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*Kelly Bouchard, motivational speaker and president of
Bouchard International Inc., Ontario, Canada*

UNAFRAID

Living God's Plan
On a Ladder and a Promise



Karon Phillips Goodman

[You can click
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to go to its
Amazon page.]

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to hearing from you with your comments.

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-or-

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Enjoy!

Part 1 Getting Started



Chapter 1

Toolbelts: On!

Welcome to my temple. I know, it's unfinished, tools are everywhere, and the blueprints are stained, but I'm working on it. God's working on it with me. I'm standing here on the ladder, a few floors are a real mess and many more to go, but as long as we're working, we're okay. He's ready to build with you too.

Our temples are the lives we live that reflect the grace of God to those around us. It's really not complicated at all. It's a joy and a journey with no end and no limits, where we get to choose every day how we'll build and grow and live His plan.

Building a temple of a life—and there's an Old Testament story of an actual Temple we're going to talk about that makes it all make sense—is building a life of devotion to and reflection of God in all we do. It begins or begins again today, every day, for you and for me.

I pray you'll use this book as a guide to help you stand on that ladder before you and build high the hopes and dreams and goals you see in your life. I pray you'll welcome God as your Architect as you work to put together every facet of your life to show those around you Who He is. I pray you'll trust God to be there beside you as you gather the tools you need and follow His plan to build the temple—the life—He's planned just for you.

And I pray you'll hammer and saw and drill, *unafraid*, stand on your ladder high off the ground, *unafraid*. I pray you'll face the

opposition around you, *unafraid*, accept God's plans even when they seem big and impossible, *unafraid*. I pray you'll breathe deeply in peace as you cling to God's promises and grab another handful of nails, *unafraid*.

We all know too well the fear that stalks us and stalls us and separates us from the life we want. But, we can learn to leave it behind. We can learn to build a temple of a life with a foundation of trust and obedience that holds us steady no matter what. And we'll discover the great joy inherent in this building of a life with our God. That joy of the jobsite is a constant and comforting amazement to me.

Think about the life you're building now. Think about the life you want to build. When you look at it as a temple, you'll see it has a hundred wings and a thousand floors. Everything overlaps like paint strokes and works together to form the whole of who you are, the only disciple of God who can build *your* temple.

As we work here, you'll see where your temple can grow, change and expand:

- * In your relationship with God—maybe your prayer life feels empty or you have trouble accepting His grace, you're adapting to a major life change or you don't feel God's hand on your heart, you're lost in the legalism of your faith or doubting your part in God's plan.
- * In your family—maybe you have a new marriage, a lost marriage, or you're working on a troubled relationship, you're a new mom, a stepmom, or a mom letting go, you're dealing with sibling discord or ailing parents or just doing your best to build your family day by day.
- * In your heart—maybe you can't forgive a hurt or forgive yourself, or you're struggling with honesty or resentment, or you

feel no excitement or inspiration for the dreams you once couldn't live without.

- * In your career—maybe you're happy with your job but you want to do more, or you're not happy in your job and don't know what to do, you want more education or training or to pursue a whole different field.
- * In your ministry—maybe you don't see the ministry opportunities open in your life, even at home, or you don't know how to become part of a bigger ministry, or you don't feel ready to answer the call you hear.
- * In other areas—maybe you're desperate to get out of debt or learn to save, you need to take better care of your health or organize your home, you need to break some bad habits or start some good ones.

All these parts of our lives and many more change and need different amounts of attention as we change and grow, make progress and lose ground. Sometimes we'll have chronic struggles with particularly difficult floors of our temples, but God works with us to keep building, despite the odds or our own shaky hands.

We'll learn how to work on big goals here for you and for me. We'll build our temples, one brick at a time, as God would have us—*unafraid*. We'll start today, in this book, living His plan on a ladder and a promise.

We'll learn how the temple-building story in the brief Book of Haggai relates to us as we go from stalled to stable on our jobsites. You'll see how all those floors of your life are connected and learn practices to guide your work. And look for these points to help along the way:

- * **Building Permit:** Steps we can take today to live out God's promises and plans in our work, families and ministries.

