

A Wise Man

A Wise Man Builds upon a Rock
by a FOOL Who Built on Sinking Sand

Erin Thiele

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A Manual for Men
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by Erin Thiele

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Introduction

The book that you hold in your hands is not meant to be read and put aside. It is my hope and prayer that it will give you the knowledge you need to prevent you from ever having to face infidelity or divorce. For those who have gotten this manual because of my recommendation in *How God Will Restore Your Marriage: There's Healing After Broken Vows*, I am certain that God sees your heart and is at this moment “strongly supporting” you.

It is time for *all* men (and women) to realize that *all* marriages are on sinking sand, unless they are grounded firmly on the Rock of God's Word.

As you read each chapter, you will see clearly that your dependency must be on the Lord. Scripture is all that you need to renew your mind to God's way of thinking and you must throw out other opinions from the world. Then, it is your task to rebuild your home upon the Rock by being a *doer* of the Word, not a *hearer only*.

Before rebuilding, you must have good blueprints. Your blueprints must be His Word, which you will find in the following pages. Next, you must find the Cornerstone that everything will be built around. Our Cornerstone is taking Jesus as your Lord, not just your Savior. We will cover this in Chapter Two.

With a renewed mind and the Lord's blueprint, you will then be able to rebuild your home on the Rock instead of on sinking sand. Those of you who are sitting amidst rubble because your house has fallen (through infidelity or divorce) really have the advantage. You are motivated to begin to rebuild now since basically you have nowhere to live. It will be painful, but worth every bit of effort you exert.

Those of you who are living in a home, which only creaks a little or maybe shifts when the weather changes, are comfortable, but God is trying to get your attention or you would not be holding this manual in your hands. Remember, Jesus said *when* the rains come, not *if* they come. And, He is very clear that all those whose houses are not built on the Rock will fall, and great will be their fall! Your rains and winds may come in the form of you or your wife being unfaithful, a sickness or death in the family, or financial troubles. God is faithful; He will use whatever He knows will get *your* attention.

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6). I guarantee that all of us will have trials and tribulations in our lives; therefore, let's build our homes firmly on the Rock.

Table of Contents

1. On the Rock	5
2. Your First Love	15
3. Blessed Are the Meek	27
4. Thrusts of a Sword	37
5. Weapons of our Warfare	45
6. The Angry Man	59
7. Immoralities	70
8. Manages His Own Household	81
9. Man Alone	93
10. Various Trials	105
11. I Hate Divorce	117
12. The Fruit of the Womb	126
13. The Ministry of Reconciliation	135
14. Provide for His Own	151
15. Father's Instructions	158
16. Empty Talkers and Deceivers	178
17. Opening the Windows of Heaven	187
Answer Key for Test Your Wisdom	198

Chapter 1

On the Rock

*Therefore everyone who hears these Words of Mine, and acts upon them,
may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock.
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,
and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall,
for it had been founded upon the rock.
—Matthew 7:24*

Is your house built upon the rock? Are you sure? Because God's Word says that the rains are going to come. They may be in the form of a financial crisis, the death of a loved one, unfaithfulness, or health problems. How about your marriage; will it stand? Great is the fall of most marriages; will yours be next? Or, perhaps it has already fallen. Men, it is time for all of us to rebuild our homes firmly on the Rock of Jesus Christ—*firmly on His Word*. The ways of the world will only guarantee the fall of our home along with our hopes and plans for our families.

Do you really know what God's Word says about your responsibilities? Have you read God's blueprints and modeled your home after them? Here are a few of the questions that will be answered by Scripture in the following chapters: Should we only discipline our children for "deliberate defiance"? Why is it that most wives seem to display toward their employers those attitudes and characteristics of an ideal wife? How has the practice of birth control and sterilization actually encouraged and spread homosexuality? Is there anything wrong with divorce—in certain circumstances?

Why are insults and evil brought into our lives, and how does this relate to God's blessings? What danger is present when a wife fulfills all of her own needs, and the couple is no longer dependent upon each other? Why does Scripture tell us that we are not to be frightened by any fear? Some preachers tell us that we are commanded to be angry; is this true? Should your pastor be the spiritual leader of your family? If you put your wife first in your life, what will happen to your marriage?

