

Walking with Obedience

Pat Robertson made a simple decision to obey God more than six decades ago. As a result, hundreds of millions of people have been saved from sin and entered a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Robertson says he still remembers what the Lord told him years ago: “I am sending my Spirit all over the world. I want you to go out to the world. Don’t try to teach people theology—just tell them about Jesus. Tell them about the cross. Tell them about the resurrection. And if you do that, they’ll come to the Lord.”

Robertson founded the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) in 1961 and has seen the staggering fruit ever since. CBN now reaches 159 countries and territories in 70 languages, with an audience of hundreds of millions. Robertson says well over 100 million people receive salvation every year as a result of CBN’s multimedia efforts.

“It’s not reported in the news, but this is one of the great revivals in the history of mankind,” Robertson says.

He says this is just one of many miracles he has encountered over years of following the Lord. Robertson has been one of the most visible charismatic leaders over the last few decades, between hosting The 700 Club; founding Regent University, Operation Blessing and the American Center for Law and Justice; and running for president of the United States in 1988. Through all these experiences, Robertson says he has learned a number of key lessons, which he felt compelled to document for future generations in his new book, *I Have Walked With the Living God* (Charisma House).

“I’ve walked with the living God,” Robertson says. “I have [seen] miracle after miracle. I have been in difficult situations, and God has sent an answer. He has led me and

guided me. I have started a number of significant enterprises—some of the most important in the nation, as a matter of fact—and it's been the Holy Spirit of God that has led me all the way.”

In looking back on more than six decades of faithful ministry, Robertson shared with Charisma some of the greatest miracles he witnessed and lessons he learned, the many ways culture has changed throughout his lifetime and—when he's eventually gone to be with the Lord—what he hopes people will best remember about him.

Eyewitness to Miracles

Robertson says he was first inspired to write the book during dinner with two friends.

“I began to relate [to them] some of the wonderful miracles that God has done over the years at CBN,” he says. “There's so many remarkable things. My guest said, ‘Well, you ought to write a book about it,’ and I thought, Maybe I should. I found we have a timeline of things that had happened in my life, and I used that as a framework. Next thing you know, the Holy Spirit began to flow in my life, and it became a book to share all the miracles of starting CBN, starting Regent University, starting the American Center for Law and Justice and Operation Blessing, and all the things God has done over the years. So that was the origin of it.”

He hopes the book will be a reminder to believers everywhere that God is still a God of miracles—and they should act, live and pray accordingly.

“I would just encourage people to realize that the God of the Bible is real—and He does not disappoint people,” Robertson says. “He has never disappointed me. He does answer prayer.”

One example Robertson readily shares is the founding of CBN. The network—then airing on WYAH-TV—was founded Jan. 11, 1960,

and went on the air in Portsmouth, Virginia, in October 1961. Robertson remembers first arriving in Virginia with only \$70 in his pocket and no knowledge of television work. In fact, all he came with was the strong inclination that God had told him to buy a television station. After what Robertson calls "several extraordinary occurrences," he found an owner willing to sell him a station, worked out a deal with RCA and says God even told him the exact amount to offer to buy the station.

Robertson says many people told him throughout this process to give up and admit defeat, but he would not let go of the dream God had given him.

"I'm a hardened optimist," he says. "You know, the cup is either half full or half empty, and my cup is half full. I believe in looking at the positive, and I see God doing great things. ... I was told constantly that I couldn't do things or that this is impossible: 'You can't do it.' 'Nobody can do that.' 'You can't get a license.' 'You don't have enough money.' 'It's impossible.' Yet every time, the Lord said, 'OK. Trust Me and I'll do the impossible.' ... God is a God of miracles, and there's nothing impossible with Him."

Though Robertson says CBN was not the first television station to offer Christian programs, he notes that CBN was groundbreaking as the first station licensed by the FCC to broadcast 50% or more religious programs. For this reason, he played a massive part in creating the Christian media industry, which he says "didn't exist at all" when CBN got started.

"I was able to pioneer all kinds of things in Christian television," Robertson says. "Not only did we get a number of licenses, but I assisted people in various cities. I helped Rex Humbard in Cleveland, Ohio. I helped some friends in Pittsburgh. I helped other people get licenses and start stations as well."

Robertson says the experience taught him to always trust God with his life, even when the road ahead seems uncertain. He says God can always be relied on to love and direct those who will obey Him.

