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Author of 10 *New York Times* Bestsellers

**YOUR
GREATER
IS
COMING**

DISCOVER THE PATH TO YOUR
BIGGER, BETTER, AND BRIGHTER FUTURE

Your Greater Is Coming

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Better, and Brighter Future

Joel Osteen



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CHAPTER ONE

Your Greater Is Coming

We all face setbacks in life, things we don't understand. We may have lost a loved one, had a friend walk out of our relationship, or are dealing with an illness. When we go through loss and bad breaks, it's easy to think that's the way it's always going to be. But our God is a God of restoration. He doesn't stop every difficulty, and He doesn't keep us from every challenge. But He promises He will pay us back for the wrongs. He will restore what's been stolen. David says in Psalm 71, "You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but You will restore me to even greater honor." The suffering is a setup. God allows the difficulty, not to make you miserable but to restore you to greater honor. He never brings you out the same. He makes the enemy pay for bringing the trouble.

When you're in tough times, you need to remind yourself that it's not how your story ends. The loneliness, the bad break, or the anxiety is not your destiny. Greater is coming—greater joy, greater strength, greater relationships. The setback in your finances, the contract you lost, or the unfair childhood didn't stop your purpose. Greater opportunities are coming, greater favor is coming, greater influence is coming. The enemy brought the difficulty to set you back, but he didn't realize it's setting you up for God to

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show out in your life. He may have meant it for your harm, but God is turning it to your advantage.

When you're in difficulties, when life doesn't seem fair, you'll be tempted to get discouraged and lose your passion. Keep this phrase down in your spirit: *Your greater is coming.* God didn't bring you this far to leave you. He wouldn't allow the pain if it were going to keep you from your destiny. It's just the opposite; it's going to thrust you into your destiny. The apostle Paul says, "These light afflictions are for a moment, but they are working in you an eternal weight of glory." The trouble is temporary, but the glory is permanent. The key is to not stay focused on the suffering; stay focused on the glory that's coming. It may be tough now. Life has dealt you an unfair hand, but that suffering is not in vain; it's serving a purpose. It's leading you to greater favor, greater anointing, greater victories.

I love David's attitude. He says, "God, You have allowed me to suffer much hardship," but he doesn't stop there. He could have stayed focused on all of his bad breaks and said, "God, I don't understand it. Why didn't my father believe in me? Why did he leave me out in the shepherds' fields when Samuel came to anoint the next king? Why is King Saul trying to kill me? I haven't done anything wrong. Why are all these people slandering me, trying to ruin my reputation?" Instead, he says, "God, I've had a lot of bad breaks. I've suffered much, but I know this: You will restore me to greater honor." He was thanking God for greater in the middle of the difficulty. When

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you're in tough times, you can either talk about how big the problem is or talk about how big your God is. You can be complaining about the trouble or you can be thanking God that the trouble is only temporary.

If you're going to see the greater, you have to do as David did. In the middle of the suffering, start declaring that greater is coming. If the medical report doesn't look good, while you're taking the treatment you have to say, "Father, thank You that greater health is coming. Thank You that the number of my days You will fulfill. Thank You that I will run and not be weary." When you're fighting depression, anxiety, or fear, don't sit around thinking about how you're never going to get better. In the middle of the battle, you have to say, "Lord, thank You that greater joy is coming. Thank You that You're pushing back the forces of darkness." When it seems as though you're stuck in your career and your dream looks impossible, say, "Father, thank You that greater favor is coming. Thank You that You're opening doors that no man can shut, that You're taking me where I can't go on my own." Your attitude in the suffering is what's going to determine whether you come out with greater or whether you get stuck where you are.

Going Through Is the Way to Your Greater

The apostle Peter says, "After you have suffered a little while..." I'm not saying that if you have faith, you'll never have any suffering, never have things that aren't fair, never have situations that aren't turning around. But keep the right perspective. The suffering is not permanent. You may suffer for "a little while"—not for your whole life, not for the next twenty years. Don't believe the

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lie that what you're going through is never going to change. Don't believe the lie that you'll always struggle with the addiction, that you'll always have to deal with a sickness, or that you'll always have that trouble at work. The suffering is not going to last. It didn't come to stay; it came to pass. What God started in your life, He's going to finish.

