

# Going Deeper

WITH

# A LIFE THAT MATTERS



**Breakthrough Weapons  
from Christianity's  
Greatest Generation**

BY RON HUTCHCRAFT

# BREAKTHROUGH WEAPONS FROM CHRISTIANITY'S GREATEST GENERATION

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The first century believers in Jesus Christ were the most powerful people who ever lived. Their driving obsession was to carry out the mission for which our Savior died. The significance of their life has far outlasted their lives. Because of their mission, they took a little life and attached it to a massive mission.

What's supposed to be your mission? The events of your life have not been random; they have been to credential you uniquely to talk to people like you who will listen to somebody like them. Acts 1:8 says, "You will be my witnesses." Don't let them die without a warning. That's why you are where you are and why you have experienced what has happened to you. You need some weapons to share Christ with those who need Him.

Let's discuss five breakthrough weapons from Christianity's greatest generation:

## 1. An Unencumbered Message

The first breakthrough weapon is an unencumbered message. First century believers focused like a laser on one message: "Jesus died for us and that Jesus is alive." Every time they had an opportunity, they told others about Jesus but specifically that He died for them and He rose again.

That is the greatest love in the world you could possibly experience—He died for you. The greatest power you could ever have is the power to conquer death. Jesus has both. He has the greatest love you could ever have and the greatest power you could ever have. That's extremely relevant for our time, because Christians are talking and spending a lot of time on other issues. The issue isn't the lifestyle of the lost; the issue is they're lost and need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

When talking to the lost, don't talk about church or about religion. We often add cultural issues and our denominational distinctives to the Gospel. The early Christians were laser beams. "Jesus died for you and He's alive", and that's where they left it. "Repent and believe, because this is the Gospel." Don't load the Gospel with things that will confuse people and be a barrier between them and the cross. Don't put anything between them and the cross. Those issues will be resolved after they come to the foot of the cross, but don't put it on the weight of the cross.

The Roman Empire in which they were presenting Christ was full of issues they could have addressed. Baby girls were left in jars on street corners to die. Slavery was a huge issue, and every other person on the street of Rome was a slave. They found it fun to watch people torn apart by animals in front of fifty thousand people in the coliseum. Not once did the most powerful people in history address any of those issues, even though they lived in the midst of this horrible sin and corruption. Instead, they believed that the way

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to change was to stick to Jesus, His cross, and His resurrection. They knew that real change would come from addressing their need for Jesus. They realized that with Jesus they could be on their way to a solution, and lives were changed! We need to stand for God's righteousness and apply the Bible to these real issues, but we need to let people hear the Gospel first.

The message that will change lives, cultures, nations, and behaviors is that Jesus died for you and He's alive! If we don't think so, we have to argue with the most powerful people in history. In Acts 8:35, you see that they called it the Good News about Jesus. They did not fight the symptoms in their world; they fought the disease which was the cancer of sin. The Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 2:2, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." He knew all the theology and even wrote the theology, but he knew the importance of sticking to Jesus and His cross. The Gospel is most compelling when it's unencumbered by any other messages.

## 2. An Unarguable Starting Point

The second breakthrough weapon is an unarguable starting point. Start with a topic they can't argue with. If you say, "You need Jesus," they might think that's arguable. Paul tells people what happened to him on the Damascus Road and he tells about what happened when he met Jesus. People couldn't argue with his story. Paul essentially said, "I met Jesus, and here's what happened to me." You can't say, "No, you didn't" or "No, that didn't happen." They can argue with your theology, but they can't argue with your life story. It happened! Paul started with something they couldn't argue with—his hope story or personal testimony. Who could argue with that?

Start with an unarguable starting point and include two things:

- **Your 'I am Jesus' moment.** Paul said, "Look, I had a moment when I heard this man, which I didn't want anything to do with, say to me, 'I am Jesus.'" Do you remember yours? When did Jesus become real to you? When did you discover 'Whoa! This is Jesus!?' Every Christian has had at some time or another, whether it was dramatic or not, an 'I am Jesus' moment that you can't argue with. Tell them about your 'I am Jesus' moment. That's what Paul did.
- **The difference Jesus has made.** Paul said something like, "Guys, listen. I was a killer. I was a persecutor. I was against this and I was religious, but it wasn't enough and all that has changed." Who can argue with the difference Christ has made? Some people say, "Well, I don't have a testimony. I was prenatally good. I was prenatally religious. I don't have needle tracks in my arm. I was never in the mafia. You know, I just don't really have..." Oh, yes you do have a story to tell!

If you want to find out what your hope story is, take a piece of paper and write these words at the top: "If it weren't for Jesus, I'd be..." Fill that page by describing how your life would be without Jesus. Would you be any different as a husband or wife? Would you be any different

as a father or mother? Would you be any different as a boss or an employee? Would you be any different in your grieving times? What would your life be like in your lonely times or the depressing times? If there wasn't a Jesus, how different would your life be?

That's your hope story. Start with something they can't argue with.

### **3. An Unintimidated Courage**

The third breakthrough weapon is an unintimidated courage. The first Christians never stopped telling the story of the Good News. What's the one thing that has kept us from telling what we know about Jesus to people who don't know Him? Fear. It is the fear of rejection, failure, ridicule, intimidation, or maybe even embarrassment. What do our fears all have in common? They're all about "me". "I will 'goof it up'...They won't like me...They may reject me." Is there a common word here?

