

MAY 2025

ISSUE 1

THE ANVIL

FORGING MEN FOR LIFE'S BATTLES



FROM THE FORGE

“The Fire That Forms Us”



Brothers —

Welcome to the first strike of the hammer.

This isn't just a magazine. It's a movement. A map. A mirror. And most of all, a forge — where men like you and me show up not polished, but raw. Not perfect, but willing. Willing to be shaped by something greater than ourselves. Willing to endure the heat and pressure required to become something useful. Something immovable. Something real.

Because here's the truth:

The world isn't going to stop and wait for us to figure it out. Life is full of battles — some loud and public, others quiet and private. Some happen at work, others in the four walls of our homes, and many in the hidden chambers of our own minds. And unless we choose to be forged — by fire, by faith, by friction — we will be fractured by all of it.

Iron sharpens iron, not when it's sitting still, but when it's clashing.
When it's tested. Heated. Hammered.
Just like us.

That's what The Anvil is about.

Not a perfect life, but a purpose-filled one. Not spotless hands, but calloused ones that have reached for the Gospel. Not easy answers, but hard-earned truths forged in community, in accountability, in God's Word.

Every story in this issue is for a reason. Every verse. Every insight. Every challenge. This is not fluff. This is fuel. For your soul, your spirit, and your next step as a man, husband, father, brother, and believer.

So here's your invitation:

Don't just read this. Wrestle with it.
Don't just nod. Knock.
Don't just admire the fire — step into it.

Because real strength isn't just found on the mountaintop.
It's forged in the valley.
At the anvil.

And that's where we'll be.

Stay strong, stay rooted — and stay dangerous to the darkness.

FATHER KNOWS BEST

"When Your Best Isn't Enough, God Steps In."

Scripture Focus:

Exodus 3:4

Psalms 139:9-10



Let's get honest.

Most of us have had a "Moses moment." Not the glory-on-the-mountain part. I'm talking about the backside-of-the-desert, "How did I get here?" kind of moment. The "I've failed," "I've run," "I've blown it" kind. The kind where you sit by a well in the middle of nowhere and wonder if God has already moved on to someone else.

But the beauty of God is this: He's not looking for your strength. He's waiting on your surrender.

Barren Places Birth Burning Bushes

Moses was raised in Egypt. That means he learned to think like Egypt. Plan like Egypt. Solve problems like Egypt.

And like Egypt... he thought he could solve injustice through

control, power, and maybe a little brute force. So, he killed an Egyptian in defense of his people. But it wasn't God's method. It wasn't God's time. And it wasn't God's way.

One dead Egyptian. One self-exiled deliverer.

That was the result of Moses doing it *His* way.

He fled to the desert. Not the edge — the **backside** of it. Horeb. The Mountain of God. A place that literally means *barrenness*.

Let that settle in.

God didn't meet Moses at the palace. He didn't find him in his moment of power. **God met him in the place where Moses had nothing left.** Because that's exactly where God does His best work.

When You Run Out, God Steps In

God speaks to barren places. To broken men. To the ones who've run, lost, failed, and sat down with sand on their shoes and regret in their bones. And when He speaks, He doesn't rub it in. He reignites a purpose that never died — just got buried under the weight of trying too hard in the wrong way.

And what does He say?

"Take off your shoes. You're on holy ground."

Moses didn't bring anything holy with him. The ground wasn't holy because Moses was special — it became holy because **God showed up in his emptiness.**

The Seven "I Wills"

In Exodus 6, God lays it out plainly — seven declarations of divine action:

- "I will bring you out..."
- "I will rid you..."
- "I will redeem you..."
- "I will take you to Me..."
- "I will be your God..."
- "I will bring you in..."
- "I will give it you..."

Let's be clear: **not one of those "I wills" belongs to Moses.**

That's the sermon in a sentence:

"You tried to save one Hebrew. I'm about to save millions. But it'll be Me doing the saving."

The Danger of Doing It Your Way

Moses tried to carry out a divine plan with an Egyptian mindset. And that never works. It's the same mistake churches are making today — mingling **worldly wisdom** with **spiritual calling**. Flash over fire. Performance over presence. Strategy over surrender.

But when you try to bring the glory of God in on an ox cart like the Philistines (see 2 Samuel 6), someone dies. Uzzah tried to steady what only God was meant to carry — and God struck him down.

We don't carry God. God carries us.

