

What Others Are Saying about Bishop Henry Fernandez and *Favor Unleashed*

“Sometimes the easiest thing to say is the hardest thing to believe. Most of us have no problem saying we’re blessed, but living like we actually believe it is an entirely different thing. In *Favor Unleashed*, Henry Fernandez shows how God desires for each of us to live a life that’s ultimately narrated by His grace.”

—Steven Furtick
Pastor, Elevation Church
New York Times best-selling author

“Bishop Henry B. Fernandez is a dedicated spiritual leader in our community. He strives to empower others through his generosity and support. I truly appreciate the positive difference he makes in the lives of so many each and every day.”

—Marty Kiar
Broward County Property Appraiser
Fort Lauderdale, FL

“*Favor Unleashed* will transform your life! Bishop Fernandez’s deep passion for faith will inspire you to take action. This book will activate your faith, encourage your heart, and stir your soul to victory!”

—Dr. Traci Lynn
CEO and founder, Traci Lynn Jewelry

FAVOR UNLEASHED

HENRY FERNANDEZ



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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**FAVOR UNLEASHED:
EMBRACING GOD’S BEST FOR YOU**

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to every individual who is seeking to fulfill his or her destiny. Yes, this book is dedicated to you! Deep inside every person, the loving heavenly Father has placed a passion to succeed—to attain everything for which He created us. Although each of us face challenges and obstacles in life, along with many responsibilities that compete for our attention, God has also given each of us the spirit of a warrior that compels us to “fight the good fight” in front of us until we embrace all that He has ordained for us.

I dedicate this book to you because you are such a person. Over the past twenty-five years I have had the joy of helping many people just like you discover and embrace God’s destiny and purpose for their lives. It is individuals like you who inspire and motivate me, because I know the good plan He has for you. He loves you completely, He has delivered you from all your sin and failures—even those you’re still struggling with—and He stands ready to chase you down with blessings, prosperity, and purpose for every area of your life. May God richly bless you as you step into His unfolding, perfect plan!

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FOREWORD

F*avor Unleashed: Embracing God's Best for You* is a rare combination of biblical insight and catalytic personal development. It contains the proof that God does not want to withhold anything from you but rather wants to load you to capacity with benefits through discovering the dimension of favor.

Gaining an understanding of the phenomenon of favor has the power to quantum-leap your life and empower you to significantly impact the world! Throughout history, we can see that those who had favor on their lives made the greatest impact on society and excelled in ways that would not have been otherwise possible.

In my own life, favor has been the indispensable key that has opened countless doors of opportunity for me to fulfill my destiny in shaping the trajectory of economies and nations.

I am so thankful that my dear friend Bishop Henry Fernandez has written this important book about how to unleash the power of God's favor in our lives. He is well qualified and intimately acquainted with this dimension of unmerited blessing and unusual grace. I have personally witnessed divine favor upon his life and I believe that there

is a supernatural transference for you within the pages of this book as you devour its contents.

Every Christian book fills a vital role. However, *this* one is a masterpiece in preparing generations to reside in a unique dimension for a mission that goes far beyond the average mandate.

Presented within these pages is a gushing geyser of truth that has the potential to ignite your dreams to flourish as you encounter the power of favor. If, in the pursuit of your dreams, you've felt stuck, restless, discouraged, not good enough, or disqualified, then this book is for you, as those are only indications that you have outgrown your present reality and you're ready to enter the often discounted, but extremely potent, dimension of favor. Bishop Henry Fernandez eloquently takes the concept of favor to places it has never been before so that you can go to places you have never gone before.

Prepare to receive enlightenment. Prepare to receive practical insights that will forever change your life—prepare to receive favor!

—*Dr. Cindy Trimm*
Founder, Cindy Trimm Ministries
International conference host and speaker
Bestselling author of *Commanding Your Morning*,
Prevail, and over forty other titles
www.cindytrimm.com

INTRODUCTION: YOU WERE CREATED FOR SUCCESS!

I want to start this book off right away with a little secret:

You are blessed.

That's right! In the here and now, in every area of your life, you are highly favored. Almighty God—the source of all blessings and good that comes to any of us—has deposited in your heavenly account everything you need to succeed and prosper beyond your wildest expectations.

