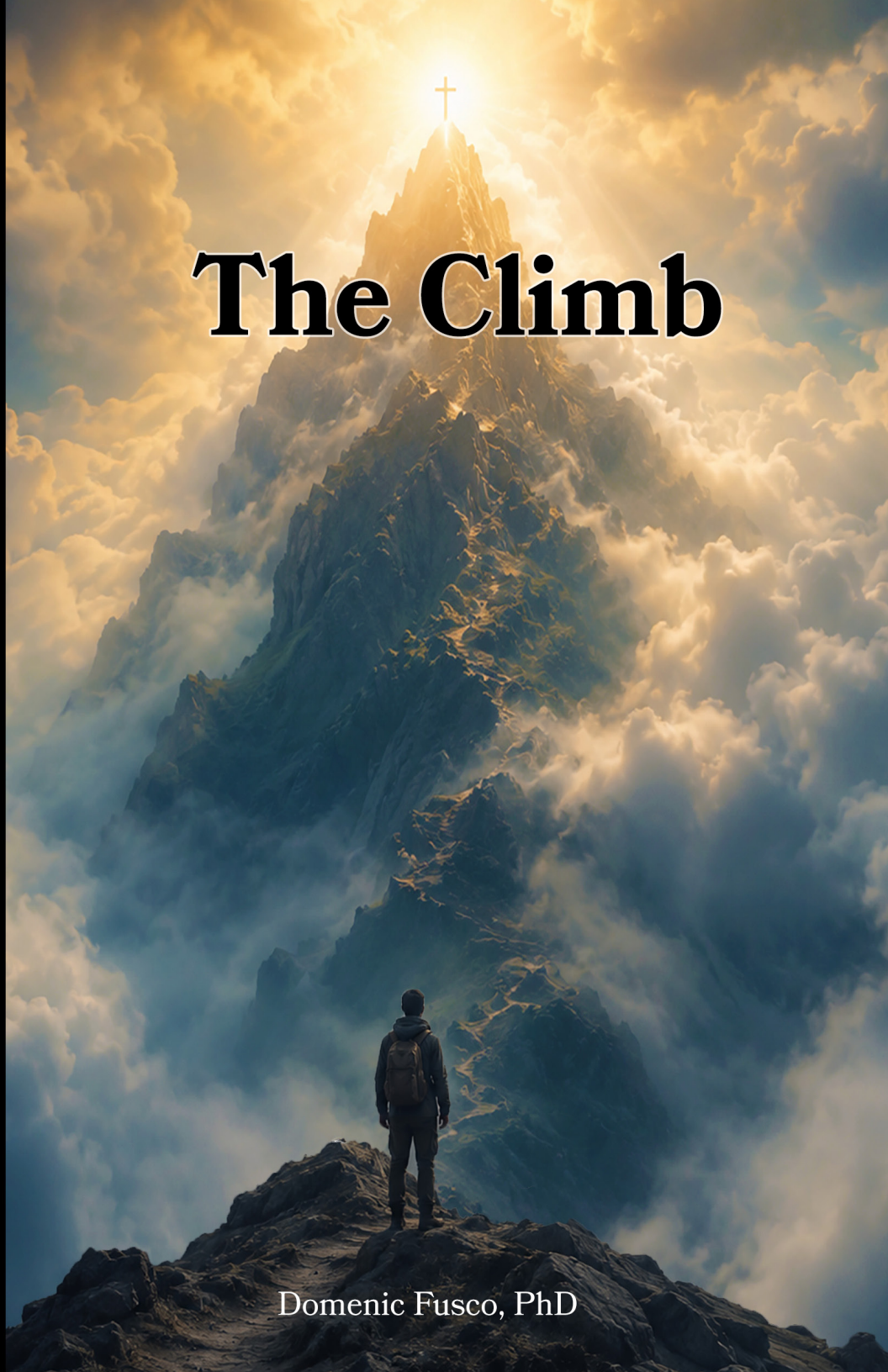




The Climb

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THE CLIMB

Every great achievement begins with a single step.
A forever decision.