But here's the key: To see the greater, you have to go through the suffering. I wish I could tell you that greater comes by just being positive, just having faith, just honoring God. There are levels you can only reach by going through some difficulties. Don't get stuck in the suffering. Don't get bitter because somebody walked out on you. Don't settle in the depression, thinking that's your lot in life. Don't let the setback in your finances convince you that you'll always struggle. Keep an attitude of faith and go through it. Keep believing when every thought is telling you it's never going to change. Keep talking like it's going to happen when nothing is improving. Keep declaring God's promises when it seems as though it's not doing any good. That suffering is a test. It's an opportunity to show God that you're not going to get discouraged, give up on your dreams, and lose your passion.

Peter goes on to say, "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore you, strengthen you, and establish you." God has already called you to live a victorious life. He's already called you to overcome every obstacle. You've been handpicked by the Creator of the universe. The God who spoke worlds into existence chose you before you could choose Him. The forces trying to stop you are no match for the God who has already called you. Now do as David did and go through the suffering with faith,

knowing that your greater is coming. If you keep the right attitude, God Himself is going to restore you. That means that He's not going to send the angels, He's not going to ask Gabriel to do it, but the Most High God is going to suddenly turn things around. He's going to suddenly heal, suddenly deliver, suddenly promote. When it's your time, you're not going to come out the same; you're going to come out better.

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You may have already passed this test. You've been doing the right thing, suffering with a smile, praising through the pain, worshipping instead of worrying, being good to people who aren't good to you. Get ready. Greater is coming. God is about to do a new thing. Problems that look permanent are about to turn around. Dreams you thought were too far gone are about to suddenly come to pass. The right people, divine connections, are about to show up. Greater influence is coming, greater favor is coming, greater honor is coming. The enemy thinks he is pulling you back to keep you there. He doesn't realize that like a bow and arrow, the more he pulls you back, the farther God is about to shoot you. The enemy thinks he is hindering you, but the truth is that he is helping you. The suffering is a setup. God allowed it so He can launch you to a new level of your destiny. Don't get discouraged by what you're going through. You couldn't become who you were created to be without the disappointments, without the bad breaks, without the struggle. I know it's uncomfortable, and I know you don't like it, but keep reminding yourself that greater is coming.

Everything Is Coming Back

In 1 Samuel 30, when David and his six hundred men were returning from a mission in Philistine territory, in the distance they saw smoke billowing in the sky. It looked as though it was coming from their city of Ziklag. I can imagine that they started walking faster, wondering what was going on. When they arrived home, their worst fears came to pass. The Amalekites had raided their city, burned their houses, taken their wives and children captive as well as all their possessions. Here David was out doing the right thing

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and the wrong thing happened. It didn't seem fair. But just because you have trouble doesn't mean you're doing something wrong. Sometimes, because you're doing the right thing, you're facing difficulties. There are forces trying to keep you from your destiny. When you understand this principle that every setback is a setup for God to take you further, the suffering is putting you in position for

greater honor. Then you won't fall apart when you face bad breaks. You won't get bitter because you have an unexpected challenge. You'll stay in faith, knowing that the enemy wouldn't be trying to stop you if he didn't know something amazing was in your future.

David and his men were so discouraged that they wept until they could not weep anymore. If that wasn't bad enough, David's men were so upset about losing their wives and children that they began to talk about stoning him. David could have sat around depressed, in self-pity, but the Scripture says, "David began to encourage himself in the Lord his God." Maybe that's when he

wrote, “I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise will continually be in my mouth.” Maybe he wrote, “When I go through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” Maybe in those ashes he wrote, “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.” Instead of complaining, he started thanking God that He was still on the throne.

Sometimes you can't find anyone else to encourage you. Your friends are busy, your pastor is out of town, your phone is dead, and you can't find me on television. That's God letting you know that you have to encourage yourself. You have to dig down deep and say, “I am not going to let this bad break, this disappointment, or this injustice steal my joy and sour my life. Lord, thank You that You are bigger than this sickness, greater than this opposition, more powerful than the people who are trying to stop me. I know that Your being for me is more than the world being against me.” You have to stir up your faith, stir up your praise. Start speaking victory over your life. Start thanking God that He's fighting your battles, that this too shall pass, that greater is coming.

David prayed and asked if he should go after the enemy. God answered, “Yes, pursue them. You will surely recover everything that was taken from you.” You may be in a difficult time when you've lost some things—lost your dream, lost your joy, lost your health. God is saying, “If you get your fire back and start moving forward, you will surely recover everything you lost.” The enemy may be laughing now, but you're going to have the last laugh. God has the final say. He saw the injustice. He saw who did you wrong, what didn't work out, what was taken from you.

The enemy may be laughing now, but you're going to have the last laugh.

