

The book cover features a vibrant yellow grid pattern. Overlaid on this are several thick, black, expressive scribbles that create a sense of movement and energy. Two solid black rectangular boxes are positioned in the center, containing the title and author information.

RESTLESS

BECAUSE YOU WERE
MADE FOR MORE

JENNIE ALLEN

Author of Anything and the Bible Studies Stuck and Chase

YOU ARE NOT ALONE . . .

Live a small life? I cannot. And neither should you! The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead lives in each one of us. God has given us that life-changing power so that we are able to do the very thing He has placed us on the earth to do.

Then why do we feel a sense of restlessness? I believe it is because deep down we know we were made for more than where we are and what we are doing right now. There is something to be birthed through us. Whatever our history has been we know we are somehow a part of destiny and we want to play our part in realizing that.

God gave us more than our own gifts, talents, and abilities. He gave us more than inspirational quotes and motivational pep rallies. He gave us His very self in the person of the Holy Spirit so that we would never be limited to achieve only what is possible on our best day.

Jennie, thank you for bringing us to this because it is to our Father's Glory that we bear much good fruit during our brief sojourn on this earth. And dear reader, I pray that you dream big, believe big, and dare big during your one and only life on this planet. Impossible is where God starts and miracles are what God does. Go on, I dare you to let God be God in you so he can be God through you!

CHRISTINE CAINE
AUTHOR OF *UNDAUNTED*

They say the world is made up of individual atoms. But the truth of it is that the world is made of individual stories. In the beginning was the Word—not atoms—and that very Word exhaled and breathed you into being and every story connects to another story that is changing the story of time—His Story.

Now is *your* story, and you and your story matter beyond time.

Now is your space on stage. Now is your time and now you are here for such a time as this. You will not pass by this way again. There is only one now. Eternity is worth the risk. Now is not the time to be demure with the gifts you've been given. Share them lavishly. Now is the time to let your life be poured out as ink in an epic story of bold sacrifice and startling courage. Now is the time to live upside down. Herein is rest for our restless souls.

There is a darkness that tries to spread the disease of “be big.” Christ whispers the cure to the ego’s disease: Decrease so I can increase. There is a lie that tries to convince that giving yourself for the world is what really matters. Christ is the Truth who whispers that giving yourself for one person is how you really change the world.

ANN VOSKAMP

AUTHOR OF *ONE THOUSAND GIFTS*

I keep hearing this common tension among women. It’s funny because we are a generation that is so advantaged. We have more than our parents have—most of us have more schooling, bigger houses—we have every privilege, luxury even, and advantage. We’ve been given so much, and we are so blessed, and yet I keep hearing over and over, “I’m restless. I don’t know what it is, I don’t know what more I could possibly want, what am I missing? How could I still feel at all dissatisfied with this happy beautiful life that I’ve been given?”

I love it because I know that God is calling us deeper and deeper into the kingdom where things like houses and salaries and success simply cannot satisfy. He has set this longing in our hearts for more of Him, more of the gospel, more of His goodness, more of the kingdom, and so we find ourselves at this interesting crossroads as people of privilege who have been given much. But like Jesus told us, to whom much has been given, much will be required.

The life that God has set in front of us is exciting, and adventurous, and risky. Sometimes it’s even dangerous. And it’s going to ask everything of us, because apparently it doesn’t care much for our comfort or our happiness or our safety, and yet it is the kingdom that satisfies. It is the gospel that makes us whole and gives us purpose.

My deepest hope for these years we have on this planet is that collectively we reach across and grab each other’s hands and chase after God together. Where we’re willing to risk anything for it, or sacrifice anything for it. I think that is the secret to this life. That’s the secret to this kingdom Jesus was always trying to explain to us in the gospel. I believe it is worth it, and it is precious. So if you feel restless you are not alone. Let’s join hands and chase after God together.

