

foreword by LECRAE

Henry Kaestner, J. D. Greear,
and Chip Ingram

FAITH
DRIVEN
Entrepreneur

What It Takes to Step Into Your Purpose
and Pursue Your God-Given Call to Create

PRAISE FOR *FAITH DRIVEN ENTREPRENEUR*

As an entrepreneur who feels deeply called to the marketplace, I am grateful for the experience and wisdom shared in this book around generosity, identity, and the unique challenges and opportunities of using business as a way to bring justice, equality, mercy, and dignity to earth as it is in heaven.

LIZ FORKIN BOHANNON

Cofounder and CEO of Sseko Designs and author of *Beginner's Pluck: Build Your Life of Purpose and Impact Now*

I was very sincere in my intent to create a faith-driven company—but the outcome was lukewarm at best. I know had I read *Faith Driven Entrepreneur* I would have, with new knowledge, fully accomplished my vision. This is a must-read for the believing entrepreneur!

HORST SCHULZE

Former president of the Ritz-Carlton

Christians know that their work is a part of their worship. But the how hasn't always been as clear. *Faith Driven Entrepreneur* will give you practical, actionable ways to build on your faith and integrate it into how you lead, launch, and grow your business.

SANYIN SIANG

Leadership coach, executive director of the Coach K Center on Leadership & Ethics at Duke University, and author of *The Launch Book*

Faith-driven entrepreneurship is an ancient-future proposition. From the time Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived as entrepreneurs on a faith adventure up to the present era, it has been a historical norm for God to work with people in the midst of the marketplace. Our world is groaning for the gospel, and business leaders following Jesus are poised for radical impact. This book needs to be read by every Christian businessperson, student, investor, and pastor. Let's go!

MIKE SHARROW

CEO of C12 Group

The top can be a lonely place, but *Faith Driven Entrepreneur* is a reminder that there are cofounders and CEOs all around the world working to faithfully serve God in the way they lead their businesses. I'm striving to be one of those leaders, and I invite anyone who reads this book to join me.

ANTHONY TAN

CEO of Grab

There are so many entrepreneurs in the world who haven't yet experienced the joy, freedom, and missional possibility of deeply connecting their work to their faith. Henry has pursued and lived out this integrated life and is now on a mission with J. D. and Chip to help thousands more through this book. Read it and you will no doubt be encouraged in your own journey.

DAVE BLANCHARD

Cofounder and CEO of Praxis

In 2008 in Charlotte, North Carolina, I felt very alone and very unsure of how to start a bank that sought to love God and love people. In *Faith Driven Entrepreneur*, Henry, J. D., and Chip do a wonderful job describing how God is moving around the globe. Entrepreneurship is the key to unleashing the next generation of Christ followers who are seeking to love God and love people. In this book, you'll find out why and how. My only complaint is that it was not available to guide me on my journey a decade ago!

CASEY CRAWFORD

CEO of Movement Mortgage

If you feel that starting a business can't be a part of God's plan for your life, think again. *Faith Driven Entrepreneur* is a book by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs that invites all business owners—from the billion-dollar company to the street-corner store—to be a part of God's witness on earth.

DR. BRIAN FIKKERT

Founder and president of the Chalmers Center at Covenant College and coauthor of *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself*

FAITH DRIVEN ENTREPRENEUR

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Faith Driven Entrepreneur: What It Takes to Step Into Your Purpose and Pursue Your God-Given Call to Create

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FOREWORD

What does it mean to be a Faith Driven Entrepreneur?

What does it mean to be a Faith Driven person . . . really?

These are questions I find myself asking often. This book has helped me move toward answers.

It's written for Christian entrepreneurs, yes, but there's something about that phrase—*Faith Driven*—that makes me think.

Christian makes a phenomenal noun but a subpar adjective. Because when you say “I am a Christian,” you're saying a lot about who you are, right? You're saying that you stand for Jesus and that you're a follower of his. So often, though, that word *Christian* has a loose meaning.

If I told you I was a “Christian” plumber, what exactly does that mean? I'd like to imagine that a Christian plumber is someone you instantly knew operated with quality, excellence, integrity, timeliness, and many other virtues. That would be awesome if whatever came after the adjective *Christian* meant that. But oftentimes it doesn't.

This book is helping us redefine the idea of excellence by giving us a different frame. We're *Faith Driven*.

What does that mean? First and foremost, it says that my faith in Jesus Christ drives the way I work and live. It says that I'm here to create quality work. It says that I'm here to do the work that God has put in my hands to the best of my ability because I believe that he oversees everything I do, and my work, my time, my energy—all things that belong to and come from him—are tools to serve him well.

It's so easy to take those things and use them to glorify ourselves, though. Oftentimes we find ourselves fighting to keep up the image, fighting to keep up the persona of all the things that a Christian leader is "supposed" to be. And what ends up happening is that there's too much shame to be vulnerable and transparent about the areas where we are not succeeding and not winning because there are so many expectations on us.