All the dreams that you have held so deeply in your heart for many years, the ones that you may have given up on long ago as unattainable, are still in active mode, waiting for you like a trusted friend. The plans, expectations, goals, and ambitions from your past that may have faded into dim memories—those that are God-inspired, prophetic, and etched into your very soul—have the same power and potential as when the heavenly Father first dropped them into your spirit.

Yes, if I know anything about how the kingdom of God operates, I know this with certainty: You are blessed!



IF I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HOW THE KINGDOM OF GOD OPERATES,
I KNOW THIS WITH CERTAINTY: YOU ARE BLESSED!

EVERYONE FACES ADVERSITY

Now, you may think that these are easy words for me to say, something I am tossing off casually in an effort to help people who are struggling in life to feel better about themselves. Perhaps the reality of your own circumstances seems to be proof of anything *but* God's abundant blessing. Maybe, like so many people today, you are struggling financially, physically, or emotionally; maybe you're stuck in a job you hate or maybe you feel paralyzed in a dead-end position. Maybe you're suffering through the effects of a broken marriage or a relationship that has ended, or maybe you're heartbroken over a child who has made some poor choices.

Every person, at some point in life, faces hardships and trials. When we're in over our heads in the tides of life that pound against every single one of us, it can be easy to slide into hopelessness and despair, to begin to think that things will never change, to assume we'll never find the place of destiny and success that every person craves. *I'll never get out of debt. I'll never find where I fit in life. I'll never finish school and find a good job. I'll never be healed. I'll never find that significant someone to share my life with.*

The variations of "I'll never," "I can't," and "It will never happen" that our minds throw at us are endless, and each self-prophecy of failure and defeat seems to plunge us deeper into despair.

THE POWER OF GOD'S GRACE

I want to tell you from personal experience that if you find yourself in such a mode of thinking or with such an attitude, then you

aren't counting on the most powerful resource known to humanity—a power that is even now available to you, right this second: God's unending grace. "But what is grace?" you might be asking. "I've heard the word, and I know it's supposed to be something good that God has for me. But what is it, really, and how can it possibly make a difference in my life?"

Two simple but divinely powered words will answer your questions: *unmerited favor*. Those two words make all the difference between failure and success. Those two words indicate God's desire to do you good despite your unworthiness and your absolute inability to help out. You can't gain God's grace by your own efforts, you can't increase its flow in your life by trying a little harder. In fact, just the opposite is true. Our own ham-handed efforts to "help God out" in guiding our lives inevitably land us in a world of trouble and grief.

OUR OWN HAM-HANDED EFFORTS TO "HELP GOD OUT" IN GUIDING OUR LIVES INEVITABLY LAND US IN A WORLD OF TROUBLE AND GRIEF.



The problem is that while many of God's people today acknowledge the *concept* of grace—that they are saved from their sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—they really don't understand the *power* of God's grace—His unmerited favor—to give them success and victory in every area of their lives. God tells us in His Word that He is willing, able, and ready, through Jesus Christ, to meet all of our needs out of His unlimited storehouse of riches.¹ We are the King's kids and He has given us open access to His heavenly account which we can draw on at any time!

1. See Philippians 4:19.



WE ARE THE KING'S KIDS AND HE HAS GIVEN US OPEN ACCESS TO HIS HEAVENLY ACCOUNT WHICH WE CAN DRAW ON AT ANY TIME!

A PRODIGAL MENTALITY

The Christians who live out their days as if their heavenly Father is reluctant to give them anything are like the Prodigal Son. Jesus tells the story in Luke 15 of this young man who left the home of his wealthy and generous father and wasted all of his inheritance on drunken, foolish living. When he came to his senses and decided to return to his father, this unworthy son came home with the full expectation of living the remainder of his days as a mere slave in his father's house. It wasn't until he was confronted with the full force of his father's deep compassion toward him, of his father's great love for him despite his failures and the pain he had caused, that the Prodigal Son understood his father had received him back as though he had never left.

I am reminded of an old story about a man who, in his youth, left a loving home and community where his father was a well-known, wealthy, and highly respected businessman. After years adventuring around the country and wasting his life and opportunities on worthless pursuits, the man one day found himself back in the city where he had grown up, a hopeless, broken wreck living on whatever he could beg from passersby on the street.