Jesus > Egypt

Egypt said, "Get power, control the outcome, dominate your enemy."

Jesus said, "Lay it down. Take up your cross. Let Me lead."

God's work has never depended on man's cleverness. The Red Sea didn't part because Moses had a good plan. It parted because he obeyed God's. It parted because Moses finally stopped swinging his sword and started raising his staff.

So Where Are You?

Are you still trying to do it your way? Still wearing your Egyptian armor, dragging your own ox cart of ideas behind you, hoping to impress God with your hustle?

Or have you reached the backside of your own desert, where you're finally barren enough, broken enough, and honest enough to say, "Here am I"?

God didn't call Moses until He saw Moses turn aside to look. Maybe that's all He's waiting for from you.

You Can't Go Too Far

You may think you've gone too far. That God can't use you now. That you've blown your shot. But listen:

"If I take the wings of the morning... even there shall Thy hand lead me." (Psalm 139:9-10)

You can't go too far to outrun grace. You can't bury yourself deep enough that the burning bush won't still catch your eye. You can't be too barren for God to birth something through you.

Turn Aside. Take Off Your Shoes. God's Just Getting Started.

Reflection Questions:

1. Where have you been trying to do God's work in your own way?
2. What does barrenness look like in your life right now — and how might it actually be holy ground?
3. Have you turned aside to see what God is trying to reveal?

Steel & Scripture Challenge:

This week, take 15 minutes to sit in silence. No agenda. No performance. Just you, your Bible, and your barrenness. Ask God to speak. And if you're brave enough... take off your shoes. It might just be holy ground.

Closing Prayer

Father,

I've done it my way for too long. I've tried to fix things, save people, build plans, and prove my worth — all in my own strength. And I'm tired. Not just physically... deep-down, soul-tired.

But You are the God who shows up in barren places. The God who calls from burning bushes when everything else in me has burned out. The God who doesn't need my strength — just my surrender.

So today, I take off my shoes. I stop trying to impress You. And I simply say, "Here I am."

Re-teach me how to walk in Your ways. Burn away the Egypt still living in my mind. Help me lay down the sword I picked up in pride... ...and pick up the staff You've crafted in humility.

Speak Your "I wills" over my life, Lord. Remind me that You're not done. Not with me. Not with my calling. Not with this story.

I trust You.
I turn aside.
I'm listening.

In Jesus' mighty name,
Amen.

FIELD REPORT: THE WELL, THE WRECKAGE, AND THE WHISPER

Submitted by: J. Walker - Alabama



I never thought I'd be a man who sat down by a well.

Not the kind in a backyard. The kind in your soul. The kind you collapse beside when life breaks harder than you thought it could.

I was 38. Had a wife, three kids, a mortgage, and a solid job in construction. On paper, everything looked "fine." But inside, I was worn out. Angry. Spiritually dry. I hadn't cracked a Bible in months, hadn't prayed in longer. And I was running — fast. From the pressure. From failure. From God.

Then I got laid off. No warning. Just a box, a handshake, and a "Thanks for everything." That same week, my youngest got diagnosed with epilepsy. And instead of turning to God, I did what I always did: I shut down.

Until I couldn't anymore.

I found myself out by a lake one morning, sitting in my truck before sunrise, just staring at the water. And that's when I broke. Not loud. Not dramatic. Just... quiet tears. Silent wreckage. That's when I finally prayed again.

No fancy words. Just, "I don't know what to do, God. I'm tired of pretending I've got this."

And right then, something happened I'll never forget.

I didn't hear thunder or see fire — but deep in my chest, I felt something whisper:

"Take off your shoes. This is holy ground."

I knew the story. Moses. The bush. The backside of the desert. And in that moment, I realized — that's where I was. Not in church. Not in revival. Just a man at his end, and God whispering that He was just getting started.

Since then, it's been a long walk back. Some days still feel like wandering. But I'm learning what men have been preaching: **real strength isn't found in the spotlight. It's forged in silence. In surrender. In showing up anyway.**

To any brother reading this who's sitting by your own well — take heart. You're not done. You're not too far. You're just finally empty enough for God to fill.