JEN HATMAKER

AUTHOR OF *SEVEN*

R E S T L E S S

RESTLESS

BECAUSE YOU WERE
MADE FOR MORE

JENNIE ALLEN



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“YOU HAVE MADE US FOR YOURSELF, O LORD, AND
OUR HEART IS RESTLESS UNTIL IT RESTS IN YOU.”

—SAINT AUGUSTINE

GOD, YOU ARE HOME TO ME.
TAKE THESE WORDS AND LIGHT FIRES
THAT CANNOT BE PUT OUT—
FOR YOUR FAME ON THIS EARTH IN OUR TIME.

CONTENTS

PART 1: THE CALL

1. A Call to Dream	3
2. Tangled Threads	9
3. Die to Live	16
4. Permission to Dream	25
5. Uncertainties	32
6. Pleasing God	44
7. A Parable	54

PART 2: THE THREADS

8. The Process	63
9. The Project	72
10. The Immovable Fabric	80
11. The Starting Place	90
12. Threads of Gifts	98
13. Threads of Suffering	108
14. Threads of Places	120
15. Threads of People	130
16. Threads of Passions	142
17. The Tailor	150
18. Your Threads	160

PART 3: LIVING ON PURPOSE

19. Untangling a Dream	167
20. Shrinking Back	177
21. When Women Dream	186
22. Focused and Steady	199
23. The End of Mundane	204
<i>How to Find God</i>	209
<i>Leaving Behind & Moving Forward</i>	211
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	213
<i>Notes</i>	217
<i>About the Author</i>	221

PART 1

THE CALL

CHAPTER 1

A CALL TO DREAM

As I stared at the ceiling, I saw the scrape marks. Right after we had moved into our first house, Zac, my husband, scraped off the popcorn-textured ceiling. You'd think that would be something you'd never really notice—the ceiling—but it was something I stared at every afternoon. I stared as my newborn son slept. I had nowhere to be. Nothing to do.

I would lie on my beige sofa and stare at the marks that had been left in, trying to make something perfect of it. And in the quiet, surrounded by everything I thought I'd ever wanted, I felt that everything I'd ever wanted was strangling me.

I loved my family, but in the process of making a family I had somehow lost myself. Passions were pushed aside, dreams had trickled away, and the needs of other people outside my family had escaped me. My entire former life had been shut down for the immediate demands of one little person. I wondered if it was wrong

to care about anything or anyone outside of these four walls. I wondered if I would feel permission to dream again.

I didn't need to find a career or even a calling. I had one. Motherhood. What I needed was a sense of purpose. I felt restless.

Was this feeling pushing me toward something bigger, or crippling me from loving the life I was given?

Maybe it was both.

Something in me still feels restless.

As we stare at the marks on the lives we have tried to make perfect, we ache a little.

The word *calling* has always seemed to tease me, like a mysterious secret containing the answer to my ridiculously restless spirit. We wonder if we are missing some mystical, great, noble purpose that was supposed to squeeze into the holes of our ordinary lives.

We feel numb.

We feel bored.

Let's assume that if we are breathing, then we have a purpose for being here. Every one of us with breath in our lungs still has something left to do.

I want to dream of what our purposes may be.

The conviction to write this book was born out of conversations with many of you. Since I wrote the first book, *Anything*, the most consistent thing I have been asked is some version of this question:

"I am in. I am all surrendered to God. But now what? I don't know what he wants me to do."

Every single one of us is designed to fit into a unique space with unique offerings. God's will for every one of us will look different. There is a framework within the commandments of Scripture, and within it we are free to create lives reflecting God and his passions here.

As I have wrestled with calling and purpose and dreaming this year, I have fallen deeply in love with the life of a man who surely

lived restlessly in Scripture. Joseph's story, told throughout Genesis 37–50, is the story of a life that at times felt wasted, and yet God was working in every moment that felt mundane and unfair and dark, moving all of the mess into his unique purpose and calling.

This is a book about God.

And this is a book about us and God. And this is a book about the moment we close our eyes and see God. This is a book about facing the God of the universe and answering to him about the life and resources he gives us while we are here.

