#### Part One

# THE FIRST CIRCLE -DREAM BIG

Until the day he died, Honi the circle maker was mesmerized by one phrase in one verse of Scripture - Psalm 126:1. "When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed." That phrase, "we were like those who dreamed," provoked a question that Honi grappled with his entire life:

Is it possible for a man to dream continuously for seventy years?

Neuroimaging has shown that as we age, the center of cognitive gravity tends to shift from the imaginative right brain to the logical left brain. And this neurological tendency presents a grave spiritual danger. At some point, most of us stop living out of imagination and start living out of memory. Instead of creating the future, we start repeating the past. Instead of living by faith, we live by logic. Instead of going after our dreams, we stop circling Jericho.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Harriet Doerr dreamed of going to college in a day and age when university populations were mostly male. Money, and then children,

kept her from going, but the dream never died. Half a century later kept her from going, but the dream in the Stanford University at the Harriet earned her bachelor's degree from Stanford University at the Harriet earned her bachelor's degree from Stanford University at the kept her nom be Harriet earned her bachelor's degree and her contemporaries were retiring age of sixty-seven. While most of her contemporaries of writing a be Harriet was just getting started. She also dreamed of writing a book Harriet was just getting started, was published when Harriet age of sixty and getting started. Site and published when Harriet  $w_{ag}$  Harriet novel, Stones for Ibarra, was published when Harriet  $w_{ag}$ 

Is it possible to dream continuously for seventy years? seventy-four years young.

Is it possible to dream continuous, "One of the best things about aging In the words of Harriet Doerr, "One overtake memory." is being able to watch imagination overtake memory." being able to watch imagination overtakes memory or memo

So who's right? I ne neurono overtakes memory or memory over. As we age, either imagination overtakes memory or memory over. As we age, eitner imagination is the road less taken, but it is the takes imagination. Imagination are directly prover. takes imagination. In again and imagination are directly proportional; the more you pray the bigger your imagination becomes because the Holy Spirit supersizes it with God-sized dreams. One litmus test of spiritual maturity is whether your dreams are getting bigger or smaller. The older you get, the more faith you should have because you've experienced more of God's faithfulness. And it is God's faithfulness that increases our faith and enlarges our dreams.

There is certainly nothing wrong with an occasional stroll down memory lane, but God wants you to keep dreaming until the day you die. You're never too old to go after the dreams God has put in your heart. And for the record, you're never too young either. Age is never a valid excuse.

### Is it possible for a man to dream continuously for seventy years?

Ironically, Honi answered his own question with his own life. He never stopped dreaming because he never stopped praying. And how could he, after God answered his impossible prayer for rain? Once you've experienced a miracle like that, you believe God for even bigger and better miracles.

If you keep praying, you'll keep dreaming, and conversely, if you keep dreaming, you'll keep praying. Dreaming is a form of praying, and praying is a form of dreaming. The more you pray the bigger your dreams will become. And the bigger your dreams become the more you will have to pray. In that process of drawing ever-enlarging prayer circles, the sphere of God's glory is expanded.

Our date of death is not the date etched on our tombstone. The day we stop dreaming is the day we start dying. When imagination is sacrificed on the altar of logic, God is robbed of the glory that rightfully belongs to Him. In fact, the death of a dream is often a subtle form of idolatry. We lose faith in the God who gave us the big dream and settle for a small dream that we can accomplish without His help. We go after dreams that don't require divine intervention. We go after dreams that don't require prayer. And the God who is able to do immeasurably more than all our right brain can imagine is supplanted by a god — lowercase g — who fits within the logical constraints of our left brain.

Nothing honors God more than a big dream that is way beyond our ability to accomplish. Why? Because there is no way we can take credit for it. And nothing is better for our spiritual development than a big dream because it keeps us on our knees in raw dependence on God. Drawing prayer circles around our dreams isn't just a mechanism whereby we accomplish great things for God; it's a mechanism whereby God accomplishes great things in us.

Is it possible for a man to dream continuously for seventy years? If you keep drawing prayer circles, the answer is yes.

