SUNSTILL

STAND

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DARE TO ASK GOD FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

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UNCORRECTED PROOF
Dear Friend,

If the size of your dream isn’t intimidating to you, there’s a good chance it’s insulting to God. So you’re about to learn how to activate audacious faith…and watch God accomplish the impossible through you. Just as He accomplished the impossible when He made the sun stand still in response to a prayer by Joshua of Bible fame.

You see, audacious faith triggers level-headed people like Joshua—and like you and me—to live with unusual boldness. When you live this way, your eyes will open to see day-to-day life in vivid color. The routines that used to seem pointless will be infused with meaning. Your spiritual growth will accelerate at a supernatural pace.

Audacious faith is for schoolteachers. Stay-at-home moms. Seventh-grade girls. (Seventh-grade boys, too. Maybe.) Construction workers, bankers, hairstylists, college students. I’ve seen the sun stand still for all of them, just as I’ve seen it stand still for me.

You’re ready for audacious faith too. You’re ready for bold action and impossible prayers. You’re ready to start a movement in your life, your church, your community. You’re ready to see God change lives, change the world—change you. You’re ready to make the sun stand still.

Embark on your journey right now. Read on and then step out in audacious faith by writing your own sun stand still prayer.

Be the change the world is waiting for,
This booklet is intended to help you discover and develop a sun stand still prayer and passion of your own. Of course, you don’t need instructions for you to begin praying your own sun stand still prayer. But Steven Furtick provides insight for navigating the process of God wanting to do the impossible in your own life. And this is just the beginning.

The text is adapted from Steven’s book, *Sun Stand Still*, in which he wreaks havoc on your mediocre prayer life and shakes the hinges off the box in which you’ve placed God. Read the book to build a greater understanding of how to –

- Align your dreams with God’s will
- Step away from a complacent faith
- Recognize God’s unstoppable plan for your life
- Resist excuses and ignite the ordinary
- Understand the sacrifices necessary to live in God’s plan
- Accept your mistakes and disappointments
- Push past obstacles.

Audacious faith can transform your life and change your world. Pick up *Sun Stand Still* online or at a bookstore near you, available everywhere September 21, 2010.
Enter Joshua, one of the great franchise players of the Old Testament. Most people with a scrap of Bible knowledge or a few days in Vacation Bible School know that Joshua fought the Battle of Jericho. But his epic story started long before that.

Born into slavery—the fate of every Jew of his generation—Joshua grew up to experience firsthand Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian oppression. On the journey to the Promised Land, he rose to a position of leadership as Moses’ assistant. Then, at the very border of the Promised Land, disaster struck. When the people heard that giants and walled cities stood between them and taking possession of their destiny, they panicked. Everyone wanted to turn back.

Everyone, that is, except Joshua and his friend Caleb. Maybe you know the story. Unlike the other spies, Joshua and Caleb returned from scouting out the Promised Land with a message of faith, not fear:

The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up.
(Numbers 14:7–9)

But fear won out that day. God’s people didn’t understand that if you want to see what God can do, audacious faith is not optional. Even after all the miracles they’d witnessed in the desert, they still hadn’t grasped that what seemed impossible for them to accomplish was exactly what God wanted to accomplish for them.
Forty wasted years followed.
I feel for Joshua. To my mind, forty years of enduring the consequences of other people’s bad decision would be enough to derail anybody’s dreams. Yet Joshua never flinched. He never gave in. He never lost sight of God’s promises. And when Moses died, God chose Joshua to be his successor. Big shoes to fill. Most ordinary believers would back down, but Joshua stepped up.
He launched a campaign activated by audacious faith in God’s goodness and power. And Joshua changed the world in his generation.
Think about it: Before Joshua took charge, God’s people were migrants, living hand to mouth. Afterward, they were settlers—owners of the “exceedingly good” land God had promised.
At this point it would be totally understandable if you’re thinking, I’m not sure I see how a Bible hero’s military campaign relates to my life. My most exciting daily battles are navigating stop-and-go traffic at 7:30 a.m. on the way to a job I’d give anything to quit without doing violence to anyone, and getting my kids to clean their rooms at night without any bloodshed.
I feel you. But stay with me. The story God has scripted for your life isn’t inferior to Joshua’s—or anyone else’s. There’s an exceedingly good land that you’re meant to occupy. And as you put yourself in this story, something life changing will begin to happen inside you.