- * **Hard Hat Zone:** Help and encouragement for the especially scary rungs of the ladder, where the opposition is strong and the will is weak.
- * **Renovation Station:** Tips for remeasuring and reworking when something didn't fit the first time and help for beginning again after a delay, interruption or setback.
- * **Inspection Point:** Questions to help us gauge our trust and efforts in various challenges and situations of our lives.

Ready? Good. Strap on your toolbelt, step up on that ladder, and kick your fear to the scrap pile. This is going to be great, because “we are the temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6:16). Let's get to work.



Chapter 2

He's working on me

Are you busy all the time but getting nowhere fast? Got a lot of responsibilities, things to take care of? People around you interfering with your work and generally making your days less fun than an overdue mammogram? Feeling alone, afraid, empty and exhausted?

Boy, I've been there, and if you have too, we'd have fit right in with the folks in Haggai's day. Who, you say? Haggai was a prophet who lived about 2500 years ago, but his message applies just as well to us today. His words make up a whole two chapters of text, but the point of them is the basic foundation of our faith. Hard to believe, isn't it?

Haggai focuses on one moment in the Israelites' history, a pivotal time after a war and exile, and it's a story of fear and doubt I've lived plenty of times myself. They had a temple to build but they abandoned their work. I've been there too and I wanted to deny how much I had in common with them, but God wasn't interested in my protests. Despite my best efforts to prove I was nothing like them, He showed me a mirror. Oh, He's clever. I tried, though.



"Lord, do You *see* this list? I'm checking off stuff fast as I can, just trying to do the right thing, but no matter what I do, nothing works. I'm stalled, shaky in my own steps," I complained without even the breath of a hello.

"Yes, I've been wondering when you'd show up. I promised I had plans for us, remember? And I haven't changed *My* mind, you know." He's always polite and to the point despite my tirades.

“Yes, I know, but about that. You see, it’s tough down here on planet Earth. I’m treading water as hard as I can.” (I grunt for effect but He doesn’t seem to notice). “I think I’ll just back off from doing any big building for a while and lay low, You know? I have plen-n-ty to keep me busy off this ladder.”

“But then what happens, in your heart, I mean?” He *is* persistent.

“I don’t know. It feels like the more I try to do and figure out, the more confused I get, so I get nowhere.”

“Perhaps your focus is all wrong, ever consider that?” Never lets me by for a *minute*.

“Well, I’m trying to understand what I see—though I can see no end to this drudgery playing like a video loop in my scattered mind—and get a grip on everything and make the parts fit.” Seemed like a good comeback, don’t you think?

“Then why are things, let’s say, not so great? And why are you stuck?”

“Who knows?” I pout and throw my hands up for effect. He isn’t moved.

“Uh, that would be Me.”

Oh.

“Well, okay, I can see where I may have... neglected You and our building plans a bit, and I’m sorry, but right now I’m wobbling here a few floors up, afraid, empty, weak, and alone. Did I mention afraid—really, *really* afraid? And I know, it’s my problem to solve now, right?”

“If you want it that way, sure, but I have an answer for you. I made it *My* problem when I promised you My love, grace and faithfulness. Have you forgotten? Do you think I fibbed? Was I unclear?”

“No, of course not. But I’m *scared*, Lord. I’m telling you it’s a jungle here in my world, a scary, confusing, dangerous, DSL-delivered jungle. And I’m not sure I can take a single step to follow through with our plan, not sure I can build and be what You see.”

“Oh, please. It’s not like you’re doing such a bang-up job on your own. We can agree on that, can’t we?”

That was an easy one.

“Okay, then, how about we get back to where we started? I’m still here, and you never have to be afraid to stand on that ladder again.”

“Well, if You say so.”

“Now you’ve got it”

He has given us his very great and precious promises.

2 Peter 1:4

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God bless!