

Chapter Three



Unlikely Heroes

“Thos that you would least expect.”

We shall never forget September 11, 2001. On that day and the dark days surrounding, countless ordinary men and women became extraordinary heroes. So many stories were recorded of unusual acts of bravery where one by one these heroes risked everything to reach out to their fellow man in the midst of such a horrific event. America was changed, never to be the same again. We listened to these stories night after night and watched as their faces shadowed our lives and left us grieving the loss of so many.

We found hope in the heroes, for the heroes of 9/11 brought unity. As we learned of each brave attempt, our hearts were woven together by threads of love, compassion, and our faith in God. But each one of these men and women were only ordinary people.

They were ordinary people who found themselves in situations that demanded so much more than they ever realized they possessed. They were the ordinary achieving the extraordinary.

When I think of heroes, people like those of 9/11 immediately come to mind. When I think of heroes, I think of remarkable men and women who possess strength and courage, who risk it all for the sake of others.

How about you? Do you feel you share those same admirable qualities of a hero? Or like so many of us, do you feel you are destined to be ordinary? Do you question how God could use someone like you? Do you have doubts and fears that hinder the pathway to your destiny? Has your failures blocked off the hopes and dreams you once possessed?

God has a divine plan for our lives. He created you to be His instrument to accomplish many amazing things, but we must yield to His plan to fulfill the destiny God has for us. So what stops us from fulfilling this divine destiny?

If God has a plan for our lives, the enemy has his own evil schemes to obstruct God's plan. Everyday we are in hand-to-hand combat with Satan at some level, and his tactics are unregulated and deceptive, (2 Cor. 11:14, 1 Jn. 8:44b). Satan watches, listens, and waits. He listens to our words, he sees what makes us cry, and he knows what makes us explode in anger. Aware of our every passion and knowing exactly what makes us tick, he seeks out our weaknesses. He waits for the moment to turn us directly away from our destiny and from fulfilling God's plan for our lives. Reminding us of our faults and failures, he attempts to blind us with doubt and fear, leaving us feeling insignificant and insecure. So we must guard against his tactics and focus our attention on God and His guidance.

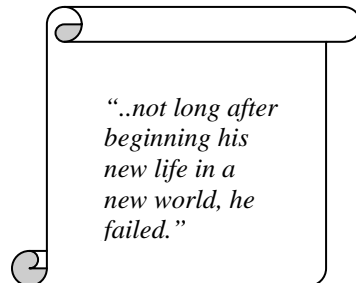
Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil
walks about like a roaring lion,
seeking whom he may devour.
Resist him, steadfast in the faith. . .

1 Peter 5:8-9a

Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

We can read all throughout the word of God about men and women who had a divine mandate from Heaven to do what God called, ordained, and anointed them to do. When we examine the lives of these people, we discover they were ordinary people just as you and I. People who have faced the same fears, frustrations, and failures we do today. Incredibly, many of them are listed as heroes of the faith in Hebrews chapter eleven.



As we read historical accounts of each life, we may wonder how it could be possible to classify any of these men and women as heroes. Who were these men and women and how did they become heroes in the Faith Hall of Fame? As I like to call Hebrews chapter 11.

Among them we find Noah, a man who honored God. His story starts in Genesis chapter six with man having become so corrupt and evil that God is going to destroy him from the face of the earth with a catastrophic flood. But *by faith Noah, warned of God. . .prepared an ark to the saving of his house, (Heb. 11:7)*. While others mocked him and laughed at him, he worked diligently year after year. When all others turned away, he trusted God and followed His instructions with detail and precision preparing the ark on a dry land where it had never rained.

As the storm began, the raging waters surged throughout the entire earth drowning all existence, Noah and his family was tucked away safely in the ark, held by the mighty hand of God.

Yet what happened to Noah? As soon as the ark landed securely on dry ground, he built an altar to praise God for His safety and protection. However, not long after beginning his new life in a new world, he failed. In a drunken stupor, Noah took off his clothes and lay naked in his tent. His own sons walked into the tent backward, ashamed of the nakedness of their father and covered him. Noah was now a disgrace to his family. Noah experienced failure. Gen 9: 20-23.