When you're performing for acceptance, that's religiosity to the core. That's not faith.

Faith is when you can be honest and transparent and say, "God, I don't have what it takes. I need you to do it." I've chronicled my own journey of coming to the conclusion that I was more devoted to my devotion to God than I was devoted to his devotion to me. It's easy to get that backward, especially as an entrepreneur when you're the one who is constantly on the pedestal. You're the one everyone is looking at.

For Christians, we can be tempted to twist our virtues so

that they serve us. We like to pat ourselves on the back and say, “Look at me. I woke up at 5:00 a.m. to drink coffee and do my Bible study.” Click. Instagram that. #blessed. But then people can look at us and think we’re always the 5:00 a.m. Bible study and coffee type. We’re not allowed to struggle. We’re not allowed to fail. Entrepreneurs feel that pressure more than most, but the principles in this book can help relieve us of that burden. Why? Because it’s not about us anyway.

I’m excited for the work that Henry, J. D., and Chip put into this book because of what it means to me as both an entrepreneur and a creator. They help us expand the definition of *entrepreneur* to include artists, musicians, builders, and anyone else who is making something new. Anyone who is following the example of their Creator God can find echoes of their work in this book.

I’m reminded that creativity is really a unique aspect of expressing what theologians would call “*imago Dei*”—the truth that we have been made in the image of God. God is the ultimate Creator, so he is the source of all creativity. He created the heavens, the earth, the moon, and the stars. And so when we are creating, we’re actually reflecting his glory. We’re reflecting back the awesomeness that he has instilled in us.

Paul tells us that “we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). And so, when I create, I know that

in some sense I'm walking in God's footsteps. But the other beauty of creating is that it reminds me of how big God is.

God created something out of nothing. We can't even begin to imagine how that works. Instead, we use the raw materials that God has created to make things as our way of following his example. But one cool thing that we get to do that no other creature on the planet can do is add value to things. We can take ore and metal and then shape them and mold them, and then we add value to them in the same way God took dirt and added value to it by breathing life into it.

That's something really special that I don't want to take for granted. When people hear a song that I've made and they see it as valuable enough to want to purchase it, that's me following in the footsteps of God. I've just taken sounds and thoughts and added value to them—turning raw materials into something more. If you're an entrepreneur, you know the feeling.

Creating something that others want feels incredible. The only thing that tops it is creating something that makes others want something bigger than you could ever make. I believe the future is full of Faith Driven Entrepreneurs who will do just that—men and women around the world working to create products and services that meet the needs of those around them and point to the God who meets *all* our needs.

I hope I get to be one of those people. I hope you do too.

Lecrae

INTRODUCTION

Henry Kaestner

Blank stares.

That's what we saw in meeting after meeting, conference room after conference room. As we made the rounds up and down Sand Hill Road, we walked in and out of venture capitalists' offices, trying to figure out what had gone wrong. There were meetings where the disconnect was obvious. Many investors failed to resonate with different aspects of our business. But even for those who were interested in what we were doing, the mood changed when we talked about our faith. When we introduced that topic, there seemed to be a tension and unease that hadn't been there before.

I don't think this is a rarity for Faith Driven Entrepreneurs—the men and women who are starting companies and building businesses with a belief in Jesus Christ and an understanding of themselves as beloved children of God as their core identity.

In fact, I think many Christian entrepreneurs have received this response, either in a pitch meeting or even in their church.

Just as many venture capitalists are confused by how faith can be integrated into entrepreneurship, so too are many pastors and churchgoers. Many of us have misunderstood how entrepreneurs are core to the work God is doing on earth. Entrepreneurs aren't God's plan B. Rather, they are the men and women God has called and equipped to see his will done on earth as it is in heaven.

As an entrepreneur, you—yes, *you*—are a part of God's plan A. God has a purpose and a plan for the entrepreneurial ventures his people are starting and growing all around the world. The work you do today—the company you've built, the employees you work with, the customers you serve, the shareholders you report to, all of it—can serve as an active part of what God is doing on earth.

Faith Driven Entrepreneur is both an organization and a type of person. As an organization, we exist to encourage, equip, and empower Christ-following, entrepreneurially minded people with world-class content and community. As people, we (and hopefully you) are working to create, alongside the master Creator, businesses and enterprises that bring him glory through their mission, their return, and their practices.

But more than that, Faith Driven Entrepreneur is a movement. It is a continually growing group of people who believe

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that they are sent by God to do his work by building businesses that serve his plan.

Entrepreneurship is a lonely journey. But it doesn't have to be. You don't have to build your business on an island. Let this be an affirmation and a call to arms—your work matters, and you're not the only one out there doing it!

