

FIVE WELLS MINISTRIES

AUTHORITY

Embracing Your God-Given Influence

You don't need a title to walk in power.
You've been chosen, empowered, and sent.

Protestant First — Jesus as Lord and Savior

Revised Edition — Ezra Standard

A Second Act Starter by Kalan Paul

TheSecondActMinistry.com

A Note on How This Book Handles Scripture

Every scripture reference in these pages has been studied in the original Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic and interpreted in its own literary, cultural, and historical context. That's a standard I call the Ezra Standard, after Ezra 7:10 — a man who set his heart to study God's law, to practice it, and only then to teach it.

At the end of every chapter, you'll find a Berean Challenge — named for the believers in Acts 17:11 who received Paul's teaching with eagerness and then examined the scriptures daily to see if what he said was true. If an apostle's teaching was subject to verification by the text, then so is mine.

I am not your source. The text is your source.

Introduction: This Isn't About Control — It's About Calling

For a long time, I misunderstood the word "authority."

I thought it meant power. Control. Dominance. A platform. A title. Something given to other people with louder voices, bigger roles, or more polished resumes.

But over time, God showed me something different.

Authority isn't about superiority. It's about stewardship.

It's not about platform — it's about presence.

It's not about getting your way — it's about paving the way for others.

And here's the truth I didn't always believe: God has given you authority. Not someday. Not if you earn it. Not when you're more qualified. Now.

He placed His Spirit in you. His image on you. His calling over you. And that means you walk into every room, every conversation, and every assignment with a spiritual inheritance that changes atmospheres — not because you're loud, but because you're His.

The enemy has tried to confuse you. To convince you that influence is for "them," not for you. That your voice doesn't carry weight. That your prayers don't matter. That your role is too small. But the cross and the empty tomb say otherwise.

You've been commissioned. Entrusted. Sent.

And it's time to stop waiting for permission — and start walking in the power that's already yours.

So no, this isn't about control. This is about calling. This is about waking up to the kingdom weight you carry. This is about standing in the authority that Jesus paid for — and using it to set others free.

This is your second act.

Let's live it with authority.

Chapter 1 - A: Assigned

You Were Sent On Purpose, For a Purpose

The Text

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." — Jeremiah 1:5

God speaks this to Jeremiah before Jeremiah has done anything. The Hebrew *yada* (knew) means intimate, experiential knowledge — not just awareness. The word *hiqdashtika* (set you apart/consecrated) is the same root as *qadosh* — holy, separated for sacred use. And *natati* (appointed/gave) means literally "I have given you" — past tense, completed action. God's assignment of Jeremiah was finished before Jeremiah was born.

What's critical under the Ezra Standard is what comes next. In verses 6-8, Jeremiah pushes back: "I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." God doesn't argue with Jeremiah's self-assessment. He overrides it: "Do not say, 'I am only a youth.' To all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you." The assignment didn't wait for confidence. It preceded it.

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul writes: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." The Greek *poiēma* (workmanship) means a crafted thing, a composed work — where we get "poem." And *proetoimasen* (prepared beforehand) is past tense: the works were ready before you arrived at them. You're not looking for an assignment. You're walking into one that's already been prepared.

Word Picture: The Orders

You don't drift into purpose. You're sent.

When soldiers are deployed, they don't get to pick the destination — they receive their orders. Their mission isn't random. It's deliberate. Strategic.

That's what your life is.

You were assigned to your place, your role, your relationships. God didn't just approve your journey — He authored it.

Bible Character: Jeremiah

Before Jeremiah ever spoke a word, God declared him appointed. Even when Jeremiah doubted himself, God reminded him: "I put My words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9). The Hebrew *natati* (I have given) is the same word from verse 5 — God gives the assignment and gives the words. The assignment came before the confidence. But the whole counsel of Jeremiah's life shows that the assignment also included immense suffering — rejection, imprisonment, accusation of treason. Assignment does not mean ease. It means purpose inside whatever comes.

My Story: Where This Became Real

There was a season I felt overlooked. Ministry was happening all around me — and while I supported others, I questioned if my role even mattered.

One night, while cleaning up after an event, I overheard someone sharing how something I'd said weeks earlier had impacted them. A single moment I barely remembered — God used it to plant a seed.