And because I think we all want that moment to go well, this is a book about discovering ourselves and getting over ourselves all at the same time. This is a book about being brave enough to imagine a better world, and how we may be used to make it that way. This is a book about changing the world and changing diapers. This is a book about fears and suffering and joy and gifts. This is a book about all that lies in our control and how nothing is in our control. This is a book about vision and obedience.

I feel a weight.

An indescribable burden.

A holy, God-given passion burning in my soul for you, for us, for our time here. Because I know we will blink and be together with God forever and there is life to be lived here, in our generation, on this earth, with our breath.

So I humbly ask you, dream with me.

We will lay out the unique threads of our lives that feel random, potentially even tangling us up, but we will lay them out and dream about eternal purposes for seemingly mundane moments and consider that it is possible to waste our lives.

And then let's not.

I'm not good with catchy titles. I just name projects based on how I feel . . . so here it is—here is what I feel, and I have a hunch I am not the only one:

Restless . . . because you were made for more.

I believe this is from God, and I pray it will spark something in you . . . a vision, perhaps, of the unique reason God keeps issuing you breath.

*I want to dream of
what our purposes
may be.*

I am going to ask you to join me in what might be a very uncomfortable process: I want you to dare to believe that God has a vision for how you are to spend your life. Because finding and accomplishing this vision is quite possibly the greatest responsibility we have as a generation, second only to knowing and loving God.

I wish I could promise magical moments with angels scripting visions in the sky just for you. I wish I could promise that at the end of our time together, you would never feel empty, numb, or bored again. I can't. But if you go here with me—I think we will see God move.

We have a call to dream.

The Old Testament described a day in the future about which God said:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions. (Joel 2:28)

God promised a day would come when his people would be filled with his own Spirit. And when they were full of God, God himself would give his people dreams and visions.

Dreams and visions.

This day has happened. The Holy Spirit flooded the earth at Pentecost, and immediately after, Peter reminded them of the promise of that day:

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.” (Acts 2:16–17)

We live in the last days. We are filled with the Spirit of God, and we’re living on this earth for relatively few days to accomplish the will and work and wonders of God. Why do we do this? So that “everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (Joel 2:32).

Our creative God has an infinite number of creative plans to make himself known through us, his image bearers, so he sent his Spirit to give unique visions to unique people to reach the world in unique and beautiful ways.

The Spirit of God has dreams for you.

And he has given you an abundance of gifts, resources, people, and vision to accomplish *his* dreams for you. If you do not feel that way yet, you will.

What if?

What if the things you love to do collided with the plans God has laid out for you from before the foundations of the earth?

What if the random relationships and activities in your life all of a sudden had a focus and felt intentional and meaningful?

What if the things that have caused the most hurt in your life became the birthplaces of your deepest passions?

What if you could get past your fears and insecurities and spend the rest of your life running your guts out after his purposes for you?

The beige sofa upstairs is unthinkable dirty with the stains of over a decade of beautiful messy life; my quiet, sleeping baby turned

into four big kids; and my minutes are overflowing now, filled with it all. Life. But I still feel it sometimes . . . a whisper of more. Not more because what I am doing isn't important, but because I so rarely believe that it is.

May this be the place where your restless soul meets God, and where dirty, beige sofas become beautiful, and where no life or minute or breath ever feels small again.

CHAPTER 2

TANGLED THREADS

I was unusually empty and didn't have the patience to give a funny opening illustration to cut the tension. With scripted notes in my hand and fifty women staring at me, expecting a typical church retreat in the middle-of-nowhere Texas, I paused. And in the space of that silence, I saw the same look in their eyes that I knew was in mine.

What was I going to do—follow the script? I sat in a room full of women who were hurting, doubting, numb, tired, insecure; and their teacher was feeling all the same things. What was supposed to happen here?

I set down my notes.