There are 582 million entrepreneurs in the world—that includes every tech entrepreneur, salon owner, and independent insurance representative from New York to Nairobi. Approximately 180 million of them are Christ followers. That's 180 million men and women who are creating and shaping culture; 180 million men and women who already know that their work is an opportunity to transform and innovate, to help and serve, to launch and learn; 180 million men and women who are just like you—who are building businesses on behalf of the God who made them.

Our vision is that in ten years, every Christ-following entrepreneur will know the majesty of the gospel first, and with that gift fully received, will be inspired to bring their gifting, experience, talent, and work to the altar as their meaningful form of spiritual worship, thereby transforming the workplaces, families, and communities in which they operate.

We want to see that happen in the lives of entrepreneurs all around the world. This is the mission that gets me out

of bed every morning and that has motivated the writing of this book.

So, a number of us set out to determine the defining characteristics of a Faith Driven Entrepreneur—the values, habits, and traits that allow men and women to successfully build a business and faithfully pursue a loving relationship with their God. And that’s what this book is. It’s an outline of those characteristics, stories that display what they look like, and encouragement for how you can see them in your own life.

Along with this book, we’ve partnered with RightNow Media to produce videos that reinforce the principles described here. At the end of each chapter, we’ve included a suggested video that tells the story of a Faith Driven Entrepreneur that will help you further explore what that characteristic looks like as it’s lived out. And at the end of the book, we’ve included a discussion guide that will help you dive deeper into these ideas with others. Because despite what you may have felt in the past, you don’t have to go it alone.

This book is the starting line. It’s not meant to be comprehensive or the final word on the subject. It’s just the start—for me, for you, and for the entire Faith Driven Entrepreneur movement. So start reading. And more important, start realizing that God has a plan for every entrepreneur, and he’s inviting you into it. Will you join?

CHAPTER 1

OUR CALL TO CREATE

Henry Kaestner

The word *calling* has dominated Christian circles in recent years, and it has taken on a mysterious power that no one seems to have nailed down. Does God call people into certain jobs and professions? Is calling a special spiritual experience? Are some people called and other people not? Questions abound, and we can debate all we want about what calling means and how we can discern our own, but the real harm in our conversations around calling is found in the spiritual caste system it has created between secular and sacred callings.

If you grew up in a Christian home in the last thirty to

forty years, maybe you've noticed that being "called" into ministry seems like a special, more elite, and more personal path than having a career in other professions. Christians often consider those called to vocational ministry a Special Ops group that only certain people are qualified for. We often believe that there are regular believers on one side and preachers, teachers, and missionaries on the other. And while we can't *all* be missionaries and preachers, it's easy to feel like those people have received something special from God that we haven't.

Or, if you're new to faith, you may be wondering if what you do in your professional life is illegitimate or a waste of time. If God has put us on this earth to love him and love others, and if our daily work isn't evangelistic in nature, do we need a new model? Reading about a lemonade-stand kid turned tech giant doesn't exactly scream "holy calling" to us.

But why not? Why can't an entrepreneurial venture, lived and pursued faithfully, be God's desire for your life?

I think it can be.

Entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity to step into a purpose that is aligned with who God is and how God has made them. Just as pastors are taking the gifts God has given them and giving those gifts back to others, entrepreneurs can take the creative problem-solving energy within them and pour that back out into society in a way that is beneficial to

those who receive it and glorifying to the God who instilled it in them in the first place.

As an entrepreneur, you've felt the life-giving energy that comes through serving your customers, vendors, and investors. You get fired up when you find solutions to problems. You can't

wait to see the fruit of the work of your hands. Why? Because you're created in the image of a creative, entrepreneurial God.

If you've ever felt less-than in the church because of your business, or if you've ever wondered whether your life is truly leaning into the purpose God has for you, look back at the Garden of Eden. God created humans in his image. And in his image, we can see a God who worked six days and created something out of nothing. That's who we are. That's what an entrepreneur does!

This is how it works. When you solve problems from scratch, that's an opportunity to commune with the living God who has helped people solve problems from the beginning of time.

When you provide a new idea, a new resource, or a new product, that's a chance to bear witness to a God who is the ultimate provider.

When you pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," God is answering that prayer with a

Entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity to step into a purpose that is aligned with who God is and how God has made them.

resounding *yes*, and he's running toward you, eagerly inviting you to come under his power and his protection to join him in doing the work to make that happen.

Leave your feelings of inadequacy at the door. You were made for this. God has something incredible in store for the Faith Driven Entrepreneur.



A lot of images come to mind with the word *entrepreneur*. There's a Silicon Valley stereotype that includes a button-down shirt with a Patagonia vest. A lot of people will think of someone young, someone working in technology. Few people would think of a gardener.

