

Destined to Win

OTHER BOOKS BY KRIS VALLOTTON

[[list to come]]

Destined to Win

HOW TO EMBRACE YOUR GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY
AND REALIZE YOUR KINGDOM PURPOSE

KRIS VALLOTTON



NELSON
BOOKS

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Published in association with the literary agency of The FEDD Agency, Inc., P.O. Box 341973, Austin, Texas, 78734.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Printed in the United States of America

16 17 18 19 20 21 RRD 6 5 4 3 2 1

I dedicate *Destined to Win* to my mother who lost her husband, the man of her dreams, when she was twenty years young. Alone with two small children and a broken heart, she forged her way through life with amazing kindness and intense perseverance. In the years that followed, tragedy and hardship would continue to hang over our family like a thick black cloud; yet my mother remained a bright light shining through the darkness.

My mother contracted lung cancer at the same time I began this project. The doctors gathered our family three times to talk to us about taking her off of life support, but true to her nature she insisted on living! Two months later, at the ripe old age of seventy-nine and against all odds, she left the hospital under her own power, recovered from surgery and healed of cancer.

My mother's incredible love has carried me through the worst situations, and her faith in me remains the driving force in the core of my being. She is the angel on my shoulder, the cheerleader in my corner, and my friend in the storms of life. She makes me laugh when I am low, reminds me of who I am when I have lost my way, and is the loudest voice in my victories.

I love you, Mama! You were the first one to ever believe in me, and you taught me that I was destined to win!

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FOREWORD

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INTRODUCTION

The world is filled with amazing people who are walking in their divine callings, changing history, and seeing their dreams come true. They have discovered their true identities, harnessed their strengths, focused their energies, and maximized their opportunities. Successful people know how to love well; they lead passionate, productive lives. When they fail (and everyone does), they learn from their mistakes and gain wisdom to rise to new heights in God and life.

Successful people make the most out of these opportunities and thereby profoundly impact the world around them. When life gives them lemons, they make lemonade; and when things get tough they grow stronger. They refuse to become victims because they know they were born to be winners . . . victors . . . champions!

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Yet other remarkable people, for various reasons, find themselves waiting for life to begin. These people sit daily at the porch of possibility, eating their Lucky Charms while longing to be discovered. They each pray for a big break, dream of a better life, and hope for a deeper love. Like a beautiful bird that has wings but never learns to fly, they see life as a well of untapped potential, a buried chest filled with secret treasures waiting to be unearthed.

The truth is, no matter where you find yourself in life, there is always more: more things to learn, more people to help, and more obstacles to overcome. I long to see people fully actualized in a way that causes them to embrace their God-given identities and fulfill their divine purposes. My heart yearns to see people become fully alive and totally equipped: His story-makers, who alter the course of history toward God's incredible kingdom!

In 1997 I became so overcome with the desire to equip people for their divine purposes that I left our four businesses and our home in the woods to join the Bethel Church leadership team. That same year, Bill Johnson and I (along with our amazing team) founded the Bethel School of Ministry in Redding, California. The school quickly became a catalyst for people who wanted to rewrite their personal stories and grab hold of the callings God had for their lives; it grew to more than two thousand students (in a city of less than ninety thousand) in just seventeen years. In fact, the school grew so large and so fast that we soon found ourselves completely out of room. In 2001 we added another wing to our building, but it was full before we finished it. The word continued to spread, and people kept coming from all over the planet. Before long we found ourselves stretched all around the city in several different buildings; in spite of the inconvenience,

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more students continued to enroll with passion in their eyes and fire in their hearts.

In 2012 BSM took over the Redding Civic Auditorium (the largest auditorium in our county) to house just half of our student body. As of this writing we are again out of room, necessitating one of the largest building projects in the history of our city. The school now trains nearly nine hundred international students annually. People all over the world are so hungry to reach their full potential in God that their passions have caused BSM to become the largest international SEVIS-certified (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement–certified) vocational school in America.

As I travel the world, I have discovered that, despite the incredible growth we've seen already, there are still so many more people who long to have the same experiences our students are having; yet for a variety of reasons, they can't make the journey. This book is my attempt to speak to that need, to capture some of the most remarkable things we have learned about calling and purpose over the last two decades for those who haven't been able to make it to Redding.

I'm personally inviting you to join me on this journey as we venture to uncover the buried treasure hidden in the hearts of every reader. My goal is that all who brave the pages of this manuscript will become fully alive, passionate people who learn the secrets of success in God and become equipped to apprehend their divine purpose in life.