That's when it hit me:

I wasn't just helping. I was assigned.

Assigned to encourage. Assigned to show up. Assigned to speak life even when no one was watching.

The Shift

You are not randomly placed. You are divinely positioned. Stop minimizing your post. Start owning your assignment.

You don't have to be famous to be faithful. And faithfulness is what makes you powerful.

Reflection

- Where have you felt unseen or underused — and might that be the very place God assigned you?
- Jeremiah's assignment came before his confidence. Does yours need to as well?
- What prepared-beforehand work (proetoimasen) might you already be standing in front of?

Declaration

I am assigned by God — yada, known before I was formed; hiqdashtika, set apart before I was born. My placement is not a mistake. I walk into works that were proetoimasen — prepared before I arrived. My obedience matters. I carry heaven's mission in every space I enter.

Activation

Write down three areas where you've felt unseen, underused, or unsure. Then declare over each one: "God, I trust You've assigned me here. Use me for Your glory." Ask Him to show you one way to show up with fresh boldness this week.

Berean Challenge

Read Jeremiah 1:1-19 — the full call narrative, including Jeremiah's objections and God's responses. Then read Ephesians 2:1-10 and notice that verse 10 comes after the description of grace in verses 8-9. Ask: does the assignment flow from grace, or does grace flow from the assignment?

Chapter 2 - U: Anointed

You're Not Just Called — You're Equipped

The Text

"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth." — 1 John 2:20

The Greek *chrisma* (anointing) shares the same root as *Christos* (Christ — the Anointed One). When John says you have a *chrisma* from the Holy One, he's saying you carry the same category of anointing that defines the Messiah himself. Not the same degree — but the same source. The Spirit who anointed Jesus at the Jordan is the Spirit who lives in you.

In the Old Testament, anointing was reserved for three offices: prophet, priest, and king. The Hebrew *mashach* (to anoint) meant to pour oil over someone as a public act of consecration — setting them apart for sacred service with divine authority. When Samuel anointed David in 1 Samuel 16:13, the text says "the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward." The Hebrew *tsalach* means to rush, to advance powerfully. The anointing wasn't a feeling. It was the arrival of the Spirit's power for a specific purpose.

What's important under the Ezra Standard: the anointing didn't make David's life easy. Between the anointing and the throne, David spent years running from Saul, hiding in caves, and living as a fugitive. The oil was on him long before the crown was. Anointing precedes arrival — and the space between can be brutal.

Word Picture: The Oil

In Scripture, oil represents the anointing — the tangible sign of being set apart and empowered by God.

Kings were anointed before they ruled. Prophets were anointed before they spoke. The oil wasn't just a symbol. It was a signal: God's hand is on this life.

And that's still true today.

Bible Character: David

David wasn't the obvious choice. He was the youngest. The shepherd boy. When Samuel came to Jesse's house, he passed over every older, more impressive brother. God told Samuel: "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). David was anointed in front of his brothers — publicly set apart, Spirit-rushed — and then sent back to the sheep. The anointing was real. The waiting was also real. Both were part of the assignment.

My Story: Where This Became Real

I never felt like the most obvious leader in the room. I wasn't the loudest (maybe sometimes), the flashiest, or the most credentialed.

But over the years, God kept sending people across my path that needed encouragement. I didn't understand why — until God made it clear:

"It's not about charisma. It's about the oil."

When God places His anointing on you, it marks you. It draws others. Not for your fame — but for His glory.

The Shift

Stop waiting to feel ready. Start trusting the oil.

God doesn't anoint the perfect. He anoints the willing.

Reflection

- Where are you waiting for the crown when the oil is already on you?
- David was anointed and then sent back to the sheep. What's your "back to the sheep" season — and is the anointing still real in it?

Declaration

I am anointed — chrisma, from the same source that anointed Christ. The Spirit who tsalach — rushed upon David — lives in me. I am set apart, called, and equipped for every good work. The oil is on me even when the crown isn't.

Activation

Find a small amount of oil (olive oil, etc.). Quietly anoint your hands or forehead and say: "God, I receive Your anointing. Use me for Your purposes." Then journal a short prayer of availability: "God, I'm willing. The oil is enough."