**The Audacity to Ask**

My favorite exploit in Joshua’s life doesn’t get nearly enough air-time, if you ask me. From every angle, the story—tucked away in Joshua 10—showcases the kind of audacity we’re after. And it all hinges on a preposterous prayer. In fact, when you first hear it, you might even feel like it’s insulting or irreverent. But as it turns out, our God isn’t intimidated by long-shot prayers.
As the chapter opens, we read that five opposing Amorite armies were planning to attack. Having decided to strike first, Joshua led his entire army toward the Amorites on an all-night march. Sometime during that march, God spoke to Joshua. He told him:
Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you. (verse 8)

At dawn, the Israelites unleashed a surprise attack, and right from the beginning, the battle went well. When the enemy lines broke, and the Amorites started to flee into the valley, Joshua’s men chased them down. And God got personally involved. “As they fled before Israel,” the account reads, “the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky” (verse 11).

Then, as the sun sank toward the horizon, Joshua faced a decision. The victory wasn’t complete, and once it got dark, the rest of the Amorites would slip away. But Joshua was determined to fight on. Perhaps he realized that if he didn’t destroy the enemy now, Israel’s conquest of Canaan would grind to a halt. Maybe he knew that anything less than total victory would conceal God’s presence and glory.

Besides, he remembered God’s promise in the night: “Not one of them will be able to withstand you.”

Most of us – even really good Christian people – would have called it a day. I’ve done all I can do. I’ve exhausted every option. I’ve given it all I’ve got. But Joshua wasn’t most people. He refused to go out like that. That wasn’t the way it was supposed to end. This was where his audacious faith began.

Joshua sized up the situation, summoned all his available courage, and delivered one of the most gloriously unorthodox prayers in the entire Bible:

O sun, stand still over Gibeon,
O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon. (verse 12)

Now can you see why I love this story? Joshua had the audacity to ask God to make the sun stop in the sky. To freeze time on behalf of his people.

I know this proposition seems impossible to us. And it doesn’t make a bit of sense scientifically. But according to Scripture, God gave Joshua exactly what he ordered. Just when the Amorites were hanging on for the cover of darkness, darkness never came. Just when they thought the curtains were about to drop on their day from hell, God came out for an encore.
The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since.... Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel! (verses 13–14)

The skeptic in me has all kinds of questions: Did God actually stop the earth on its axis? Did He create some kind of substitute sun to extend daylight? In other words, what really went down here?

I don’t know the answers to those questions. There are other books written by much smarter people that address the practical implications of this event. But my faith is pretty simple. I choose to believe that the same God who intervened to bring His Son back to life intervened on this day in history to help His people. He chose to answer Joshua’s outrageous prayer. He did what only He could do. And He did it in a way that His people would never forget—in a way that we’re still marveling at to this day.

Besides, maybe instead of trying to figure out all the technical answers, we should be asking a more relevant question: could it be that God intends for us to have the same kind of audacious faith—the kind of faith that dares to believe God for the impossible—as a normal way of life?

With everything in me, I believe He does. I believe He still desires to make the sun stand still over the life of every believer. If we’ll have the audacity to ask.

**IN THE MIDDLE OF A MOVE OF GOD**

I tried this one time. I’ll tell you about it if you’ll promise not to laugh.

I started this book by describing to you how breathtaking it was to lead a worship service with over ten thousand people in attendance. But trust me, my journey as a pastor certainly didn’t begin that way. It all started with a God-given, gospel-centered, audacious ambition. My wife and I moved to Charlotte with a four-month-old kid, limited funding, no connections, and little experience. In faith, seven other families moved with us. We had been meeting with these families for almost a year, laying the foundation for a church that I had been dreaming about starting since my junior year of high school. I just didn’t know where. Or when. Or how. Only why.
We set a goal of reaching over one thousand people in our first year of ministry. Since the average church size in America is fewer than one hundred and twenty, and the first rule of goal setting is attainability, I guess we were overshooting a bit. But we wanted to see God accomplish something so exponentially amazing that it would leave no doubt who deserved the credit. In fact, several times during those months of casting vision, I told our little group, “I want to know what it means to live life and do ministry at the speed of God. I want to see God do so much so fast, that the world will have to take note.”