But think about it. A gardener is nothing if not an entrepreneur. A gardener has the raw materials of soil and seeds and water, which they combine and tend in an effort to create something where, only days and weeks before, nothing existed. Beauty replaces nothingness; lush plants replace dry ground. What was once just a plot of land, a gardener turns around through the work of their hands and makes something useful—either for its aesthetic or for its function, and sometimes both.

And if we want to learn what it means to be a Faith Driven Entrepreneur, the first place we can look to is a garden. Because you, entrepreneur—whether you're calling yourself that yet or not—are a gardener. But you're not the first.

God is the original entrepreneur. If anyone knows what it's like to create and build something completely new, it's him. And we can see that from the very beginning he has created us to share in his entrepreneurial process: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

God invited Adam into the work of caring for and cultivating the Garden right away. He didn't just set Adam down in Eden and tell him to enjoy himself. Adam had roles and responsibilities. You think your day is busy today? Imagine having to name every single animal in existence!

So often, we think of work as a curse—as something God made us do after we got kicked out of the Garden. But what if work is actually a part of bearing his image? What if work is an invitation to create and build alongside

the ultimate entrepreneur? What if work is something God gave us as a vehicle through which we can enjoy his presence?

What made the Garden of Eden so special wasn't the absence of work. It was the presence of the perfect coworker. God and Adam worked together. The Garden of Eden and all the plants and animals in it were shared between God and man. That's the perfect vision of entrepreneurship—that we can be united in purpose, passion, and pursuit with God.

What made the Garden of Eden so special wasn't the absence of work. It was the presence of the perfect coworker.

God wants to work with us. He wants to create with us. He wants to start, share, and complete new projects and ideas with us. He didn't leave Adam alone to tend to the Garden of Eden, and he doesn't ask us to work in isolation.

God uses us to bring about his Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Our creations can bring order out of chaos, solve problems, rally against injustice, and create dignity and opportunity for those who interact with our creations.

This truth should empower us. It should give us the ability to move forward confidently as we create and lead our businesses, as we propose solutions to societal problems, and as we step out in faith into the entrepreneurial venture God has drawn us to.



I discovered my first love when I went to college, and it was that I could buy a T-shirt for five dollars and sell it for ten dollars. As I did that, as I took risks and interacted with customers and thought about the next deal and saw the fruits of my labor as I hired other college students, I felt fully alive.

The creative process pumped blood into my veins. I came up with designs, made sales, and received affirmation from vendors and customers that I was doing a good thing. The feeling of validation that comes after creating something the market wants—even when that something was just a

T-shirt—was unbeatable. I was hooked. From my campus at the University of Delaware, we ended up selling on forty-nine other campuses up and down the East Coast.

Still, I put that aside as a collegiate venture. When I graduated, I thought I needed to get a real job. I moved to New York City and worked on Wall Street for six years. Now, you'd think that making a lot of money and living in New York City would be the dream. You'd think that would be better than selling T-shirts. But it wasn't. During that time, I longed for the entrepreneurial venture. I missed it. I wanted to feel fully alive again.

So I packed up and moved to North Carolina to start my own company. At the time, I had no perception of calling; I had no concept of what God wanted me to do with my life. I didn't think about things in a framework of faith at all. I was just chasing a bug to create and innovate.

And my bet is that if you're reading this book, you have that bug too. You want to break out of whatever societal box makes you feel trapped, and you want to move and shake and do and work and make something. That's the entrepreneurial dream. And since you're reading a book about being a *Faith Driven* Entrepreneur, my guess is you're serious about your Christian faith as well.

For far too long, Christian culture has ignored and dismissed this type of desire. I've met too many faithful people who ask me hesitantly, "Is it okay if I say no to working for

Entrepreneurship provides a place where you get to commune with God through the creative process.

a church or missions agency and start a business instead?” They’re cautious, uncertain, scared, and wondering if the entrepreneurial journey aligns with God’s call for believers.

I’m here to tell you, yes. It absolutely does. Entrepreneurship provides

a place where you get to commune with God through the creative process. It provides a way through which you can love God and love others. And so my hope is that as you read through the rest of these chapters—these marks of a Faith Driven Entrepreneur—you will feel empowered to do what you’re doing and to do it well.

Entrepreneurship is a legitimate pursuit that, when done well, brings honor and glory to our entrepreneurial God. You can speak confidently about what you do, because God is in you and with you.

WANT TO SEE THIS LIVED OUT?

Visit the Faith Driven Entrepreneur website at www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/book-stories to watch “Not Dead Yet,” the story of Saddleback Leather Company. While serving as a missionary and English instructor in Mexico, Dave Munson started a side business out of the back of his truck. Today, he and his wife, Suzette, own and operate a

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high-end leather goods business that has attracted a dedicated following for the beauty and quality of its products. Visit the URL to watch the full video and find thousands of other like-minded entrepreneurs going through the video study together.

