

WINTER 2025-26

YOU[®]

**LIMITED
RESOURCES,
LIMITLESS GOD**

+ + +

**SHARING
JESUS IN A
POST-CHRISTIAN
WORLD**



A PROMISE THAT WILL NEVER BE BROKEN

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It hurts when people break a promise. Some people make promises they have no intention of honoring. Others sincerely mean well, but circumstances interfere and they're unable to do what they said they promised they'd do.

God is not like us. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. Period. He is always faithful to His word. For example, He promises an abundant and eternal life to those who trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.... For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:9,13).

But we don't automatically enjoy the benefits of this wonderful promise. We must understand and believe Jesus died on the cross, taking our sin upon Himself, and then rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us. As we believe, we also acknowledge His lordship, turning from sin and surrendering our lives to Him.

God's promise is for you. If you would like a new life in Christ, repent of your sins and put your faith in Him. Admit to God you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive you. Turn from the sin that has kept you from God and accept Jesus's gift of forgiveness. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

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ON THE COVER

A proud product of Fort Pierce, Florida, Pastor Charles F. Salem III accepted his call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in 1993 and was later ordained in 1998. After 22 years of service to his country, Pastor Salem retired from the U. S. Army in 2013 and settled in Quincy, Florida. Being led by God, Pastor Salem planted New Destiny Christian Church in 2017. Together, they have done a great work impacting the county with the gospel through local missions, community service, and school partnerships.

Pastor Salem's greatest accomplishment in life is being a loving husband to Dr. Monica N. Salem. Dr. Salem has faithfully supported Pastor Salem in ministry and military service since 1991. A native of Gretna, Florida, Dr. Salem is a professor and academic advisor who holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Management. She serves as Director of Women's Ministry and Church Administrator at New Destiny Christian Church. Pastor and Dr. Salem are proud parents of four children and three grandchildren.

As leaders of New Destiny Christian Church, they utilize the YOU curriculum for adult Bible study. YOU has been an essential part of equipping men and women with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Members of New Destiny have found YOU to be a practical Biblical application for life.



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EDITORIAL

MARK CROSTON

The gospel has the power to change everything, our lives, our circumstances and our hope for heaven and eternity. Even though it may seem to some like Christianity is losing ground, trust me, around the world the Gospel is being proclaimed, and the church is flourishing. This is why we have focused this issue of the YOU Bible Study to encourage and strengthen you to share the Gospel wherever you go.

In this issue of the YOU Bible Study we will talk about our Limited Resources, Limitless God and Sharing Jesus in a Post-Christian World. We want you to let the fear and majesty of God compel you to look out for others, so we've added the study, Compelled to Act. In addition to these studies, get extra insights and teaching tips from our YOU Blog at you.lifeway.com and listen to our Lifeway YOU Podcast on your favorite podcast app.

The **Black Church Leadership and Family Conference** is right around the corner. There is a full program for all your church leaders and every member of the family! Join us for this all-in-one, equipping and energizing week, July 20 through 24, 2026. I'm sure this year will be just the time of relaxation, refreshment, and renewal we all need.

Learn more at lifeway.com/blackchurchconference.

Thanks for joining me in this season of study. Grab your Bible and allow God to speak through YOU!

Be Blessed!

Dr. Mark A. Croston, Sr.

YOU General Editor

National Director of Black Church Ministries

lifeway.com/BlackChurchLife

Lifeway **black church**

YOU 5

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOU

YOU is a three-in-one learner and leader resource with inspirational and educational features to enhance Bible study that leads to spiritual maturity and life change. Here is information to help you get the most out of *YOU*.

LEARNER PAGES

The first half of *YOU* includes pages for personal study. These should be read by the learner and leader prior to group time. Included in each session:

Memory Verses encourage filling the mind with the Word of God to strengthen every aspect of spiritual life.

Keywords identify and define words or phrases to add clarity to the biblical text.