May you keep dreaming until the day you die. May imagination overtake memory. May you die young at a ripe old age.

Chapter Five

### CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF QUAIL

B efore the first raindrop fell, Honi had to have felt a little foolish. Standing inside a circle and demanding rain is a risky proposition. Vowing that you won't leave the circle until it rains is even riskier. Honi didn't draw a semicircle; he drew a complete circle. There was no escape clause, no expiration date. Honi backed himself into a circle, and the only way out was a miracle.

Drawing prayer circles often looks like an exercise in foolishness. But that's faith. Faith is the willingness to look foolish. Noah looked foolish building a boat in the middle of a desert. The Israelite army looked foolish marching around Jericho blowing trumpets. A shepherd boy named David looked foolish charging a giant with a slingshot. The Magi looked foolish tracking a star to Timbuktu. Peter looked foolish getting out of a boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. And Jesus looked foolish wearing a crown of thorns. But the results speak for themselves. Noah was saved from the flood; the walls came tumbling down; David defeated Goliath; the Magi discovered the Messiah; Peter walked on water; and Jesus was crowned King of kings.

Foolishness is a feeling that Moses was very familiar with. He had to feel foolish going before Pharaoh and demanding that he let God's people go. He felt foolish raising his staff over the Red Sea. And he most certainly felt foolish promising meat to eat for the entire nation of Israel in the middle of the wilderness. But his willingness to look foolish resulted in epic miracles — the exodus of Israel out of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, and the quail miracle.

Drawing prayer circles often feels foolish. And the bigger the circle Drawing prayer circles onen tern tern to be une circle you draw the more foolish you'll feel. But if you aren't willing to step you draw the more foolisn you in a water. If you aren't willing to step out of the boat, you'll never walk on water. If you aren't willing to circle out of the boat, you'll never walk out of the value of the boat, you'll never fall. And if you aren't willing to follow the the city, the wall will never fall. And if you aren't willing to follow the star, you'll miss out on the greatest adventure of your life. In order to experience a miracle, you have to take a risk. And one

In order to experience a minute to take is risking your reputation of the most difficult types of risk to take is risking your reputation of the most difficult types of the Honi already had a reputation as a rainmaker, but he was willing to Honi already had a reputation for rain one more time. Honi to the Honi already had a reputation for rain one more time. Honi took  $t_{he}$  risk his reputation by praying for rain one more time. risk — and the rest is history.

The greatest chapters in history always begin with risk, and the same is true with the chapters of your life. If you're unwilling to risk your reputation, you'll never build the boat like Noah or get out of the boat like Peter. You cannot build God's reputation if you aren't willing to risk yours. There comes a moment when you need to make the call or make the move. Circle makers are risk takers.

Moses had learned this lesson well: If you don't take the risk, you forfeit the miracle.

### FOOD MIRACLES

I love miracles, and I love food, so I really love food miracles. And while there are multiple food miracles in Scripture, the day God provided quail meat in the middle of nowhere may rank as the most amazing. When the Israelites exited Egypt, a quailstorm was definitely not in the forecast.

The people of Israel also began to complain, "Oh, for some meat!" they exclaimed. "We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!"

The Israelites were complaining. I know, shocking! Instead of manna, they want meat to eat. And as a hardcore carnivore, I understand that. If you haven't eaten at an all-you-can-eat Brazilian steakhouse, you aren't ready to die yet. But talk about selective memory

We must seek to Focuson 48 the what did when we we asked rather than We w what's not, when we want it

The Israelites longingly remember the free fish they ate in Egypt, and forget the little fact that the food was free because they weren't. The Israelites weren't just slaves; they had been the victims of genocide. Yet they missed the meat on the menu? And isn't it just a little ironic that the Israelites were complaining about one miracle while asking for another one? Their capacity for complaining was simply astounding, and we scoff at the Israelites for grumbling about a meal of manna that was miraculously delivered to their doorsteps every day, but don't we do the same thing?

