

W A L D O N F E N S T E R

FEELING

DANGEROUS

ONLY FEAR GOD

STOP HIDING. START OBEYING. LIVE DANGEROUS.

WALDON FENSTER

FEELING DANGEROUS

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS A THREAT

This book is a threat—mostly to me. I am writing it first because I am not sure I have the courage to write everything that comes after it. There are stories I have kept buried because they were painful, embarrassing, unbelievable, or still too close to the surface. There are victories I have been afraid to share because I know how quickly gratitude can be mistaken for arrogance, and there are failures I would rather leave behind because bringing them into the light means admitting they actually happened.

But hiding has a cost. When I hide part of my story, I give shame permission to keep owning it. When I make myself smaller so other people can feel more comfortable, I move further away from the man God created me to become. And every time I promise myself that I will write it someday, someday becomes one more place to hide.

That is why *Feeling Dangerous* has to come first. This book is my public commitment to stop running from the stories God has asked me to tell. It is me signing my name before I know exactly how everything will end and taking away my own escape route. Once this book exists, I cannot pretend the others were only ideas. I have to write them, tell the truth, live exposed, and keep becoming the man those stories require me to be.

Feeling dangerous does not mean feeling invincible. I have lost too much to believe I cannot lose. It does not mean being reckless, loud, or fearless, and it certainly does not mean that every decision I make is right simply because I make it confidently. Feeling dangerous means knowing Who sent me—and trusting Him enough to move.

It means walking into situations where I do not have enough money, strength, experience, evidence, or approval, then obeying God anyway. It means knowing that the only One I truly fear is God, and He is on my side. That is not confidence in myself. Confidence in myself can disappear with one bad decision, one diagnosis, one lawsuit, one failure, one betrayal, or one hard look in the mirror. Confidence in God is different.

Confidence in God says that I may lose, but loss does not get the final word. I may be attacked, but I do not have to hide. I may be afraid, but fear does not get to make my decisions. I may walk through the darkest valley, but I will not walk through it alone. Saying, "My God is good," does not mean my life will always be safe. God is good, but He is not safe.

He will ask you to leave things you thought you needed. He will tell you to take risks other people will call irresponsible. He will expose the parts of you that you worked hardest to conceal and allow the fire to get hot enough to burn away the person you were pretending to be. Then, when you can no longer control the outcome, He will ask you to walk forward without knowing how the story ends.

That is where this series begins—not at the finish line and not with a polished testimony that makes every painful moment sound like part of a perfect plan. It begins with me standing in the middle of stories I still do not completely understand, admitting that God was present in every one of them.

Some of those stories will take us into casinos, where God asked me to take bigger risks while lawsuits, victories, devastating losses, and the fire of refinement challenged everything I thought I knew about faith. That story will become Winning Faith.

Another begins with a business introduction that went sideways and eventually became a twelve-million-dollar judgment against me. What happened caused me to stop making introductions for years. Then prayer, uncomfortable obedience, and a path I could never have created allowed that judgment to be settled in full for five thousand dollars. That story will become God Gave Me \$12M.

Another story begins with a promise I made to myself while I was drinking every day: "Do not drink today. There will be free beer tomorrow." I could not imagine staying sober forever because forever felt impossible, but I could delay one drink for one day. Then I could do it again. Daily drinking became daily delaying, and daily delaying eventually became freedom. That story will become Free Beer Tomorrow.

There is also the story of two people living in different parts of the world while God prepared each of them for the other. From our first hello to marriage took fifty-eight days. Thirteen years, seven children, and more life than either of us could have imagined followed. That story will become 58 Days.

Then there is the story of shutting down businesses, closing everything, and moving to the middle of nowhere to fight what I had been told was an incurable disease. I was not searching for a better version of my old life; I was trying not to die. That road eventually led me into a cave in Jerusalem associated with the place where Jesus was held before His crucifixion. I entered that season broken, depleted, and uncertain whether my body would ever be restored. I did not leave the same. That story will become The Cave.

There is the story of our children—seven arrows, each carrying a direction, personality, calling, and purpose of their own. It is the funny, raw, exhausting, and beautiful story of children watching their parents grow up while we were trying to raise them. That story will become Arrows.

There are stories of protection and provision, impossible timing, warnings, strangers, and encounters that sound completely made up. I would probably doubt some of them if they had not happened to me. Those stories will become Angel Operations.

Then comes The After. Most people spend their lives preparing to take the "before" picture. They postpone the work and make everything their future self's problem: someday I will get healthy, stop drinking, fix my marriage, build wealth, become disciplined, or finally obey God. But someday is where assignments go to die.

My before picture is complete. I cannot change what happened in it, and I do not need to keep living inside it. Everything now must be built around the after—the after of health, wealth, freedom, fatherhood, purpose, legacy, and eternal life.

And when all of it is finished, only one outcome will matter. It will not be how much money I made, how many people knew my name, how many businesses I built, how many battles I won, how many books I wrote, or how many people I proved wrong. The only victory that matters is completing what God entrusted to me and hearing the words, "Well done." That will be the final book.

But I cannot write the final book without writing the first one. I cannot tell you about obedience while continuing to avoid my own. I cannot challenge you to live exposed while I carefully protect the parts of my life that might change what people think about me. I cannot tell you to stop hiding while I am still hiding.

So this is the line in the sand. This book does not mean I have everything figured out; it means I am finished waiting until I do. It does not mean I am fearless; it means fear has lost its vote. And it does not mean the enemy will stop attacking; it means I am no longer willing to make his job easier by living small, staying silent, and dying with the stories God gave me still trapped inside me.

I am not writing from the safety of the other side. There are still battles ahead of me, and I am still becoming the husband, father, leader, warrior, and faithful servant I have been called to be. I am writing because accountability begins when a private intention becomes a public commitment.

My name is Waldon Fenster. These stories happened to me. These books now have names, and I no longer have permission to hide from them. This is Feeling Dangerous. Let's begin.