Digging Deeper provides a deeper look at a word, character, or other aspect from the session.

Did You Know? provides an urban or African-American cultural or historical fact or update connected to the session.

Live It sums up the session and offers applications points to challenge daily living.

DAILY READINGS

Included with each session are five devotionals to be read by the learner and leader. The benefits of a daily devotion are innumerable. Their primary purpose in this resource is to focus attention on the biblical content of each session for application of and conformity to the Word of God.

LEADER PAGES

The second half of *YOU* includes pages to guide the teaching of each session. Leaders can use the leader pages to guide learners through the passage and its key emphases as detailed on the learner pages. Here are suggestions on how to teach:

- Prior to the session, read and study the Bible passage, keywords, and learner pages.
- Plan teaching using the leader pages. Keep in mind that because of time, it may not be possible to use every teaching suggestion. **Also the teaching suggestions are in sequential order for easy use.**
- Features to use when teaching include: The Point, which is readily recognizable on the learner and leader pages; The Question at the top of the first page of each learner session; Keywords on the Scripture pages; "Digging Deeper"; "Did You Know?"; Pack Items* (see next page); "Object Lessons"; and Commentary at the end of each session on leader pages.
- Refine your teaching plans when necessary.

Get more teaching help at you.lifeway.com.

PRAY

Because the Holy Spirit is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to "rightly divide the word of truth" as you teach your group. Read the Bible passage several times, asking the Holy Spirit to show you its meaning and application.



FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GO DEEPER



The **Advanced Bible Study** is written for group members who desire more extensive commentary. It includes exposition of each session's Scripture passage, an examination of keywords, an introduction to the setting of the passage and biblical life and times, questions to guide the study, and interactive responses to help readers apply God's truths to their lives today.



The **YOU Leader Pack** is a collection of teaching aids designed to help leaders provide a visual and interactive experience for learners. Each pack contains posters, charts, maps, and handouts that can add another layer to teaching and engender needed variety that makes learning more interesting.

The **YOU Leader Pack** is located at lifeway.com/YOU



YOU podcasts provide a candid overview of each YOU Bible Study session. General editor Mark Croston and content editor Natasha Meniffee casually discuss each biblical topic from an urban perspective with a strong theological and biblical emphasis. The intent of these podcasts is to provide listeners with a time-efficient overview of each session and creative tips for study group leaders.



Social Media: Connect with a community of **YOU** users.

- Post responses to questions, share teaching ideas at **Facebook.com/YOUBiblestudy**
- Learn more about **YOU** and link to great blog content at **YOU.lifeway.com**
- Shop **YOU** at **www.lifeway.com/YOU**

YOU DISCIPLESHIP PLAN

The Pathway of Discipleship

Growing in Christ is a journey—a lifelong journey—but what does that look like? Lifeway's research reveals eight markers consistently present in the lives of believers who are growing spiritually. Each year, Bible Studies for Life engages all eight of these areas. Following this intentional plan for discipleship ensures progress on the pathway to becoming more like Christ.

Visit BibleStudiesforLife.com for a fuller picture of this discipleship plan through 2026.

8 SIGNPOSTS	Winter 2025-26	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	
Exercise Faith	Limited Resources, Limitless God			
Share Christ	Sharing Jesus in a Post-Christian World			
Seek God		God Is: Understanding the Character of God		
Live Unashamed		Seize the Day: Embracing a Mission with Purpose		
Build Relationships			Connecting with Others Like Jesus Did	
Serve God and Others			Essentials for Christian Living	
Engage with Scripture				
Obey God & Deny Self				

STUDY 1 LIMITED RESOURCES, LIMITLESS GOD

INTRODUCTION

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Exercise Faith.

This study will encourage us to give what little we have to God and exercise faith that He will honor the gift and supply our needs.

Writer Bio

Matt Tullos

is a church specialist, interim pastor, deacon, father, and substitute Sunday School teacher from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, who loves to give more than a little.