Ashamed of being recognized as the no-good son who broke his mother's heart, sullied his father's good name, and threw away his fortune and future, the man crept around town for months bumming a dollar here and a meal there from those he was sure wouldn't know him. One day in a crowd he touched a stranger on the shoulder and asked in a shaky voice, "Sir, could you spare a dollar to help

me get something to eat?” As the stranger turned around, the man was shocked to look into the face of his own father, who immediately recognized his long-lost boy and threw his arms around him. “My son!” he cried, “I’ve finally found you. A dollar, you say? Don’t you realize that all I have is yours and I’ve been waiting for you to return? Welcome home!”

ARE YOU MISSING SOMETHING?

Are you like that broken-down man today? Have you lost sight of the wondrous riches of God’s inheritance for you, bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ? Have years of wandering, wounding, brokenness, and despair left you blind to the reality of who you are and the authority that is yours through Christ? Have you lost the hope of tomorrow, the assurance of a rich destiny that is the treasure of every true child of God? Is the grace of God—the unmerited favor that He promised for you—nothing more than a meaningless word?

Maybe the above scenario is not where you’re at. Perhaps you’re doing just fine in life, with a good job and income, a comfortable lifestyle, a great home and family. Maybe by all the measurements the world uses, you are a success. Still, I’d be willing to bet, there’s a nagging doubt somewhere deep inside you that no one else can really see. For all that you’ve accomplished, for all the accolades, prestige, and esteem of others, there is an emptiness and dissatisfaction that you just can’t shake. As you take stock of your past and reflect on your future, you’re wondering if you’ve missed out on something important. What’s that all about? Is there more to life than you’ve built by your own efforts?

Or maybe you’re wondering what would happen if you woke up one morning to find yourself losing the things you value. What if your company downsizes and you suddenly find yourself looking for a new job? Or what if the business you’ve taken years of sweat and toil to build into a successful venture begins losing momentum, the valued customers slowly disappearing? What if a simple visit to the doctor

for your annual physical reveals a life-threatening ailment? What if you lose a loved one who means the world to you?

What if, in the saddest scenario of all, nothing changes and you come to the end of your life having succeeded financially, relationally, and in every other earthly sphere—but have nothing of eternal value to show for all the years of life you lived? What if, as Jesus put it, you gain the whole world but lose your soul?²

REACHING HIGHER

The truth of the matter is that whether you are living at a high level of success and accomplishment and have found a fair degree of personal satisfaction in life or you are struggling in any of a number of areas to find your place and purpose, the Creator of the universe and our heavenly Father has so much more for each of us than meets the eye.

Yes, that includes the financial favor necessary to meet our needs and those of our family and loved ones; a job, career, or calling that is meaningful and lines up with our abilities and interests; and successful, fulfilling relationships that don't hurt us emotionally. God has a destiny in the here and now for each of us with success, victory, and peace written all over it.

But there is more.

Part and parcel of all that success is something that can't be measured with financial security, a satisfying vocation, solid relationships, or anything else this world can give. That *something* is really *someone*—Jesus—who said that He came so that each of us might have joy and satisfaction in every area of life. For those of you who know the story of Jesus—how He came as God's Son, lived, died, and rose again—you realize that His promise of abundance and blessing in every corner of our lives cost Him everything He had.

2. See Matthew 16:26.

This book is all about showing you how you can access the abundance that Jesus Christ purchased for you on the cross of Calvary, and how you can live in that abundance every day for the rest of your life. If the abundance you need right now means improved finances, a better education and a career or job move, healing in your body, and restored and renewed relationships, take heart, you are on the right path.

Or if that abundance you seek tends more toward a renewal inside yourself, a peace of mind and heart, a closer relationship with God, and a life that will matter for all eternity, again, you have come to the right place!

Stay tuned and read on, because every chapter is packed with inspiring and motivational stories, simple godly counsel, and challenging advice that will help you move up to the next level of God's destiny for you.

THE SEEDS OF TRUE GREATNESS

I am the greatest!”

