



Falling *into* Grace

FROM THE EDGE OF FAME
TO THE HEART OF GOD

ALVALINO KASENDA

FALLING INTO GRACE

From the Edge of Fame to the Heart of God

Alvalino Riclef Kasenda



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*“A true story of identity, surrender, and
Spirit-led calling”*

*“Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”
(Psalm 46:10, NIV)*

DEDICATION

This book is first and foremost dedicated to Jesus Christ, my Savior, and the Holy Spirit, my ever-present guide and teacher, whose wisdom, encouragement, and unseen hand carried me through every word and every idea. Without Your presence, this work would never have seen the light of day.

I am deeply grateful to Grace O’Nelwan, whose keen eyes, patient guidance, and steadfast support shaped this book into a clearer and more faithful expression of its message. To Dr. Tom Bohnert, your insightful input challenged me to think deeper and write with greater clarity—thank you for sharing your wisdom so generously.

And finally, to my parents, Ruth Labesi and Sem Kasenda, thank you for your unwavering love, prayers, and support. Your belief in me gave me the courage to persevere even when the journey felt long.

This book is a tapestry of guidance, love, and mentorship—woven together by God’s grace and the generosity of those who walked this path with me.

PREFACE

I never planned to write this book. In fact, if you had told me years ago that one day I would share my story—not on a stage, not in a competition, but in the quiet pages of a book—I would have laughed. My dream had always been applause, not authorship. I chased crowns, cameras, and stages, believing that success was the proof of my worth.

But life has a way of breaking down the stories we write for ourselves. Mine came crashing down—quite literally—when I fell forty meters off a cliff at Broken Beach in Bali. In that moment, when I thought it was the end, I cried out one desperate prayer: *“Jesus, help me.”*

And He did.

Not only did God save me from death, but He also began to rewrite the script of my life. From broken bones to broken pride, from bitterness in Batam to the waves of Nusa Penida, from hospital rooms to worship stages—every moment became part of His greater story.

This book is not about my strength, but about my weakness. Not about my success, but about God's grace. Not about how far I climbed, but about how deeply He carried me when I fell.

You will read about wounds that shaped me, applause that could never satisfy me, the fall that nearly killed me, and the voice of God that taught me to *be still*. You will also see how healing comes in pieces, how surrender reshapes identity, and how calling often hides behind closed doors and shattered dreams.

My prayer is simple: that as you read these pages, you will find your own story mirrored in mine. You may never stand in a pageant, sing in a competition, or survive a cliff fall—but you know what it means to search for identity, to chase applause, to wrestle with bitterness, or to feel broken.

If God could use my brokenness to bring glory to His name, then He can use yours too.

This is not a book about me. It is a book about the God who saves, heals, restores, and calls. May these pages lead you not to admire a man, but to trust a Savior.

Because at the end of the day, I don't need to be famous. Jesus does.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to an inspiring journey of hope, healing, and transformation as you step into Alvalino's story. God often uses three things to help us grow as human beings: life events, other people, and the spiritual disciplines. In this narrative, you will see how all three beautifully intersect to shape a young man's life in ways that only grace can explain.

Every person's journey is marked by moments that test the soul. Alvalino faced one such moment—an experience that brought him to the end of himself and to the beginning of a deeper encounter with God. What could have been a story of despair became the soil of growth, surrender, and renewal. His story reminds us that God never wastes our pain; He uses it as a classroom for the soul, where faith is refined and purpose is rediscovered.

This is not merely a story about survival; it is a testimony of transformation. It invites each of us to see how God works through the unexpected and the painful to draw us closer to Himself. As you journey with Alvalino, may you find renewed courage to trust that even the darkest valley can become a doorway of hope—because grace always has the final word.

—*Dr. Tom B., Professor, APTS*

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the emptiness of applause*

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PART ONE
SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY

Chapter 1

Island Roots

Childhood Memories

I was born on December 10th, 1995, in Tahuna, the capital city of Sangihe Island in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. A place so remote that many people do not even realize it exists. On the map, it looks like nothing more than a tiny dot, lost in the vast blue of the ocean.