Berean Challenge

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and count the gap between anointing and throne. Then read 1 John 2:18-27 for the full context of chrisma — John is writing about discerning truth from deception. Ask: is the anointing primarily about power, or about the ability to recognize truth?

Chapter 3 - T: Advancing

You Don't Just Hold Ground — You Take It

The Text

"Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, just as I promised to Moses." — Joshua 1:3 (ESV)

God speaks this to Joshua after Moses' death. The Hebrew *natati* (I have given) is the same past-tense word from Jeremiah 1:5 — the gift is already completed. But there's a condition embedded in the promise: you have to tread. The Hebrew *darak* means to step, to march, to tread upon. God has given the land, but Joshua has to walk into it. The promise is real and the action is required. Both.

What follows in Joshua 1:6-9 is God repeating three times: "Be strong and courageous." The Hebrew *chazaq* (strong) means to seize, to hold firm. And *amats* (courageous) means to be alert, to harden yourself for what's ahead. This isn't motivational language. It's military preparation. God is preparing Joshua for resistance — because every piece of promised land had occupants who weren't leaving voluntarily.

The whole counsel includes Joshua's failures alongside his victories. In Joshua 7, Israel is defeated at Ai because of Achan's sin — a consequence of failing to follow God's instructions completely. In Joshua 9, the Gibeonites deceive Israel into a treaty because Joshua "did not ask counsel from the LORD" (Joshua 9:14). Advancing doesn't mean every step is victorious. It means the direction is set by God even when individual steps go wrong.

Word Picture: The Flag

When soldiers take new territory, they raise a flag. It's not decoration — it's declaration. It marks victory. Occupation. Advance.

You weren't called to play defense your whole life. You've been given authority to move forward — in your family, faith, calling, and influence. Not just surviving — expanding.

Bible Character: Joshua

Joshua didn't inherit a vacation — he inherited a battlefield. But with every step, God confirmed His promise. Joshua's obedience led to possession. He also made mistakes — the failure at Ai, the Gibeonite deception — and God didn't revoke the mission. He corrected and continued. Advancing includes stumbling. The direction holds even when the steps falter.

My Story: Where This Became Real

There was a season when I felt stuck. I wasn't in crisis — but I wasn't growing either. I prayed, served, and waited. Then one morning in prayer, I sensed God say:

"Stop circling. Start stepping."

It hit me hard. I'd been camping in what was familiar, calling it faithfulness. But God was inviting me to take new ground — to apply, to speak up, to launch what He had already placed in my heart. That step led me, my wife and eventually my family to Ireland and a new chapter with new relationships that are now family.

So I did. And while it wasn't easy, it was fruitful. Because God meets you in motion.

The Shift

Faith doesn't always feel bold — but it moves forward. Your next step isn't rebellion — it might be your release.

God won't bless your comfort zone — He blesses your courage.

Reflection

- Where have you been circling when God is saying "step"?
- Joshua advanced and also failed at Ai. Does knowing that advancing includes stumbling change your willingness to move?

Declaration

I am advancing. God has natati — already given — the ground before me. I will chazaq and amats — hold firm and be courageous. I will not shrink back. God goes before me. I will take ground for His glory, one obedient step at a time.

Activation

Write down one area you've been circling in fear or hesitation. Now write this underneath: "I'm not stuck. I'm stepping." Ask God what forward movement looks like — then take it. Flag it with praise.

Berean Challenge

Read Joshua 1:1-9, then Joshua 7:1-12 (the failure at Ai), then Joshua 9:14-15 (the Gibeonite deception). Notice that advancing included both victories and failures — and God didn't revoke the mission after either failure. Ask: does my fear of failing keep me from advancing into what God has already given?

Chapter 4 - H: Armed

You're Not Exposed — You're Equipped

The Text

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." — Ephesians 6:11

The Greek panoplian (full armor) refers to the complete equipment of a heavy-armed soldier — nothing missing. The word endysasthe (put on) is the same clothing verb Paul uses for putting on Christ in Galatians 3:27. You clothe yourself in armor the same way you clothe yourself in identity — deliberately, by faith.