Most men are so occupied with hobbies, sports, and their jobs that they spend little or no time studying God's Word. In many instances, their wives are tirelessly saturating themselves with Bible studies and seminars, yet their homes are out of order and crumbling. Have you ever wondered if your marriage will last? Are you certain that it will stand the test of time? Well, God's Word says, "Therefore let him who **thinks** he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

Sound doctrine? We as Christians enjoy the messages from the pulpit or Christian radio that get us all fired up for the Lord, but what about those messages that bring about conviction? Do we run from those words? A lot of preachers and speakers today need to minister to large crowds for financial reasons. The ministers tell their congregations or listeners what they *want to hear*, because it brings in the largest offerings. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will

accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the Truth, and will turn aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:3–4).

Ravenous wolves. Jesus warned us of spiritual leaders who will try to deceive us. “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits . . .” (Matt. 7:15–16). We can see the financial fruits of their ministries, yet most of their followers are perishing for a lack of knowledge. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge . . .” (Hos. 4:6).

Finds wisdom. If you heard a strong message entitled “Spiritual Leader,” “Lusts of the Flesh,” or “A Lover of Self,” and it convicted you, would you embrace or run from that conviction? Not condemnation, but conviction. Do you know the difference? “My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord, or loathe His reproof; for whom the Lord loves He reproofs, even as a father, the son in whom he delights. How blessed is the man who **finds wisdom**, and the man who gains understanding. For its profit is better than the profit of silver, and its gain than fine gold” (Prov. 3:11–14).

His purpose. Satan brings condemnation to us—thoughts that make us feel hopeless. The Lord convicts us in our spirit in order to show us the things in our life that need changing. However, all guilt is not bad. On the contrary, we *should* feel guilty when we sin. If a person feels no guilt or remorse for his sin, why would he want to repent? Even the hopelessness that condemnation brings can be used for good if we turn to God for our hope. We know that we have the assurance “. . . that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). Did you know that, many times, God brings adversity into our lives to strengthen our relationship with Him? It was God who brought the many trials into Jonah’s life to bring about obedience. And it was the Lord who blinded Saul in order to change him into the godly Paul. Does it really matter where the adversity is coming from as long as we allow each of these tribulations to mold us more into the Lord’s image?

My ways, my thoughts. As you read through the chapters in this manual, much of what is written may seem foreign to you. Many of these truths are rarely, if ever, preached from the pulpit, discussed on Christian radio, or written about in Christian books. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9). These teachings are found easily in Scripture but are often overlooked, watered down, or taken out of context to justify an opposing view or even to justify sin. “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His Words, lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar” (Prov. 30:5–6).

A broken and a contrite heart. Is your heart broken and contrite? It must be to receive the Truth. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; **a broken and a contrite heart**, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17). This is the fertile ground that the Lord says will produce much fruit. “Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the Word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the Word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the Word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the Word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty” (Matt. 13:18–23).

Did not hear it. “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear

what you hear, and **did not hear it**" (Matt. 13:16–17). You will need an "ear to hear." That means listening and desiring to gain the complete wisdom that the Bible has to offer.

Meditates day and night. You will need to renew your mind, to line it up with the instruction found in God's Word. Most people rely on what is popular according to the world's standards or follow the so-called "experts" in the field. Let's never forget that God is our Creator; does He not know how to deal with every circumstance or relationship He created? "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he **meditates day and night.** And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; *and in whatever he does, he prospers*" (Ps. 1:2–3).

Thy Word is Truth. Satan will try to tempt you into rejecting what is written in this manual. He will also try to cause division by getting you to think or say that you do not agree with the author. First of all, it doesn't matter what this author is writing or saying. What matters is what God says, since He is the Author and Creator of life. Secondly, remember that Satan will try to discourage you; division is one of his favorite tactics. If you don't believe what is written in these chapters, you have three choices: You can talk to someone *you know* will agree with you. You can just take what you want and pass over the rest like a buffet. Or *you can search the Truth.* "Sanctify them in the Truth; **Thy Word is Truth**" (John 17:17).

Seek and you shall find. "But seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you" (Luke 12:31). "And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). Use your concordance; allow the Lord to direct you to all Truth. Memorize a verse and ruminate on it over and over in your mind. And then, one day, it will be as if a light were turned on in a dark room; you will know the Truth! It's worth the effort! You must make the time! "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). If we seek Him first, He promises that everything else will be given to us.