It’s not difficult to remember who made those famed words his bold calling card throughout a storied athletic career. Cassius Clay, destined to become known to the world as legendary heavy-weight boxing champion Muhammad Ali, first declared himself to be the “greatest” before his February 25, 1964, bout with then-heavy-weight-champion Sonny Liston. Considered outmatched in nearly every department by the notoriously hard-hitting, ruthless, and far more experienced Liston, the twenty-two-year-old newcomer to professional boxing was making quite a prediction when he guaranteed to newspaper reporters that Liston would “fall in eight to prove that I’m great.”¹

But when newcomer Muhammad Ali, a long-shot seven-to-one underdog in the fight, easily stopped Liston after only six rounds, sports reporters and fight fans began to wonder if the brash young boxer might know something about his ability that they had missed. And, indeed, over the next several years, as he felled a long list of

1. Muhammad Ali, quoted in Thomas Hauser, *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1992), 61.

worthy opponents to become the only three-time heavyweight champion in history, Muhammad Ali proved that his words went beyond mere bragging by going down in history as the “greatest” boxer of all time.

EVERYONE WANTS GREATNESS

Believe it or not, what Muhammad Ali said goes to the very heart of something that dwells deep inside every person: the need for greatness. That’s right. If you look closely you will find in every human being the desire to excel, to be the best we can be, to be at the top of our game—in short, to be great.



IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY YOU WILL FIND IN EVERY HUMAN BEING
THE DESIRE TO EXCEL, TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE,
TO BE AT THE TOP OF OUR GAME—IN SHORT, TO BE GREAT.

From the homeless person on the street and the nameless face in the crowd, to kings, presidents, financial giants, and those whose names have become synonymous with some incredible achievement, every person, if he or she were honest, would admit that they are motivated by a desire for their lives to matter, to be validated by an accomplishment or purpose that is valued by those around them, and to build something that will survive even after they have left this earth.

Almost from the beginning of history men have strived to build and create that which is bigger, better, more grandiose, and more epic than anything that had been experienced before. Something that would serve as a monument to their greatness. Think of the Great Pyramid of Egypt, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, the Empire State Building, the Hoover Dam, or the Golden Gate Bridge.

Each is a testimony to the ingenuity and ability of people responsible for them, a legacy of sorts that has survived their own individual stories.

Think about the nations who spent vast fortunes and many years in an effort to go faster and further than anyone has before. Many Americans can still recall when John Glenn made his historic orbit of the earth in a spacecraft in 1962. Just seven years later two men would travel to and walk on the moon, and by the mid-1980s America was roaring into the great unknown on the historic space shuttle. Individuals like Neil Armstrong, “Buzz” Aldrin, and Sally Ride—along with a few who sacrificed their lives in space—have been immortalized for their contributions to this monumental endeavor.

Or in business and industry, Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Cornelius Vanderbilt leap to everyone’s mind as the men who started with nothing yet built vast empires and accumulated incredible wealth and power, all in their own personal quest for greatness. In recent years entrepreneurs and business magnates like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Oprah Winfrey have taken center stage, joined by a host of individuals who have made their mark in music, movies, media, and entertainment.

You get where I’m going with all of this: whether we achieve it or not, we all want to make our mark on this world. Whatever our economic, educational, or social station in life, all people are wired for greatness. That includes you and me.

I believe those seeds of greatness are planted in the human heart by God Almighty, whose plan is for every person to grow in true greatness and destiny as it is defined in His eternal economy. That means living a life marked by favor with God and man, enjoying incredible blessing and prosperity, and enjoying immeasurable value toward God and others.

That is the destiny I am believing and declaring for you, and the reason I penned this book.



SEEDS OF GREATNESS ARE PLANTED IN THE HUMAN HEART
BY GOD ALMIGHTY, WHOSE PLAN IS FOR EVERY PERSON
TO GROW IN TRUE GREATNESS AND DESTINY.

THE WRONG PATH

The world's formula for greatness—selfishly pursuing wealth, material possessions, accomplishments, acclaim, and power—is the only path that most people are aware of. They think it is the model they must follow, so they do, to their own ultimate heartache. One of God's greatest sorrows is to watch multitudes following the wrong path to greatness, when true greatness—body, soul, and spirit—is right within their grasp if they would but follow His plan!