So we shamelessly asked God to exceed our wildest dreams and bring unprecedented Kingdom success to our very first year of ministry.

Some people laughed at our approach. I guess in their eyes we might as well have been shouting at the sun, insisting that it stop in its tracks. Their skepticism was understandable. Charlotte is one of the most “overchurched” cities in America—more than eight hundred churches at last count. (Bonus: it’s the birthplace of Billy Graham.) Why would Charlotte need another church? As a matter of fact, some church-growth experts refer to Charlotte as a “church-planting graveyard.”

A few of those experts reinforced the intimidation I felt during my first few months. “Welcome to the neighborhood, kid,” they’d say. “You might want to consider renting your house instead of buying.” One told us that nine out of ten new churches here fail before the three-year mark. “Good luck, though,” he said. “If I can do anything to help...”

I spent some long nights nursing regrets. More than once I wished I could take the whole thing back. I had convinced seven families to sell houses, quit jobs, and move to Charlotte. No salaries. No benefits. Just a burning conviction that there has to be more to life than a 401(k), additional square footage, soccer leagues, and church as usual. I really wanted to believe. But honestly, at times I wondered.

If you’ve ever set out to accomplish a dream that was just too big for you, I know you can relate. Maybe for you it was a business venture, a physical healing, a family reconciliation, a set of values you wanted to pass on to your children against all odds, or a relationship you desperately desired. When you have a dream in your heart, but no earthly idea how to make it happen, keeping your faith intact is a full-time job. But I’ve discovered that these crises of belief don’t have to be the end of faith. They can become the foundation that a stronger faith is built on.

Surely Joshua faced the temptation to stop believing. Surely he must
have been overcome by doubt before and after his outrageous request that God would reset the solar clock. But we can only speculate, because the Bible only records what mattered to God: Joshua’s faith and Joshua’s prayer...and what God did next.

He stopped the sun. He accomplished the impossible.

Don’t you want a piece of that kind of divine action?

Wouldn’t you like to know how it feels to see God accomplish the impossible right in front of your eyes? While I can’t relate to the scope of Joshua’s challenges or conquests, I am captivated by his faith. However it might come across, I might as well tell you up front that I intend to live this way. I’m determined to take ground and win big for the kingdom of God. I’m unapologetic about my mission to change my world for the glory of Jesus. I want to be a Joshua in my generation.

The story of our church is still being told, of course. But here’s what I can tell you now. After just four years of ministry, our church has grown to more than six thousand regular attendees. Since our opening day, more than five thousand people have publicly professed faith in Christ. I’ll never forget the time we baptized over a thousand adults in a two-week period. And the Easter service I told you about? Over seven hundred people committed their lives to Christ on that single Sunday.

And we’re just getting started. Sometimes, when we consider the rate at which God has multiplied this ministry, we feel like we’re living in a warp-speed dream world. But the story is real, and our city is shaking. We feel the tremors all around us. We are living in the middle of a move of God.

We’ve seen previously suicidal teenagers maturing in the things of God, leading their friends to Christ, and showing up at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday to volunteer.

We’ve seen couples come to our church with the intention of giving God one last try before signing their divorce papers. A few months later, we’ve seen their marriages restored: families healing, faith growing, new life emerging.

We’ve seen God multiply meager financial resources like the fish and loaves, over and over again.

We’ve seen people who have been terrified to even talk about their faith in the office, lead their same co-workers on a missions trip to a country that is hostile to the gospel.

I guess you could say we have seen the sun stand still.
But this book isn’t about us. It’s about what God stands ready to do for and through you. I believe our story hints at a God-sized transformation that is available to every follower of Christ.

**Activating Audacious Faith**

I’m inviting you to be a main character in the story, in the thick of the plot. What God has done among us is so big that there’s nobody to blame but Him. I want you to be able to say the same about your life. I want you to take the chance on another kind of faith. I want you to live in the middle of a move of God.

