

I Found God In My Children's Eyes

I did not find God in the war. I did not find Him on Wall Street. I found Him in my children's eyes.

There was a time in my life when I thought strength meant endurance—pushing through pain, never flinching. I carried that belief through combat in Iraq in 2003 and onto the trading floors of Lehman Brothers in 2008. But when my life unraveled—when my marriage fell apart, my career lost meaning and I was left in solitude—it wasn't brute strength that saved me. It was love. It was grace. And a journey through my past, along with a long walk downriver. And the beacon that got me home came in the form of three little souls who still called me "Dad."

We live in a world that celebrates independence, ambition and personal achievement. But those things, as I learned the hard way, can leave you empty if not rooted in something greater. My own journey downriver was marked by trauma, pride and a slow collapse under the weight of unprocessed pain. I didn't know how to ask for help. I didn't know I needed to heal. And for a time, I drifted from God—ashamed, angry and convinced that if I couldn't hold my life together, I didn't deserve to be seen.

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

God saw me anyway. And He used my children to reach me.

There's something sacred seeing your children begin to discover their own purpose—watching them wrestle with adversity, hope and faith. It forces you to confront your own reflection. When I saw my sons and daughter step forward in courage—one choosing to serve at West Point, the others

walking their own paths with integrity—I didn't just feel pride. I felt conviction. Their faith wasn't inherited; it was chosen. And in their choice, I saw what I had lost—and what I could still reclaim.



To order Jonathan Cahn's new book, The Avatar, visit .

The healing didn't come all at once. It never does. But it came in small moments—side conversations, shared prayers, quiet forgiveness. It came in recognizing that while I had failed in some ways, I had not forfeited the grace to begin again. That's the power of fatherhood. It humbles you. It sanctifies you. And if you let it, it brings you back to the cross.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

We often think revival starts in churches or movements. But sometimes it starts around the dinner table, or on a car ride to practice, or in the patient way a child asks, "Dad, are you OK?" Or, through their loving embrace. And in my case, the pandemic afforded a window of opportunity for me to reconcile with my family.

America is in need of renewal and reconciliation. I think it starts in the home. In the hearts of fathers willing to lead not with bravado but with humility and patience. In families where prayer is more than a ritual—it's a lifeline. In broken men like me who finally learn that strength isn't about what you carry. It's about Who carries you and from which you draw strength.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

I had to go downriver to find that truth. But I thank God my

children were the ones waiting on the shore as a beacon to bring me home.

“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers,” (Malachi 4:6).

Ryan McDermott *is an Iraq War veteran, recipient of the Bronze Star medal and author of the award-winning and critically-acclaimed book, Downriver: Memoir of a Warrior Poet. His views do not reflect those of his employer or any affiliated organization.*