He's saying, “Get ready. Everything is coming back. You're getting back your health, your children, your finances, your dreams, your

joy, your peace.” It’s not maybe, not there’s a good chance, but surely you will recover everything. *Surely* means without a doubt, that you can count on it. God used the word *surely* not for Himself, but for us. He is saying, “Be confident. It’s all coming back.”

Your Reward Is Coming

David and his men left the city and headed out in pursuit. They were not certain where the Amalekites had gone, but they found an Amalekite slave in a field who had gotten sick three days previous

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and been left behind to die. David gave him food and water and promised that if he would lead them to the Amalekites, David would spare his life. This young man took them right to the enemy’s camp. When you get your passion back and go after what belongs to you, God will

have the right people in your path to help you. He’ll bring divine connections, people who will use their influence and expertise to take you where you couldn’t go on your own.

When David and his men showed up, the Amalekites were having a big party, celebrating their victory, eating, drinking, dancing. I’ve learned that sometimes the enemy celebrates too soon. He doesn’t realize that you’re down but you’re not out. You had a setback, but really it’s setting you up. The enemy thought the disappointment would cause you to be sour, to give up on your dreams. He thought the bad break would cause you to stay sitting in the ashes, discouraged and bitter. He didn’t know you would encourage yourself in the Lord. He didn’t know that when you

got knocked down, you would get back up again. He didn't know that instead of complaining, you would start praising. He may be celebrating now, but don't worry. Your time is coming. Right now God is arranging things in your favor. He's lining up the right people. He's pushing back forces of darkness. Things are happening that you can't see. If you keep moving forward in faith, you're going to come into promotion, healing, breakthroughs—things that you couldn't make happen on your own.

David and his men attacked the Amalekites and wiped them out. Not a single Amalekite was left in the camp. The Scripture says, "David got everything back that the Amalekites had taken. They rescued their wives and children. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back." You may have lost some things. Perhaps your loved one didn't make it, and it feels as though a part of you was taken with them, and you have lost the joy you had. Maybe you've struggled with an addiction for so long that you've lost the desire to be free. Perhaps you've accepted that it's too late now and your child is never going to get back on course. God is going to do for you what He did for David. One day you're going to say, "Nothing is missing. I got my joy back. I got my health back. I got my dreams back. I got my freedom back. I got my child back." God is not going to bring you out partially, where you get most of what you lost. God doesn't do things halfway. Nothing is going to be missing.

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It was a great victory that David got everything back. But God doesn't bring you out the same. When you go through suffering, your greater is coming. The Scripture says, "David's men rounded up all the Amalekites' flocks and herds and took all their possessions. These belonged to them as their reward." There is a reward

You're not just going to come out, you're going to come out better.

for going through difficulties with a good attitude. We would be grateful if God just brought us back to where we were. But when you go through challenges in faith with your head held high, knowing that God is fighting your battles, then a reward is coming. You're not just going to come out, you're going to come out better.

The Suffering Is a Setup

Back in the 1950s, my father had been pastoring a very successful, growing church for many years. They had just built a beautiful new sanctuary. He was on the state board for his denomination, and his future looked bright. At that time, my sister Lisa was born with something like cerebral palsy. After the doctors told my parents that she would probably never be able to walk or feed herself, my father went to a downtown hotel for a week by himself to study the Scripture in a new way. He had been taught in seminary that God healed people in biblical times but that period of divine healing had passed away. He read the Scripture that says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He realized that there never was a day of miracles, but there is a God of miracles. And He's still alive.

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My father went back to his church with this new message of faith and victory and healing. He thought everyone would be excited, but it was just the opposite. This message didn't fit

their tradition. There was so much opposition that he ended up feeling he had to leave the church. He was very discouraged. He had poured his heart and soul into those people. My mother was twenty-six years old at the time, and she had lifelong friends who never spoke to her again.

Instead of sitting around frustrated and bitter over what didn't work out, my parents went out and started Lakewood. They found an old feedstore that had holes in the floor and cracks in the walls. They cleaned it out, and ninety people showed up for church. My father went from a big prestigious church with a beautiful new auditorium to a run-down little wood building with a fraction of the people. Year after year my father kept being his best, pouring into those ninety people, not listening to the critics. The opposition said that Lakewood would never last, that he was wasting his time. But when you suffer much, God gives you a promise that greater honor is coming—greater favor, greater opportunity, greater influence. Against all odds, my sister Lisa slowly got better and better. Today she's perfectly healthy. And in 1972, Lakewood started to grow, with people coming from all over Houston. It kept growing and growing, and here we are over sixty years later, still going strong.

