

**Foreword by Bishop Timothy J. Clarke**

**First Church of God, Columbus, OH**

## **Living A Legacy**

# **Authentic Stories of Building A Lasting Impact**

***By Tim Brown***

**The Visionary Timeless Legacies**

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*Living A Legacy*

*Authentic Stories of Building A Lasting Impact*

By Tim Brown

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN

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# Foreword

*Foreword to Living A Legacy by Tim Brown*

***By Bishop Timothy Clarke  
First Church of God Columbus, OH***



In the book of Revelation, the risen Lord calls John into service and says to him, “What thou seest, write a book.” From the heart of God and the pen of John comes what, in the Canon, is the last book of the Bible, the book that speaks to things past, present, and future. In a very real way, the book that you hold in your hand is also the

result of a man of God by the name of Tim Brown writing in a book what he sees.

Vision is powerful, it is often personal, but it is never private; it has about it a communal mission and a universal reach. The prophet Habbakkuk says, “Write the vision and make it plain, so that they who read it may run”

Tim Brown, out of vision and burden, has given us a book that serves not only as a tool, but also as a road map. It is a book that is both informational and inspirational. Very often, a book contains the heart and mind of a person, but because of his spirit of cooperation and collaboration, Tim Brown has not made this book about him, but he has given us the privilege of listening to voices beyond his own, thus allowing us to experience a mosaic and tapestry of wisdom, experience, and knowledge.

As you read this book, you will sit at the feet of men and women who have lived life, faced foes, and persevered through pain. Their story is about destiny and purpose, and they remind us that we, too, can overcome what stands in our way and we, too, can walk in that which God has designed and determined for us to do.

Get ready to have your life changed, your focus clarified, and your vision expanded.

Blessings,  
Bishop Timothy J. Clarke  
First Church Of God  
Columbus, Ohio

## Introduction

*By Tim Brown*



In a world where legacy is often associated with grand gestures and monumental achievements, we want to redefine what it means to leave a lasting impact on those who come after us. At its core, a legacy is not just about leaving a mark on the world; it's also about living a life that

makes a meaningful difference in the lives of others. In "Living a Legacy: Authentic Stories of Building a Lasting Legacy," we invite you to join us on a journey to explore what it means to live with intention, purpose, and passion. Through the stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things from The Be a Baller Podcast, you'll discover that building a lasting legacy is not just about grand plans or big dreams; it's about being intentional with the gifts, talents, and resources God has given us.

As we explore these authentic stories of living a legacy, you'll be encouraged to reexamine your own priorities, values, and goals. You'll learn how to cultivate a mindset that seeks to honor God in all aspects of life, from relationships to work, and from leisure activities to spiritual practices.

This book is not just about building a legacy; it's also about living a life that brings joy, purpose, and fulfillment in the present moment. The wisdom gems shared by our podcast guests will empower you to ask the question, "What will be my legacy?" So whether you're looking for inspiration to make a bigger impact or simply seeking to live more intentionally, join us on this journey of building a lasting legacy that honors God and blesses others.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share these stories with you, and I thank God for giving me a purpose in life to engage, encourage, and empower others. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Carlin Armstead, whose thoughtful writing, editing, and careful attention to detail have helped transform this book into a journey that captures the vision, honors the heart of the message, and gives structure to the story.

I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family - Karmen, Timothy Jr., Karmell, and Nathaniel - for their unwavering support throughout this journey. And finally, thank

you to the Be a Baller Podcast guests from our first 5 seasons for sharing your wisdom with us. God is good.

# Section 1: Legacy in Ministry

Every generation is shaped by voices that choose faithfulness over fame, service over status, and impact over applause. The people you will meet in this chapter didn't set out to be famous. They set out to be faithful. Along the way, their faithfulness became their legacy. Their stories remind us that ministry is less about titles or positions, and more about showing up, again and again, with love, courage, and unwavering trust in God.

