

GOD IS IN THIS FIGHT

God Is in This Fight

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Chapter 1

Thank You for Saving My Life

Rescue me, Lord, from evildoers; protect me from the violent, who devise evil plans in their hearts and stir up war every day. They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's; the poison of vipers is on their lips. (Psalm 140:1-3 NIV)

Nineteen minutes after takeoff, we touched down again, just long enough to save a life. We picked up our survivor and her advocate at a private terminal, then lifted off as quickly as we'd landed. Our destination: a safe house over a thousand miles to the north. This marked the third rescue for Invisible Angels, and God's miracles were happening so quickly that I could hardly keep up with them. Eight months earlier, Invisible Angels had been nothing more than a thought, a single God-given inspiration downloaded straight into my heart. We had no website, cards, or bank account. Just a vision. I had ideas upon ideas on where to take Invisible Angels, but God gave me the next steps to take as needed.

Now, as I hugged the coastline at fifty-five hundred feet, I realized we owned a \$250,000 aircraft in perfect condition and that was mission-ready. Switching to the tower and descending into the traffic pattern, my mind bounced between air traffic control arrival instructions and frequency assignments. I was in absolute awe of what God had done, transforming Invisible Angels from a dream into actually rescuing trafficking survivors in less than twenty-four months.

The human trafficking scenario in the United States is different from what most think. First of all, *it exists*. Human trafficking is real, and it's happening at epidemic levels inside our borders. People often ask if the survivors we rescue are young girls from Central America, or immigrants trying to get into our country, or victims from Eastern Europe. Most people have no idea that the trafficking survivors we rescue and recover are American boys and girls, men and women,

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from ages eight to forty-eight. It's not what you see on TV; it's much, much worse.

The logistics for these rescues are crucial. There can be no downtime. We need to be in and out within ten minutes without seeming rushed or concerned. The reality is, traffickers can and will reengage, even in public places like federal airport property. Although you might not expect it, trafficking survivors can and sometimes do change their minds and go back. It's just a reality. We need to be quick, focused, and invisible.

To the best of our ability, we timed everything to the minute. Nicole, the survivor advocate from Selah Freedom, waited for us in the private terminal with Jolie, the trafficking survivor. Jolie savored her Starbucks, breathing in the aroma more than sipping it. She hadn't had a Starbucks in quite a while.

Not what most would consider the typical *trafficking survivor*, Jolie was in her late forties, bright, articulate, pleasant, and eager to leave. After a quick greeting and flight briefing, we were back on the runway in just under ten minutes.

You could think of rescues as a witness-protection program of sorts. Once separated from the trafficking environment, survivors need to vanish. To traffickers, each human life – man or woman, boy or girl – is about a \$200,000-a-year commodity. That's the price of bondage in America today. Yes, it's 2025 in the United States, and these individuals, God's children, are still being bought, sold, and traded between gangs, pimps, and lone traffickers.

On this trip, we headed north, over one thousand miles away, to a wonderful safe house and rescue rehabilitation facility where Jolie would receive the care and support she needed to begin rebuilding her life.

Prayer is the core strength and lifeblood of Invisible Angels. Before any survivors see us, before any trip is planned, each survivor is prayed for from the first moment we receive the rescue request. We have a team of the greatest prayer warriors I have ever seen. You wouldn't know it by looking at them, and that is probably exactly how God wants it.

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We have a woman in her eighties who has moved mountains. Another in her seventies has the power to bring heaven down to earth. A gentleman in his sixties meekly petitions for impenetrable angelic protection, and a tiny woman in her forties who, through tears, has fervently interceded for strength, peace, and protection. On every trip, we have felt the supernatural coverage of prayer. Invisible Angels would be helpless without it.

When rescued, survivors usually have nothing besides what they are wearing. So, our prayer team also puts together a backpack for each survivor filled with hygiene items, new clothes, a Bible, a journal, and a letter written by team members. I have never read the letters, but I have seen tears streaming down the faces of some survivors after reading them. I have never asked what is in the letters. All I know is that each letter tells the survivor about Jesus, His limitless love, and His plan for them. It's amazing to see the impact of God's love, grace, and holy protection on someone in such dire need of His loving peace.

We pray a lot, even while flying, and we consistently see God's hand in every journey. On every trip, once we reach cruising altitude and our passengers get something to eat, they all drift off to sleep. We couldn't ask for anything more.

Climbing to our cruising altitude, we settled in. Jolie was pleasant, talkative, relaxed, and relieved. We enjoyed the aroma of her Starbucks as it filled the cabin. She chatted with us for a while, then there were longer pauses between words. Slowly, it grew quiet, then quieter still. After a while, I looked back and saw she had drifted off to sleep. "Perfect. God, You are awesome."

Several hours later, we descended through a thin, gray, overcast sky that suggested it was colder there. After receiving our runway assignment from the center controller, we were handed over to the tower as we continued slipping through the layered clouds. Slowly, the airport came into sight, and, lining up with the runway, we floated inches above the centerline for an ultrasmooth landing. As we taxied toward the small private terminal, we saw the people from the new safe house waiting for us on the tarmac. Nicole had stayed in touch with them

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throughout our descent and had timed it perfectly.