After two decades of equipping people, I have come to realize there is no such thing as a magic pill or overnight success in God. But as thousands of our students would attest, there is a common process that prepares us for the actualization of our dreams. Let

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me be clear: I am not naïve enough to believe that everyone who reads this book will experience a transformed life, but I do believe that most everyone can learn enough to dramatically impact his or her life and ultimately have a positive effect on the kingdom of God.

As you join me on this expedition, I want to challenge you to posture yourself for change. My prayer is that God would meet you in the pages of this book and cause *all* of His dreams for you to come true. You are destined to win!

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Henry was my best friend in high school. He was a short, stocky kid who sort of walked like a duck. His parents forced him to go to church so he spent most of his growing-up years trying to escape the religious stigma that plagued him. I was a tall, skinny kid (five feet eleven, 137 pounds) who practiced my “cool walk” at home, strutting as if I had a stick up my butt! We were such a pair.

We both longed to be accepted by the popular crowd, and we did everything we could to fit in. We cussed and acted mean. I even wore skinny jeans and white T-shirts, but Henry’s wardrobe was a medley of thrift-shop finds. His mom did her best to dress him “nice,” but Henry’s mismatched and outdated clothes only added to the kid’s misfortune. The truth is that his parents really

loved and cared for him, but they were Flintstones . . . out of touch with the real world.

Henry grew up on the poor side of town, just down the street from a wrecking yard. This became his hangout, an escape from a world of brokenness. He quickly became somewhat of a junkyard dog and gofer all wrapped up in one dirty, greasy kid. When Henry was finally old enough to have a driver's license, the yard boss let him rescue a tired, rusted-out '57 Ford Fairlane from the crusher before they smashed the thing. This diamond in the rough was originally painted a two-tone white and salmon color, but it had faded to a kind of ugly pink, which came off on your clothes whenever you rubbed up against it.

The first week after Henry rescued the car from the yard it was obvious to both of us that it needed some serious upgrades! First things first, we took it to our auto shop class and sprayed the entire outside with about ten cans of gray primer. Then, in flat black, we stenciled the words *Captain America* in huge letters on both sides of the car. After that, we put the junker up on the lift and drilled holes in the mufflers so it would sound like a race car.

The seats were so ripped up that the stuffing was literally falling out onto the floorboards, so we bought about three rolls of duct tape and reupholstered the seats with it. The only down side was that you had to be careful when sliding into the car, because the duct tape would stick your butt to the seat; not to mention the fact that getting the glue off your jeans was almost impossible.

The aesthetics definitely needed some work, but the ride was also in need of serious help. One of the many unique qualities of Captain America was its ability to burn almost as much oil as it did gasoline. Whenever we would stop at a red light and rev

the engine, blueish smoke would completely cover the car. Henry called it the “glory cloud.”

The truth is, we thought that heap was really cool, but looking back now I can see we were the laughingstocks of our school. Let’s just say that none of the ladies wanted a ride home.

What Henry and I didn’t understand back then was that stenciling *Captain America* on the side of the car didn’t make us superheroes any more than drilling holes in the mufflers made that piece of junk a race car. Duct tape may be fine to seal HVAC connection points, but it certainly wasn’t designed to upholster seats. We were just two young boys desperately trying to fit in . . . to be loved . . . to be known. We thought the world was laughing *with* us; we had no idea the world was laughing *at* us.

The reality was that Henry and I were never going to fit in; we weren’t good at anything the cool crowd valued. More important, we didn’t like ourselves. I understand now that Captain America was more than an automobile; it was an outward manifestation of our inward brokenness. Our lives were duct-taped together because our dysfunctional families had beaten the stuffing out of us. It was all we could do to keep our intense pain from leaking out of our ears. We painted over the faded glory of our boyhoods, but we couldn’t cover the discolored, rusted-out, painful years of rejection. We stenciled *Captain America* on our T-shirts, but there were still two scared little boys under the hood. We roared like race cars coming down the street, talking tough and cussing like sailors; yet it was all smoke and mirrors, a low-budget film with poor actors and no plot. Our self-hatred bonded us together; we fed one another’s brokenness and provided a generic intimacy for our starving souls. We were just two

blind boys stumbling through the darkness, grasping for acceptance, and longing for love.