In this chapter, we step into the journeys of those who answered the call to ministry and remained steadfast through seasons of triumph and trial. Their lives remind us that legacy is not measured in moments of recognition, but in decades of faithful presence—in preaching the Word, shepherding communities, mentoring the next generation, and standing as witnesses of God's enduring grace.

As you read these stories, you will discover that legacy is not accidental—it is intentional. It is built one act of service, one word of encouragement, and one step of obedience at a time. These individuals teach us that true legacy is not about leaving something **for** people, but leaving something **in** people. This chapter is an invitation to reflect on the kind of legacy we are building in our own lives. May these testimonies of lifelong ministry inspire you to consider not just what you will accomplish, but how you will be

remembered—and more importantly, how God will be glorified through the life you live.

## Bishop Timothy J. Clarke

### Season 2 : Episode 5



*“There's a place where God makes room for you. Whether an entrepreneur or a preacher, you don't have to cut anybody down to get your room.”*

For over 40 years Bishop Timothy Joseph Clarke has been the visionary leader and Senior Pastor of First Church of God in Columbus, OH, where under his dynamic and prophetic leadership,

First Church has become a spiritual beacon at the local and national level. He is a faithful pastor, anointed teacher, author and an articulate and prolific preacher. Bishop Clarke's journey in ministry is a testament to faith, dedication, and the transformative power of leadership. After four decades of service, he has left an indelible mark in Columbus, Ohio, and beyond, impacting lives through his commitment to education, mentorship, and spiritual guidance. Bishop Clarke was interviewed at First Church of God at a live event during Season 2 of the “Be A Baller” podcast.

## **Background**

Bishop Clarke's journey began in the heart of his home, where faith was not just spoken but lived. His grandmother, mother, and two aunts were the pillars of his upbringing, embedding in him a profound Christian foundation — one that emphasized not only the love of God, but the importance of knowing Him personally. This faith was more than a belief; it was a relationship, a guiding force that shaped his character and purpose.

Bishop Clarke was raised in a household led by his grandparents. He credits his grandfather as the first significant father figure in his life. The passing of his grandfather in August 1962 became a pivotal moment, shaping his understanding of family, responsibility, and faith.

**Bishop Clarke:** *I grew up in New York. I was born in Brooklyn at Kings County Hospital and lived in Far Rock Away. That's where our homestead was. Our grandparents were there. My grandparents had three girls, and almost all of their grandchildren lived in the house with them. They really raised us.*

*My grandfather passed in August 1962, and that was a real seminal moment in my life because my Mom and Dad were never married, so my dad never lived with us. I knew him and interacted with him, but he wasn't in our home, so my*

*grandfather was really the first father figure that I had on a regular daily basis.*

## **Home, Church, and School Life**

Growing up in New York, Clarke was surrounded by possibilities — both good and bad. The city offered countless paths, some promising, others destructive. But with the solid foundation of faith, family, church, and education, he was equipped to make choices that honored his calling.

**Bishop Clarke:** *I was born in Brooklyn, grew up in Far Rockaway. Our mother worked for Columbia University School of Social Work, so we moved to Manhattan, which is commonly called Colombia Heights, but it's really Harlem. We lived there on 113<sup>th</sup> Street. So, I'm a Native New Yorker. I grew up in New York all of my life.*

*My grandmother, but also my mom, and my two aunts instilled in all of us a real Christian sense of not only loving God but knowing God, knowing God for yourself. The second thing I had was a strong Church community. My childhood pastor, Dad Cray was like my father. I called him Dad, and he was really like my father, but there were other men in that congregation and in that community who nurtured me and modeled for me ministry. So, I had family, home, the church, and then school.*

School was another cornerstone of his development. Among the many teachers who guided him, one Science teacher's words left a

lasting impression. It was a lesson that would stay with him, a reminder that his talents were not just for personal gain but came with an obligation to uplift others.