We all have unfair things happen. People come against us. There are betrayals, and there are sicknesses. It's tempting to get discouraged and say, "God, why did this happen? Why did these people push me out? Why was my daughter born with an illness?" There are some things that we're not going to understand. Don't spend your life trying to answer all the whys of life. That's going to frustrate you. God knows how to work all things for your good. He says that He will pay you back double for the unfair things that have happened. The key is to go through that suffering with a good attitude, knowing that God has promised you that your greater is coming. It may not happen overnight, but God

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is faithful. He sees you doing the right thing when the wrong thing has happened, taking the high road, overlooking the offense. He sees you being your best at work when people aren't giving you the credit. He sees you standing against the illness, staying in faith when you could be complaining.

Your time is coming. That suffering is a setup. As with my father, you're going to see the hand of God take you where you can't go on your own. Don't worry about the people who have tried to push you down. God is preparing a table for you in the presence of your enemies. They're going to see you promoted, honored, in a position of influence. It doesn't go unnoticed when you fight through health issues with a good attitude, still thanking God, still being good to others. You've gone through the suffering, now get ready for the greater—greater health, greater freedom, greater breakthroughs, greater victories.

Greater Honor Is Coming

In Genesis 29 is the story of two sisters, Rachel and Leah. When a young man named Jacob saw Rachel, he fell head over heels for her. It was love at first sight. The Scripture says, "Rachel was beautiful in every way, with a lovely face and a shapely figure." When God says you're fine, you know you're fine. Rachel had it going on. Jacob asked her father, Laban, if he could marry her. Laban said he could if he worked seven years for him. Jacob worked faithfully for those seven years, but Laban didn't keep his word. He tricked Jacob. At the weddings back then, the brides wore very thick veils,

so you couldn't see who was behind the veil. Jacob assumed the bride was Rachel, but it was Leah. The Scripture says, "Leah had weak eyes and was dull looking." I don't know what weak eyes mean, but I know what dull looking is. I have a brother named Paul.

Laban made sure Jacob had too much to drink at the wedding. The next morning when Jacob woke up, he saw weak eyes staring back at him and nearly passed out. He went and found Laban and said, "What in the world are you doing? You know our agreement was for Rachel." Laban responded, "Yes, but our tradition says the oldest daughter must be married first. Work for me another seven years and you can have Rachel." Jacob was so dumb—I mean *so in love*—that he worked another seven years and finally married Rachel, too. But the whole time, Jacob never really loved Leah. All of his attention was focused on Rachel. But Rachel was unable to have children and remained barren. Meanwhile, Leah gave him son after son, hoping this would win his affection, but it didn't change anything. Years later, Rachel finally gave birth to two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

All those years, Leah lived in a loveless marriage, feeling unwanted, not chosen, marginalized. I'm sure she was tempted to have low self-esteem, to not feel good about who she was. But God sees when you're not being treated right. He sees when you're being overlooked, pushed down, and discounted. Leah could have been depressed and gotten bitter, but she just kept suffering in silence, doing the right thing with a good attitude, not complaining. When it came time for God to choose a family line to bring Jesus through, He didn't choose one of Rachel's sons, even though she was the favorite wife. He didn't choose Joseph, whom we read so much about in the book of Genesis. He didn't choose Benjamin. He chose Leah's son Judah. Jesus came through the tribe of Judah. All of Leah's sons became founders of six of the twelve tribes of Israel.

What's the point? Even when people dishonor you, don't get discouraged. God knows how to honor you. He knows how to cause you to shine. People don't have the final say. They may try to discount you and make you feel less-than. Keep your head high. You're not who people say you are. You are who God says you are.

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He calls you a masterpiece. He says you are fearfully and wonderfully made. You have royal blood flowing through your veins. He's crowned you with favor. You may have to suffer in silence at times and do the right thing when it's not fair. You may have to work hard when you're not getting credit and be good to people who aren't good to you. God is keeping the records. When you go through much suffering, He promises that greater honor is coming. Greater favor. Greater influence. Those who discount you now will look up to you one day. People who won't give you the time of day will strive for your attention one day. God knows how to pay you back. He knows how to make your wrongs right.

When you're in tough times, keep this phrase playing in your spirit: *Greater is coming*. The difficulty is not there to defeat you; it's there to promote you. You may have lost some things in the past, and you've accepted that it's never going to happen. This is a new day. Things are shifting in your favor. God is saying to you what He said to David: "You're going to get everything back. Your joy is coming back, your health is coming back, your children, your dreams, opportunities, freedom. I believe and declare that nothing will be missing, large or small.