I was struck with the idea that the lot of us may never be in the same room again this side of heaven, and, overwhelmed with the need I saw in front of me, I opened with these words:

I sat in a room full of women who were hurting, doubting, numb, tired, insecure; and their teacher was feeling all the same things.

“We have a little bit of time together—how about we just get after it? How about we really deal with our sin and hurt? How about we fight to find God here? And then let’s dream about how we display God while we are on earth for a few years.”

And I am almost certain everyone was looking at me, thinking, *No, seriously girl, where’s the funny story?*

But then something happened. God’s Spirit blew in and, with their eyes cutting across the room, hoping maybe it was safe enough, the women slowly let words fall out.

“I honestly don’t care about God.”

“I don’t think God cares about me.”

“I am afraid what people will think.”

“I want a comfortable life.”

“My spouse won’t be on board.”

“I think I will fail.”

“I have nothing to give God.”

“I don’t think my life even matters this much.”

Then, with all the mess of it pooling on the floor of our cabin, I looked around the room and saw a hint of something—a little sparkle, possible hope in their eyes.

Maybe this isn’t life, I thought. These thoughts can’t be from God.

The worries that had consumed each person moments before all of a sudden looked miserably ridiculous staring back at them. The realization needed no words to help form it. We were faced with a simple, striking image: strong, resourced, rescued people, full of God, going through life completely shut down by lies and fear.

Could it be possible there is more to life than this?

We were all certain that there was, and with all the chains on the floor, we could almost taste what we had been missing. We were about to remember what running with abandon felt like, what purpose felt like, what dreaming felt like, what freedom felt like.

Do you need to remember that there is more?

How to run freely?
What purpose feels like?
What freedom feels like?

Some of us have decorated our prison walls so beautifully that we have altogether forgotten we are sitting in a cell, wasting our lives. We don't know there are chains that, though they no longer bind us, still seem to tangle us up. We sit and listen to talks or read books about God, and we wonder why nothing changes when we so desperately want it to.

WHERE STORIES ARE BUILT

When I saw *Batman Begins* for the first time, I kept punching my husband's arm because I was coming out of my skin. I was so moved, so inspired. (*Batman Begins*, in Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy, is hands down one of the best films on planet Earth.) A young Bruce Wayne watches as his parents are shot and killed, and he spends the next decade of his life seeking revenge, wandering the world as a restless, unsatisfied, lost soul and committing crimes. Bruce is insanely wealthy, trained, and gifted, but he has nothing to live for—no focus, no drive other than pain.

I picture his life as a bunch of loose threads: his pain, his wealth, his potential, his training, his gifts, the fate of his city blowing around in the wind as he tries to escape his pain. These are threads he wishes he could cut—they have no semblance of order or purpose; they seem to be entangling him, certainly not empowering him.

I picture his life when I look into most people's eyes. They have a similar look to them—hungry, unsettled, slightly unsure. But you can see in others only what you have tasted yourself.

Somewhere in the chaos of Batman's search, the threads of his life begin to untangle and weave themselves into something new.

Something potentially epic. Bruce can't escape the great pain and need screaming all around him in his home city of Gotham, so despite his reluctance and suffering, the threads of his life somehow

Ironically, his purpose is woven together with the very threads that seemed to entangle him.

bind together and equip him to meet that great need. The need finds him. Ironically, his purpose is woven together with the very threads that seemed to entangle him.

Out of Bruce Wayne's deepest tragedy, fear, and pain—Batman is born.

Every one of us has a version of this same story in us. Some of you are thinking, *Yes, Jennie. I always think to myself, "Batman and I have so much in common."*

For the rest of you, here is where all of our stories converge:

You have threads of life blowing around, possibly even strangling you—threads that are meant to bind together and become your unique, God-given contribution to a world in great need. And not just for a world in need, but our souls were made to find their home in God with God's purposes for our life.

ACHING FOR PURPOSE

No unique purpose for your life will fill your soul. The only thing that will fulfill and settle your soul is God himself.

