

“*God’s Not Done With You* is both a biblical and a personal look at how God rescues, restores, and repurposes our lives in amazing ways. In an era when hope and encouragement are lacking, these stories will inspire you to greater faith in the God who has great plans for your life!”

**ROBERT JEFFRESS**, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas

“What the world needs now is *hope*! In this book, John Meador shows us that it is never too late for a new beginning: that one setback doesn’t make a failure. We get to bat again. Read it... and reap!”

**O.S. HAWKINS**, Best-selling Author, *The Promise Code*

“What a great book! Reading it reminded me of my own story of setback, and the similar stories of many who I pastor. This book will be a wonderful encouragement and blessing for those for whom confusion or pain is loud, and who need to hear that God’s not done with them.”

**STEVE ROBINSON**, Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Liverpool, UK; Director, Acts 29 UK

“John Meador knows something about struggles and facing great odds. Robbed of his hearing as a young boy as a result of illness, he does not even hear himself speak, yet he has mastered the art of preaching without hearing even his own voice. His own struggle makes it natural for him to speak up for those who are facing various challenges in their lives. The pages before you will encourage you, thrill you, challenge you, and confront you with your own need for a second chance in life. God is not through with you yet!”

**JIMMY DRAPER**, President Emeritus, LifeWay

“I’m already making my list of loved ones to send copies of this book to. The comeback stories from the Bible apply so aptly to crises they’re facing: depression, disobedience, disillusionment, difficult people to deal with, debilitating health challenges... Here is a direct, inspiring message from an authentic voice.”

**DIANNA BOOHER**, Author, *Lead With Confidence!* and *Communicate Like a Leader*

“The Bible is not only a book to believe but also to be lived. This is the reason why so much of God’s word is written in the very human stories of real people. John Meador delivers the stories of men and women like you and me who step from the pages of Scripture to show us how to overcome and live in hope every day. We all enjoy comeback stories, and *God’s Not Done With You* is a great read for those who want to keep going and never quit as we face life’s challenges. If you want more grit and more grace in your life, this book is for you!”

**JACK GRAHAM**, Pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas



**GOD'S  
NOT  
DONE  
WITH  
YOU**



*To my wife, Kim.*

*Your authentic faith, tireless dedication to passing  
faith on to our children, and encouragement to  
me to be faithful to the Word in preaching and  
writing have consistently buoyed me.*

*What a blessing you are!*

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# Introduction

**W**herever you are, no matter what has happened to you, God is not done.

I write this introduction from Cabo San Lucas, where my wife and I are staying on a brief retreat gifted to us by friends. The Sea of Cortez is gorgeous, and on this day, sizable waves are crashing into the steep portion of a beach where we are walking, just next to a jagged outcrop of rock. It's a dangerously beautiful place to stand in, and I am fascinated by the ebb and flow of the ocean—the rising of the waves and the loud crashing of the water on the rocks, then washing back into the sea, only to do it over and over again.

It looks a bit like life, with its daily rise and fall of circumstances, slow recovery, and then the challenge of another day and different dilemmas. Life, they say, ebbs and flows.

On this day, however, my beach experience is a bit more complicated. While capturing a video of those waves from a sandy portion of the beach just next to the rocks, I am surprised by an enormous rogue wave that crashes completely over me. Its force knocks me off my feet and pulls me down the steep drop into the sea. Holding tightly to the phone I've been using to film the waves, I fight my way back to my feet and scramble to safety just before the next wave comes crashing in.

The video I was able to capture, by the way, is awesome. I escaped unscathed but lost a bit of my pride and one of my favorite beach sandals.

In life too, rogue waves surprise us and knock us off our feet. Challenging setbacks in life are far more difficult to navigate than rogue waves—and they sometimes cost us things we never intended to surrender.

Your own challenges in life may look more like tsunamis than isolated rogue waves: seasons when it seems impossible to find anything to hold onto at all and nearly unthinkable to come back from. And yet, comebacks *are* possible from the most devastating situations imaginable. Countless stories are told of these incredible rebounds and rescues—whole books devoted to the minute details of these dramatic battles for life and meaning.

I know these sorts of stories because I have walked some of them myself and have for many years walked with others on these journeys.

People struggling with loss and disappointment.

People who've encountered sudden tragedy and search to try and make sense of it.

Friends who battle through serious physical illness and who wonder what the outcome will be.

Stories of those who ask questions about where God is when these things happen.

Stories that also ask, "Am I done? Is God finished with me? Do I still have purpose?"

I've set my mind to find an answer to those questions. And I promise you, when we make that search, God is to be found in our suffering.