Just take a look around you and you can see individuals dedicating their entire lives to pursuits that can never bring them true satisfaction. I never cease to be amazed at the efforts people go through to find success on the football gridiron, basketball court, baseball diamond, soccer field, or other athletic arena. Beginning even as kids, some folks spend many years of time, tears, and sweat equity in a desperate effort to win a few moments in the limelight of athletic greatness. And yet, even if they are able to scratch and claw their way to the top, those moments are over all too quickly, usually stolen away by someone who is a little bit better—a little “greater,” as it were.

Most people, in fact, despite the years they have dreamed and trained and competed, never quite make it to the top. Oh, they're good, maybe even superior in ability to many others. But in their minds, they never rose to the level of “great.” I once heard that hundreds of young men are signed every year to a professional baseball contract, but only about 3 percent will ever play an inning for a major league team. For the other 97 percent, their personal quest for greatness will fall short.

How many skilled and successful athletes can we name throughout the years who, although undeniably at the top of their game, never won a Super Bowl trophy, a World Series ring, an NBA title, or other championship that defined greatness in their sport? There is a clear sense of disappointment that hangs over them, a lack of validation for all their accomplishments, a nagging sense that in the long run they fell short of the “greatness” they pursued for so long.

It’s not just on the athletic field that people strive for illusive greatness, however. The enormous efforts people go through to be at the top in business, politics, media, music, and entertainment—all are tied in one way or another to a deep need to reach a high level of prestige and esteem and to be “somebody” in the eyes of the world. Maybe it is one more successful business deal or acquisition, another hit record, another trophy or award from their peers assuring them that they have reached the pinnacle of success.

The huge irony, of course, is that for those who *do* reach the plateau they have been assured will mark them as “great,” the achievement is almost invariably hollow and anticlimactic. How often have we heard individuals testify to this truth? How about the football star who finally wins a Super Bowl and relishes the experience for the few moments of fleeting joy, but the glory of the moment is soon gone and he asks, “Is that all there is? Was it really worth it?”

Or take the successful business mogul who finds himself increasingly dissatisfied with every million he makes, realizing that no matter how much he accumulates in wealth, influence, and power, he somehow never finds happiness.

How many actors or entertainers reach the end of their lives—or their popularity with the public—only to find that they have been forgotten or that the accolades they receive now fail to satisfy?

King Solomon, considered one of the wisest men who ever lived, had immense wealth, was successful in many things, and tried everything under the sun, yet at the end of it all he put it this

way: “*Meaningless! Meaningless!... Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.*”²

And yet our culture keeps trying, trying, trying, believing the lie that the world’s greatness brings happiness!

DO YOU HAVE THE STUFF OF GREATNESS?

Now don’t get me wrong! There is certainly nothing wrong with being a successful athlete, businessman, actor, singer, or entertainer, or in pursuing excellence in almost any endeavor on earth.

There are many fine people throughout history who have made their marks in this world because of their skills and success. But what about those who have tried and failed, or those whose lives, by all human accounting, are devoid of anything that could be counted as great in the eyes of others? Have they somehow missed out on achieving the ultimate prize of life—true greatness?

Or how about those who were blessed with great talent or skill in some particular area, but laziness, bad habits, an addiction, or some other self-imposed limitation held them back from reaching their true God-given potential? For example, while the legendary Mickey Mantle was considered one of the greatest baseball players of all time, in his later years he admitted that he was held back from all he might have accomplished by years of alcohol abuse—much of it during his playing days—that chipped away at his incredible skills and ultimately cut short his hall-of-fame career. “God gave me a great body to play with, and I didn’t take care of it,” Mantle revealed years after his playing days were over. “And I blame a lot of it on alcohol.”³

Tell me, friend, are such people disqualified because of their choices and wrong turns in life? Has true greatness eluded them?

2. Ecclesiastes 1:2 NIV.

3. Mickey Mantle, “Time in a Bottle,” *Sports Illustrated*, April 18, 1994.

How about your own experience? What dream do you hold deep in your heart? What do you want to accomplish or become that would bring you great satisfaction and joy to fulfill—something that would place a big exclamation point over your life? Is it finishing college and diving into a successful career? Is it building a thriving and prosperous business? Maybe you envision yourself as a gifted entrepreneur with a special ability to see a need and know how to make it profitable. Or have you always dreamed of becoming a skilled and successful musician, athlete, or someone else in the public eye? Maybe your dream of greatness means answering God's call as a pastor, teacher, or in some other aspect of ministry.