I am writing while neck-deep in the midst of what some may think is a great purpose. Zac and I are running hard toward God and doing our best to complete the works he is putting in our path for us to do for him. We are doing our best to raise our kids to love God and not be little punks. Zac is leading a church full of people who are hurting, and he spends most of his days looking people in the eyes and listening to their needs. I am writing and speaking the things God has given me to say. On some days, our threads seem to

be meshing into something useful. I have never felt more peace and more joy, and yet life has never been more difficult.

Like today, for instance, I fight a deep desire to shut down this work, crawl back into bed, and live like this isn't important. I still feel restless. I struggle to keep pace with God, and I still fight my sin.

That's how I *feel* today. Now let me tell you what I *know*.

Our God is real.

Our God is coming.

Our God has plans for us.

Our lives are short.

We must get after it.

Because heaven is coming fast.

And what we are about to do here *is urgent*.

It's more urgent than we could ever imagine. We get to play little parts in the epic story of a God who put this whole universe in motion with a word.

You have threads of life blowing around, possibly even strangling you—threads that are meant to bind together and become your unique, God-given contribution to a world in great need.

IF I FIND IN MYSELF A DESIRE WHICH NO EXPERIENCE
IN THIS WORLD CAN SATISFY, THE MOST PROBABLE
EXPLANATION IS THAT I WAS MADE FOR ANOTHER WORLD.

C. S. LEWIS

Figure out what it means to run after God. Throw off what is holding you back. Find and live your part in his story. *That* is what we are going to do here in this journey together. And if ten of us do the work, it will all be worth it. Our generation could mark this earth and stamp it with the brand of a God who we all decided was worth it.

We tend to think that if we can land on our perfect purpose for our lives, we will finally be satisfied. Hear me: we have complete

access to joy and purpose right now. Even with no grand vision from God, we have access to our Creator, and he is not hiding happiness from us. He gave it to us in the form of Christ. Everything we are going to talk about is just a response to our God. Our mattering doesn't depend on a stellar performance. We matter because we are children of the living, breathing, reigning God of the universe. We matter because we were bought with the blood of the Son of our Father God. He set us in our spots and in our time. He numbered our days and counts our hair. And we matter because he says we matter. This isn't a book about you suddenly finding a secret way to matter; it's about realizing you *already* matter, and therefore you can deeply desire to make your few days here count in light of all that is ahead for us as children of such a God.

I've wasted a lot of my life. I grew up with a sickening chase to win people's approval that I could not ever catch. And so I have given most of my life to the cause of being liked. God was never enough for me.

We have complete access to joy and purpose right now.

It's not a noble cause. It's embarrassing, and I am sorry, because you probably were deeply hoping you picked up the book of a saint. You picked up the book of a sinner—likely a sinner worse than you. But chances are you aren't noble either, and likely you have wasted your life on . . . something.

But what if we just stop? What if we wake up? We are building mansions on sand when an enormous, steadfast, unmovable rock sits right beside us. This is why I will not put down my work and crawl into bed today, and I will stay and speak these words to you. Because for years I ran after uncatchable wind and built homes on

sand, until I finally noticed that wind never stops escaping us and sand never stops shifting.

After a childhood observing a God I didn't need, at seventeen years old, I stood in front of three crosses at Kanakuk Kamp. I looked up at them and wondered at my own crimes, which had always seemed small until that moment. I looked at the crosses, and at the Jesus I had heard about all my life, and it occurred to me that I hung him there. I did it with my heart that loved people more than God—my heart that was black from building monuments to my reputation. I was haunted by pride and self, captivated with it all, bound by invisible chains heavier than the ones this world shames.

I saw my sin, and God saved my soul. And now all of us who love God are in it together, fighting to stay free and to free people around us, because there is a God who never escapes us and never shifts. Because people's eyes seem to contain similar hurt as mine did everywhere I go.

Is God real?

Do I matter?

Is there more than this?

Is this all worth it?

Yes. I swear it.