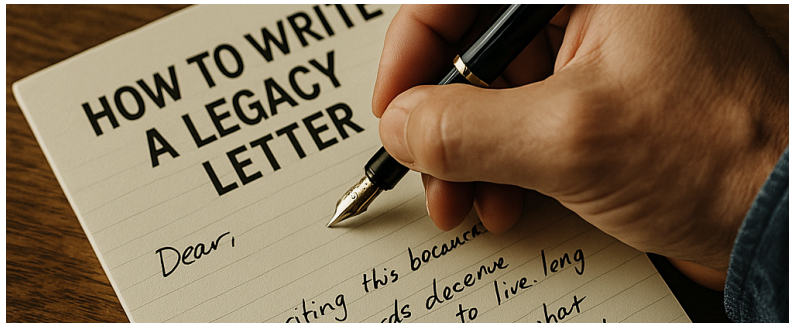
And trust me, when He starts forging, He doesn't miss a swing.

Stay strong, men.

— JW

FIELD GUIDE

How to Write a Legacy Letter



There comes a time when every man should write something down that outlives him. A legacy letter isn't just for your deathbed — it's for your life. It's your chance to speak truth, identity, and blessing into someone you love.

Whether it's for your son, your father, or a brother in the trenches, this kind of letter becomes sacred ground — something they'll hold onto long after your words stop flowing in real time.

WHAT IS A LEGACY LETTER?

It's a handwritten (or typed) letter that:

- Passes down your faith
- Honors the person you're writing to
- Offers lessons from your life
- Speaks identity and blessing into theirs

It's not about being poetic or perfect. It's about being real. These letters aren't read once and tossed. They get tucked into Bibles, wallets, glove compartments, and shoeboxes. They're read when life falls apart — or when a man just needs to hear your voice again.

HOW TO WRITE IT

1. Open With Why

Let them know what this letter is and why you're writing it. Example:

"I'm writing this because some words deserve to live longer than I will."

"I want you to know what I believe, what I've learned, and what I see in you."

2. Tell the Truth of Your Journey

Not the highlight reel. The real one.

- What you've struggled with.
- Where God met you.
- What you've learned the hard way.

"I've failed. I've feared. But I've also found God to be faithful. I want you to know both."

3. Call Out Who They Are

Call out the gold in them — their gifts, character, and potential.

"You were never meant to blend in. There's a warrior in you, even if you don't feel it yet."

"I see in you a man who doesn't give up, even when life throws everything at it's got."

4. Pass Down What Matters

- Scripture that shaped you
- Core values you live by
- Family stories or lessons from your mentors

"Never make a major decision tired, angry, or full of pride."

"God's grace is stronger than your worst day. I've tested it."

5. End With a Blessing

Literally bless them. It's old-school, it's biblical, and it still works.

"May you walk with boldness, fight with purpose, and never forget Whose you are."

Sign it. Date it. Seal it.

BONUS: WHEN & WHERE TO DELIVER IT

- Leave it in their Bible or backpack before a big moment.
- Send it as a surprise after a hard season.
- Read it aloud during a rite of passage or retreat.
- Keep it in your will — as your final word.

FIELD TEST CHALLENGE:

Pick one man — your son, father, mentor, or friend — and write the letter this week. Don't wait for the perfect time. Make time. Put your legacy in ink.

Because one day, your words may be the only sermon they remember. Make them count.

WHEN GOD SAYS WAIT

“What do you do when God puts your calling on pause?”



When the Fire Goes Quiet

Let's talk about a moment most men would rather skip: The moment after you know you're called... and nothing happens.

Moses had one of those moments. Actually, he had about 14,600 of them.

Let's rewind: Acts 7:25 tells us that Moses knew God would use him. He didn't stumble into a calling or accidentally trip into leadership.

He had purpose branded on his bones.

“He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them...”

And yet... instead of walking in to save Israel, he walked into the wilderness. And stayed there for forty years. No burning bush. No clear plan. No miracles. Just sheep, sand, and silence.

Most men today would call that failure.

God called it formation.

Because sometimes the season between your calling and your mission isn't a punishment — it's a preparation. And waiting isn't God wasting time. It's God reshaping you.

Living in the In-Between

Let's be honest. Nobody likes waiting. Especially not men. We like momentum. Progress. Proof that what we're doing matters.

But what happens when you don't get applause?
When no doors open?
When it feels like your gifts are gathering dust?

That's the tension of the wilderness season:
You're carrying a holy burden in a quiet place.
You're called — but you're stuck.
You're ready — but nothing's moving.
You know what you're meant to do — but God says **not yet**.