Now let me ask you: How would you feel if you were able to achieve your dream to the fullest? Just picture it: You've graduated *summa cum laude* and are immediately swept into your dream career, where you wow everyone with your aptitude for success in every venture. Or as an entrepreneur you have the "Midas Touch" that causes every project you're involved in to turn to pure gold. Or in the entertainment world your unusual talent is recognized, you shoot to the top, and you are recognized the world over. Or how about as that star athlete? There you are: the MVP your rookie year, and your team goes on to decisively win the championship.

Tell me: after all is said and done and you succeeded to the uttermost, would the greatness you achieved give you the happiness and joy that makes life worthwhile?

Or maybe you're at the other end of the spectrum, and through circumstances beyond your control, or through poor choices you have made in life, any success at all—let alone fulfilling a lifelong dream of personal greatness—seems as far away as the stars. Instead of dreaming, you're despairing. "The only thing I've been great at, Henry, is failure," you might tell me. "I don't think there is any way the dreams that I once had for life will ever be fulfilled. I've just gone too far down the wrong road."

GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR YOU

Friend, whatever your circumstances in life, whether you're dreaming of success or your life and future seem hopeless, I have some good news for you. You have a champion in your corner who is committed to raising you up to greatness in every area of your life. In medieval times, a skilled and courageous knight would often step forward to champion the cause of someone weaker and in deep need—someone who would otherwise be overwhelmed and destroyed by the foe. In your situation, no matter what it is, God is your Champion, your Deliverer, your Advocate, whose presence in your life ensures your victory and success against the storms and any enemy who tries to destroy you. God created you for success and prosperity, and it brings Him great joy to position you for His greatness, to take you right where you're at, and lead you on a pathway of divine destiny. His Word is clear that those have been His thoughts from the time He created you. He tells us that He has a plan for each of us to prosper us and to give us a clear future and a bright hope.⁴ Yes, God has greatness written boldly on the very blueprint of your life.



**GOD HAS GREATNESS WRITTEN BOLDLY ON
THE VERY BLUEPRINT OF YOUR LIFE.**

But let me be crystal clear: the greatness I'm talking about does not begin or end with earthly success. True greatness for you begins in the very heart of God, where your value and worth never change. It is always solid gold. You see, in His eyes, every person is of equal value.

4. See Jeremiah 29:11.

No one has greater worth than anyone else. No one gets extra points by what he or she accomplishes, and no one is penalized for failure or weakness.

And so, when you come to Him, whether you are “the greatest” in the world’s eyes, with a massive bank account and all that success can give, or you consider yourself a miserable “failure” because of difficult circumstances, your own mistakes, or even because of the actions and attitudes of others, the opportunities before the heavenly Father are equal: you are entitled to come to His throne of grace, mercy, and abundance with boldness and the expectation that He will hear and answer all your petitions.

It is important to remember that none of us come to God by our own righteousness and good works. In fact, the Bible emphasizes that every person on earth comes to God empty-handed, sinful, and in deep need of a Savior—and the only One who meets the requirements to be that Savior is God’s one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

NOT BY YOUR GOODNESS

Now, I know it is not popular in this day and age to talk about sin. It’s much easier—and more politically correct—to talk about misfortune, mistakes, and weaknesses. But please hear me: in order to reach the destiny of success and greatness to which God has called you in every area of life, you must start with the realization that sin—your actions, attitudes, and heart condition that run counter to God’s Word—prevents you from being God’s child and enjoying all the benefits of being a part of His family.

The good news is that when Jesus came to earth, died a cruel death, rose again, and went back to heaven to sit down at the right hand of the Father, He did it for one reason: to destroy the power that sin, sickness, death, poverty, and failure had over you, and to make

you an absolute, no-holds-barred child of God with all the rights and blessings that come with that designation.

