
INTRODUCTION



The arena is filled to the brim. The atmosphere is high-energy and thick with anticipation. Thousands of seats are crammed with a diverse collection of saints all propped up on the edge of their seats awaiting the star of the show—you! You're the famous saint who has defeated incredible opponents. Like David, you've stepped out on the battlefield to contend with great warriors who have defied the armies of the Lord. Your motive now is to do nothing more than march into the arena called life and defeat anything that exalts itself against your God and your destined position as a conqueror for Jesus. Your enemies plan to cut you off from your good name, steal your title belt as a champion, kill your destiny in life, and destroy your hope of reigning with your Father for all eternity.

Yet, God has given you one of the most powerful of weapons to fight with; the testimony of the saints. The bible says that faith comes by hearing the word of God. That means the more you hear the word and truth of God's goodness, and hear it interacting in the lives of God's people, the stronger your faith becomes. That's why John the Baptist sent his disciple to Jesus to confirm that Jesus was in fact the One for whom John should face death for.

The seats in the arena of life are filled with people who can testify of God's goodness, His faithfulness, and His enduring, immutable power. Countless saints can testify that though they lost things, experienced pain, and endured struggle, they ultimately achieved immeasurable victory and triumph by remaining faithful to the Lord.

That's what *Refined by Fire: Secrets to Becoming a Champion of Life Challenges* is all about. This book is composed of real women who have stepped out onto the battlefield of life and fought the good fight of faith; not in their own name, but in the name of the Lord. And just like God did with David, He is making their name great in the arena of life. God has significance and greatness in you that only He can give you access to. God wants to bring forth great things from your life.

Life isn't easy for anyone. This fact can be discouraging for people who are trying to succeed in it alone. Many people fail to truly win the way that God wants them to win in life. The fact that only two people made it into the Promised Land out of 2 million Israelites makes many people draw back in their faith. None of us wants to wander in the wastelands of mediocrity and carnality. If you feel like God has called you to come forth like pure gold before the refiner's fire and move on toward perfection in the Lord, this book is for you. If you feel like God has called you to take your life to the next level, not only for yourself, but for your family, for your community, and for this generation, this book is for you. If you want to become a champion of life challenges this book is for you.

We have written a section called *Champion's Corner* to provide you with practical insights, as well as a section called *Spiritual Manna* to give you powerful scriptures to use in your battle of faith.

May your faith be strengthened and your mind be challenged. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but we are guaranteed victory if we can learn to deny our flesh, embrace our cross, and follow God. The saints of God, present and past have been counted as champions of life, not because they embraced life, but because they embraced death. This great paradox kept the Israelites wandering in circles in the desert until they all died. Jesus has called us to pick up our cross and follow Him. The Lord has called us to become a living sacrifice to Him on a daily basis. We must deny or die daily to our own fleshly impulses and desires so that God can pour His good gifts, His riches, and His holy substance into our very lives. He wants ordinary people like us to manifest His extraordinary treasures, but we must first come to reject the ordinary in order to obtain His extraordinary treasures and eternal life.

Becoming a champion of life challenges means that you've learned to die to your own desires and live according to the will and plan of God. May this book help you as you take on the greatest foe of any man or woman who has ever stepped into the arena of life, the foe called **SELF**. The contents of these pages attempt to encourage and empower you to embrace the life of a champion that God has waiting for you!