There are miracles all around us all the time, yet it's so easy to find something to complain about in the midst of those miracles. The simple act of reading involves millions of impulses firing across billions of synapses. While you're reading, your heart goes about its business circulating five quarts of blood through a hundred thousand miles of veins, arteries, and capillaries. And it's amazing you can even concentrate, given the fact that you're on a planet that is traveling 67,000 miles per hour through space while spinning around its axis at a speed of 1,000 miles per hour. But we take those manna miracles, the miracles that happen day in, day out, for granted.

### PULLING AN ADAM TAYLOR

Despite the Israelites' incessant complaining, God patiently responds to their food tantrum with one of the most unfathomable promises in Scripture. He doesn't just promise a one-course meal of meat; God promises meat for a month. And Moses can hardly believe it. Literally.

"Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!' Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?"

Moses is doing the math in his mind, and it doesn't add up. Not even close! He is trying to think of any conceivable way that God could fulfill this promise, and he can't think of a single scenario. He doesn't see how God can fulfill His impossible promise for a day, let alone a month.

Have you ever been there?

Have you ever been there: You know God wants you to take the job that pays less, but You know God wants you to go on the mission You know God wants you to go on the mission the doesn't add up. You know God wants you to get married doesn't add up. You know God wants you to get married, go to but it doesn't add up. You know for add up. grad school, or adopt, but it doesn't add up.

ad school, or adopt, but it doesn't went on one of our annual mis. A couple years ago, Adam Taylor went on one of our annual mis. A couple years ago, Adam any and the set of his life. God was calling sion trips to Ethiopia. While he was there, he knew God was calling sion trips to Ethiopia. While the week of his life. God was calling him to invest more than one week of his life. God was calling him him to invest more than one ment was when a fifteen-year-old boy to go all in. The defining moment was when a fifteen-year-old boy to go all in. The defining mount manhole cover. He didn't have any named Lilly popped out of a sewer manhole cover. He didn't have any shoes on, so Adam spontaneously gave him his. Lilly took Adam on a tour of the sewer where he found an entire community of orphans living under the streets. In that moment, Adam knew that Ethiopia was his Jericho.

The prospect of leaving a six-digit salary didn't add up, but Adam didn't care. He moved to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, trusting that God would provide, and he started a ministry called Change Boys, which rescues street kids and gives them a home to live in. In fact, twenty. two kids live with Adam in a house that God miraculously provided. Adam signed the lease on the house, not knowing how God would provide. Meanwhile, we released our annual Christmas catalog that raises money for a variety of mission projects. Adam didn't know it. but Change Boys was one of those projects. How appropriate that Adam's spiritual family, National Community Church, would cover an entire year's lease. When Adam heard the news, he cried. Then we cried.

Adam's story has inspired others within our church to step out in faith too. In fact, his name has been turned into a verb. "Pulling an Adam Taylor" has become synonymous with taking a step of faith that doesn't add up.

### IMPOSSIBLE PROMISES

Meat for a month seems like an impossible promise. And Moses has to decide whether or not he is going to circle it. Logic is screaming no; faith is whispering yes. And Moses has to choose between the two. what happens when Topic Schlams no, but faith screams yes? 50

This predicament reminds me of another food miracle that happened in the Judean wilderness about fifteen hundred years later. A crowd of five thousand is listening to Jesus speak. He doesn't want to send them away hungry, but there aren't any eating establishments anywhere. Then a nameless boy offers his brown-bag lunch of five loaves and two fish to Jesus. It's a nice gesture, but Andrew verbalizes what all the other disciples must have been thinking: "How far will they go among so many?" Like Moses, Andrew starts doing the math in his head and it doesn't add up. Outofaith

In terms of addition, 5 + 2 = 7. But if you add God into the equation,  $5 + 2 \neq 7$ . When you give what you have to God, He multiplies it so that 5 + 2 = 5,000. Not only does God multiply the meal so that it feeds five thousand; the disciples actually end up with more leftovers than they had food to begin with. Only in God's economy! The twelve baskets of remainders means the most accurate equation is this: 5 + 2 = 5,000 R12.