**Bishop Clarke:** *Teachers saw in me something that, at times, I didn't see in myself. I will never forget one of my science teachers who said to me one day, 'Tim always remember with gifts and power come responsibilities.' I never forgot that. He said, 'You're so gifted and you have so much to offer, but with that comes responsibilities, and if you squander it then you're going to be held accountable for that.'*

## **Passion to Purpose**

Bishop Clarke's call to the ministry came in January 1974. He began serving as an associate minister at the First Church of God in Far Rockaway, New York, under the leadership of the late Dr. James E. Cray. The experience laid the foundation for his pastoral journey, igniting a passion for shepherding God's people.

In 1977, Bishop Clarke accepted his first pastoral appointment at York Avenue Church of God in Warren, Ohio. Four years later, in 1981, he was called to Columbus, Ohio, to serve as pastor of First Church of God. On February 14, 1982, he officially began his ministry at the church — a small congregation of fewer than 100 members. Bishop Clarke loves learning. He has a Doctorate, a Master's degree, and a certificate in Theology.

## Decades of Leadership

Bishop Clarke's 43-year tenure at First Church of God is marked by significant growth and transformation, which he categorizes into decades — each reflecting a distinct era of purpose. Though the beginnings were modest, Bishop Clarke's vision extended far beyond what was visible. He believed in leading toward what he saw in the Spirit rather than what was physically present.

**Bishop Clarke:** *Here's what I believe. I believe God has a purpose and plan for us. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "I know the plans (some translations say I know the thoughts) that I have for you thoughts of good, plans for good not for evil, to give you a future and to give you a hope."*

*I believe that. That same Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:11 records that God said to him at a very early stage in his life, "Before you were born, I knew you, before you were conceived, I ordained you. I literally placed my hand on you and ordained you, anointed, and appointed you to be a prophet."*

### The First Decade: Called to The People

The initial years in Columbus were dedicated to building relationships and establishing trust. Despite being a newcomer to the city, Bishop Clarke embraced his role with unwavering commitment. He poured himself into pastoring the small congregation as if it were already a thousand. His belief that

leaders must prepare for the future before it arrives guided him through those formative years.

**Bishop Clarke:** *When I came to Columbus on the second Sunday in February 1982 on the corner of Wilson and Fair, there were less than a hundred people who were members of this church. And from that very, very, very, very small beginning. God just continued to multiply our ministry, but I identify that decade as “Called to the People” because no one in the city knew me, no one in the city knew where the First Church was, he said.*

The first decade laid the groundwork for the church’s expansion. Under Bishop Clarke’s leadership, the congregation grew not only in numbers but in spiritual depth. His focus on consistent, faithful service proved that small beginnings, when handled with care, could yield great rewards.

### **The Second Decade: Coming Out of the Wilderness**

The second 10 years (1992-2002) marked a period of transition and transformation. The church began to cast a new vision, expand its ministries, and reach the least and the lowest. The TV/Radio Ministry began, Bishop Clarke was casting a new vision through seeking for men in the church, seeking families, and reaching the least and the lowest. During that time that's when Clarke was becoming a City Pastor.

**Bishop Clarke:** *So, that was the decade of getting out of the Wilderness, of finding a Promised Land, a Rehoboth where God*

*makes room for you. I want to say to businessmen, and women, and to clergy (that) God has a Rehoboth for you. I know right now you feel like the sons of the Prophet, the place where we dwell is too tight for us, but there's a Rehoboth for you. There's a place where God makes room for you, and please hear my heart, whether an entrepreneur or a preacher, you don't have to cut anybody down to get your room. You don't have to do it.*

### **Path Toward Progress**

Bishop Clarke's unwavering faith saw the congregation through seasons of slow growth, yet he never wavered. He continued plowing, sowing, and preaching — believing that faithfulness in the wilderness would ultimately lead to abundance.