Joy Nettles

adapted the learner pages for the *YOU* audience. She is a wife and mom of four who teaches at a local university. She enjoys reading the Word and actively finding ways to show its relevance in the now.

Dr. Dorothea Johnson James

wrote the Daily Readings for this study. She serves as Manager of Pastoral Ministries at Oak Crest Erickson Senior Living and Christian Discipleship Director at The Peoples Community Baptist Church in Silver Spring, MD. She and her husband of 36 years Lawrence reside in Baltimore, MD.



A BIBLE STUDY ON THE LIMITLESS POWER AND PROVISION OF GOD

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Friend, I wish I could help! But I have no time. I have no money. I have no plan. I'm just exhausted. My tank's empty. I don't think I'm your person. I'm not sure that's inside the parameters of our company policy. My calendar is slammed. I'm all out of those. I can't find what you need.

Does this chorus of universally common responses sound familiar? We've all heard them. We've said them, and sometimes they really are true. We live high-capacity lives with low-capacity funds and dwindling time. Everywhere we turn, we find overextended, underfunded people with limited margins, few guardrails, and contracted capabilities. Culture thrives on scarcity of time, money, and ability.

But when confronted with the needs of a lost, weary world, you'll never find those excuses in the red-letter verses of your Bible. Jesus is truly the all-sufficient Savior who supplies everything we need. He longs to show us how to escape the bounds of scarcity.

We can learn and discover that little really does become much in the Lord's hands. Over the next six studies, let's discover His greatness when we present limited resources before a limitless God.

SESSION 1

WHEN YOUR FAITH FALLS SHORT

Leader pages on pp. 96-99

THE POINT:
A FAITH THAT LOOKS
TO JESUS IS A
POWERFUL FAITH.

MATTHEW 17:14-20

¹⁴ When they reached the crowd, a man approached and knelt down before him.

¹⁵ “Lord,” he said, “have mercy on my son, because he has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire and often into the water.

¹⁶ I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn’t heal him.”

.....
¹⁷ Jesus replied, “You unbelieving and perverse generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.”

¹⁸ Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and from that moment the boy was healed.

.....
¹⁹ Then the disciples approached Jesus privately and said, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

²⁰ “Because of your little faith,” he told them. **“For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”**

MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

Lord (v. 15)—The father likely meant nothing more than to show respect for Jesus as a rabbi and someone who might heal his son.

Rebuked . . . Came out . . . Healed (v. 18)—All indicate simultaneous action and not sequential results. Jesus rebuked the demon, it departed,

and the boy was immediately and permanently cured.

Little faith (v. 20)—The singular word translated as “little faith” appears only here in the New Testament. Jesus referred to the quality of their faith rather than the quantity of their faith demonstrated with the comparison which followed.

WHAT CAN BELIEVERS DO WHEN THEIR FAITH FALLS SHORT?

New believers and longtime believers alike have all likely experienced crises or chronic circumstances at one point or another, times when it looked like life was just “lifing.” Though we know faith is important, it’s frustrating when we just don’t have any answers. The voice inside our head whispers, Why? Why me, God? These tests, these challenges, at first glance, might challenge everything we know about God, faith, and prayer, but through all our emotions, thoughts, and missteps, we are not alone. We come to see that when we have nothing left to give and no one else to call, Jesus is just getting started.

Without Faith We Fail //

Matthew 17:14-16

Fresh off the divine encounter of the Transfiguration, where Moses and Elijah showed up in all of their glorious extravagance, Jesus encountered the worst of evil. There was glory on the mountain, but there was trouble in the valley. That’s the way life is. We can experience glory in one place and evil in another all in the same day. There can be excitement and victory in one place and trial and tribulation in another. Staying on the mountain would be amazing, but we can’t pitch our tents there when our community is in crisis. Jesus’s disciples understood this and ran to the aid of their community. When you engage this story, you’ll encounter the following seven elements:

1. **Desperation.** A father collapsed at the feet of Jesus. This was no time for foolishness. This man was at his wits end. The whole community knew that.
2. **Futility.** The disciples tried everything that had worked in the past and they came up short. They had no power over the boy.
3. **Confusion.** The people had dealt with demons before, but they wondered what made this situation so impossible. The witnesses had to be confused also. This didn’t fit the narrative

that they had heard about Jesus’s disciples. They thought they were miracle workers, but the men in front of them had no tricks up their sleeves.