If you put what little you have in your hand into the hand of God, it won't just add up; God will make it multiply.

One footnote.

Do you recall what Jesus did right before the miracle? It says Jesus "gave thanks." He didn't wait until after the miracle; He thanked God for the miracle before the miracle happened. Jesus put the Jericho principle into practice by praising God before the miracle happened as if it had already happened because He knew His Father would keep His promise. He didn't just pray through; He praised through.

### THIS IS CRAZY

You are only one defining decision away from a totally different life. One defining decision can change your trajectory and put you on a new path toward the Promised Land. One defining decision can totally change the forecast of your life. And it's those defining deci-sions that become the defining moments of our lives decision that I have the The quail promise was one of those defining moments for Moses. Fr

He had a defining decision to make: to circle or not to circle. What do you do when the will of God doesn't add up? What do you

do when a dream doesn't fit within the logical constraints of your left do when a dream doesn't fit within the that seems impossible? What brain? What do you do with a promise that seems impossible? What do you do when faith seems foolish?

you do when faith seems toolle what the LORD had said. So Moses went out and told the people what the promise. How

So Moses went out and tota the performance of the promise. He pushed all Moses risked his reputation and circled the table and told the Israel Moses risked his reputation and to the table and told the Israelites of his credibility chips to the middle of the table and told the Israelites of his credibility chips to the meat to eat. This had to be one of the that God was going to give them meat to eat. This had to be one of the that God was going to give mean one of the scariest sermons he ever toughest decisions he ever made, one of the scariest sermons he ever toughest decisions he ever the transfer of the ever toughest decisions he ever made, he ever cast. It doesn't add up, but preached, one of the craziest visions he ever cast. It doesn't add up, but preached, one of the craziest view by human calculation. Moses had the will of God never does add up by human calculation. Moses had the will of God never does a going to keep His promise, but that isn't no earthly idea how God was going to keep His promise, but that isn't no earthly idea how God was god's business. Too often we let  $h_{owget}$  our business anyway. That is God's business. Too often we let  $h_{owget}$ our business anyway. I hat to get to do. We can't figure out how to do in the way of what God wants us to do. We can't figure out how to do what God has called us to do, so we don't do it at all.

This is what I have come to call a "this is crazy" moment. If we had the transcript of Moses' thoughts, I wonder if it would read, This is crazy, this is crazy, this is crazy.

I had one of those "this is crazy" moments last summer while tray. eling in Peru. After hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, Parker and I had an opportunity to check a goal off our life goal list by paragliding over the Sacred Valley. Paragliding is one of those experiences that sounds amazing when your feet are firmly planted on terra firma, but the closer you get to the cliff the more you question whether you should be running off it. I have a minor fear of heights, and that fear was not alleviated by the sixty-second orientation given in broken English by my Peruvian tandem partner, who was half my height. His instructions? Run as fast as you can toward the cliff. That's it.

As I sprinted toward the ten-thousand-foot drop-off, one thought kept repeating itself like a broken record: This is crazy, this is crazy, this is crazy! But it was quickly followed by, This is awesome, this is awesome, this is awesome!

We ran off the cliff and caught an updraft in our parachute. The next thing I knew we were sailing over the Sacred Valley at 14,000 feet. Despite the fact that I lost my lunch seven times in twenty minutes, paragliding ranks as one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life. I learned that if you aren't willing to put yourself in "this is crazy"

situations, you'll never experience "this is awesome" moments. If you aren't willing to run off the cliff, you'll never fly. I also learned that paragliding is amazing for your prayer life. You can't *not* pray when you are running off a cliff. The same is true when we take a flying leap of faith.

### THE LAW OF MEASURES

While it's not recorded in Scripture, I promise you that Moses prayed. Isn't that what we do when we cannot figure things out ourselves? When we find ourselves in situations that are beyond our control or beyond our comprehension, we pray. Moses must have felt like he was running off a cliff, but that is how the parachute of God's promises opens up. It often seems like circling the promises of God is risky, but it's not nearly as risky as *not* circling the promises of God. The greatest risk is failing to circle the promises of God because we forfeit the miracles God wants to perform.