There’s nothing our world needs more desperately today—in individuals, families, businesses, churches, and communities—than God’s saving, supernatural acts. And he’s ready to act if we will be bold enough to ask, not just for a good day or a better life, but for the impossible. Then step forward to act in audacious faith.

Each of us is called to be a Joshua—each in our own way, in our own circumstances, with our own God-given personality. As you’ll see in the pages ahead, you and I are called not just to have faith, but also to regularly activate our faith by asking God for giant outcomes, taking giant steps. If we have the audacity to ask, God has the ability to perform. That’s how God turns His amazing promises into everyday reality in every generation—for Joshua’s and for ours.

You and I may not see the same miracles Joshua did, but we serve the same God. His nature never changes. The same power that stopped the sun and raised Christ from the grave lives in every believer. God still demonstrates His power and supplies His provision in direct proportion to the faith of his children.

Don’t get me wrong. Audacious faith is not about throwing yourself off the top of a mountain and expecting God to catch you. It’s not about thinking you can get God in your back pocket so that you can manipulate Him for your own purposes. And—thank God—it’s not about entering a gifted and talented program for the spiritually elite.

Audacious faith is for schoolteachers. Stay-at-home moms. Seventh-grade girls. (Seventh-grade boys too. Maybe.) Construction workers, bankers, hairstylists, college students. I’ve seen the sun stand still for all
of them, and I’ll share many of their stories with you.

Choosing to live with sun stand still faith will never be the easiest way to live. In fact, it’s often downright intimidating. But it’s the best way to live. And if you’re going to be a part of what God is doing in this generation, it’s the only way to live.

It’s time to write your own sun stand still story. To pray your own sun stand still prayers. And to live with audacious faith that sees the impossible come to pass.

To the best of my ability, I’ll show you how to do just that so that together we can be part of a great move of God in our generation.

I am a Joshua. And I am just like you.
How to Pray a Sun Stand Still Prayer

**Step 1:** Activate your audacious faith. Reject passivity and fear. Seize the initiative because you know who God is. He is good, strong, and faithful. So agree with God that He has called you to a larger purpose for your life that will bring him glory. He has a vision for your life, and it’s always a purpose that only He can accomplish.

> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

**Step 2:** Approach God with boldness. Come before Him with confidence, making your request to Him based on his proven character, the promises in His Word, and His actions in the past. This does not mean his answers are in any way connected to your worthiness. Rather, you pray humbly, based in grace, because you don’t want what you deserve.

> This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

**Step 3:** Ask specifically for the impossible. Like Joshua, speak your exact request to God without mumbling or hesitation, believing that nothing is impossible with Him. You have now chosen to see your situation from God’s point of view, not yours. You’re asking for something that only He can accomplish—and that only He can take credit for.

> Everything is possible for him who believes. (Mark 9:23)

**Step 4:** Advance toward the answer. Joshua didn’t just pray for the sun to stand still. He marched his army all night to be in a position to defeat the enemy when God answered his prayer. Audacious faith means that you are willing to become the answer to your own prayer. Make your move. Be prepared to work hard and stick with it.
Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:17)

**Step 5:** Give God all the glory. When God does the impossible, give Him the credit, honor, and thanks He deserves. As we say often at my church, what God has done among us is so big that there’s nobody to blame but Him. The story of your sun stand still prayer is yours to tell – but the story itself is always all about Jesus.

O LORD, you are my God;  
I will exalt you and your name,  
for in perfect faithfulness  
you have done marvelous things. (Isaiah 25:1)

And now I want to pray for you. Your ordinary life is about to be ignited for God’s glory. Your uniqueness is going to be leveraged for Kingdom purposes. Your small beginnings will have seismic impact. And even your most challenging crisis or painful failure is an opportunity for God’s glory to shine in your life.
A MOVEMENT OF AUDACIOUS FAITH & PRAYER

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WHAT'S AVAILABLE ONLINE:

Share your own Sun Stand Still prayer at www.sunstandstill.org

Study materials for your students, church or ministry

Group discussion short films led by Steven Furtick

Free resources to participate in the Sun Stand Still series in your own church

Bulk book rates for your student or church groups

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