4. **Repetition.** This was not a new thing. This craziness relentlessly kept showing up. Sometimes it happened near a fire, and other times, around bodies of water, but it just kept happening.
5. **Failure.** The disciples’ feelings of futility morphed into frustrating failure. They had to



THE POINT: A FAITH THAT LOOKS TO JESUS IS A POWERFUL FAITH.

be thinking, What are we doing wrong? How are these demons different than the ones we've expelled in the past?

6. **Evil.** The howls, the foaming at the mouth, and the blasphemy were all outgrowth of a terrible evil.
7. **Faithlessness.** It's possible that because of the volume of the outbursts, the constant struggle, and the seemingly powerful enemy, the disciples themselves had a crisis of faith.

Scared disciples and a powerless community paint the perfect picture of a struggling church that tries in their own strength to do what only Jesus can do. The demonized boy represents the Christless world all around us, a wicked and perverse generation. As we imagine the scene, it reminds us how futile it is to try to do anything good apart from Jesus.

There are lots of strategies people use to overcome the darkness of this age.

- Read books about the problem.
- Watch YouTube® videos for help.
- Ask our friends.
- Try to numb the pain.
- Complain.

Jesus, however, reminds us of who we are and who He is: "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me" (John 15:5).

Regrettably, the outside world often ignores the Church because believers choose to find a solution without regard for the power that they possess. Jesus is always the best option to bring our problems.

God doesn't always show up as practically and miraculously as that, but if we pay attention, He's there. He is the One who speaks softly during our chaotic messes. He is the most essential part of our day. He is the beginning and ending of everything we face. Woe unto the self-sufficient disciple who thinks he or she can do anything outside the bounds of God! It will not go well. It's like trying to fell a tree with a chainsaw but forgetting to add fuel or start the engine.

WHEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A HELPLESS SITUATION ONLY GOD COULD FIX?



DIGGING DEEPER MUSTARD SEED

When Jesus referenced the mustard seed, he was likely referencing the black mustard seed, which would have been anywhere from one to two millimeters in length. That's about 1/32 to 1/16 of an inch. That's roughly the size of the flat, southernmost circular tip of a crayon. Think about how small that is. Jesus was basically saying that if we push away the doubt and give Him even the very beginnings of our faith, He can accomplish the miraculous. How much power must our faith hold if one little grain of it can move mountains? How much more could we accomplish if we allowed our faith to grow past its infancy? Hebrews 11:6 reminds us, "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Faith is vital to the life of a believer. It is Jesus who has given us access to a faith that is more powerful than any circumstance we could ever face.

What mountain can you apply your faith to today?



See God Working Around You //

Matthew 17:17-18

What frustrated Jesus? Was it the fact that this boy somehow got himself in this situation? Was it that these people were interfering with the day's agenda? What irked Jesus was their faithlessness. Their lack of faith wearied Him. Jesus minced no words when He talked about faithless activity. It contradicted everything they had experienced together. He is sufficient. He doesn't need anything to work out a solution. He is the solution. He tells them, "Bring him here to me" (v. 17).

In Matthew 17:18, we can only imagine the relief of the father as Jesus said, "Bring him here to me." The crowd must have winced. After all, this boy is a mess, a train wreck! He's messy, uncontrollable, defiant, and he has some nasty self-inflicted wounds. But Jesus is insistent, "Bring him here to me."