No book tells these stories more powerfully than the Bible. In character after character, thrilling and inspiring comeback stories of Scripture give hope and encouragement. The accounts contained in the Bible are

unique in contrast with all other great stories in that they reveal the narrative of the God of the universe, who masterfully brings every needed resource to the comeback operations in our lives. He's the God who is forever redeeming our past to give us a future.

Maybe your life is simpler. Perhaps you've not yet experienced agonizing defeat and discouragement. I assure you, in time you will, and what is written within will be worth reading.

On the other hand, maybe you're skeptical. Your life may feel more like the massive tsunami than the rogue wave, and you wonder if idealistic-sounding Bible stories can really inspire or instruct you. I urge you to keep reading, for these stories are about real-life events that often brought more drama, more heartbreak, and more tragedy, with more at stake than most any other situations in history. They show us greater and more meaningful outcomes than we can possibly imagine.

There is the story, for example, of a leader who committed the most public and embarrassing act of adultery in history and arranged a deadly, shameful cover-up of his sin. But somehow, God was not finished with him. Or the surprising account of a woman who was the wife of an irrational fool who taunted armed warriors. While her husband's act of defiance nearly brought on the slaughter of his entire household, God rescued her out of that desperate situation, and then elevated her to an entirely new position. Just when she felt life was over, it wasn't!

Nine amazing stories—nine real-life scenarios that give us hope for our own comeback seasons. There are common themes in these stories that I am eager for you to read—truths that are absent from every other type of rescue scenario. Transcending the predictable narratives where someone overcomes hardship through simple grit, these

tell of unbelievable changes of heart and circumstance, and the presence of One who makes all things work together for your good. These are God-sized stories, and here are the seven truths you'll find woven throughout them:

1. God is intimately involved with the details of our lives as we go through rogue waves and tsunamis—even when we're not aware of His involvement.
2. In your worst hours, you are not alone. He is the God who is *there* with you. He is *for* you.
3. God gives promises to ordinary individuals and keeps them. It is those fulfilled promises that change outcomes.
4. He has made amazing resources available to us in our most trying moments that are only for those who trust Him in the battle.
5. God will teach us the art of how not to self-destruct while we're waiting on answers and solutions.
6. He provides a divine grace that empowers us to persevere—a resilience that enables us to get up again and trust that we will make it through because He is never finished with us.
7. God will use your difficult circumstances to build trust in Him, forge strong character in you, and show others the power of God working within your situations.

I promise to help you discover how these truths work, where they are found, and when you can expect great moments of breakthrough. While God works in mysterious ways, He also reveals those ways to those who seek Him. This book leads you to those ways, and by

reading, you are seeking. There's a promise in Scripture that he or she who seeks shall find (Luke 11:10).

These truths are not simply *taught*, as in a classroom, but *caught* in real-life situations—perhaps the exact kind of situation you are presently facing. It's in real life where faith meets doubt and where we experience the fulfillment of His plan and purpose—even in the most trying times.

Read all these stories. You'll need them all. God has recorded the details of these lives so that we might know about them and learn from them. He's shown us these stories because He wants you to see Him more clearly in your own life and your own challenges.

In this season of your life, whatever it may be, get caught up with me in the greatest victories of all time and bring them by faith into your own life and the lives of those around you.

You are going to learn that *God is not done with you*.



## Chapter 1

# Your Past Need Not Define You

## MOSES' STORY

*"God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice."*

Exodus 2:25

In recent years, a young man named Brad has moved from the periphery into the mainstream of my life and work. One day I asked Brad an innocent question: "Where were you when I moved here?"

His answer: "In jail with my father."

Now, that's a reply that makes you want to dig deeper. And I did. I learned that Brad had been brought back from a painful past. Raised in a home with turmoil and abuse, he was brought to faith by a believing mother but did a lot of running—from home, from church, and from faith. He also ran from the law. He was so in and out of trouble that it took him two years to complete his senior year of high school, and there wasn't much promise of improvement ahead. One night he was arrested, along with his father, during a family dispute—and together they went to jail.

Over time, he began to turn back toward a relationship with God. He told me, "I felt like I was called to something

greater,” but he had no idea what that was. His was a gradual journey, and within a few years, Brad learned that he had never escaped the attention of God. Today, he finds himself processing the past and is amazed that God has worked so powerfully to bring him back.

Brad is the worship pastor of the church I lead—and it’s remarkable to see what God is doing with this young, growing leader who impacts thousands of people through ministry.

That’s a long way from “in jail with my father.”

Brad’s story is one of many that demonstrates that God can orchestrate an extraordinary comeback from a difficult past—and that even when times are dark, He is not done with us yet.