No one has ever stood on a mountain peak without first walking through valleys, crossing rivers, climbing steep cliffs, enduring storms, and refusing to quit. The same is true in God's Kingdom.

When God calls a man or woman, He never promises an easy road. He promises His presence.

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Hebrews 13:5

Throughout Scripture, significant encounters with God often happen on mountains: I believe mountains represent the journey of faith we take as believers.

For example:

- **On Mount Ararat**, the Ark finally came to rest after judgment. For Noah a new life began.
- **On Mount Moriah**, Abraham demonstrated his true faith in God.
- **On Mount Sinai**, Moses received God's Law.
- **On Mount Carmel**, Elijah witnessed God's power over Baal.
- **On Mount Hermon**, the disciples experienced Christ's transfiguration and Who He really is.

The mountain God has called you to climb is your assignment; your purpose, your ministry, your mission. When you first begin the climb, your excitement is high. The summit is visible in the distance, and your heart is full of faith. Then reality arrives.

- The trail becomes steep.
- The rocks become loose.
- The climb becomes exhausting.

That is where many people turn back.

As you climb, there will always be voices, even close friends, even family. Some will say,

- "You're wasting your life."
- "You're wasting time"
- "You're giving up your wealth."
- "Be realistic. You're crazy"
- "Besides, you will never make it to the top."

Even Jesus experienced discouragement.

- His own brothers did not believe Him John 7:5
- His hometown rejected Him Mark 6:4
- The religious leaders opposed Him.
- The crowds abandoned Him.

Yet, He heard His father's voice and kept on climbing.

- **Noah** preached for decades while the world mocked him.
- **Abraham** waited twenty-five years for God's promise.
- **Joseph** spent years as a slave and a prisoner before becoming a ruler.
- **Moses** wandered for forty years before leading Israel to the Promise Land. He never entered.
- **David** was anointed king but lived as a fugitive.
- **Nehemiah** rebuilt Jerusalem while enemies ridiculed and threatened him.
- **Paul** was beaten, imprisoned, shipwrecked, and abandoned.

Not one of them reached the summit without hardship. Why should we expect our climb to be easier? Remember Isaiah's promise:

*Yet those who wait for the Lord
Will gain new strength;
They will mount up with wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary.*

Isaiah 40:31

Some climbers never reach the top because they carry too much weight.

- Some carry fear.
- Some carry bitterness.
- Some carry unforgiveness.
- Others carry the opinions of people.
- Others stop climbing because the world's riches begin to sparkle in the valley below, and they look back as Lot's wife did.

Jesus warned us:

The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches... choke the word."

Matthew 13:22

The Word that is life to us, health to our whole body.

Proverbs 4:24

Others lose precious years walking with companions who have no desire to reach God's summit. Scripture wisely says,

Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good character.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Every mountain climber eventually learns a simple truth: The higher you climb... the lighter you must travel.

Then one day, something changes.

Then You Finally Get Above the Tree Line

- There are no trees, no grass, seemingly no life.
- The distractions disappear.
- The noise and clutter fade.
- The crowd and even close friends and family are gone. Only those willing to pay the price are still climbing.
- The air is thinner.
- Every step requires greater strength.
- But your eyes begin to see farther than ever before.

You realize something wonderful.

The struggles that once seemed enormous now look very small. The mountain that once troubled and even terrified you is now beneath your feet. The things that once consumed your thoughts no longer control your heart.

You have been changed.

Not merely by reaching the summit, but by the climb itself.

For God was never building a ministry.

He was building you. You've developed great strength. Now...

“Knowing this, that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:3–4

Finally, You Reach the Summit

You've arrived. The climb is over.

- The years of sacrifice suddenly make sense.
- The disappointments become testimonies.
- The tears become treasures.
- The valleys become memories.

You look across God's breathtaking landscape and realize He was faithful every step of the journey.

You have a view most never experience.

Far below are the worries that once seemed so overwhelming. Above you... is only heaven.