One of the defining moments in the history of National Community Church was the day we made a defining decision to start giving to missions. We weren't even a self-supporting church at the time, but I felt like God was prompting us to start giving. To be honest, that prompting prompted a little argument. Have you ever felt like God has called you to do something, but after a quick calculation, you assume the Omniscient One miscalculated? I tried reasoning with Him. *How can we give what we don't have*? But here is what I learned about arguments with God: If you win the argument you actually lose. and if you lose the argument, you actually win.

I lost the argument, and God won the day. We wrote a \$50 check to missions and what happened next doesn't add up. The next month, our monthly giving tripled from \$2,000 to \$6,000 and we never looked back. My only explanation is that Luke 6:38 is true. And when we circled this promise by writing that check, God multiplied His provision.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

I believe in the law of measures. If you give big, God will  $bl_{e_{s_s}}$  big. That certainly doesn't mean that you can play God like a  $s_{lot}$  machine, but if you give for the right reasons, I'm convinced of  $th_{list}$  You'll never outgive God. It's not possible because God has  $prom_{ised}$  that in the grand scheme of eternity, He will always give  $back_{more}$  than you gave up.

than you gave up. This year we're projecting a mission budget of more than a million dollars, but that \$50 check still ranks as the hardest and largest gift we've ever given to missions. It didn't add up, but God made it mul. tiply. And He'll do the same for you. If you respond to His prompt. ings, "this is crazy" will turn into "this is awesome." When you live in obedience, you position yourself for blessing. And you never know how or when or where God is going to show up. He might just send winds out of the west at fifty miles per hour with a 100 percent chance of quail.

### QUAILMAGEDDON

Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea. It scattered them up to two cubits deep all around the camp, as far as a day's walk in any direction. All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered quail. No one gathered less than ten homers.

The Israelites were parked in the Desert of Paran, a region about fifty miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea and fifty miles southwest of the Dead Sea. The significance is this: Quail tend to live by the water, and they don't fly long distances. If it hadn't been for a supernatural west wind, they would have never made it this far inland. So this is a meteorological miracle. And it's not just a miraculous west wind. The clouds burst and rained quail from the sky.

When quail get tired, they dive-bomb. We're not talking about a perfectly angled duck that makes a smooth landing on a watery runway; quail were falling from the sky like huge pieces of hail. There had to be more than one bruised noggin on *the day* it rained quail. They were popping Advil in Israel that day. Scripture also says that some of

the quail flew into the camp about three feet off the ground, so there may have been some below-the-belt bruises as well.

Based on the Hebrew system of measurement, "a day's walk" was approximately fifteen miles in any direction. So if you square the radius and multiply by *pi*, we're talking about an area that was almost 700 square miles. To put that into perspective, Washington, DC, is 68.3 square miles. Not only was this an area ten times larger than the nation's capital, but the quail were piled three feet deep as well.

Can you imagine seeing that many birds fly into the camp? It was like a bird blizzard. Quailmageddon. The cloud of birds was so massive that it seemed like a solar eclipse. For the rest of their lives, when the eyewitnesses who were there that day closed their eyes at night, they counted quail.

Once the quail stopped falling, the Israelites started gathering. Each Israelite gathered no less than ten homers. Ten homers multiplied by 600,000 men equals 6 million homers at a minimum. A homer equated to roughly 200 liters, and assuming that the quail were of an average size, it rained somewhere in the neighborhood of 105 million quail. You read that right: 105 million quail. God doesn't just provide in dramatic fashion; God provides in dramatic proportion.

One of the reasons I love this miracle is because it is a miracle pun. This miracle is recorded in the book of Numbers, and the Greek name for Numbers is *arithmoi*. That's where we get our word *arithmetic*. Recorded in the book of arithmetic is a miracle that doesn't even begin to add up.