Paul's context matters enormously. He's writing from prison, chained to a Roman soldier (Ephesians 6:20). He's looking at actual armor while writing about spiritual armor. Each piece maps to something real: the belt of alētheia (truth), the breastplate of dikaiosynē (righteousness), feet fitted with the gospel of eirēnē (peace), the shield of pistis (faith), the helmet of sōtēria (salvation), and the sword of the Spirit — the only offensive weapon — which is the rhēma theou (the spoken word of God).

The word methodeia (schemes/strategies) in verse 11 means craftiness, trickery, systematic deception. The enemy's primary weapon isn't brute force. It's deception — lies about your identity, your standing, your authority. The armor is designed to counter deception with truth at every point.

Verse 12 is critical for context: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." The Greek palē (struggle/wrestling) is hand-to-hand combat. And the opponents are organized — archē (rulers), exousia (authorities), kosmokratōr (world powers). Paul is describing a structured spiritual opposition, not random bad luck.

Word Picture: The Armor

Before battle, a soldier doesn't just hope for the best — they suit up. Every piece of armor matters. It's not just protection — it's preparation.

The same is true for you. You're not left vulnerable. God has armed you — fully. You are not walking into spiritual conflict uncovered. You're dressed for victory.

Bible Character: Paul in Prison

When Paul wrote about the armor of God, he wasn't sitting in safety — he was imprisoned, chained to a Roman guard. He looked at actual military equipment and saw a spiritual parallel: God has given us gear for every dimension of the battle. But notice that Paul, fully armored in the Spirit, was still in chains. The armor protects and empowers — it doesn't guarantee the absence of suffering. Paul wrote some of his most powerful letters from prison. Armed doesn't mean comfortable. It means capable.

My Story: Where This Became Real

I remember a season when everything felt like warfare — in my family, my life, even in my own thoughts. I felt vulnerable and reactive. One morning, exhausted, I asked God, "What more can I do?"

And I sensed Him say:

"You don't need something new. You just need to put on what I already gave you."

That day, I opened Ephesians 6 and prayed each piece of the armor aloud — the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith...

And something shifted. Not because my problems vanished — but because I stood differently.

The Shift

God didn't promise a life without battles — but He did promise armor for every one of them.

You are not unprotected. You are armored, anointed, and assigned.

Reflection

- Which piece of the armor do you most need to put on deliberately today?
- Paul wrote about armor from prison. Does knowing the armor doesn't prevent suffering change how you understand spiritual warfare?
- The enemy's primary weapon is methodeia — systematic deception. Where are you most vulnerable to believing lies right now?

Declaration

I am armed with the panoplian — the full armor of God. I am covered in alētheia, dikaiosynē, eirēnē, pistis, sōtēria, and the rhēma of His Spirit. I will not live in fear. I am covered, equipped, and ready to stand — even when the battle is real.

Activation

Each morning this week, declare each piece of the armor out loud: Belt of truth.

Breastplate of righteousness. Shoes of peace. Shield of faith. Helmet of salvation.

Sword of the Spirit. Visualize it. Speak it. Walk like you're wearing it. Because you are.

Berean Challenge

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 — the full passage, including Paul's request for prayer in verses 19-20. Notice that Paul, fully armored, asks for boldness to speak — he still needed courage. Then ask: is the armor a guarantee of victory, or equipment for faithfulness in the fight?

Chapter 5 - O: Aligned

Spiritual Authority Requires Spiritual Surrender

The Text

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." — James 4:7

The Greek hypotagēte (submit) means to arrange yourself under — a military term for taking your proper position in rank. And antistēte (resist) means to stand against, to oppose firmly. James gives a sequence: submission first, resistance second. The authority to resist comes from the alignment of submission. You can't effectively stand against the enemy if you're not first standing under God's command.

Jesus himself modeled this in John 5:19: "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing." The Greek ou dunatai (can do nothing) is absolute. Jesus, fully God, fully man, chose to operate under the Father's authority. His power flowed from his alignment — not from independence. If the Son of God lived in submission to the Father, the text makes it clear that authority without alignment is not the model of the Kingdom.

In John 15:5, Jesus says: "Apart from me you can do nothing." The Greek chōris emou means separated from me, disconnected from me. The vine-and-branches metaphor makes the point: branches don't produce fruit by trying harder. They produce fruit by staying connected. Alignment isn't an occasional discipline. It's the ongoing connection that makes everything else possible.