CHAPTER TWO

It's Just a Matter of Time

There are times in all our lives when we have things we're believing will change. We might be fighting an illness, struggling with an addiction, or dealing with fear, anxiety, or depression. We know that God has promised that He would restore our health, that our children would serve the Lord, that we would be free from the fear. We prayed, we believed, but we don't see anything improving. But what you can't see is that the moment you prayed, the source of what was coming against you was cut off in the unseen realm—the source of the fear, the source of the addiction, the source of the sickness. You may not see any manifestation for some time. There may not be any evidence that anything has changed. This is when many people get discouraged. There will always be a time period when it looks as though God didn't do what He promised. The fear still comes, the medical report hasn't improved, or the addiction is just the same. But what's feeding those things has been cut off. It just looks as though they're still alive. The truth is that the fear is dead, the addiction is dead, the trouble at work is dead. Don't get

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discouraged because you don't see anything happening. It's just a matter of time. What God promised you is on the way.

The Roots Are Dead

One time when Jesus was leaving the village of Bethany, He saw a fig tree off in the distance. He was hungry and walked over to get some of its figs to eat. But the tree didn't have any figs. He said to the tree, "May no person ever eat fruit from you again." He cursed the tree. But after He said it, nothing on the outside of the tree looked any different. It was just as healthy and full as before. I can hear the disciples whisper, "It didn't work this time. What happened? Did He lose His power?" They had seen Jesus speak to a blind man and heal his eyes. They had heard Him speak to the raging sea and calm the wind and the waters. But this time when He spoke, nothing changed. There was no evidence that what He'd said had happened.

But the next morning as they were passing by the tree, the Scripture says, "The disciples saw that it had withered from the roots." When Jesus spoke to the tree, nothing happened on the outside, but inside, down in the roots, the source was cut off. When the roots are dead, the tree is dead. It may still look alive, it may still have green leaves and wide branches, it may look healthy and strong, but it's just a matter of time before the outside catches up with the inside.

When Jesus spoke to the tree, nothing happened on the outside, but inside, down in the roots, the source was cut off.

It may look as though the sickness you're dealing with is still

alive, or the anxiety seems as bad as ever, or the addiction is just as strong. You've been praying and believing, wondering why God won't do something. God has done something. The moment you prayed, He cut off the source. That addiction looks alive, but if you could see the roots, you would realize it's dead. It's just a matter of time before the outside catches up. The sickness seems permanent. You feel as though you'll never get well. No, have a new perspective. The roots have been cut off. The sickness is dead. The depression is dead. The poverty is dead. Don't get discouraged because there are still leaves on the tree and nothing looks any different. Psalm 75 says, "The strength of the wicked is being cut off, and the power of the godly is being increased." You need to know that the power of everything that is trying to stop you is being cut off. It may be hindering you now, but it's only temporary. It's not going to last. It's lost its source. Every day it's withering; every day it's getting weaker. On the outside it may look the same, but inside it's drying up.

When Jesus spoke to the fig tree, there was no sign that anything had happened. There was no evidence that anything had changed. Maybe you're believing for something and you don't see any sign of things improving. You're speaking faith over your health, but the medical report is not getting better. You're praying for your child, but he or she is not getting back on course. If you just had some evidence, if you just had a little sign, then you would believe. But this is what faith is all about. You can't be moved by what you don't see; you have to be moved by what you know. "Father, thank You that the moment I prayed, You cut off the roots. I know that this sickness is not permanent.

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Healing is coming. I know that this addiction is not how my story ends. Freedom is coming. I know that this depression doesn't have the final say. Lord, thank You that it's withering and dying."

Some of the things you're worrying about, God has already done it. You haven't seen it, but in the unseen realm things have changed. The anxiety that you've been praying about, asking God to take away, it's already dead. The trouble at work, God has already cut off the source. Now do your part and stay in faith until it manifests. Keep thanking God, keep talking like you're free, keep thinking like you're healthy, keep acting like you're victorious.

Believe First

I talked to a man who had struggled with an addiction for many years. He said, "Joel, I asked God to help me, but nothing happened." He didn't see anything changing on the outside. It wasn't getting any easier, so he assumed that God wasn't doing anything. He lived with the mind-set that says, "I'm addicted. I can't get free. It's too strong." He was waiting to see the manifestation before he believed that God was working. But faith says you have to believe that when you prayed, God put the miracle in motion. You can't wait for the evidence and then you'll start believing. You have to believe first. You may not see any sign of it, but you have to know that deep down the source of that addiction has been cut off. When you know that the roots have been cursed, you'll have a different mind-set. Instead of thinking, *Maybe it will happen one day*, you'll know it's just a matter of time. God has already spoken. He's already cut off the roots. Now all you have to do is walk it out.

