I often mention both for two reasons. First and foremost, this book is about faith—recognizing what faith is and is not, strengthening it, keeping it, and using it by exercising your spiritual muscles. Peter's grasp of the meaning of true faith is undeniable, especially as it relates to the issues prevalent in today's church. And second, Peter is relatable. I could point out an Old Testament saint like King David—a mighty warrior and writer of poetry—whom God called "a man after My own heart" (Acts 13:22). Or refer to the New Testament apostle Paul, a brilliant intellectual giant. Paul was among the most educated men of the first-century Roman Empire and was seen as one of the

greatest converts to Christianity. There are believers today who are of David's renown and Paul's stature, but I believe that most of us find ourselves walking in Peter's sandals much of the time.

According to church history, Simon Peter was a rough, tough, uneducated Galilean fisherman. Scripture tells us that he and his brother Andrew were the first to obey Jesus' call to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-20). And Peter started off with gusto. When the disciples' boat was in the middle of a storm-tossed sea, Peter showed tremendous faith by stepping out of the boat and onto the waves when Jesus invited him to (Matthew 14:29).

Yet if there was an opportunity to misjudge a situation, Peter regularly did. He was impetuous and had a habit of contradicting Jesus. He was passionate, and this often got him in trouble! After Peter promised he would never desert Jesus, he exclaimed, "I do not know the Man!" (Matthew 26:74). Peter's vehement denial could have been the end of his story, but thankfully, for him and us, it wasn't. Peter was lovingly restored by the One whom he had abandoned. And then came the day of Pentecost.

Being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4-5).

Ever since Pentecost, the promised Holy Spirit has indwelt every believer. He is the confirmation stamp, the seal of God's ownership, upon every heaven-bound saint (see 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 4:30). The Spirit's presence is essential for the Christian life to be effective. When He goes to work in our lives, He strengthens us against temptation, facilitates the operation of our spiritual gifts,

and empowers our witness to the world by helping us to live out our faith with boldness.

Following the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-4), the effect of the Holy Spirit on believers was astounding. As you continue to read the book of Acts, there is an incredible download of supernatural inspiration, knowledge, and power in Christ's followers, and we see it first in Peter. The bumbling, impulsive disciple becomes Peter the apostle, a confident and bold messenger of the gospel. Incredibly, 3,000 people were saved following his first public sermon. In the world's eyes, Peter didn't amount to much, but he didn't need to—he was transformed!

Transformation is an incredible word. In the Bible, the Greek term used to describe this is *metamorphoo*, which means a change of condition or form. It suggests that a thorough and dramatic change has taken place. In the life of a believer, transformation is an internal process that begins the moment we become born-again (see John 3:3-8). Nature gives us a physical picture of this spiritual reality through caterpillars. Those hungry little creatures eat their way through your garden until it is time for them to shed their skin and form a chrysalis. Once inside this protective covering, they undergo a complete and radical transformation and emerge as a butterfly or moth. What happens on the inside must eventually manifest itself on the outside in a beautiful way.

Likewise, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit resulted in profound changes within Peter's life. He boldly served Christ and eventually wrote 1 and 2 Peter, books that couldn't be more different in their language and style. First Peter is written in a simple manner, while 2 Peter is technical, advanced, and theologically profound. The sentence structure of 2 Peter reads more like the apostle Paul's writings or what is known as a Pauline style. To some, it seems impossible that an uneducated Galilean penned such lofty words, yet he did.

Peter's continual growth into a deep thinker and fearless defender

of the faith came as he yielded himself to the Spirit's work in his life as he immersed himself in the Scriptures.

The practice of immersion is used today by the US military with amazing results. Their renowned language school in Monterey, California, is where they send soldiers whose assignments require them to blend into a foreign region without detection. Through total immersion—not a word of the student's native tongue is spoken or written by the instructor—they learn another country's language, dialect, and ways. Those soldiers know they will be changed by the end of their studies.

Dear saint, when you yielded your life to Jesus, a tremendous change occurred, and the course of your life was forever altered. And because this is true, you are not, and never will be, the same. Now is the time to immerse yourself in God's Word and watch how the Spirit uses it in you!

By God's grace, with the Holy Spirit's help, you are different from where you started in Christ, and you're bringing things like pride, lust, or anger under the control of the Spirit. You are growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and advancing in your faith. Second Corinthians 3:18 announces that you are "being transformed...from glory to glory," but this transformation isn't a one-and-done event. It is an ongoing and observable work of the Holy Spirit.

The born-again believer's life has been radically altered—transformed—and with that comes liberation and freedom. Just as a butterfly is liberated from its chrysalis, God has set you free to go out into the world transformed. You are now ready to be used. But the choice about your usefulness to God is yours—you'll see why in a moment.

You've Been Set Free

How do you introduce yourself when you meet someone for the first time? Do you say, "Hi, my name is Paula," or "My name is Bob"? Or is your introduction more like, "I'm Brent, founder and

CEO of the biggest and best construction company in town”? How we view ourselves says a lot about us. Just ask Paul, Timothy, Ephraim, James, Peter, and Jude. Each of these men was a leader within the church, worthy of honor, but first and foremost, they saw themselves as bondservants, or as some Bibles translate it, slaves. In some of their letters to other believers, Peter and Paul even chose to label themselves a bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ before identifying themselves as an apostle (see Romans 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1).