I have often tried to take the issues of my life into my own little workroom and bang out a solution on my own. Meanwhile, Jesus is waiting for me to come to my senses and realize that I need to trust Him. We see this everywhere. We see people, even believers, trying to be self-reliant as they work on problems, trying to orchestrate miracles on their own. Shame creeps in and we don't really bring it to Jesus because we think it's too big, too small, too messy, or too late. We postpone the solutions by our stubbornness, unwillingness, or lack of faith. We're afraid that if we bring our maladies and messes to Jesus and nothing happens it will shake our faith, so we choose to go at it alone. All

the while, Jesus is waiting for us to bow before Him and hand over the goods so that He can do what only He can do.

WHAT ARE REASONS WE DON'T BRING OUR ISSUES AND PROBLEMS TO JESUS?

Our nature is to believe that if we could fix things ourselves, we would somehow be more righteous and accepted. The opposite is true. If we are unwilling to relinquish our control, we will never experience the intimacy we so desperately need.

Start with Mustard Seed Faith // Matthew 17:19-20

We can imagine the disciples' frustration of struggling needlessly with the strong demonic forces they encountered and then witnessing the sheer, simplistic dominance of Jesus. They wanted to sidebar with Jesus, away from the villagers. Perhaps they were a little embarrassed. Before today, they had the power to send demons running. Why not this time? Jesus's answer is perplexing. You must have faith, but it doesn't take much faith. It all hinges on our connection with a mountain moving, demon scattering Savior.

It's not about our capacity. It's about the capacity of Jesus. The disciples' inability to cast out the demon shows that spiritual authority didn't come from their own abilities but through a deep dependence on God. True faith recognizes our need for God's help in every situation.

We all struggle with faith sometimes, especially if a situation remains the same after years of prayer. That's why Jesus taught us to pray and "not give up" (Luke 18:1). We must remember God's view that transcends our nearsighted perspective. Wouldn't it be nice if prayer was more like a microwave with a time machine setting? But that's not the way prayer works. We must realize that prayer is a process that changes us and draws us into a deeper dependence upon Him. We must always remember that larger picture.

Whenever you feel inadequate and insufficient, remember George Müller, an ordinary man with extraordinary faith. Müller felt called to help the countless orphans on the streets of England but

THE POINT: A FAITH THAT LOOKS TO JESUS IS A POWERFUL FAITH.

refused to ask anyone for financial help. Instead, he relied on the mustard seed of his faith. One famous example occurred one morning when there was no food to feed the children. Müller gathered the orphans and prayed, thanking God for the food that they had not yet received. Shortly after the prayer, a baker knocked on the door, bringing enough fresh bread to feed everyone. Then a milkman's cart broke down outside the orphanage so that the children were also able to have fresh milk.¹ This is what it means to go on an adventure with God. We have to step out in faith. George Müller's faith wasn't illustrated in one single dramatic event. His life was marked by a persistent, daily faith that built his legacy, brick by brick, day by day.

WHEN CAN EVEN A LITTLE FAITH BE A GREAT FAITH?

The clarion call for the believer rings loud and clear from the heart of Jesus: Have faith. Be encouraged by the simple truth that God isn't looking for the most attractive, talented, educated, or popular. His eye is on the one who takes Him at His word, prays faithfully, and believes consistently. When our faith falls short, we must run to the One who strengthens our faith. He overcomes every shortfall and challenges us to bring everything to Him, even when it's a mess. He specializes in messes and impossibilities.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to James 1:5, we can ask seek God for help in any situation, and we can expect that He will provide insight. I remember watching my dad years ago as he worked on his tractor. He'd been working for days attempting to figure out the problem and simply could not. Finally, he decided to ask God for help. I remember him saying, "Suddenly, I just knew what to do. I knew where the wires were supposed to go." This insight wasn't earthly. He got his tractor back working because he decided to use his faith. Think about the strength of this kind of testimony in our everyday lives. God's wisdom extends to both big and small, and all it takes is a little bit of courage to step out on faith.

Biblical Truth: "Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him" (Jas. 1:5).