Moses could have never anticipated this answer to prayer. It was unpredictable and unprecedented, but Moses had the guts to circle the promise anyway! And when you circle the promise, you never know how God will provide, but it's always cloudy with a chance of quail.

Do you think that perhaps you need to quit doing arithmetic and start doing geometry? Your job is not to crunch numbers and make sure the will of God adds up. After all, the will of God is not a zerosum game. When God enters the equation, His output always exceeds your input. Your only job is to draw circles in the sand. And if you do the geometry, God will multiply the miracles in your life.

# MULTIPLICATION TABLES

I was recently helping our youngest son, Josiah, with his multiplic I was recently helping our your of the flash cards, and I quizzed him on tion tables. We pulled out the flash cards, we'll move on to sixes, A to be not sixes as the flash cards and the sixes as the flash cards and the sixes as the sixes a tion tables. We pulled out the tion tables. We pulled out the fives. Once he gets his fives down, we'll move on to sevens. That's the way is fives. Once he gets his five in the way it work he get his sixes down, we'll move on to sevens. That's the way it work he get his sixes down, we'll move on to multiply bigger and the sevent in the sevent in the sevent has a sevent to multiply bigger and the sevent has a sevent here in the sevent here is a seven he get his sixes down, we have the way it work in the world of multiplication. You learn to multiply bigger and bigger an in the world of multiplication. It should work spiritually, but many numbers. That's also the way it should work spiritually, but many us never graduate beyond addition and subtraction. willing logo Jesus taught multiplication. He promised that He would multiplication

Jesus taught multiplication in the second se His blessings if we work and the used one hundred, sixty, and thirty as multipliers.

"Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop  $-a_{hun}$ ." dred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

A few years ago, Lora and I circled this promise contained within the parable of the sower by making the largest faith promise of ou lives. A faith promise is an amount of money pledged to mission above and beyond the tithe. It's not based on a budget; it's based of faith. Honestly, we had no idea how we'd be able to give the amount of money we pledged, but God had specifically spelled out the numbe we knew we were to give. We knew it would take some supernatura provision, but we believed that God was going to honor our pledg because our pledge honored God.

On the day we made the pledge, July 31, 2005, I blogged what believed: "I have a holy anticipation that I can't even put into words. can't wait to see how God provides what we promised." Two months later, on October 4, 2005, I landed my first book contract. The advance on that four-book deal was thirty times greater than the pledge we had made. Coincidence? I think not. It was like quail that came out of nowhere! I was thrilled about getting the book contract, but I was even more thrilled about writing the largest check we had ever written for a kingdom cause. I believe that contract was a direct result of having circled this promise.

In December 2010, I signed another book contract with my new blisher, and I oro and I of the state of the publisher, and Lora and I felt led to give a significant percentage of the

advance to National Community Church. It wasn't until tax time the next year that it dawned on me that this gift was exactly thirty times larger than the original faith promise we had made five years before. Coincidence? I think not.

I have no idea what your financial situation is, but I do know this. If you give beyond your ability, God will bless you beyond your ability. God wants to bless you thirty-, sixty-, hundredfold. And if you are willing to subtract what you are spending on yourself and add it to what you are investing in the kingdom, God will do the multiplication. If you believe that, you'll circle the promises of God and reap the reward. If you don't, you won't.

If you're still living in the world of addition and subtraction, the tithe is difficult to give because it feels like you're subtracting 10 percent from your income. But once you graduate to multiplication, you realize that God can do more with 90 percent than you can do with 100 percent. Why? Because when you add God into the equation of your finances, it changes the game. If you give generously and sacrificially, the day may come when you're giving more than you're currently making. If you believe that, that promise might be worth circling!

### MULTIPLICATION ANOINTING

God isn't offended by big dreams; He's offended by anything less. Your dreams may start out small, and God will honor those humble dreams, but as your faith grows so do your dreams until you dare to dream thirty-, sixty-, hundredfold dreams. And when you draw those God-sized circles, it gives the Omnipresent One room to work.