Our impotent substitute for an unstoppable mission is intimidated silence. Curt Shelling pitched the first game in an American League championship series for the Red Sox and his team lost. Curt Shelling had known Christ at that time for about seven years. His team lost the first three games of the series and everybody thought they didn't have a chance. Before the fourth game, he prayed with his pastor, and he said, "Pastor, I want you to pray for me that, for the first time in my life, I'll speak up for the Lord if God gives me favor in this game." They won the first of what turned out to be the four game amazing turnaround of that series. Afterwards, on ESPN, he said, "In game one, you saw what Curt Shelling could do. This time you saw what God could do, because I surrendered to Him." In the second game of the World Series, he pitched again. The reporter said, "Boy, you're bleeding from your sock here...your ankle injury." Shelling said, "Well, guys, have you checked out Philippians 4:13 in the Bible? It says, 'I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.'" Later, in a Christian magazine, Curt Shelling said this: "I learned that I should never ever hide my faith. I wasted seven years and nobody knew."

Some of us have wasted more than that because we have been intimidated into silence. Too often we settle for silence, and it is a deadly silence for the person we're not telling about Jesus. Ezekiel 3:17-18 says, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood." Don't be more afraid about what could happen to you than what could happen to them.

Do not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. The fears that silence us are all about 'me.' Rescue is all about 'them' and the people who will die if we don't share Jesus with them. The guys going into the World Trade Towers were scared to death, as well as the guys going into the bomb site at Oklahoma City. They thought the building was going to come down on them while they were trying to get people out, but they realized that people would die if they

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didn't go in. The nature of rescuing is self-abandonment. It doesn't matter as much what happens to you as it matters what happens to them.

#### **4. An Unlimited Vision**

The fourth breakthrough weapon is an unlimited vision. Notice the church at Antioch. Acts 13:2-3 says, "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off." They were sent to proclaim the Word of God in the Jewish Synagogues and to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas came back with a good report. Acts 14:27 says, "They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

The greatest generation of Christians was not content to just have their little church be a lifeboat for already saved people. They had to do something about the people who did not yet have a chance. They didn't see themselves as a parking lot, but instead a launch pad. Everywhere they went, they preached the story of Jesus because they knew it was critical news to share.

Is your church, your home, or your life a launch pad? Maybe you would say, "Man, there's a world out there that needs Jesus. We have been giving to things to help reach people in our area, but we haven't thought much about a dying world. We need to find a way to be involved in a dying world." Those eleven guys were told it was Jerusalem, it was Judea, Samaria, it was the uttermost parts of the earth and you don't get to choose. It's a world vision and they had an unlimited vision to reach the world for Christ.

#### **5. An Unstoppable Name**

The last breakthrough weapon is an unstoppable name. The early Christians served in the name of Jesus. They had been told, "You may not mention the name of Jesus again" but they knew there was no other name. Satan's order from hell is "Edit Jesus. I don't care if you talk about your church, family values, Christianity, or even about God. I don't care, but don't mention the name of Jesus!" That is the order from hell and it has worked, because when we choke talking to people about spiritual things, we choke on the name of Jesus. It is in the name of Jesus all the power resides. Jehovah rescues!

In a tolerant and inclusive world, how can there be any other name? Many wonderful people are sincerely following many different beliefs. According to George Barna, two-thirds of our fellow Christians think there are other ways to God. There are many religions, but there's only one Rescuer. For the lost, their only hope is a rescuer—not a way to get themselves out of this.

Every religion in the world is a way to get ourselves out of this, but we can't swim out. There is a death penalty, and the only way a death penalty can be paid is someone has to die. A religion didn't die for you, so you're going to have to pay unless you accept the only One who could die in your place. Jesus is the man coming down the cable to rescue you, and for the people you

know, their only hope is a rescuer from above. There's not a way to swim out, because Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, or even Baptist swimming instructions won't get you out. There is nothing you can do of a religious nature to be saved. Only the Rescuer can save.

In the book of Acts, we find a tremendous winning approach used by the early church to share the Gospel. They shared the Gospel and so many people came to Christ. Here is their winning approach:

- Pray for ready hearts.
- Count on divine match-ups.
- Let it get to your heart.
- Find your common ground.
- Start with something they're looking for.
- Rebound from failure.

Your life is significant and you have a very important mission. Nothing has been random about your life. You are where you are today for a specific reason. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are a witness of Jesus. Use these breakthrough weapons—an unencumbered message, an unarguable starting point, an unintimidated courage, an unlimited vision, and an unstoppable name—to help rescue the lost around you!

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### **About Ron Hutchcraft**

Ron Hutchcraft is committed to communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost in their language and to motivating and equipping believers to communicate Christ to the lost in their world. In all he does, he seeks to reach the lost and the young with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

As President of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, Ron and his team specialize in developing authentic, relevant, and creative tools to reach people with the message of Jesus. A veteran of over 48 years of youth and family work, Ron has presented the Gospel across North America and around the world. Mr. Hutchcraft is also involved in work with Native Americans, and is founder of the On Eagles' Wings® Native leadership program.

For more information about Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, visit [www.Hutchcraft.com](http://www.Hutchcraft.com).

To find out how you can begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, please visit [www.ANewStory.com](http://www.ANewStory.com) or call 1-888-966-7325.

### **Online Resources**

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