When you take responsibility for your sin and all its consequences of failure and defeat, admitting to the Lord that you are not able to chart your own course, it is at that moment that the true seeds of greatness begin to germinate in your life. A great exchange takes place, as God removes the rags of your past failures and misery, replacing them with a robe of greatness and authority.

The Bible tells us that because God's children are made new through Jesus Christ, we actually take a seat in the spirit next to Him in "*heavenly places,*" where we have great power and authority to reign and rule wherever He has planted us.⁵

Now you might say, "Henry, you don't understand. I've blown it so many times. I've failed in everything I've tried. My past sins and mistakes are just too heavy." Friend, I've had hundreds of conversations with people who have told me these very things, or who have complained that they just haven't been given the breaks others have enjoyed, or who insist that they've been cursed with "bad luck" or have just had too many "bad breaks."

I tell those people the same thing that I am telling you right now: your life as a child of God isn't based on your failures, on "luck," or on having the right breaks. If you will simply choose it, your life can be totally guided by God's favor. God tells you that as His child, you have the true seeds of greatness—of His authority and power—deep inside you, and that because He is for you, *nothing can stand in your way.*

The same God who gave us His own Son to purchase you back from the realm of misery and destruction is the one who promises to freely open His storehouse to ensure that you have everything you need to be truly great, successful, and excellent on this earth—in whatever realm He has called you.

5. Ephesians 2:6.

YOU ARE JUST LIKE ABRAHAM!

The Bible says that as God's child through Jesus Christ, you are an heir of Abraham, one of the greatest men of the Bible. You are subject to the same promises God gave to Abraham! Let me tell you, friend, that that means you have the same seeds of greatness inside you, controlling your destiny.

When God called Abraham out and up into his destiny, He promised to make Abraham into a great nation, to bless him and his descendants with abundant increase, to make his name famous and distinguished, and to cause him and his seed to be a blessing to others wherever they went.⁶

But when God made that promise, there was a major obstacle in the way. Abraham had no son, and his wife, Sarah, was barren—unable to have children. In other words, there was no way other than God's direct intervention that the greatness He promised was going to come to pass in Abraham's life. Only by believing God's promises, following God's plan, and staying in faith, would Abraham be able to experience what God had promised him.

The same thing is true for you. The greatness God has promised you, placing it deep within your heart, will only come to fruition as you look to Him, obey His word, and keep your heart and mind encouraged and positive. That is what faith in God is all about. The Bible defines it as an assurance and confidence of what we are hoping for, and the absolute conviction that it is a done deal even before it happens.⁷

Even though Abraham is considered one of the Bible's major -league champions of faith, we know that, just like you and me, he too had to battle against doubt and fear. In fact, Scripture tells us of a disastrous choice he made when he took his eyes off of God as His provider and began to rely on human reason.

6. See Genesis 12:2.

7. See Hebrews 11:1.

You see, God had promised that Abraham's heir would come through his wife Sarah. But after years of waiting and wondering, during which Sarah had no children, Abraham's faith began to falter, and he decided to "help" God by having a child with Sarah's handmaiden—an act of disobedience that changed the course of history.

However, that misstep in Abraham's walk of faith did not cause God to change His plan and promise in Abraham's life. No, God's mercy, grace, and favor was still in operation, and after leading Abraham through the wilderness and seasoning him in faith through years of perseverance, God capped it all off with an incredible miracle, causing Sarah to bear the promised heir, Isaac, when she was an old woman and well past child-bearing years.

YOU ARE NOT DISQUALIFIED

There is a lesson in Abraham's life for all of those who think that their past mistakes and failures have disqualified them from experiencing God's best for their lives. While it is true that there were serious consequences that came as a result of Abraham's doubt and disobedience, in the history of faith's champions written in Scripture, there is no mention of Abraham's misstep! What's recorded instead is a testimony of his commitment to believe God until the promise came to pass.

Likewise, in each of our lives, God looks past our failures, missteps, shortcomings, our fear, doubt, and unbelief, and He fixes His eyes on the divine destiny—that place of greatness—He has ordained for each of us. When we turn to Him in repentance and renew our commitment to believe Him and His Word, to follow His leadership, and to wait for His timing, God is emphatic and intentional in His response of favor on our lives. His love for us is so deep, His commitment to our success is so complete, that He will spare no expense from His unlimited storehouse and withhold no intervention from the angelic troops who await His orders, until His will is completed in the lives of His weakest and most needy children.