But for me, it was everything. This is where my story began, the place I will always call home.

Sangihe Island is so tiny and surrounded by beautiful beaches. I grew up there, where the crashing of waves sang in harmony with the blowing wind, the chirping birds, and the rhythm of waves pounding on the calm beach. Nature's beauty was my playground, and the ocean breeze carried with it a sense of freedom.

Chapter 2

Addicted to Applause

Pageants

I first stepped into the world of pageants back in 2013. It was in my Island, Sangihe, where they held the *Ungke and Momo* competition — a local pageant, pretty big among the youth.

The winners of Ungke and Momo don't just get a title. They move on to the next stage—the *Nyong Noni North Sulawesi* pageant. It's the biggest stage in the province, and being part of it means being seen, being heard. For many of us, it's a dream. Because it also means becoming part of the region's best young representatives, with the chance to promote North Sulawesi's tourism—not just across Indonesia, but even to the world.

I still remember the nervous rush as I walked onto that stage. My heart hammered in my chest, my hands trembled a little, but I forced a smile like everything depended on it. I gave it my all—walking tall, locking eyes with the judges, pouring everything I had into every moment.

Chapter 3

The Idol of Success

Jakarta Dreams

Coming home from Myanmar in mid-2018, my heart was on fire with hope. I had just represented Indonesia on an international stage, standing among forty-two countries and breaking into the Top 12. For a boy from a small island, that was no small thing. Surely, I thought, Jakarta—the city of dreams—would welcome me with open arms.

Jakarta had always symbolized opportunity. It was the place where stars were born, where careers were launched, where hard work and talent were rewarded with fame. I imagined film contracts, modelling gigs, and TV appearances waiting for me like fruits ready to be picked. After all, hadn't I proven myself already?

But when I set foot in Jakarta, reality cut through my expectations. Instead of red carpets and bright lights, I found myself in cramped audition rooms, standing in long lines with hundreds of others who carried the same dream. Instead of

Chapter 4

Broken Loves, Broken Heart

Relationship

Back in November, while competing in *X Factor Indonesia*, something unexpected happened. In the middle of chasing one of my biggest dreams, I entered into a relationship with another participant. We clicked quickly, and what I thought was love began to bloom. Looking back now, I realize it wasn't love—it was infatuation mixed with loneliness. But at the time, I was convinced it was real.

My attention became divided. Instead of focusing fully on the auditions, I cared more about her—our chats, our moments together, the spark of something new. During the rounds, my concentration slipped. By the time the judges cut me out of the competition, I was devastated. I hadn't even made it to the Top 100. The sting was unbearable. I thought I was on the brink of breakthrough, yet I walked away with nothing—no victory, no recognition, only heartbreak.



Part Two

Grace in the Fall

The accident that changed everything

Chapter 5

Bitterness in Batam

Burnout

When I left Batam, I didn't return home refreshed or inspired the way people usually do after a mission trip. Instead, I carried with me a heavy, restless heart—full of disappointment, anger, and bitterness toward God. Ministry was supposed to strengthen me, but instead it exposed the cracks in my soul.

On the outside, my life seemed steady. I was teaching students Monday through Friday, giving them my best effort. But the truth? My pay check was so small that sometimes it felt like my work had no value at all. I poured myself out day after day, yet still couldn't even cover the basics of living in Jakarta. Every time I counted my salary, discouragement whispered: *Is this really worth it?*

Chapter 6

Broken Beach

A Forty-Meter Fall and the Cry That Heaven Heard

After Batam, my heart was weary in ways I couldn't put into words. Ministry had started to feel like routine—songs sung without fire, prayers prayed without passion. My teaching job barely covered the essentials, and my dreams in entertainment, once burning bright, seemed to be crumbling one rejection at a time. The bitterness inside me was growing heavy, like a weight strapped to my chest.