Then there is Moses. Moses was a mighty leader who led multitudes of Israelites out of captivity. Moses witnessed some of the greatest miracles this world has ever known that still continue to astound us to this day. The great Red Sea was parted as the Israelites

passed through on dry ground, (Ex. 14). In chapter sixteen and seventeen, Manna from Heaven provided their nourishment and water from a rock quenched their thirst.

Nehemiah 9:12 tells us that He *led them with a pillar of cloud by day, and with a pillar of fire by night, to illuminate the way they should go.* Miracle upon miracle is recorded in God's Word as Moses allowed God to use him to lead the Hebrew children into the land He had promised.

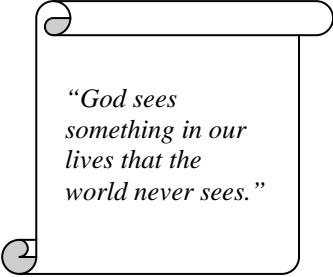
Yet after forty years in the wilderness, God told Moses that the very people He had been called to lead, the very people who had watched as God called the horrible plagues on Egypt, the very people who had witnessed these mighty miracles, would go back to their rebellious and wicked ways. Moses himself was not even allowed to enter the Promise Land because of his failure and disobedience at the waters of Meribah, (Num. 20:7-13). Even though he is remembered as a pastor with a dynamic, effective ministry, Moses also failed.

There are others heroes listed there like King David. Even though he was a murderer and adulterer, he was still the anointed king. Then there is strong Samson who used the very gift God gave him to attract women and take out revenge on the ones who wronged him. Let's not forget Rahab, the harlot. This Canaanite woman was an idolater who was caught up in sexual immorality disguised by religious practices that labeled her lewd acts sacred. Yes, she even made the list.

Murderers. Harlots. Drunkards. Heroes? Are they the kind of people we would aspire for our children to become?

Could we categorize them as successful? Not by the world's standards, which define success by where we live, what we

drive, how much money we have in our bank account, and how high on the professional ladder we climb. But they were definitely significant in God's kingdom, and He used them to fulfill His plan.



“God sees something in our lives that the world never sees.”

For children of God, success is defined differently. In the lives of God's people, success is defined as a life that is lived in a manner that pleases God.

Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;
But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me,
that I *am* the Lord, exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight,” says the Lord.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

The people God uses are people He takes from somewhere they never should have been and places them where He has destined them to be. God sees something in our lives that the world never sees. The world may call us misfits. The world may call us insignificant. But God specializes in taking a mess and transforming it into a divine miracle.

Yes, Noah, Moses, and David were ordinary people just like you and me, but when they allowed God to take control of their lives, they became part of something extraordinary. We remember them as mighty heroes of the faith because they simply chose to put their faith in the mighty hand of God.

These people were products of failure. Just like them, every single one of us today is a product of some kind of failure. However, the Bible tells us that God is a God of restoration and renewal. God in His grace, through the power of the Spirit, does what we cannot do for ourselves. He redeems us from our past and gives us a new start.

Perhaps you have experienced a great failure, something so great that you think it has utterly destroyed your chances of ever becoming anything significant in God's kingdom. Maybe you have cheated, lied, stole, Maybe you have committed adultery. Perhaps you are just simply a mess, and you have exhausted all your strategies. All of your tactics have failed. Satan has convinced you that you are done. You have fallen too far, and stooped too low, and there is no way you can win. But our all-powerful God knows right where you are. He knows all your faults and failures and He supplies amazing grace that is all-sufficient. No matter where you are or what you have become, there is redemption, restoration, and renewal. There is life, hope, and there is encouragement that only comes through Jesus Christ.

When the world casts you away as a failure, God steps up and shows you that He can take a broken vessel and mold it into a masterpiece. The spirit of God in your life will

change you. The sins of the flesh are overpowered by the Spirit of God. Have you had a failure in your life? He is more than able to restore the years that sin has devoured and Destroyed, (Joel 2:25). If you confess your sins He is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness, (1 Jn. 1:9). He will remove your sin and your guilt by the power of His Spirit. He is your redemption, and He has a divine plan just for you, (Jer. 29:11).

For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works
that God prepared long ago to be our way of life.

Ephesians 2:10 (RSV)