I told that man what I'm telling you: "You may not see anything happening, but the moment you prayed God did something."

Instead of thinking, *One day I'll be free*, try a new approach and say, "Father, thank You that I am free. Thank You that this addiction is dead. Thank You that it doesn't control me, that You've already put an end to it." He started living with the attitude that it was already cut off. He kept thanking God that He was free, talking like he was free.

Are you waiting for the evidence to believe what God said about you?

When I saw him six months later, he said that after twenty-two years of being addicted, he was totally free. Are you waiting for the evidence to believe what God said about you? Are you talking yourself out of it because you don't see any sign? If you get in agreement with God, you'll see what He's done inside show up on the outside. The source of what's trying to stop you has been cut off.

"Well, Joel, it seems as though it's still alive. It's seems as though it's stronger than ever." Don't be fooled by the outside. In our backyard we have some beautiful rose bushes. One day Victoria cut off one of the roses and brought it inside. The moment she cut it off, it was dead. It was separated from its source of life. But what's interesting is that it didn't look dead. It didn't look any different than all the other roses that were still on the bush. It was still beautiful, still colorful, still smelled great. She brought it inside and put it in a vase by the kitchen sink. For a couple of weeks it looked beautiful and healthy. But the whole time it was dead. It was just a matter of time before it withered.

You may have things in your life like that rose. The moment you prayed about the addiction, the depression, or the fear, it died. The sickness has been cut off. But it looks just the same. You don't feel any different. You don't see anything changing. That's okay. That doesn't mean it's still alive. That doesn't mean your prayer didn't work. At some point, like the rose in the vase, it's going

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thinking.*

to begin to wither. You're going to see what God promised you come to pass. The Scripture says, "Don't faint in your mind." The first place we lose the battle is in our thinking. Thoughts will tell you, *Nothing happened when you prayed. You'll never get well. You'll never break the addiction. You've struggled for years.* Don't believe those lies. The roots have been cut off. It's just a matter of time before you see things change in your favor. What's trying to stop you is temporary.

We have some friends who send us a box of a dozen rose buds every Easter. They have long stems with a rose bud on the top. What's interesting is that even though the rose is dead, even though it's been cut off from the bush, when you put the stem in water, the rose will bloom. It's dead, but it will still blossom. It has no life, but it will still get bigger, expand, increase. There are times when, even though God has cut off something in your life, it will get bigger. Even though He's cut off the sickness, it will increase. Even though He's cut off the trouble, it will blossom. You'll be tempted to think, *There's no way this sickness is dead. It's getting worse. There's no way this anxiety is*

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dead. It's increasing, not decreasing. No, stay encouraged. It may bloom, it may blossom, but it's still dead. It's just a matter of time before it withers. All through the day you have to say, "Father, thank You that the source of this trouble has been cut off. Thank You that You cursed the roots of this fear. You spoke to the addiction. You commanded the sickness to wither and die. So, Lord, I am staying in agreement with You. I know it's just a matter of time before things change in my favor."

Don't Be Surprised by Opposition

When we were searching for property for a new sanctuary and went to try to acquire the Compaq Center, we had a lot of opposition. After a couple of years, we finally got enough council members to be for us, and we won the vote. We were so excited. We knew God gave us the victory. But three days later, a big real estate company filed a federal lawsuit to try to keep us from moving in. This company was the largest taxpayer in Texas. I had thought the opposition was over, but it was just beginning. Now we had this giant coming against us. They had more resources, more influence, and more experience. I was tempted to get worried and think, *God, what are we going to do? We don't have a chance.* But I had to do what I'm asking you to do. I said, "God, I believe the strength of those coming against us has been cut off. They're bigger, they're stronger, but I know that Your being for us is more than the world being against us."

Like the rose bud that blooms even though it's dead, don't be surprised if you have opposition that blossoms, adversity that blooms, and giants that try to stop you. They look like they have the upper hand. Stay in peace. Their source has been cut off. What you're up against is only temporary. It's just a matter of time before you see the hand of God. When all the odds were against us, it looked as though the Compaq Center could be tied up in the courts for years. We were told the other side would never back down. But out of the blue one day they called and said they wanted to meet. We met with them, and they agreed to not only let us have the building but to lease us nine thousand covered parking spaces. That two-year legal battle suddenly came to an end.