And then there’s Moses, whose story is an epic account of a troubled past. Storytellers have been fascinated by who he was and what he experienced. He was the rescuer of a nation. A leader of perhaps millions. Mental images come to mind of a historic leader with a flowing beard, holding his hands out over the seas as they split apart. He’s on the mountain, holding tablets that God Himself has inscribed with commandments—glowing with a glorious countenance as he descends from the pinnacle. If there was an Old Testament superhero, this is the guy.

Countless books have been written and movies made of key seasons of his life. Few, however, focus on *the dark part* of his life.

Moses’ life is most clearly understood through three 40-year seasons. The first season is told in a mere 15 verses of Exodus 2. It’s the story of his birth, miraculous rescue from certain death as an infant, and unlikely adoption into the house of Pharaoh—the ruler of all of Egypt. Moses’ life is one of privilege and passion, with a deep love for his nation, Israel—a nation in bondage to Pharaoh.



His sense of justice for his people stirs his anger when he sees one of his fellow Israelites beaten, and he kills the Egyptian oppressor. Now Pharaoh is angry and tries to capture Moses in order to put *him* to death. Moses flees 360 miles into the desert region of Midian (a 20-day journey) in order to escape. This first period of his life ends with these words:

*“But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well.”*

*(Exodus 2:15)*

Fifteen verses. Forty years. A meteoric rise with unprecedented opportunity. A tragic, compulsive decision to take another's life, and then an escape into exile in order to avoid capture and execution. This begins the second season of his life, the dark one. This is the portion of Moses' life that no movies are made about. It's the quiet, dark period where fear is all-consuming and past actions are regretted. Far from the place of his family and people, he's a long way from his destiny. He's on the backside of the desert of his life. It's a tough place to be for anyone, and especially this one, who has lost so much.

Human nature and personal experience lead me to believe that Moses is living in the land of regret and sorrow. Surely, he's aware of his amazing rescue from the death sentence proclaimed by Pharaoh over all the male Hebrew babies born around the time of his birth. How could he not know of his unique privilege and opportunity—to be trained in the royal palace and have extraordinary influence as a young man? It was an incredible place to be—a divine placement from which he might have spoken on behalf of his people.

Yet, in spite of all that God had done to place Moses in such a place, one swift action of angry personal revenge

brought it all down—and with it the opportunity of a lifetime. He’s far from where God placed him and far from family and friends. Alongside that comes the mental beratement and self-condemnation Moses must have experienced on his escape to Midian. We know Moses to have been a passionate man. We know he experienced the gamut of emotions in his lifetime. Many tears fell in that desert.

Grief and regret from something we’ve done bring overwhelming sorrow when we realize what has been lost. Most of us have been there in some way. I remember standing at my mother’s grave years ago and being completely overwhelmed at what was lost—what would never be—after she lost her battle with cancer. I didn’t cause it, but I felt it to my core.

Moses had *caused* this loss. He recklessly and angrily took matters into his own hands and destroyed the life of another man—and along with it, his own future. From his perspective, what was lost would be forever lost. In his mind, there was no comeback scenario. It’s in this kind of situation that we wonder if God knows or even cares about where we are anymore. After all, no one else does.

### **Anger Can Ruin, but God Can Rescue**

As a teenager and later as a young adult, anger nearly ruined me. It wasn’t the “Moses level” of anger, but it was frightening.

I thought my anger was due to what others said or did to me—when something was said behind my back or I was ridiculed in front of others. Being rejected by those I most wanted acceptance from would set me off. Failing to perform in a sports event would send me into a tantrum.

Anger began to invade my everyday life like a fog moving in—a darkness that seemed to be out of my control. I lost friends and a roommate; I broke bones in my hands from hitting things in frustration.

On the worst night of my young adult life, I raced my car down a highway, angry at life and bitter about the outcomes, looking in desperation for a place at which to aim my car and end my life. Thankfully, I ran out of courage, and the moment passed. I will never forget just how close I came to ending it that night.

For many, a moment like that doesn't pass easily. People often pay a high price for what they have said and done in angry moments.

Moses, one of history's greatest leaders, nearly forfeited an entire future because of his anger.

But God had a way of rescuing Moses—and He has a way of rescuing us.

God was not through with Moses, but Moses had no idea. At times, our faith is as good as dead before God raises it up again.

Have you ever run from your past? I love that the Bible gives us so many examples of people, who, like ourselves, have something to hide.

Adam and Eve tried to hide their original sin from God in the garden.

Abraham and Sarah laughed at God's promise while trying to hide their deep doubt.

David had an affair with Bathsheba and tried to hide it by arranging her husband's death.

These are just a few examples of actions that caused incredible grief and undeniable damage, yet God covered Adam's sin, blessed Abraham and Sarah with a son, and restored David's kingdom. God is famous for bringing people back from the dead—figuratively *and* literally.