The world is filled with people like Henry and Kris who survive in the painful existence of symptomatic cures, reactionary lifestyles, and loveless cultures. They flock together, validating one another's dysfunction, measuring their level of achievement (or lack of it) by comparing themselves to one another. An ancient Israelite prophet named Isaiah put it this way: "All of us like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6).

But, as most of you know, we are not powerless victims! In fact, we were born to win. The fact is that we don't have eyes in the backs of our heads because we weren't designed to back up, retreat, or lose ground. Furthermore, our arms were created to only work in front of us, building what's before us. Our feet point forward and are incapable of swiveling rearward, making retreat a slow, difficult process. It's all a sign of our Creator's desire for us to gain ground and to live successful, productive lives. God is our rear guard, and we are to face forward.

GOD IS OUR
REAR GUARD,
AND WE ARE TO
FACE FORWARD.

Knowing this, how are we to move ahead, to become prosperous in the Kingdom? We must discover our true identities, proactively develop noble virtues, and get to the root causes of our destructive and/or unproductive behaviors. We have to take off our masks and refuse to live a photoshopped life! It's imperative that we wake up to the stunning reality of God's superior kingdom, while learning how to navigate this journey we call life. We are called to greatness and destined for glory.

Greatness Defined

Greatness and *fame* are terms often confused or even used interchangeably. Fame is usually the result of some popular act: a ball is caught, a song is sung, a book is written, or a character is played. But greatness cannot be reduced to an action or an event. Kingdom greatness is measured long after the crowds have dispersed, the applause has silenced, and the stage lights have cooled, because true greatness lies deep in the heart of every person. In fact, genuine greatness is most often exposed in the dark times, in the secret places, and in the alone hours of a believer's existence. It is in these desert seasons that the seedbeds of God's greatness, the attributes we need to cultivate, are conceived. It is later—often much later—that the results are revealed to the world.

The Scriptures describe men and women of God who cultivated these qualities and took hold of their positions of divine influence to shift the destinies of nations. Their prominence was not for their own benefit, but for the purpose of shaping society toward God's original intent. They created catalytic cultures that maximized the godly influence of their constituents on the rest of creation. Believers throughout the book of Acts are great examples of noble people who catalyzed culture. They had such deep impacts on their societies that when Paul and his friends arrived in Thessalonica, the people said, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too" (Acts 17:6 NKJV).

The world is crying out for people like Paul—and Joseph—who will become fathers and mothers to the pharaohs of the world (see Genesis 45) and see whole nations fall into the hands of the Lord. God is summoning the Daniels of the earth who

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can stand as he did in the courts of four worldly kings and bring the most powerful nations into the Kingdom. God is gathering the Nehemiahs of our day to rebuild our ruined cities and restore hope to the planet. He is awakening the Davids of our generation and commissioning them to defeat the giants of racism, crime, immorality, and corruption that seem to roam the earth wreaking havoc on our children.

This is our moment, our time, our Jordan River crossing, our season for epic transition. We are God's X factor, His secret weapon, His ace in the hole, His divine strategy for global reformation. That's right. We are the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). We preserve the planet and are vital to life in the Kingdom.

We are the light rising in the darkness that is longing for a new day to dawn. It's you and me, and it's people like us all over the world who are taking hold of this mandate to stand firm in our stations at the height of every city and shine against the backdrop of doom. Together we are the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), illuminating breathtaking solutions to people in desperate, despairing, and destructive circumstances.

The teacher in Proverbs, as he encouraged his students to pursue wisdom instead of folly, told them,

The LORD by wisdom founded the earth,
By understanding He established the heavens.
By His knowledge the deeps were broken up
And the skies drip with dew.

(PROVERBS 3:19–20)

It was wisdom that formed the earth, and it is wisdom that

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will reform it. When explaining to his readers that God's grace made him a preacher to the Gentiles so that His church would grow, the apostle Paul concluded that "the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10). God used Paul to deliver His gospel to the Gentile church; now that church broadcasts His wisdom to the rest of creation. Each of us who follows Jesus is endowed with the wisdom of God. It is His wisdom in us that is about to be demonstrated through us to the rulers around us, to restore the earth beneath us, so that His city above us can be the habitation among us.

That's who you are, and that's who I am! We are sons and daughters of the King, filled with wisdom and living in His radiance. This is not a fantasy or some script from a superhero movie. It's the truth that frees the world to fulfill the Creator's original intentions, our divine design, our Master's mandate.