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before you see the hand
of God.*

You may have things you thought were dead—the addiction, the anxiety, the trouble at work, the legal situation—but now they’re blossoming, they’re getting bigger. You think, *My prayer must not have worked*. No, the roots have been cut off. There may be blooming, but the source is gone. What you’re dealing with is only temporary. It can’t last without the source. That rose bloom looks so beautiful for a couple of weeks. It seems so alive and looks so permanent, but suddenly it withers. You’re about to see some of these “suddenlies.” Get ready. That thing you’ve been praying about, that you believe the roots have been cut off but it seems like it’s still alive, is about to wither. The addiction is about to suddenly go. The depression is about to suddenly stop. The opposition is about to suddenly be defeated. The sickness is about to suddenly change. It may be blossoming now, but that’s a sign it’s on the way out. That’s a sign that you’re close to your breakthrough. You’re close to a new level. You’re close to freedom like you’ve never seen.

Don’t be moved by what’s temporary. When you walk into someone’s house and see a beautiful bouquet of flowers, they look so nice and smell so good. You never think that the flowers are dead. In a few weeks, they’ll be thrown out. When negative things are blooming in your life, just like those flowers, they may look vibrant and healthy like they’ll be there forever, but you need to remind yourself that they’re temporary. The sickness looks really impressive, but I know a secret: It’s not going to last. The trouble in your marriage seems so permanent, but this too shall pass. It

Don't be moved by what's temporary.

may seem as though the child who is off course will miss his destiny. No, the source of that trouble has been cut off. It’s blooming now, but that doesn’t mean it’s not dead. There are things you have prayed about that God has already put an end to. The fear is dead. The sickness is dead. The addiction is dead. The

poverty is dead. It may take a little time to see it come to pass, but it's on the way. Don't get talked out of it. Don't let what's not happening discourage you. Keep believing, keep thanking God, and you're going to see what God has spoken over your life.

Don't Be Fooled by the Roar

I've heard it said the enemy makes the most noise when he's on the way out. Oftentimes when Jesus told the demons to come out of people, they would let out a loud scream, cause a lot of noise and commotion. Don't panic when the enemy stirs up trouble, when things you thought were dead are blossoming—the sickness looks like it's spreading, your children are acting worse, your finances are getting tighter. That's a sign that the enemy is on the way out. He makes the most commotion when he's about to leave.

The enemy makes the most noise when he's on the way out.

There was a lady who had a dream in which she was in her house and this very evil-looking person came in. She was watching from over the second floor banister as he started taking her possessions and putting them in a large bag. In the dream she began to pray, saying, "In the name of Jesus I have authority over you. Leave my things alone." The man mocked her and said, "I'm not afraid of you or your prayers." He continued going through the house and taking more of her things. She said again, "You have to go." He laughed and said, "I don't have to leave. Your prayers don't stop me. You don't have any authority over me." But she noticed that while he was saying this, he started putting her things back. He kept mocking her, laughing, causing a commotion, but at the same

time he was returning everything he took. This went on until he had put everything back in its proper place. Then he ran out of the house, and she could hear him down the street, still saying, “I’m not afraid of you. You have no authority over me.”

The Scripture says, “The enemy goes about like a roaring lion.” He’s not a lion, but he’ll make a lot of noise like one. He’ll talk a lot of trash, but his roar doesn’t match his bite. Sometimes when we pray, it doesn’t seem as though anything is happening. It’s as though the enemy is laughing at us, mocking us, saying, “You’re not free from this addiction. You’ll never get well. Your kids will never get back on track.” You have to just stay in faith,

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keep praying, keep believing. All the time when the enemy’s making such a commotion, stirring up trouble, what he won’t tell you is that he’s putting everything back. He may laugh, but he’s putting your children back, he’s putting your freedom back, he’s putting your finances back, and he’s putting your health back.

Don’t panic when things get worse, when what you thought was dead looks as though it came back to life. God is still on the throne. He has the final say.

Believe It When You Pray

Jesus says in Mark 11, “Whatever you desire when you pray, believe that you receive it, and you will have it.” He doesn’t say to believe that you receive it when you see it. He doesn’t say to believe when your health turns around or when the breakthrough comes. The

key is that you have to believe it happened when you pray. You have to believe it when nothing looks any different. It's when the medical report hasn't improved. It's when your finances haven't turned around. It's when the fig tree looks the same. There's no evidence, but you believe when you prayed that your healing came. You believe when you prayed that your finances turned around. You have to receive it in your spirit before it's going to happen in the natural. You have to be healed in your spirit before you'll see healing in your body. You have to be prosperous in your spirit before you'll be prosperous in the natural.