How can you put God's wisdom on display more in your life?

LIVE IT

How will your faith show up this week?

Jesus compels us to trust Him and have faith, even when life feels overwhelming. When our faith fails, we can lose perspective of the larger story He is writing through our lives. Perhaps the greatest gift we could give Jesus is resilient faith even when we have little else to give. This week, no matter what the circumstance looks like or feels like, have faith in the God who is greater than your situation. Do not defined by circumstance. A little faith goes a long way!

+ + +

- **Pray.** What little challenges face you this week? Make a list and pray for faith to deal with these issues.
- **Engage.** We all have experienced difficult situations and broken people. It's sometimes easier to try to avoid them. Commit to engage actively with these complicated problems rather than avoiding them.
- **Dare.** Perhaps you've stopped believing a breakthrough is possible in some area of life, even to the extent that you've stopped praying about it. Ask Jesus to change your posture from doubt to faith. Commit to reengage by taking your requests to God.

DAILY READINGS

1. MUSTARD SEED SIZE FAITH // HEBREWS 11:1

Faith does not mean we know all; it means we believe even when we don't. A mustard seed is 1 to 2 millimeters big, yet it can grow into a 10-foot-tall tree. Jesus is teaching us that even the smallest amount of faith can move mountains. Faith is at work in the world every day. We see grandparents praying over wayward children, churches feeding the hungry, and believers holding on during times of trouble. Faith does not have to be perfect, but it does have to be placed in Him who is. When we are planted in God, even a small seed of faith can yield a harvest larger than we can imagine.

Trust that God can take your little faith and do the impossible.

2. "HELP MY UNBELIEF" // MARK 9:23-24

Doubt is human. Our strength does not protect us from experiencing doubt. The father in Mark 9 faced this same struggle. He brought his son to Jesus, hoping for a miracle yet secretly doubted in his mind. His open revelation in that instant shows a vulnerability that we all share: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" We understand His ability, but we remain uncertain about His willingness to act. True faith does not eliminate doubts, but it requires us to bring our doubts to God. Have you ever refrained from asking for increased faith because you were afraid of what the price might be?

God invites us to be real and comes to where we are.

3. FAITH IS A VERB // JAMES 2:17

Believing in faith requires more than mental acceptance because it demands active engagement. The faith of our ancestors created educational facilities, organized demonstrations, and nurtured children despite every challenge. Our ancestors used their faith to endure difficult times, which gave them the power to keep moving forward. According to James, faith that does not produce action is nothing more than a dead

religion. Our trust in God's door-opening power requires us to take the necessary step of knocking. Our belief in God's provision demands our willingness to give. God wants us to actively join His mission instead of simply existing as believers. Trust God. Apply for the job. Start the ministry. Forgive that person.

This week, put your faith to work — Live what you believe!

4. STORM-PROOF FAITH // MATTHEW 8:26

The storms of life present themselves through various circumstances: mounting bills, collapsing relationships and declining health. During a literal storm the disciples lost control while Jesus slept peacefully. The disciples approached Him with fear. Jesus immediately asked them "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" This question remains relevant to our present day. Following Christ means we will encounter storms, but we gain stability through our trust in His authority over these challenges. The present storm has not surprised God in any way. He's still in control.

Choose faith instead of fear because Jesus sits beside you to calm the storm.

5. FAITH THAT SPEAKS // PROVERBS 18:21

Scripture reminds us that "death and life are in the power of the tongue." Words have the same ability to build our faith while holding the potential to destroy doubt. If you constantly speak about fear, uncertainty, failure and defeat, your faith will reflect doom. Growing up, we were taught this principle—speak life! Declare God's promises over your circumstances. Speak hope in dry places. Speak healing over sickness, provision over lack, and peace over chaos. Your words are not just sounds; they shape your faith and future. Speak with faith, stand on His Word, and watch how God moves when you declare His truth over your life.

Let your words reflect trust in an all-powerful God and let your actions follow.