

A TIME FOR
CONFIDENCE

TRUSTING **GOD** IN A
POST-CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

STEPHEN J. NICHOLS

ENDORSEMENTS

“*A Time for Confidence* has all the hallmarks we have come to expect from its author: an enviable grasp of history, shrewdness in analyzing our culture, and a deep sense that God’s Word has lost nothing of its ancient power. Amid what may feel like the shifting of tectonic plates under Western society, and facing the danger of discouragement, we want Steve Nichols near at hand to point us to a safe place to stand. But he does more than that in these pages. Far from letting us lose heart, he shows us that the gospel gives us many more reasons for confidence than for despair. *A Time for Confidence* is both a tract and a tonic for our times.”

—SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON
Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries

“Christians are living in one of the most complex times in human history. Our culture is in the midst of a moral and intellectual revolution, the pace of which is unprecedented in human history. The moral reasoning that has stood as the foundation of Western civilization is being upended, and those who once stood out as voices of moral clarity are now ostracized as intellectual outlaws on the wrong side of history. But, as Stephen Nichols makes clear in this book, this is no time for panic. *A Time for Confidence* is a needed reminder that in the midst of the cultural revolution, Christians can be confident that our

sovereign God still reigns over human history. Indeed, Christians can also be confident that the church militant will one day be the church triumphant. If you find yourself wavering in the face of cultural opposition, let this book spur you on to greater faithfulness and confidence in the reigning and risen Christ.”

—R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.

President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Ky.

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.

—PSALM 27:3

A TIME FOR CONFIDENCE

One day in May 1995 changed the life of Henry Wanyoike forever. He was all of twenty-one years old, and like many of his fellow Kenyans, he dreamed of making his mark as a distance runner and becoming a national hero. He had a 5K time of 13:50. That is less than 10 seconds away from the 2012 Olympic gold medal time. Distance runners don't peak until their late twenties, thirties, or even forties. At twenty-one, Wanyoike appeared to be headed for a bright future as one of Kenya's running superstars. Then, that one day, he had a stroke and lost his sight.

Depressed and disillusioned, Wanyoike drifted for the next several years. He was a lost soul. He went to a school for the blind in Machokos, Kenya. An administrator at the school knew of his running past and saw his flailing present, so he suggested that Wanyoike take up running again. Within a few years, Wanyoike

had set world records at the Paralympics and at the World Championships in the 5K and 10K.

In 2005, he had phenomenal back-to-back marathon performances. Over 26.2 miles of the streets of London, he set a world record, finishing in 2:31:31. However, he didn't have much time to celebrate—or recover. Seven days later, he broke his own record at the Hamburg Marathon in Germany.

He has since held political office and has established a foundation for the disabled in Kenya. He has singlehandedly contributed to raising awareness of the disabled in his country and has helped many formerly marginalized people find places where they can contribute. He also continues to train, with the goal of breaking his own records leading him on. In a nation of superstar runners, Wanyoike has taken a prominent place among their ranks.

Runner's World magazine featured the life story of Henry Wanyoike, calling him a visionary. When he first started running again after his stroke, he stumbled and fell a lot—even with guides to help him. With his sight gone, he was afraid. But he learned that there is something far better than sight. Michelle Hamilton, referring to something Wanyoike had said, put it this way: “Vision, as [Wanyoike] likes to point out, is more powerful than sight.”¹

What we need today, more than sight, is vision. Seeing, in our day, easily leads to fear. In fact, this has been the case through most of the ages. One of the things that separated the prophets of Israel from the people of Israel was the difference between sight and vision. The people saw the temporal, and they could not get past what they were seeing. God granted the

prophets vision of the eternal, which towered above and overshadowed the temporal.

Where the people of Israel saw problems, Israel's prophets saw God and His promises. Where the people saw allurements and temptations, the prophets saw God's call to purity and God's call to covenant obedience. Where the people mistook the shadows for the eternal and abiding reality, the prophets saw beyond the shadows and saw straight into the truly real.

If we only see what appears before us, we may easily shrink back in fear, or, worse, drift away from our first love. We can be enticed away by appearances. The book of Proverbs offers vivid accounts of the destruction that comes in the wake of being fooled by alluring sights. Seeing can lead to our ruin. Instead, we need to cultivate our vision.

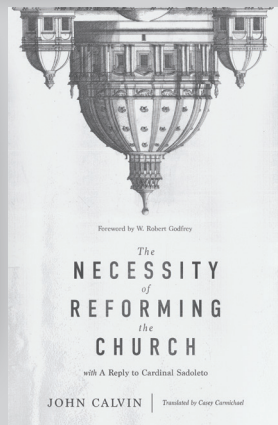
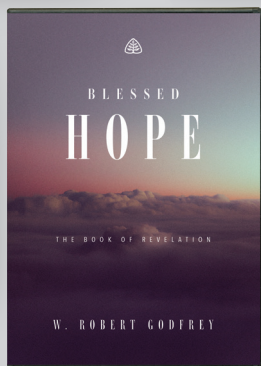
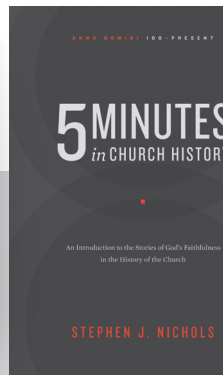
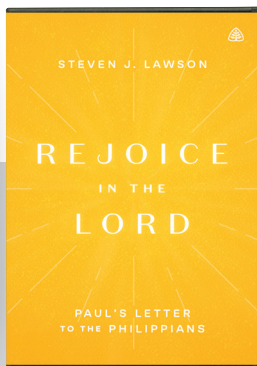
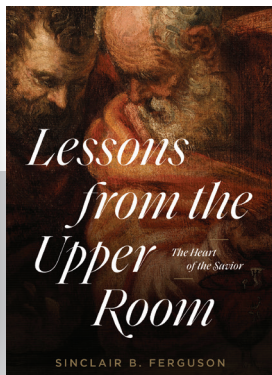
Vision led Wanyoike to make a difference for his fellow disabled Kenyans, and it led him to break world records. Vision leads to accomplishments. Sight often keeps us from even getting to the starting line. Wanyoike lost his sight, but he gained vision. Sight takes us off the path; vision keeps us pressing on toward the goal.

Today, we need vision. We need not be pulled down, distressed, or disillusioned by what we see. This is a time for confidence.

Cower, Capitulate, or Cave?

This is not a time to cower. There is plenty of temptation to do so, especially if we're too busy seeing and we lack vision.

We want to see men and women around the world connect the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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