It seemed we'd jumped into early winter, as it truly was about fifty degrees colder than where we'd taken off from. After all, we weren't that far from the Canadian border. As we exited the aircraft, the people from the new safe house walked over and introduced themselves. After quick hellos and thank-yous, they began to walk Jolie away; but after a few feet, Jolie stopped, turned around, and walked back to me. Looking me straight in the eyes with a heart full of relief, she softly said, "Thank you for saving my life."

She smiled, turned, and walked back, rejoining the others. Those six words froze me. I was awestruck at what God was doing, not only right in front of me but using me as well, putting me in the middle of His visible, miraculous work.

A few years earlier, if someone had told me I would start a nonprofit rescuing human trafficking survivors, I would not have believed them. That's how God works. It's hard to pinpoint when this actually began, and the actual beginning is really important. It is 75 percent of the Invisible Angels' story. Where God takes you, where He places you, and what He has to do to and through you is where the story truly begins. Invisible Angels did not begin when we acquired our airplane, or even when the idea was first planted in me two years earlier. God was at work long before any airplanes or ideas.

Several years earlier, I had lost two jobs within two years. I was in my early fifties, unemployed, and I thought I might stay that way for a while. God was clearly at work preparing me for the mountaintops while I was still deep in the valleys. That is where God does His best work: in the furnace, climbing the mountain, walking through the fire. God is continuously building the character needed to take you where He is leading you, and the character needed to keep you there.

Those valley seasons resulted in a surrender I didn't see coming. When I was in it, I didn't even notice it. It was a surrender born of sheer exhaustion and ultimate desperation. That is the place where God knows you are all His.

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Invisible Angels is a story of miracles upon miracles, a season of *suddenlys* and a season of shutdowns and spiritual attacks followed by silence, surrender, and isolation. At times, the isolation was so painful I couldn't see what God was doing until pieces of me started to break off and die. Only then did Scripture come to life in John 15, with my name written on it. As each vine was pruned, trimmed, cut off, and died, I began to see what God was burning up and what He was replanting in its place.

That took time.

In Matthew 17:27, Jesus tells Peter to go down to the lake, cast his line in the water, and look in the mouth of the first fish he catches. It was something that probably made no sense to Peter at the time, but he obeyed. He followed a seemingly inane instruction that led to a permanent miracle.

Through the journey of Invisible Angels, I have seen the same thing, except it wasn't a coin – it was much bigger. We think obedience will be hard, and it is, but we cannot limit our sight to only what is seen. There is so much more involved.

Even the smartest and most creative of us have only a single-dimensional, binary thought process. Isaiah 55:9 (NIV) says clearly, *"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

At best, we can paint pictures, write beautiful songs, create wonderful stories, and stack bricks into spectacular cities, but we cannot make stars, planets, or galaxies. To discover and live in the will and power of God and what He has planned for us, we must obey. To obey, we must be able to hear, and to hear, we must be in His presence, and ideally, firmly in His grip. That can be a lonely, painful journey, often requiring us to do things we do not want to do to receive a prize we cannot yet see or understand, until we are well established along our new path and the silence begins to make sense.

Obedience is not about being restricted from something you want. We have to keep obedience in its proper perspective: it exists solely for our protection and preparation.

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Obedience ranges from keeping us safe to shattering earthly, human-based perceptions and boundaries to experience God moving in ways we couldn't dream of. What do you think went through Peter's mind when he saw the sun's reflection off the coin lying firmly in the mouth of that fish? Just imagine what he said to himself.

Thirty years later, Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20 (NIV): *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.* His power that is at work within us. That spells obedience, and obedience results in more than you could ever ask or imagine. This is what I have seen, and is the story God wants to tell you.

Scripture has come to life through Invisible Angels. God has revealed His power through miracles at an unbelievable pace. Funding for each rescue appeared through prayer. The logistics, which can be quite complex, lined up perfectly, as did the people and the new relationships needed with other rescue organizations, including federal and local law enforcement. God removed people from my life and brought in others. It was, and still is, like walking in and out of a live-action prayer movie. Some days I can hardly keep up with what God is doing, and some days I have seen "the sun stand still."

We are battling an unspeakable evil. We have rescued an eight-year-old boy kidnapped by his father and put into a child pornography ring; an eighteen-year-old girl sold by her mother at fourteen because her mother needed drugs and rent money; a thirty-three-year-old woman who, after trying to escape, was the only survivor after the four other girls she fled with were murdered; and a thirty-year-old woman who had been held captive *in the life* since she was fifteen. For as long as they are held, they are raped between eight and twelve times a day, all for profit.

A few years earlier, I had no idea this was even happening. God has taken me on a journey from nothing to flying survivors to safety. Every time I tell the testimony of how Invisible Angels came to be, I keep hearing God say, "Tell My story. Tell My story."

I will. I want to tell you the story of how God started Invisible Angels and show you how God

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is clearly in this fight.