“Don’t be afraid to take on big things,” he says. “God is a God of big things. He says, ‘Open your mouth wide, and I’ll fill it.’ So don’t be afraid of taking on tasks that seem impossible, because God is the God of the impossible.”

Lessons From Failure

But though Robertson loves to boast about God’s miracles and blessings, he says the experiences that have taught him the most were his failures. He admits that he has made plenty of gaffes and mistakes over his years in the public eye.

“I’ve tried to be painfully honest in this book ...,” Robertson says. “This is my life—warts and all—and I think [it coexists with] triumph and breakthrough at the same time. I want to be honest. And I think that the readers understand that this is a book that honors God, and I hope it doesn’t honor me.”

With years of hindsight, Robertson says he can see how God has used even the failures to bring about blessings for the larger body of Christ.

“I’ve made some really bad decisions,” he says. “When I look back on them, I realize that, if I had succeeded, I wouldn’t be in a position to lead a university. I wouldn’t be in a position to write books. My income would be so substantial that I wouldn’t have to worry about things like this. So I think God deliberately wanted Me to be kept depending on Him on a day-to-day basis, instead of depending on the income from my portfolio.”

He says he hopes that because he hasn’t hidden his mistakes, other believers can look at his life and learn from his errors. After all, he says, that’s how he learned—by learning

from the examples of both Christian mentors and biblical characters.

"I have learned more from the mistakes of other people and the mistakes of people in the biblical world than I learned out of their good points," Robertson says. "You see, 'Oh, he made a mistake here. Let's not copy that.' I'm reading a number of biographies, and I think to see the mistakes people make is more instructive to me than looking at all their good points. So if people look at my mistakes—and there are plenty of them—they can say, 'God blessed him despite all of his failings.'"

He points to the life of David as a perfect example of this.

"David was a man after God's own heart," Robertson says. "He lived with the Lord, and yet he got his eye off of God. They say, 'Idle hands are the devil's workshop,' and he was idle, and he let his eyes wander and, the next thing you know, he wound up in an adulterous affair, killing an important soldier of his and paying the price for it.

"At the same time, God brought him back, and he wrote in the Psalms: 'Against Thee only have I sinned.' He says in the Psalms: 'Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.'"

Robertson says he has also learned a lot from David's predecessor, Saul.

"Look at Saul in the Bible, who became so proud," Robertson says. "And when he did, he lost God. ... You know, if pride is the greatest sin, then humility is the greatest virtue. It's greater than love. I think the Lord wants to keep us humble. If I don't submit to humility, God will make sure He gets somebody around me who will keep me humble. ... I have to stay humble before God and realize everything I do is His. All the good things are His. I have one principle: All the good things, I give Him credit for; all the bad things, I take the

blame for. If you do that, you've got it made."

A Nation Divided

The last time Pat Robertson appeared on the cover of Charisma magazine, it was May 1986, and he was about to announce his intent to compete in the Republican primary for the 1988 U.S. presidential election. Though Robertson ultimately lost to eventual President George H.W. Bush, he made an impact on the race, with his long-shot campaign winning four states and a close second-place finish in the Iowa caucuses. He also spoke at the 1988 Republican National Convention that year.

Robertson says the political landscape has changed dramatically in the 32 years since his candidacy.

"When I ran for president, it was following Ronald Reagan, who had 'Morning in America,'" he says. "There was a lot of hope with Reagan. He put in major tax cuts, and there was a comity between the Democrats and the Republicans. Things have changed so much over these last years. It's just extraordinary. The rancor that's now in Washington is so intense. There's such a bitterness between the parties. [No one] is still trying to say, 'We're all Americans. We all want to make this country better.' The whole thought is, How can I get an advantage over the other party and get my guys elected? It's the politics of self-destruction."

He believes if both parties continue along this path, America is in trouble.

"We're torn apart in ways I have never seen in my life," Robertson says. "There's such hatred now between one group and another, and there's this identity politics that's going on: the black pride and the alt-right, the white people and the black people fighting each other. ... I think the Bible makes it very clear: A house divided cannot stand. A kingdom divided cannot stand. And if we continue what we're doing, this country ultimately is going to be torn apart, and we'll all

pray there isn't some enemy lurking that we haven't identified yet."

Robertson says the answer to our natural division probably cannot be achieved by natural means. Instead, he believes it will take a supernatural revival to reform America.