Coupling the lowly position of a bondservant with that of an esteemed apostle could be considered an oxymoron—two ideas that are in opposition to one another. But in Christ, they come together as a remarkable expression of love.

In ancient history, people were reduced to slavery for various reasons—one of them was debt. If you owed someone money and couldn't repay it, you could bind yourself to that person as a slave until the debt was repaid. Some of these slaves, after completing their time of service, would think, *These years have not been bad. In fact, I like this guy and care for him. He has helped me and my family in so many ways. I don't want to leave him.* So, on the day they could be freed, they went to their master and said, “I don't want to leave you. Under your authority, my life has been better than when I was on my own. Will you have me?”

If the master agreed, he brought the slave to a wooden post. Standing before witnesses, he took the slave's earlobe, placed it against the post, and drove an awl through it. The slave was marked as a bondservant. His decision declared, “I am technically free, but I willingly give my life and freedom back to my master. He is so good” (see Exodus 21:1-6). All of this reflected the deep affection and gratitude of the slave. What followed was a lifelong submission to the will of his master.

Our English word *bondservant* translates to the Greek word *doulos*. Identifying as a *doulos* implies you are already a slave, but you've

now plunged headlong into a greater form of slavery. You may be offended at the implication that you are already a slave, but it is true, nonetheless. Undoubtedly, some people will object, “Pastor, you are dead wrong. I do whatever I want. I am my own person and call the shots in my life. I am free.” But the Bible disagrees with that assessment. Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

I once watched a news clip of vandals kicking in a vending machine in Toronto, Canada. They beat the machine apart, took all the candy, and ran away shouting, “We’re free! We’re free!” In their minds, free candy equated to personal freedom, but they weren’t free. Their lust for mischief and violence had enslaved them. Their supposed freedom was wrapped in unfettered lawlessness; they had become slaves to anarchy.

You and I may not have been thieves, but in some way, shape, or form, we were slaves to this world and our sinful desires, which are terrible forms of bondage. But after becoming believers, we are now free to serve a different Master.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin [as a lifestyle] is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed (John 8:34-36).

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

Jesus Christ sets people free forever from the bondage of sin and death. A truly free person lives with great liberty and freedom, abhors wrong, endeavors to do what is right, and experiences a harmonious

relationship with God under His rule and reign. This kind of freedom leads believers to become bondslaves in an intimate, free-will act of love.

To a self-seeking person, the idea of holding a position of honor as a child of God but choosing the humble position of a bond-servant doesn't make sense. And yet it should because that is what Jesus Himself did:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:5-7).

I urge you to stop and consider the magnitude of what Jesus Christ did for you. The Creator God—sustainer of everything, worthy of all worship, praise, honor, and glory throughout eternity—departed from His throne and entered our humanity. Jesus' decision to make Himself of no reputation rendered Him as nothing in the estimation of men, and He did so willingly.

Jesus *emptied* Himself by laying aside His divine privileges. He, in complete agreement with His Father, embraced what we would call the ultimate humiliation by becoming a human. Jesus never ceased to be God during any part of His earthly ministry when He willingly set aside His heavenly glory. He gladly took on the likeness—the physical characteristics—of a man. Jesus, God incarnate, confined Himself to a human body not for a day or a year, but forever. It is shocking when you consider the implications. At this very hour, Christ, the Son of God, sits at the right hand of God the Father in His glorified human body. He did all this to serve the will of the Father. He did all this for you and me! We are eternally indebted to Jesus. We owe Him everything.

We were not created to be served but to serve. But bear in mind that God never wants us to live as slaves to others. Instead, He desires that Christ's life be lived out by choosing to build up, bless, and serve one another. "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself" (Romans 15:2-3). As an act of love and gratitude for what Christ did for us, let us follow Him.

All of us are slaves, but are you a bondsman of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are, you will be a doer of God's Word, obedient to your new Master. And when the One who loves you and gave His life for you gives instructions, there will be no debate. You won't go to the left or right. You will follow Him because you are now free to do so.

YOUR TIME IS NOW

By God's design, you are alive at this exact time in history. Many people refer to the space of a person's lifetime as "the dash." When read on a tombstone or in an obituary, the dash looks like 1958–2022. It represents the time God has allotted you on earth and, may I add, the time He has given you to impact others. The psalmist prayed, "Teach us to number our days, that we might gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Will you ask the same? And what will you say and do during those hours, days, months, and years?

Now is the time to take a bold stand and
turn your world upside down, or better
yet, right side up for Jesus' sake.

The Bible says, "Present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness" (Romans 6:19). The word "members" generally refers to the individual parts that make up our whole body, which definitely

applies here. But, in this verse, the Holy Spirit has also arranged the words to convey that every part of us is to be in God's hand as an instrument against evil and unrighteousness.

If you possess the same precious faith that has emboldened Christians throughout history, it is time to take a firm position and engage the culture. Now is the time to take a bold stand and turn your world upside down, or better yet, right side up for Jesus' sake.