**Bishop Clarke:** *Out of that decade, I tell people there was a period of time, probably 1982 to 92-93 when I couldn't buy a member. I couldn't buy one. I could have stood on the corner of Wilson and Fair, handed out \$20 bills, and asked for people to come to my church. They'd have told me 'Keep your money Rev I ain't coming.'*

*I couldn't buy a member of this church. I want to tell you it was church growth in reverse. People stayed away in droves. People stayed away by the thousands. I couldn't grow. I couldn't get anybody, but I kept plowing, and I kept sowing and I kept preaching and I kept pastoring and I kept loving these folk and I kept believing.*

Bishop Clarke's influence in the city also began to grow during this time. He became known as "the City Pastor," with leaders, organizations, and families calling on him for guidance and support. His heart for men's ministry, families, and the marginalized became a driving force behind the church's outreach efforts.

### **The Third Decade: Conquering New Territory**

As the church moved into its third decade, Bishop Clarke led the congregation into a season of expansion. The ministry purchased 124 acres of land, established the Kingdom Legacy Foundation, and built new buildings, including the Bowman-Gaddis Family Life Center.

This era also saw the rise of the Berean Fellowship, a network of churches and pastors committed to Kingdom principles. Bishop Clarke became a spiritual father to many, planting pastors and raising leaders nationwide. His wisdom on church growth became a guiding principle for many young pastors. Bishop Clarke reflected on this decade with gratitude, recognizing that the first ten years' hard work and the second decade's perseverance made the third decade possible.

***Bishop Clarke: I enjoyed the first 10. I enjoyed the second and I enjoyed the third decade of ministry. It was exciting. We brought on staff, we were growing tremendously, we were having multiple services. We were breaking every law. Folk were double parked.***

## **Building People and Places**

Bishop Clarke's philosophy that "You don't have to cut anybody down to get your room" became a guiding principle, reinforcing that true leadership makes space for others to flourish. This decade was marked by the tangible manifestation of vision — a testament to years of faith, hard work, and divine favor.

**Bishop Clarke:** *The third decade, my 30th year, was exciting. I had a ball bringing on staff and growing, and I love the smell of sawdust because I'm a builder. If you're building, I'll come, stand around, and act like it's my church. When Bishop Dickerson bought Ebenezer, I brought so many folk down there I was giving tours because I celebrate when a church is growing. If a pastor is building, I'm his biggest cheerleader because I'm a builder and anything you are when you see it resonates with you.*

## **The Fourth Decade: Legacy and Transition**

During his fourth decade of leadership, Bishop Clarke began to focus on legacy — not only what he would leave behind but how he would prepare the next generation. His influence stretched across generations, with many calling him a spiritual father and mentor.

**Bishop Clarke:** *Nothing excites me more to see the next generation of pastors digging out churches and growing. Here's why. I'm old now. I had my day. My day lasted a long time. I*

*know I'm not going to be around forever. I want there to be strong churches.*

### **Working with Economically Disadvantaged Communities**

Bishop Clarke's vision continues to grow during his fourth decade of ministry. He oversaw the remodeling of the church sanctuary, elevating the national and international leadership and exposure, and fostering economic stability within the community.

**Bishop Clarke:** *We're always open. We're feeding seniors. We're giving out groceries. We have Pickleball, and we partner with Millennium, which is our school here on our property. We built housing. We have everything. We have a health clinic. 124 acres, and I probably need 30 more for all the vision that I have, but we have a church, we have a school, we have housing, and we have a health clinic. We minister to the total person.*

### **A Bishop's Legacy**

While reflecting on his hoped-for legacy, Bishop Clarke expresses a desire to be remembered not merely as a skilled preacher but as a compassionate Pastor who lived out the Biblical call to justice, mercy, and humility — leaving behind a legacy written in the lives of those he touched.

**Bishop Clarke:** *So, on the day of my apotheosis, when they gather to send me home, hopefully from this place, I hope my legacy will be not just a good preacher but a good pastor. Not just*