

Brave New Breed of Believers Raising Up World Changers for Christ

More than a decade ago, the Lord downloaded a life-changing prophetic word to Darlena Fields. And she wanted no part of it.

God spoke to Fields and told her that she and her husband, Phillip, were going to lay down their ministry as leadership coaches to develop one that would train warriors for the kingdom of God.

Though the couple wanted to walk in obedience to God's plans, Darlena says she felt as though they were already making an impact as leadership coaches, helping believers live courageously and find their kingdom purpose. She questioned the Lord's timing. But He saw what she could not, ultimately bringing them both into true obedience. But none of this came till they had walked through challenges to their ministry, their marriage and more.

Valley of Suffering

Prior to their ministry as leadership coaches, the Fieldses served on staff at a megachurch in Tulsa, Oklahoma, under the tutelage of Pastor Carlton Pearson. That church became known as one of the fastest-growing churches in America, and the Fieldses believed they had found their kingdom niche.

In the late 1990s, however, Pearson announced to his staff of eight pastors that his beliefs had changed. He no longer believed the Bible was inerrant, and he now thought there were many ways to God. Pearson said he was going to write a new theology called "The Gospel of Inclusion," and the announcement shook Phillip to the core.

"We watched that ship go down like the Titanic," Phillip said. "That sent me into a tailspin and, personally, it almost cost me my life. I went through a very 'dark night of the soul' wilderness season."

Phillip said the experience proved so challenging that it forced him to seek healing from a deliverance ministry. Shortly thereafter, he contracted hepatitis B, fibromyalgia and some other physical ailments that caused the doctors who diagnosed him to inquire about what he was doing to cause his own death.

In addition, the Fieldses had taken positions with a homeless ministry in North Tulsa, which cut their income in half.

All these experiences were working together to teach Phillip how to live bravely. In the valley of suffering, God was shaping him—and Darlena—to move as kingdom warriors and train others to do the same. Through it all, God gave him a strong word in June 2002.

"The Lord said to me—and I'll never forget it—'I'm going to heal you,'" Phillip says. "'But you have got to get real with Me.' So it was in that getting-real process that our ministry was born, and my life started over.

"When you've lived through something like that and you rise out of it ... when you burn out on that level and you get hit that hard, you know God's going to do something with that," he says.

"I think that's what Joshua and Caleb developed in the wilderness," Phillip explains. "They came back with their glowing report, and everybody wanted to stone them. That's how I felt through that season in my life, wondering if anyone were going to hold the truth high."

Attacks on Marriage

Through all the challenges they faced, the Fieldses' marriage also took some unhealthy shots from the enemy and became very "messy." Darlena said she had plans to divorce Phillip before they discovered his illnesses, and she developed what she termed as "suicidal depression."

"At that point, our lives were a complete train wreck," she says.

But just as God healed Phillip's body, He also healed the relationship between Phillip and Darlena.

Like many other couples, the Fieldses were striving for an unattainable perfection in their marriage. The quest for "stuff" did not provide relational security, and Darlena says their pursuit of the American dream/fantasy "put us on the performance treadmill."

Wanting to spare others from the same fate, in 2019, the two wrote *The UnPerfect Marriage: Liberation for Couples Trapped in the Fantasy of Perfection*. As it turned out, the book served a kingdom purpose greater than either of them anticipated.

"The reason we put the book together was to show people this whole journey we went through to get where we are today—strong, united and capable of leading leaders who are struggling," Phillip says.

"So when we use the word 'courage,' we don't take it lightly," he adds. "We recognize that it's more than heroism. It's really being able to embrace our full story. We don't hide it. We're not one of those ministries that believes that you just talk about the Word of God; we believe in sharing our story because I believe our story is how we connect with people. And when they read our book, or they hear our story, we minister to them, and it really liberates them to know what we've been through."

Darlana wholeheartedly agrees.

“The reason we put the book together was to show people this whole journey we went through to get to where we are today—strong, united and capable of leading leaders who are struggling,” Darlena says.”

Training Up Warriors

By 2020, the Fieldses had purchased a warehouse as a base for their ministerial offices. During that time, they began to conduct Saturday-night prayer meetings.

But for Phillip and Darlena—and for God—that wasn’t enough. They received another prophetic word from the Lord, impressing upon them that He had much larger plans for them and that, just as He had told Darlena years before, He wanted them to lay down their ministry as leadership coaches and prepare warriors instead.

“Going into a new year, Phillip and I always pray about a word from the Lord, what He would have us do for that year,” Darlena says. “And going into 2020, the word the Lord gave me was ‘warrior.’

“It was time for war, and we actually pulled from an old word that He had revealed to us several years ago that we would someday spend our lives training up warriors,” she says. “At the time, it was not a word that I had wanted to hear. I didn’t relate to it. He had just given us a reminder of what He had already told us we were going to do for him. When He reminded me, it began to make a lot more sense.

“When the Lord was telling a lot of other people that 2020 was going to be about dreams and visions coming to pass, my word for the year was ‘warrior,’ and I thought that kind of a downer,” Darlena says. “But I felt it so intensely that I had T-shirts made for all of my team members. Our Christmas picture was made in T-shirts that said, ‘warrior.’ When we got

into the midst of 2020, I began to see why the word for that year was warrior. We went into warrior mode and started training warriors. So we said yes to it.”

And in saying yes, the couple went right to work to obey the word the Lord had given. They planted a new church, Courageous Community Church. They also started a school called . (Warriors Awakened for Revolution) Academy. Its purpose, the Fieldses say, is to train a new breed of believers to live bravely in an ungodly culture intent on stirring up fear and chaos.

On top of that, the Fieldses relaunched their book, The UnPerfect Marriage, and created the UnPerfectPodcast, launched in early 2021 on the Charisma Podcast Network.

“The Lord just kept impressing upon us to take this bigger,” Darlena says. “In those prayer meetings, the Lord gave us the word that it’s time for a brave new breed of believer. He said, ‘It’s time for a brave new church, brave new pastors,’ and so we said yes to starting a new church. We felt like the challenge was to show the world what this new model would look like.”

When they work with this brave new breed of believers, the Fieldses want to impart three crucial ideals to help make their ministries impactful and powerful.

“One is an unshakable identity, two is covenant-centered relationships, and three is a God-given purpose,” Phillip says. “We see that as the foundation of leadership. So the tools we use to help them get there are vital. That’s really what we’re trying to do, to raise people up in this hour accordingly.”

“In our prayer time, I felt like the Lord challenged us to assist Him in helping to make the church great again,” Darlena says. “The way we’re going to make America great again is by starting at the foundation. The church has to rise before

America can rise. And before the church can rise, we have to also heal the family and get the family unit and the family to rise. That's what we're going after.

"That is a huge pursuit, to help make the church great again," she adds. "But I believe there's so much power behind saying yes to God, no matter how small the request. And so that's why we said yes to God and started this church. Our motto for our church is building family while we're building an army.

"And that really is our ultimate goal," she says. "In all of this and helping people learn to live brave and courageous, it is to assist God and help Him make His church great again so that America can be great again." {eo}

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