And here's where it gets dangerous: that's when we're tempted to **make it happen on our own** — to manufacture the miracle, to run ahead of God. That's exactly what Moses did when he killed the Egyptian. He didn't wait for the burning bush — he tried to burn the system down himself.

And in doing so, he delayed the very mission God had marked him for.

Where Men Meet Truth

This isn't a sermon. It's a table. And every table needs voices.

Here are 5 questions to bring to your brotherhood group, your journal, or your firepit circle:

1. Have you ever felt ready... but God said wait?

What did that season teach you — about Him, about yourself, or about timing?

Sometimes God doesn't delay the dream because you're unqualified — sometimes it's because you're not yet

unattached from the old ways of doing things. Moses had Egypt in him — and God needed to strip that out.

2. Do you believe delay is the same as denial? Why or why not?

It's easy to assume silence means "no." But what if God is just saying, "Not yet, son"?

Think about this: If you handed a chainsaw to your 9-year-old because he felt ready, what kind of father would you be?

3. What does it look like to steward your calling in the meantime — without forcing the outcome?

In the wilderness, Moses didn't lead an army. He led sheep.

That was his training ground.

You may not be doing what you feel called to yet — but are you faithfully doing what's in front of you?

You want to preach? Serve.

You want to lead men? Lead your family.

You want to plant churches? Plant discipline.

4. Can you trust that God is preparing something in you, even when you feel benched?

The backside of the desert is where pride dies, humility is born, and identity is reforged. That's not the bench — that's the gym. The forge. The cave of transformation.

You don't become a burning bush man in the spotlight.

You become one in the shadows.

5. What are the signs that you're still trying to do it your way instead of God's?

Do you find yourself exhausted trying to force fruit that hasn't been watered by obedience?

Are you defining success by speed, scale, or results?

God's version of fruitfulness often starts with faithfulness in obscurity.

How to Wait Well

Waiting doesn't mean doing nothing. It means doing the right things slowly and consistently, without needing applause or control.

Try this:

- Write down the last thing God told you to do.
- Are you doing it?
- Start every morning this week with one sentence:
"God, I trust Your timing more than I trust my own desire."
- Ask a brother you trust:
"What's one area of my life that looks like I'm forcing instead of trusting?"

Let waiting be your worship. Let stillness be your strength training.

"The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him." – Lamentations 3:25

The Table's Still Open

If you're in a wilderness season right now, you're in good company.

Joseph waited in a prison.

David waited in caves.

Moses waited in silence.

Jesus waited in the garden.

God isn't late. He's just not finished.

So sit with that. And pull up a chair next issue — we'll be saving you a seat at The Oak Table.

THE UNSPOKEN WAR: WHAT MOST MEN NEVER ADMIT

If you're feeling numb, angry, tired, or empty... you're not weak. You're just in a fight.



THE OPENING SHOT

There's a war going on inside most men — but it's not one you'll hear them talk about at work or around the grill.

It's the kind of battle you don't post about. You don't even pray out loud about it. You just keep going. White knuckling your way through fatherhood, marriage, manhood, and the slow pressure of being "okay" all the time.

This war doesn't explode — it erodes.
And over time, it leaves strong men tired.
Good men bitter.
Faithful men isolated.
And Christian men... silent.

So let's name it — and then we fight back.

**MENTAL HEALTH: YOU'RE NOT LOSING YOUR MIND.
YOU'RE LOSING YOUR MARGIN.**

Most men don't need a therapist right away — they need margin.
They're overloaded, overcommitted, and under-refueled.

You weren't built to:

- Be available 24/7.
- Fix everything.
- Carry the pressure of performance, provision, protection, and peacekeeping — alone.

"Even youths grow tired and weary..." — Isaiah 40:30

But here's the key: rest isn't weakness. It's readiness.
Sabbath was God's idea, not a self-help trend.

**EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE: YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHUT
DOWN TO BE STRONG**

The myth of "tough guys don't cry" has created generations of emotionally disconnected men.

You don't have to break down every five minutes — but you do need to feel what's happening inside you.

Grief. Disappointment. Anger. Shame.

If you don't deal with it, it will deal with you.

- In your tone with your wife.
- In how short you are with your kids.
- In how numb you feel even when life is "good."

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." — Proverbs 4:23

Guarding doesn't mean burying.

It means processing pain with God and a few good men.