In the fall of 2006, I was speaking at a men's conference in Baltimore, Maryland. It was the week before my first book, *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*, was set to release. I spoke in a morning session to about twelve hundred men and then I sat back and listened to a circle maker named Tommy Barnett. Tommy shared the footnotes to the story of how he and his son, Matthew Barnett, started the L.A. Dream Center more than a decade ago. They circled the fifteen-story Queen of Angels Hospital, and God gave it to them for \$60,000. Only in God's economy!

After sharing the story of God's miraculous provision, Tommy After sharing the story of Godd an ultiplication anointing to come to the invited anyone who wanted a multiplication anointing was invited anyone who wanted a multiplication anointing was even altar. I wasn't sure if the idea of a multiplication anointing was even altar. I wasn't sure if the idea of a many was offering it, I was taking in the Bible at the time, but if Tommy was offering it always does in the Bible at the time, but it former, and it always does, but it. It felt a little awkward going to the altar, and it always does, but it. It felt a little awkward blessing on my first book. I was pairs it. It felt a little awkward going to an my first book. I was painfully I was desperate for God's blessing on my first books. I was painfully I was desperate for God's piecent of books don't sell five thousand aware of the fact that 95 percent of books and asked God aware of the fact that 95 percent of the book and asked God to put copies, but I prayed a circle around the book and asked God to put copies, but I prayed a circle around mustered as much faith as I could a multiplication anointing on it. I mustered as much faith as I could a multiplication anomuly on the self twenty-five thousand copies. Of course, and asked God to help it sell twenty-five will" at the end That and asked God to neip it set the Your will" at the end. That tagline I threw in the obligatory "if it be Your will" at the end. That tagline I threw in the obligatory in the submission to God's will and may sound spiritual, but it was less a submission to God's will and may sound spiritual, out it that and and more a profession of doubt. If you aren't careful, the will of God can more a procession of accession of a construction out the way you want. The truth become a cop-out if things don't turn out the way you want. The truth become a cop-out it uning is that my whisper number was one hundred thousand copies. In the deep recesses of my heart, that was my big dream. I just didn't have enough faith to verbalize that number. I felt foolish enough verbal. izing twenty-five thousand.

In typical God fashion, He exceeded my highest expectations. In typical God fashion, He exceeded my highest expectations. He has a way of making our wildest dreams seem tame, our biggest dreams seem small. I believe that God's blessing on *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day* traces back to the prayer circle that I drew around it. I don't just write books; I circle them in prayer. To me, writing is praying with a keyboard. I also recruited a team of circle makers to pray for me while I wrote the book. Then we prayed circles around the people who would buy the book. We specifically prayed that God would get the book into the right hands at the right time. On one level, I'm surprised by the way God has used paragraphs within the book to save marriages and prompt decisions and birth visions. On another level, I'm not surprised at all. It's no coincidence when people tell me that God brought the book into their lives at the perfect time. It's providence. To me, a book sold is not a book sold; it's a prayer answered.

I was a frustrated writer for thirteen years. I dreamed of writing a book, but I could never seem to finish a manuscript. The turning point was when I drew a circle around the dream during forty days

of prayer and fasting. <u>I fasted from all forms of entertainment to stay</u> focused on my goal. Then I stepped into a writing circle with a Honilike determination that I wasn't coming out until I had a manuscript in my hand. Forty days later, the dream became a reality. I didn't write that book; I prayed that book.

As an author, I've learned to pray circles around my books. As a pastor, I've learned to pray circles around our church. As a parent, I've learned to pray circles around our children. It doesn't matter what you do, you need to circle it in prayer. If you're a teacher, pray circles around your class by laying hands on the desks and asking God to bless the students who sit there. If you're a doctor, pray circles around your patients and ask God to give you X-ray insight. If you're a politician, pray circles around the constituents you serve and the legislation you draft. If you're an entrepreneur, pray circles around your product.

If you do the geometry and draw prayer circles around your Jericho, God will take care of the multiplication. And the bigger the prayer circle the more God can multiply. If you claim the promise, who knows: God might just send 105 million quail into your camp.