Word Picture: The Arrow

An arrow can't guide itself. It doesn't pick the target. Its power and precision depend entirely on the one who aims it.

You are God's arrow. And authority flows from alignment — not independence. When your life is aligned with Him, your impact becomes accurate, anointed, and unstoppable.

Bible Character: Jesus

Even Jesus — fully God, fully man — said, "I only do what I see the Father doing." His authority flowed from complete surrender. His alignment brought unmatched authority, even over death. In Gethsemane, the alignment cost him everything: "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Alignment isn't painless. It's the most costly form of obedience — and the most powerful.

My Story: Where This Became Real

There was a time I tried to lead without listening — making good decisions that weren't necessarily God decisions. On paper, things looked fine. But inside, I felt dry and disconnected.

One morning, in quiet prayer, God pressed a question into my spirit:

"Do you want to move fast, or do you want to move in step?"

That wrecked me. Because speed without the Spirit is just noise. So I surrendered — again. I realigned.

And from that point on, what I lacked in pace, God made up for in power.

The Shift

Authority isn't about how loud you speak — it's about how well you listen.

Submission isn't weakness — it's your greatest strength.

Reflection

- Where are you moving fast without moving in step with God?
- Jesus said "I can do nothing by myself." If he said it, what does that mean for you?

Declaration

I am aligned — hypotagēte, arranged under God's authority. I resist the enemy from a position of submission, not independence. Like Jesus, I do only what I see the Father doing. My strength is not in control but in surrender.

Activation

Spend 5 minutes today in complete silence before God. Don't ask. Don't plan. Just be still. Then pray: "God, align my heart with Yours. I don't want to move without You." Listen. Write down what surfaces. Then walk it out.

Berean Challenge

Read James 4:1-10 — the full context of the submission command. Notice that James is addressing conflict, selfish ambition, and friendship with the world. Then read John 15:1-17 and sit with "apart from me you can do nothing." Ask: where am I trying to produce fruit while disconnected from the vine?

Chapter 6 - R: Audible

Your Voice Carries Kingdom Weight

The Text

"The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life." — Proverbs 10:11

The Hebrew meqor chayyim — a fountain of life, a spring of living water. Proverbs is wisdom literature, so this is an observation about how speech works: the words of a righteous person function as a source of life for those who hear them. It's not a promise that every word you say will land perfectly. It's wisdom about the nature of speech aligned with God.

In Proverbs 18:21, the text goes further: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." The Hebrew yad (power/hand) means the tongue has agency — it does things, it creates consequences. This isn't mystical "name it and claim it" theology. It's wisdom literature observing that words have real-world impact: they build trust or destroy it, they encourage or crush, they tell truth or spread deception.

James 3:1-12 provides the New Testament counterpart. James compares the tongue to a rudder, a bit, and a fire. Small but directional. And in verse 9, he names the tension: "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness." The same tongue, two opposite functions. James says "this should not be" (verse 10) — but he acknowledges it is. Honest about the reality, clear about the standard.

Word Picture: The Megaphone

When someone speaks through a megaphone, it amplifies their voice — not by changing the content, but by projecting it farther.

God doesn't just want to speak to you — He wants to speak through you. And when you speak in alignment with Him, your voice echoes with heaven's authority.

Bible Character: Moses

Moses didn't feel like a strong speaker. The Hebrew kaved peh (heavy of mouth) in Exodus 4:10 may indicate a speech impediment. He tried to talk God out of using him. But God's response wasn't to fix the limitation — it was to override the objection: "Who gave human beings their mouths?... Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:11-12). Moses became the voice that delivered a nation — not through eloquence, but through obedience. The whole counsel: Moses also spoke rashly at Meribah (Numbers 20:10-12), and it cost him entry to the promised land. The tongue carries weight in both directions.

My Story: Where This Became Real

For a long time, I hesitated to share what God was putting on my heart. I'd overthink every word. Question if it was needed. Wonder if someone else could say it better.

Then one day, after I finally shared something I almost deleted, someone came up to me in tears: "I needed that more than you know."

It humbled me. Because it reminded me:

Your voice isn't about spotlight — it's about stewardship.