I remember thinking, *Maybe I just need to get away. Maybe if I can breathe new air, see new sights, the heaviness will fade.* Deep down, I wasn't just longing for rest—I was trying to run from the ache of disappointment and the whispers of God's call I was still resisting.

So when I heard that my relative Valentino had been relocated to Bali, something inside me leapt. Bali had always been painted in my mind as paradise: beaches that glowed at sunset, cliffs that kissed the sky, and an endless horizon that

Chapter 7

Be Still

Rescued by Grace

The waves showed me no mercy. They slammed into my body again and again, dragging me against coral, tossing me like driftwood. Every crash sent fire through my broken foot and hand. And yet, strangely, I was no longer afraid.

Because even in that chaos, one voice rang louder than the sea.

“Be still. Be still.”

Those two words became my anchor.

With every breath I could muster, I whispered them back into the storm, as if repeating them would steady me: *Be still. Be still.*

And then, something impossible happened. The waves seemed to push me back toward the shore. I knew in that moment it was God. Once I reached the seashore, instead of panicking or surrendering to despair, I began to worship.

Chapter 8

Healing in Pieces

Surgeries

My recovery journey was nothing short of miraculous. After my very first surgery—a gruelling, six-hour procedure—the doctors shook their heads in amazement. One of them told me, “You’re a strong patient. Normally, someone with injuries this severe would be sent straight to the ICU. But you can go directly to a regular room.”

That was the first sign of God’s grace. Instead of tubes and machines in intensive care, I found myself sitting up, able to talk, even laugh with the visitors who came to encourage me. They told me to start with porridge for two days before moving to rice, and that small detail became a whisper from God: *healing comes step by step, not all at once.*

And I saw God’s fingerprints everywhere. Friends, relatives, even strangers I had never met before came to visit, pray, and offer support. Just nine days after the operation, the doctors discharged me to continue outpatient care.



Part Three

A New Mission

Surrender and calling

Chapter 9

From Stage to Stream

How Livestreams Opened a New Door for Ministry

After the whirlwind of surgeries, music competitions, and testimonies on physical stages, I found myself asking: *What now, Lord?*

The Christmas season had ended, the lights had dimmed, and joy gave way to the same lingering questions:

What will my future be? Where am I really heading?

On the outside, I smiled, but inside, I was restless. I didn't have a steady job. My savings was thinning out faster than rain evaporating under Jakarta's sun. I prayed. I fasted. I sought God with all my heart. Yet the heavens felt quiet.

Then one day, scrolling aimlessly on my phone, I noticed how much the world had shifted to livestreams. TikTok. Instagram. YouTube. Everywhere I looked, people were broadcasting their lives. But most of it was shallow—people dancing, flaunting, even using it for things that dishonoured God.

Chapter 10

Seed and Fruit-focus

Discipleship: From Viewers to Family

When I first pressed that little “Go Live” button on TikTok, I never imagined where it would lead. In the beginning, I thought livestreaming was just another experiment—a way to pass time, maybe connect with a few strangers, maybe even sell some dried flowers. But God had something entirely different in mind.

By February 2024, livestreams had grown beyond songs and testimonies. People didn’t just want to listen; they wanted to belong. The comments section overflowed with requests like, *“Can you pray for me personally?”* or *“How do I grow in faith?”*

I felt the Spirit nudge me: *“Don’t let this remain shallow. Move it deeper. Build community.”*

So, with trembling hands, I launched what I called *Growing Together*. On February 15, we held the very first online meeting. Honestly, I expected ten people at most. Instead, more than sixty faces filled the screen. My jaw dropped.

Chapter 11

Surrender Spotlight

When I look back at my journey into seminary, it almost feels like God had been preparing me for this exact step all along. On **August 28, 2024**, I boarded a flight to Manila, then traveled up the winding mountain roads to Baguio City, where Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS) sits overlooking pine-covered hills.