Too often we believe that we're going to receive it, but we say, "One day I'm going to get well. One day my children are going to do right. One day I'm going to break this addiction." That's going to limit us. The prayer of faith says, "When I pray according to God's Word, I believe it happens right when I pray. I have it in my spirit." If you don't receive it in your spirit first, you won't see it in the natural.

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When my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1981, she and my father prayed for healing on December 11. On that day my mother believed she received her healing. She had just been told by the doctors that she had a few weeks to live. Her skin was yellow and she weighed eighty-nine pounds. Nothing in the natural said she was healed. But on that day, she not only prayed but she believed that she received healing. For months nothing looked any different, and she didn't feel any better. It looked as though the cancer was winning, but she kept saying, "Father, thank You that when we prayed on December 11, I received my healing. I believe that day the tide of the battle turned in my health." She

kept thanking God, kept calling herself well, and kept declaring healing Scriptures over her life. “I will live and not die. With long life God satisfies me.” She started getting better and better. Eventually, she was completely well. The healing she received in her spirit when she wasn’t well eventually showed up in her physical body.

When you believe that you receive when you pray, you don’t keep asking God to do it. You start thanking Him. If I’ve already received my healing, I don’t have to ask for healing again. I don’t have to keep begging God, “Please heal me.” Instead, start saying, “Father, thank You that I am healed. Thank You that I am blessed.” Maybe you’re believing for a scholarship. “Father, I’m asking You for this scholarship. I believe that I receive it right now. I believe it happened.” You receive it by faith. From now on, say, “Father, thank You for the scholarship.” You just keep thanking God, keep talking like it’s going to happen. You may not see anything changing. Every voice says it’s never going to work out. That’s when you have to dig down deep and say, “I am not going to give up on what God promised me. I’m not going to let negative thoughts talk me out of it. I’m not going to let what’s not happening discourage me. I know that what I received in my spirit is on the way.”

Don’t Lose Your Cows

The writer of Hebrews says, “Hold fast the confession of your faith.” You have to hold fast to what God put in your heart. There are forces constantly trying to convince us that what God said is never going to happen. “It’s been too long. There’s no sign of it. It would have happened by now. Just accept that it’s not going to work out.” Don’t believe those lies. In the unseen realm, things

have already changed. The miracle is already in motion. The roots of what's trying to stop you have already been cut off. It's just a matter of time before the manifestation shows up. Now don't get talked out of it. You may be tempted to let it go. You're about to give up on your dream, your healing, your child, or your freedom. No, get a new grip on it. It's closer than you think. You wouldn't be reading this if it wasn't about to happen.

There are forces constantly trying to convince us that what God said is never going to happen.

When I was growing up, my father would hold a big conference at our church every Thanksgiving. It was one of the highlights of the year. He would bring in hundreds of missionaries we support from around the world. For one conference, he decided he wanted to feed everyone at Lakewood. Months before the conference, he prayed and asked God to give him two beef cows so he would have enough meat for all the people. He believed that he received it when he prayed, but week after week went by and there was no sign of any cows. He kept believing, telling the church the cows were on the way, but every thought said, *You're wasting your time. Nobody has ever given you a cow. You better go down to Chick-fil-A and eat more chicken.* As the date got close, thoughts whispered, *You have the money. Just buy the cows. It's not going to happen.* He finally got worn down, quit talking about the cows, and went out and bought the meat for the conference.

A couple of weeks later he had a dream one night in which he saw a huge snake out in a field. He could see the distinct outline of two cows inside that snake. When he woke up, God said to him, "I just want you to know that you let the enemy have your two cows." Those cows already belonged to my father. In the unseen world, they were on the way. But when we quit believing, we get

discouraged and say, “I’m never going to get well. The medical report looks just the same. I’ll never get out of debt. I’ll never meet the right person. Look at the fig tree. It hasn’t changed.” My message to you is to not lose your cows. What you received in your spirit is en route. It’s just a matter of time before it shows up. Hold fast your profession. Keep believing, keep thanking God, keep talking like it’s coming.

God is faithful. Don’t let the lack of evidence convince you that nothing is happening. In the unseen realm, things are changing in your favor. Forces that have stopped you in the past have been broken. The roots of the depression, the addiction, or the sickness have been cut off. It may look as though it’s alive and nothing has

*Forces that have stopped
you in the past have been
broken.*

changed, but stay in faith. It’s just a matter of time and you’re going to see what God promised. The reason it’s more difficult, the reason it feels as though it’s getting worse, is that the enemy is on his way out. I

believe and declare that what you received in your spirit is about to show up in the natural. Get ready for promotion, healing, breakthroughs, freedom, the right people, and vindication.