And if God gave it to you, He intends to use it.

The Shift

Stop silencing yourself. Start seeing your voice as sacred.

Your words can tear down or build kingdoms. Choose to build.

Reflection

- Where have you been silencing a word God gave you to speak?
- Moses' tongue cost him the promised land at Meribah. How does that shape your understanding of the weight your words carry?

Declaration

My voice matters. My mouth is a meqor chayyim — a fountain of life. I speak truth, grace, and hope. God uses my words to bring healing and direction. I will steward my voice with the weight it carries.

Activation

Speak a blessing aloud over your home, your work, and your people today. Write one thing God has put on your heart lately — and share it with someone. When you use your voice, the kingdom advances.

Berean Challenge

Read James 3:1-12 in full — every metaphor, every warning. Then read Exodus 4:10-16 and Numbers 20:1-13. Notice that the same mouth God used to deliver a nation also spoke words that disqualified Moses from entering the land. Ask: am I treating my words with the weight the text says they carry?

Chapter 7 - I: Available

Your Yes Unlocks God's Power

The Text

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" — Isaiah 6:8

The Hebrew *hinneni* — "here am I" — is more than an answer. It's a declaration of total availability. It's the same word Abraham used at the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22:1), the same word Moses used at the burning bush (Exodus 3:4), the same word Samuel used in the temple (1 Samuel 3:4). Every time *hinneni* appears in scripture, it signals a person placing themselves entirely at God's disposal before knowing the cost.

What's critical about Isaiah 6 is what comes before verse 8. In verses 1-4, Isaiah sees the Lord on the throne — high, exalted, with seraphim calling "Holy, holy, holy." In verse 5, Isaiah's response is terror: "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips." In verses 6-7, a seraph touches his lips with a coal from the altar and declares his guilt removed. Only then — after vision, confession, and cleansing — does Isaiah say *hinneni*. Availability flows from encounter, not ambition.

And the assignment that follows *hinneni* is sobering. In verses 9-10, God tells Isaiah to go preach — and that the people will hear but not understand, see but not perceive. Isaiah asks "How long, Lord?" and the answer is: until the cities are desolate. Isaiah's availability led to a ministry of faithful rejection. *Hinneni* doesn't guarantee a receptive audience. It guarantees obedience.

Word Picture: The Open Door

An open door doesn't force anyone to walk through — it simply offers access. Opportunity. Movement.

God often opens doors in our lives that require one thing: availability. Not expertise. Not perfection. Just willingness.

Bible Character: Isaiah

Isaiah didn't respond to God's call with a résumé — he responded with readiness. He said *hinneni* before he even knew the assignment. But his availability was forged in encounter: seeing God's holiness, confessing his own inadequacy, and receiving cleansing. That sequence matters. The boldness to say "send me" came after the humility to say "I am ruined."

My Story: Where This Became Real

I remember the first time I was invited to lead a prayer of salvation at an event with other pastors in the room. I felt unqualified and intimidated. But I sensed God say:

"I didn't ask you to impress. I asked you to show up."

So I did. I said yes. And in that simple act of obedience, God moved powerfully — not because I was impressive, but because He was present.

The Shift

God doesn't need your polish. He needs your yes.

Availability always precedes authority.

Reflection

- Isaiah's hinni came after encountering God's holiness and confessing his own inadequacy. Has your availability been shaped by encounter — or are you trying to skip to the sending?
- Isaiah's assignment included faithful rejection. Would you still say hinni if you knew the audience wouldn't respond?

Declaration

I am available to God. Hinni — here I am. My yes is on the table. I have been encountered, confessed, cleansed, and sent. I trust Him to do through me what I could never do alone.

Activation

Say out loud today: "Hinni — here I am, Lord. Send me." Then look for one place to step out in obedience this week — even if it feels small. Your yes matters. Your availability creates impact.

Berean Challenge

Read Isaiah 6:1-13 — the entire chapter, not just verse 8. Notice the sequence: vision (vv. 1-4), confession (v. 5), cleansing (vv. 6-7), commission (v. 8), and the hard assignment (vv. 9-13). Ask: which part of this sequence am I in right now, and am I trying to skip ahead?