I am reminded of the story of British sprinter Derek Redmond, who was a favorite to win the 400-meter sprint at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. Derek posted the fastest time in the first heat, and went on to win his quarterfinal race. But in the semifinal, something disastrous happened. Half-way through the race, as Derek was near the front of the pack, his hamstring snapped and he fell to the ground terribly injured and in agonizing pain. As he lay there in agony of both body and emotions, he realized that not only were his hopes for an Olympic gold medal over, but quite possibly his whole competitive career as well. No one would have blamed him had he waited for a stretcher to carry him away to weep alone and in obscurity. But that's not what happened.

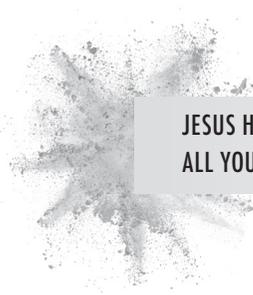
After a few seconds—but well after all other runners had crossed the finish line—Derek picked himself up, and while still in excruciating pain and anguish, began to hobble toward the finish line, determined to complete what he had begun. Before long, cheers began to go up throughout the crowd as spectators rooted for this man who would not quit, even in apparent defeat.

But that's not the end of this inspiring story. After a few minutes, a much older gentleman could be seen fighting past Olympic security to get onto the track. This man ran straight for Derek and held him up as he struggled through tears and pain toward the finish line. That man was Jim Redmond, Derek's father, who had been with the young athlete right from the very beginning, guiding, encouraging, mentoring, and cheering his son on through long years of training. As the father witnessed the determination of his son to finish the race despite pain and deep disappointment, Jim whispered to Derek, "Let's finish this together." And so, as the world looked on and cheered, father and son hobbled toward the finish line, one filled with pain and disappointment, the other bursting with pride.

Friend, that is how it is with you and your heavenly Father. He has been with you right from the beginning, holding you up, encouraging you, mentoring you, carrying you through all your victories,

disappointments, valleys and mountaintops, even during those times when you lost your way. He knows how hard you have tried, and the pain you have felt when you have fallen short, made mistakes, took wrong turns, and even given up for a time. Though it seems like you're not going to make it, that there is no reason to continue, He steps through the mist of your despair to say, "Let's finish this together."

God is not angry or upset with your failures and weaknesses. On the contrary, He is your greatest champion and advocate, constantly whispering to you in His still, small voice: "I am with you. I won't leave you. I will order your steps and make the path ahead of you straight and clear. Just keep your eyes on Me."



**JESUS HAS ALREADY WON THE VICTORY FOR YOU.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS STAND IN WHAT IS ALREADY YOURS.**

GREATNESS IS WAITING FOR YOU!

No, God never said that the road ahead of you would be free of obstacles, trials, and testing. He never said you wouldn't be tempted, or that He would make sure you didn't fail. In fact, the opposite is true.

The Word of God tells us that the enemy of our destiny will challenge us over and over with many different attacks designed to derail us from the greatness God has intended for us. The good news, however, is that God has promised to take us successfully through every one of these assaults and give us victory even in the midst of trials.

The key is to remember that Jesus has already won the victory for us, and all we have to do is stand in what is already ours. Jesus made it

clear that we would face trials, frustration, and even danger. But take courage, be confident, and don't be alarmed, He added, for "*I have overcome the world.*"⁸

Whatever you have gone through in your past, despite what you are facing today, and whatever tomorrow will bring your way, you can have the assurance that you are more than a conqueror! Your destiny is guaranteed because you are one of God's favorites. Right now, in spite of your past, your feelings, what others have told you about yourself, or the lies the enemy may have used to keep you from moving ahead, I want you to make three bold declarations and keep making them in the days and weeks ahead: "Father, I receive Your mercy and complete cleansing over all my past. Father, I embrace Your unchanging love for me. And right now, Father, I choose to walk into the destiny and greatness that You created me for even before I was born. In the name of Jesus."

Friend, God's greatness is waiting for you, and I can't wait to see it unfold!

8. John 16:33.