At first, I thought the hardest part would be adapting to a new culture. But my very first challenge wasn't cultural at all—it was academic. I had been exempted from the English placement test because of my TOEFL score, but I still had to take a plagiarism exam. To my shock, I failed on my first attempt.

That night, I sat on my bed in the dorm, devastated. I sent a message to my foster mom in Tomohon: *"If I fail again, I'll come home and find another seminary in Indonesia."* I meant it. My pride was already fragile, and the thought of being sent home after only one week crushed me.

Chapter 12

Blessed to Be a Blessing

As 2025 unfolded, I began to notice a new rhythm in my life. It wasn't the frantic rhythm of chasing applause, nor the heavy rhythm of bitterness and burnout. It was slower, steadier, deeper. Every struggle I had endured, every miracle of provision, every open door and every closed one—they were all pointing to one truth: God was giving me a new identity in Christ.

A New Identity

On the surface, I was still the same Alva—seminary student, part-time minister, survivor of Broken Beach, singer who sometimes still fought with doubt. But inside, something had shifted. For years, I had defined myself by achievements: by crowns from pageants, by applause from audiences, by how many followers I had, or even by how “successful” I looked on social media. That old identity was fragile. It could be built up in

Reflection

After Reading *Falling Into Grace: From the Edge of Fame to the Heart of God*

Date: _____

Location / Setting: _____

1. A Moment That Spoke to Me

Write a line, story, or scene from *Falling Into Grace* that stayed with you.

“The part of Alvalino’s journey that touched me most was...”

2. Where I Saw Myself in His Story

Which part of your own story — your search for identity, your pain, or your fall — did this book help you see differently?

“I realized that in my own life...”

3. How God Met Me in My “Broken Beach”

Every reader has their own moment of falling — a season when God’s grace met them in weakness.

Reflect on how the story of Alvalino's fall and rescue reminds you of God's mercy in your own life.

"My 'Broken Beach' moment was when..."

4. What Grace Means to Me Now

After walking through this story of fame, failure, and redemption, how has your understanding of grace changed?

"Before, I thought grace was... Now I see it as..."

5. My Invitation from God

What do you sense God inviting you to surrender or embrace as you "fall into grace" in your own journey?

"I feel that God is calling me to let go of..."

6. A Prayer or Commitment

End your reflection with a short prayer, surrender, or declaration of faith.

"Lord Jesus, help me to remember that Your grace is..."

Reminder

Grace isn't the reward for getting everything right — it's the place where you land when you stop trying to hold yourself up.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10

When the applause fades, grace begins.

After a forty-meter fall off a cliff in Nusa Penida, Alvalino Kasenda discovered that God's grace runs deeper than any failure or fear. Falling into Grace is a story of redemption—where tragedy becomes transformation, and pain becomes purpose.

This is not a story about fame—it's about faith.
Not about falling—but being caught by grace.

"This is not just a book of testimony; it's a book of a journey built on surrender and hope. I pray that everyone who reads this book will take a step of surrender and find true hope in Christ. They don't just walk toward the promise, but they walk in the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ps. Stefanus Jayawinata, S.Th

Lead Pastor Best Church Manado

"It is such an honour to be able to endorse this book of Alva's as it is not just a story, but a testimony of his faith journey of discovery of identity surrender and obedience into the true hope in Christ, and as you read this book. I pray that you may also discover your walk and the promises that come with your surrender."

Wai Kam Mok

Prophetic house

"Falling into Grace is our story. What Alvalino has gone through and learnt through his personal life roller coaster gives us a glimpse of our own ups and downs in our journeys. Through this book we learn to appreciate God's processes, bounce back when we fall short with God's grace catching us and propelling us higher through it all. I believe this book will help you in your personal journey with God and know that you are not alone in your journey."

Ps. Timothy John Chandra, M.A. Min

Lead Pastor Dynamic Blessing Community

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