**FATHERHOOD: LEADING WITH PRESENCE, NOT
PERFECTION**

Here's the truth: your kids don't need a flawless dad.
They need a present one.

A man who admits when he's wrong.

Who shows up even when he's tired.

Who says "I love you" even when it feels awkward.

You don't have to know the Bible inside out.

You don't have to have all the answers.

You just have to be there — consistently.

Soul Armor Tip: Don't underestimate "small deposits."

- Tucking them in with a prayer.
- Taking a walk and just listening.
- Saying, "I'm proud of you," even when they're struggling.

MARRIAGE: SHE'S NOT YOUR ENEMY. THE ENEMY IS YOUR ENEMY.

Marriage can feel like a battlefield.

But too often, we treat our wives like the opponent — instead of remembering that the real enemy would love nothing more than to divide, distract, and detonate your covenant.

You don't need more romance hacks — you need more spiritual awareness.

Ask yourself:

- Have I prayed for her today?
- Have I prayed with her this month?
- Have I spoken life over her, or just pointed out what she's not doing right?

Grace doesn't mean letting everything slide.

But grit doesn't mean bulldozing either.

It means choosing to fight for her, not against her.

SOUL ARMOR CHALLENGE – THIS MONTH'S PRACTICE: "5-5-5"

Set aside time to do this once a week (or every day if you're ready):

1.5 Minutes of Stillness – No music. No phone. Just you, God, and silence.

2.5 Honest Sentences in a Journal – Don't filter. Just write.

3.5 Words Spoken Out Loud to a Loved One – Example: "I'm proud of you." / "I need help today." / "I'm praying for you."

Do that consistently — and you're building soul armor one layer at a time.

CLOSING WORD:

Brother — you don't need to be bulletproof.

You need to be spirit-proofed.

This world will wear you down. The enemy will whisper lies. The pressure will pile up. But you've got access to armor most men don't even know they're allowed to wear.

So put it on.

Piece by piece.

Prayer by prayer.

Habit by habit.

And when the war comes — and it will — you'll be ready.

LEGACY LEDGER

The Fault Line in the Giant Killer: David, Failure, and Finishing Well

It's not just how you start. It's who you become along the way.

THE MAN: DAVID

The shepherd.
The warrior.
The psalmist.
The king.
The man after God's own heart.

David's legacy is complicated — and that's what makes it **relatable**.

He didn't live a clean story arc. He didn't end without scars. He was anointed as a boy and admired as a king — but still fell hard as a man. And yet, God's final commentary on David wasn't **Bathsheba**, **Uriah**, or **Absalom** — it was **heart**.

THE LEDGER ENTRY:

"After removing Saul, He made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after My own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'"
— Acts 13:22

THE WEIGHT OF A NAME

David's story reminds us that a man's legacy isn't forged in a moment — it's built across decades of **faith**, **failure**, **repentance**, and **return**.

Yes, he killed a giant.
Yes, he danced before the Lord.
Yes, he wrote the Psalms.

But he also:

- Abused power.
- Committed adultery.
- Orchestrated a murder.
- Failed as a father.

And yet... he still left a legacy that points directly to **Jesus**.

The Son of God is still called "**the Son of David**."

How?

Because legacy isn't about perfection — it's about **positioning your heart toward God again and again**, no matter how many times you've been broken.

REFLECT: 3 QUESTIONS TO WRITE INTO YOUR OWN LEDGER

- What will be said about your heart when you're gone?
 - David's greatness wasn't just in what he did - but in how quick he was to repent and return.



- What story is your silence telling?
 - David stayed silent in the face of Amnon's sin and Absalom's rebellion. What legacy might have been different if he had spoken up?
- Do your failures define your direction or deepen your dependence?
 - Legacy isn't the absence of wounds - it's what those wounds produced in you.

THE LEDGER PRACTICE: WRITE YOUR 50-WORD OBITUARY

Take 10 minutes and write this sentence:

"If I died today, I hope people would say I was a man who..."

Then finish it — but keep it under 50 words.

Distill your legacy.

What would make your kids proud to carry your name?

What kind of life would make your final words echo?

CLOSING WORD:

Legacy doesn't start with your death — it starts with your daily decisions.

David's heart didn't earn him a crown — it kept him from being crushed under the weight of one.

May we lead like warriors, worship like poets, and repent like kings who still believe grace is enough.

Because one day, your name will be etched into someone else's ledger.

Make it worthy of the ink.