Consider the challenges of the Old Testament heroes.

God didn't give...

- David a crown, but Goliath.
- Joseph was given a position of honor, but prison
- Ester, was not provided comfort but a crisis
- Moses, not a crown, but the wilderness

God's not breaking you, He's building you!

It's not what many expect or want, but what you need to fulfill your calling. There are Struggles!

But when you get to the summit, at that moment, success is no longer measured by applause... or money... or popularity... or position.

Success is hearing one sentence from the King.

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

Matthew 25:21

The Apostle Paul reached his summit near the end of his life and declared with complete confidence, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness...

2 Timothy 4:7–8

That is the goal. Not simply to start the climb. Not merely to survive the climb. But to finish the climb. Faithful, Obedient, and Unashamed.

One day, every believer will stand before Christ.

- No one will ask how famous we became.
- No one will ask how wealthy we became.

The only question that will matter is this:
Were you faithful to the assignment...
the mountain God called you to climb?

The Appeal

The summit, the eternal goal, the decision you have made, in these last days, is closer than you think. The ultimate view you will experience will be worth every sacrifice.

And when the race is over, you will discover that every painful step upward was preparing you for eternal glory. As Paul wrote,

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory

2 Corinthians 4:17) NKJV

Every foot of elevation costs you something. And when you finally reach the summit, you discover that God was never waiting only at the top, He had been walking beside you on every step of the climb.”

- So keep climbing, when others quit...
- Keep climbing. When friends misunderstand...
- Keep climbing. When the world distracts you...
- Keep climbing. When your strength is almost gone.

Keep climbing!

Lift up your eyes. Take the next step.

Keep climbing.

The King is waiting at the top.

My Prayer.

Heavenly Father. We thank you for the Climb. When all seemed lost at times, through the troubled days and lonely nights with seemingly nothing before us, and nothing past to ease the pain, your presence was there to encourage us forward. It has made us stronger spiritually, your encouragement motivates us daily to keep climbing, and giving us greater conviction to finish when all who we met along the climb said quit. We know you are waiting. Your promises are true! Crowns await. Eternal bliss will be at hand. Salvation forever!

As you told us when you broke bread and shared wine, "This ... my body was broken for you, This, my blood was shed for you; for forgiveness, for eternal life. Every koinonia meal, we give thanks and remember and envision your climb for us. Every meal we give thanks in remembrance of you helping us persevere, helping us become more disciplined, more committed, with eternity in sight. So, we keep moving forward, looking up, and keep climbing. You will never leave us. You are with us even to the end.

Praise and Glory be to you Father, and to Jesus, and our helper, the Holy Spirit, Amen

One Unexpected Story Changed My Life Forever

While watching a television interview, I listened to a man describe how he and two friends attempted to cross the Sahara Desert on motorcycles. They faced certain death three separate times. With every hope exhausted, they cried out to the God their grandmother had taught them about, Jesus. Each time, the impossible happened. A spring of fresh water appeared where local guides insisted none had ever existed. A caravan arrived by a route they had not traveled in more than forty years. Their lives were spared again and again by what they believed was the hand of God. I believed them. That evening, I prayed a simple prayer with them. I had no idea how completely that prayer would transform my life or what I was getting into. It was September 1975. I was thirty years old.

Within months, I committed my life to Christ, found a Bible-believing church, and publicly surrendered to Him at a Jesus Festival. Soon afterward, my wife, Charlie, and I were walking the ancient streets of Jerusalem (1976). There we discovered the Pearl of Great Price, and our hearts were forever changed. We stepped into ministry, never imagining the mountains that lay ahead—the victories, the disappointments, the opposition, the miracles, the valleys, and the breathtaking views from heights only faith can reach. That was the beginning of my climb.

This message is more than my story. It is an invitation to discover that every mountain God calls us to climb has a purpose, every obstacle has a lesson, and every step of faith brings us closer to the One who has been climbing beside us all along.

**The climb will test you.
The climb will change you.
The climb will be worth it.**



Domenic Fusco
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