Chapter 8 - Y: Authentic

You Don't Have to Perform to Walk in Power

The Text

"We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you." — 2 Corinthians 6:11

The Greek *peplatyntai* (opened wide) means to make broad, to expand. Paul is describing a posture of radical transparency — the opposite of guardedness. And he's writing to a church that had questioned his authority, his motives, and his apostleship. His response to being challenged is to open wider, not to close down. That's the model of authentic authority: vulnerability as strength, not weakness.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Paul goes even further: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." The Greek *astheneia* (weakness) means lack of strength, feebleness. And *teleitai* (made perfect/completed) means brought to full expression. God's power reaches its fullest display not in your strength but in your acknowledged weakness. Paul then says: "When I am weak, then I am strong." That's not a paradox to resolve. It's a reality to inhabit.

In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Paul describes his first visit to Corinth: "I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom... I came to you in weakness, with great fear and trembling." The Greek *phobos* (fear) and *tromos* (trembling) are strong words. Paul was scared. And he says this is how he came — so that their faith would rest on God's power, not on human wisdom.

Word Picture: The Mirror

A mirror doesn't create identity — it reflects it. When you look into it, you don't see potential — you see what's real.

The world teaches us to pose, perfect, and perform. But spiritual authority doesn't come through performance. It flows from authenticity.

Bible Character: Peter

Peter was bold, passionate, and deeply flawed. He denied Jesus three times — and yet was restored, empowered, and chosen to preach at Pentecost. In Galatians 2:11-14, Paul confronted him publicly for hypocrisy. Peter's story is not one of a man who got it right after his big failure. It's the story of a man who kept being used by God while still getting things wrong. His authenticity — his realness, including his failures — didn't disqualify him. It made him relatable and usable.

My Story: Where This Became Real

For years, I thought being a strong leader meant hiding weakness, which the enemy was reminding me often of past failures. I'd power through exhaustion. I'd smile through struggle. But slowly, that mask cracked — and I realized:

People don't need your performance. They need your presence.

When I began sharing honestly — about fears, fatigue, and faith in process — God began using me more deeply. Not in spite of my honesty. Because of it.

The Shift

Your greatest impact won't come from pretending — it will come from being real. Authenticity attracts heaven's anointing.

Reflection

- Paul came to Corinth in fear and trembling — on purpose, so that faith would rest on God's power. Where are you performing strength that's actually blocking God's power?
- "When I am weak, then I am strong." Is that a truth you believe, or one you resist?

Declaration

I lead with authenticity. God's power is teleitai — perfected, completed — in my astheneia, my weakness. I don't have to perform. I am fully loved, fully known, and fully called — even in process. My openness is not my vulnerability. It's my authority.

Activation

This week, share one real part of your story with someone you trust. Not the polished version — the true one. Then thank God for using your real life — not your curated one.

Berean Challenge

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 and notice that Paul's "thorn" is never removed. God's answer is sufficiency, not deliverance. Then read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 and notice Paul's deliberate choice to come in weakness. Ask: is my pursuit of strength actually competing with God's preferred method of displaying his power?

One Final Word: Walk in It

You've walked through every letter of AUTHORITY. You've seen it in the text. You've seen it in the lives of people who came before you. And you've seen it in your own story.

Now walk in it.

Not authority built on volume, title, or platform — but authority built on the text: assigned (yada, proetoimasen), anointed (chrisma, tsalach), advancing (natati, chazaq), armed (panoplian, rhēma), aligned (hypotagēte, chōris emou), audible (meqor chayyim), available (hinnenai), and authentic (astheneia, teleitai).

The authority Jesus gives you is not performance. It's position. It's not earned. It's received. And it operates most powerfully through people who know they need it most.

So go. Not in your own strength — but in His. Not with a need to be seen — but with a willingness to serve. Not waiting for permission — but walking in the authority that was purchased at the cross and confirmed at the empty tomb.

This is your second act. Live it with authority.

A Final Berean Invitation

This book was prepared under the Ezra Standard. But the Berean Standard means the final authority isn't me. It's the text. Go to the scriptures. Test everything I've taught against the word of God. If it holds up, walk in it. If it doesn't, trust the text over me.

He sees you. He loves you. He hasn't forgotten you. He has a plan and a purpose.

Now go find it in the text for yourself.