"I think what we need more than anything is a powerful revival," he says. "I have had on my program revival prayer—people have fasted and prayed for revival. I did a program called It's Time to Pray, America. I was involved with John Jimenez as one of the program directors for something called Washington for Jesus, where we had a huge crowd on the National Mall that was up there doing nothing but praying. We were praying and crying out to God all day long for this nation. I think that only God is going to be able to send what is needed."

He continues: "This country started out as a Christian nation. We identify as Christians. The Bible was our rule. So many people ... have tried to take that away from us. We've had multiple Supreme Court decisions that have weakened our moral fiber, and the nation is suffering because of it."

A Humble Legacy

Robertson doesn't believe he has all the answers to our current cultural moment, but he is thankful that he continues to learn more every day. Turning 90 in March, he is already hard at work on his next book, which will be about the Holy Spirit, and says God is teaching him new things every day.

While working on this book, Robertson says, "I have had my prayer life quicken in ways I never dreamed possible. I asked the Lord if He would show me more about Himself. I want to find out more about God. That's what I'm praying. I pray first of all, Make me part of Your plan. And the second is, Show me Yourself. Teach me about You. I want to know about You, God, and that's what my prayer life is.

"I'm crying out to God, and the nice thing is, He's answering. I'm beginning to see things I never saw in my life. I've studied the Bible for years. I've taught the Bible. But I'm receiving revelation from the Holy Spirit that's beyond anything I've ever experienced. The Bible says, 'They will still be bearing fruit in old age.' As I creep up on 90, I find that there's some fruit still coming forward, and I'm very glad to see it."

Over the decades, Robertson has seen many other evangelists and ministries fall due to sin and scandal. He says he believes he has avoided similar ruin by remaining close to God at all times and never failing to spend time alone with Him. Every morning, Robertson spends time praying, reading the Bible and listening to hear God's will for his life. He remarks that he "couldn't stand" ever to go a full week or two without dedicated prayer—but it's an easy temptation to fall for, especially with a busy schedule.

"The Bible says your enemy, the devil, roams the world like a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour," Robertson says. "We have an enemy, and the enemy is trying to destroy us. I think [the key is] staying humble before the Lord. You're not particularly vulnerable if you're on your face before God. You only get vulnerable when you stand up and think you're somebody special. That's the thing that I always remind myself: I'm just God's servant. By the grace of God, it's His doing and not mine. ... It's when we begin to look at ourselves—'I have to hold on to my ministry, my kingdom, all of my things'—that we get in trouble."

Robertson says he has thought about slowing down or retiring plenty of times in the past, even as early as before his first presidential campaign. But he says God keeps putting new missions and opportunities ahead of him.

"When I was 50, I figured I'd climbed up the mountain and, from then on, it was all downhill," Robertson says. "But then

between 50 and 60, I ran for president, so that kept me going pretty hard. Then when I got to 80, I decided it was time to retire and get off television and resign from the university. The next thing you know, ... I had an explosion of spiritual life when I was 80 years old, and it's like somebody strapped jet rockets to my back, and I took off with a huge amount of energy. I've done all kinds of things since that."

When asked whether he has any plans to slow down, Robertson laughs: "Not any time soon, people!"

He continues: "I don't know about retiring. In the Bible, they didn't retire. The Lord took them up in a whirlwind or else they slept with their ancestors, but I don't see anybody retiring. So I don't quite know what retirement is, but it doesn't look like it's in the works for me for the next 10 years. That ain't happening."

One day, though, Robertson knows he'll be with his Creator—whether that means dying naturally or being supernaturally taken away. When he does, he says he hopes people will not remember him so well as what God accomplished through him.

"I hope they'll remember that I tried to show forth God's power to my generation," Robertson says. "CBN has led many, many people to the Lord. So all around the world, there'll be churches building up on account of the people who found the Lord [through CBN]. At Regent University, I'm training leaders to teach others. Right now, our university has graduated about 10 or 11 college presidents, teachers in all kinds of schools and executives in various places. Our law school is very distinguished, and so I'm leaving a legacy of educational excellence. But more than anything, I hope that maybe this book, *I Have Walked with the Living God*, will be a testimony to people that God is real, and they can trust Him."

In the end, Robertson says he wants his legacy to be simple:

“That there was a man who didn’t have a whole lot, and God picked him up and let him do extraordinary things because of His power.”

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: If you liked this story, you can read more about Pat Robertson and CBN at .

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