TOOL BOX:

THE ESSENTIALS FOR A GROUNDED MAN

BOOK

"Live Not by Lies" – Rod Dreher

A bold, powerful reminder that the cultural current is often against truth — and that men of faith are called to stand. Through stories of real resistance and quiet courage from the underground church, this book reminds you to build inner resolve before the outer storm hits.

Why it's a tool: Because every man needs to know how to hold to truth without losing his soul in the noise.

PODCAST

Order of Man – Ryan Michler

If you're looking for a voice that blends traditional masculinity with modern leadership, this one's worth a listen. Interviews, tactical strategies, and bold conversation around fatherhood, finance, faith, and fortitude.

Why it's a tool: Because sometimes you need to hear another warrior talk it out while you're driving, lifting, or cutting grass.

CAMPFIRE RECIPE

Cowboy Coffee & Firebread

All you need:

- Coarse coffee grounds
- Cold water
- Cast iron pot
- A hot fire
- Patience

To Brew:

1. Toss ½ cup coffee grounds into 4 cups of water.
2. Set on the fire until it starts to boil. Remove. Let grounds settle. Pour slowly.

Firebread Tip:

Mix 1 cup flour, pinch of salt, a splash of water. Wrap around a stick. Roast until golden. Eat like a man.

Why it's a tool: Because every man should know how to make something simple, warm, and honest with his hands.

STUDY BIBLE

The ESV Men's Devotional Bible

No fluff. Straight scripture with pointed devotionals for men. It's like having a spiritual field manual beside your bed, on your dashboard, or in your backpack.

Why it's a tool: Because spiritual discipline starts with showing up — and this Bible gives you a place to start every time.

SCRIPTURE PLAN

30 Days of Grit – The Anvil Plan

(see printable plan on our site)

30 verses. 30 reflections. All centered on grit, growth, and God's voice to the modern man.

GEAR PICK OF THE MONTH

Morakniv Companion Fixed Blade Knife

Swedish steel. Built like a tank. Under \$20. Whether you're carving kindling or cutting rope, this blade feels good in your hand and never lets you down.

<https://www.amazon.com/Morakniv-Companion-Outdoor-Stainless-4-1-Inch/dp/B004ZAIWSC?th=1>

Why it's a tool: Because every man should carry something sharp, and not just in his back pocket.

CLOSING THOUGHT:

You don't need more stuff. You need the right stuff. The kind of tools that sharpen your life, not just your image. The kind of tools that get passed down, not thrown out.

This is the gear that shapes men — not just their shelves.



CHALLENGE:

FIND YOUR FIRE

This month, reignite what's grown cold. One step. One spark.

You don't need to change everything.
You just need to **light something again** — something that's dimmed, faded, or been buried under busyness and burnout.

Maybe it's:

- Your prayer life.
- Your relationship with your son.
- That dream you put on the shelf.
- The courage to confront what you've been avoiding.

Whatever it is... this month, we find it again.

YOUR MISSION (3 Steps)

1. NAME THE FIRE

In your journal, Bible margin, or scrap of paper — write one sentence:

"What has grown cold in me is..."

Get honest. No filters. Just call it out.

2. FUEL IT DAILY (5 MINUTES)

Pick one intentional thing to feed that fire — just 5 minutes a day.

Examples:

- Read a Psalm out loud.
- Take a walk with your son.
- Start a conversation you've been putting off.
- Put your hand on your wife's shoulder and pray, even if it's awkward.
- Open that book you've been too tired to finish.

It's not about perfection.

It's about **presence**.

3. SHARE THE FLAME

Before the end of the month, tell one other man what you've been reigniting. A brother. A mentor. A son.
Let it be real.

You don't have to give a speech. Just say:

"This is what I'm working on this month. Check in on me in two weeks."

You'll be surprised how fast a spark turns into a flame when you stop hiding it.

REMEMBER THIS:

"Do not put out the Spirit's fire." – 1 Thessalonians 5:19

"Fan into flame the gift of God within you." – 2 Timothy 1:6

BONUS TRACK:

Feeling stuck? Build a real fire this month — in a pit, on a campsite, or in your backyard. Sit with it. Let God speak. Journal what rises. Reignite from the ground up.

CLOSING WORD:

Your life is either a **furnace or a freezer**.

This month, we strike heat again.

One spark. One swing.

Because on the anvil... nothing stays cold for long.