Hunger and thirst. If we are believers, Christians, then our purpose on earth is to glorify God in all that we do. Isn't that what Jesus did with His life? And, if we call ourselves Christians, we are supposed to be followers of Christ. But, are we? How do we follow Christ? Maybe you've tried to follow Christ many times before, but you stumbled and were unable to go on. If you can open your heart to God and continue to read the Scriptures that are found in the following chapters, His Word will cause you to hunger and thirst for Him and His truths. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6). "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1). What a marvelous way to feel about the Lord and His Word!

His Word. God's Holy Scriptures will be the most important words on the following pages. His Word heals. "He sent **His Word** and *healed them, and delivered them* from their destructions" (Ps. 107:20). His Word is the light that will illuminate the darkness. "**Thy Word** is a *lamp to my feet, and a light to my path*" (Ps. 119:105). His Word is Truth. "The sum of Thy Word is Truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting" (Ps. 119:160). And it's the Truth that shall set you free. ". . . And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Just do it! Once you begin to understand and accept God's truths, you must then become a doer of the Word. "For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and **not a doer**, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was" (James 1:23–24). You must put action behind what you have learned or there will never be any change in your life!

Zealous for what is good? Let this thought be prevalent in your mind: the teachings in this manual have been written to help you become a zealot (a fanatic for the Truth found in God’s Word). You’ll get that way when you’re backed into a corner, when you’re sinking and you’re looking for something to save you, and when you see a real void in your life that makes your heart and your gut ache because you desperately need that void filled. If this is where you are in your life, then you too will become a zealot. Obey zealously—enthusiastically! Zealous teaching needs zealous obedience.

“And who is there to harm you if you prove **zealous for what is good?**” (1 Pet. 3:13). Jesus called for that kind of zealous obedience in His teaching while He walked on earth. “And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell” (Matt. 18:8).

Come, follow Me. “And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, ‘How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!’” (Mark 10:21–23). Are we like the rich man, unwilling to follow Jesus? How many times has He called you but you were all tied up with the things of this world, so you didn’t follow?

Lay aside every encumbrance. “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance**, and *the sin which so easily entangles us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us . . .” (Heb. 12:1). “The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore **lay aside** the *deeds of darkness* and put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12). “. . . In reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside** the *old self*, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit . . .” (Eph. 4:22). You must make changes in your life; you must do it now and commit yourself to following Jesus Christ. When will be the next time He calls you? When will be the *last* time He calls you? Could this be your last opportunity? Ponder now this sobering verse: “Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (James 4:14).

Lukewarm. God despises the lukewarm Christian. Are you on fire for Him? What does He need to do in your life to move you toward Him and His Word? “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are **lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will *spit you out of My mouth*” (Rev. 3:15–16). Make every moment, every day, count.

Spiritually poor. Are you spiritually bankrupt? If you were financially bankrupt, you’d certainly be scrambling to find the money you need to pay your bills and to feed your family, but what about the spiritual food that **you** need to share with your family?

Built his house upon the sand. Let’s face it: many of us men have built our house on the sinking sand of the world’s values. We put our desire for riches, fame, and position ahead of our desire to follow Christ. It’s only a matter of time before this house of cards falls. We’ve seen the signs; we’ve seen other Christian brothers fall. The men who find and read this manual, whose houses have already fallen “and great was its fall,” really have the advantage. They have nowhere to live, so they pick up the pieces of rubble and begin rebuilding. They have no choice to make; God made it for them. “And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall” (Matt. 7:26–27). Begin to build, step by step, board by board, your house upon the rock of Jesus Christ.

Use His Word **alone** as your blueprints. Let this manual motivate you and help illuminate those areas that pertain to the circumstances of your life.

Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord. “And he spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men. . . . What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble, even the burned ones? . . . Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!” (Neh. 4:2). Expect ridicule and mocking as you begin to rebuild your house. Read the entire fourth chapter of Nehemiah for motivation. Highlight in your Bible those passages that explain what they did to overcome those who tried to stop them. First, they prayed when others began to ridicule them, and God gave them direction along with “a mind to work.” Next, they set up a defense day and night. They were also aware of their weak points and set up extra defense in those positions. (Sounds a bit like war, doesn’t it? See Chapter 5, “Weapons of Our Warfare,” for more knowledge.) The leaders fought against the fear of those they were leading. “When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people: **‘Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord** who is *great and awesome*, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses’” (Neh. 4:14). Ultimately, the enemy saw that it was *God* who was on their side.

Counsel you with My eye. Will you continue on through the following chapters with the zealous commitment needed? We really will not be able to make the changes ourselves. We are sinners; our righteousness is nothing but filthy rags. But when we allow God to work in us and through us, He will begin to make the changes from within us. “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will **counsel you with My eye** upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check; otherwise, they will not come near to you” (Ps. 32:8–9).

According to His purpose. The Lord comes to us at the very time of our need. He is the one who allows us to come to the turning points in our lives, through various trials, so we will depend upon Him. It’s during these times of distress that we seek Him and then He lets us find Him. Brokenness many times brings about real lifelong change. That’s why we can praise Him in all things, because we have this assurance: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). We can see from this passage that our goal must be according to His purpose—what then is His purpose for our lives? Most of us are familiar with verse 28, but to really understand His purpose we must read the next three verses. “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined **to become conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (Rom. 8:29–31).

Do your deeds deny Him? Do you truly love Him enough to obey Him? Are we concerned with *our purpose* in each situation in our life or *His purpose*? Where is your heart? Many times we start out in our trial with the selfish point of view in order to comfort ourselves or protect ourselves from whatever is hurting us. But as the trial or suffering continues, we begin to see more of a need for change. We develop an insight, which reveals the reason(s) why God has allowed the trial. It was possibly for our salvation or for the salvation of a loved one, but certainly the trial is for our sanctification so our deeds will stop denying Him. “They profess to know God, but by **their deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed” (Titus 1:16).

My heart of stone. As we look ever forward to the day of our glorification, He encourages us to be specific in our prayer life. He wants us to get to the point of crying out to Him. When will you come to this point? Will you cry out in a time of frustration, or must you get to the point of losing a loved one through death? Maybe it is merely the threat of losing the loved one that will bring you to that point. Possibly, the destruction of your marriage will make you cry out to God. We must ask ourselves, how hard is my heart? “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove **the heart of stone** from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezek. 36:26). Are you willing to ask God for this heart change, “whatever it takes”?

Hardens his neck. The Lord said if you will only ask, you will receive. “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7). If we are truly Christians, followers of Christ, then we yearn to be closer to Him. Do you yearn? Or, are you surrounding yourself with the things that deaden that desire? If so, my friend, you are not a Christian on fire for God, but a backslider. “The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways . . .” (Prov. 14:14). Have you had your fill? Or must you be broken? “A man who **hardens his neck** after much reproof will *suddenly* be **broken beyond remedy**” (Prov. 29:1).

Sorrowful to the point of repentance. In order to repent and turn away from the lukewarm life we have lived for too long, we must be sorry. “I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made **sorrowful to the point of repentance**; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Cor. 7:9–10).

Destroying speculations and every lofty thing. What is separating you from the knowledge of God? What keeps you from reading His Word daily? If God is not first in your life, what is? Your job? Your family? Entertainment? What keeps you so busy that you are even prevented from giving God a second thought? “We are **destroying speculations and every lofty thing** raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete” (2 Cor. 10:5–6).

Confess your sins to one another. If you are ready, if you have allowed yourself to become convicted, you are ready to change your life. Begin by confession. “Therefore, **confess your sins to one another**, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16). If you are not broken, you will probably put these pages down now, or continue to read them just to prove to yourself that you are the good Christian you claim to be. But we both know it will never change your life because it will never penetrate your heart. It will merely pour over you like water off a duck’s back.

Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal. These pages are written by one who was broken. God often uses other people in our lives to break us. It may be just an annoyance at first; then it escalates into complete frustration. But do we turn to Him at that point, or do we instead harden our hearts and harden our necks? God is trying to change us, to mold us. “Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal** among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation” (1 Pet. 4:12).

But, usually, we don’t like the situation or the person that is bringing the trials into our lives because we can’t see that *God* is behind it. We become bitter and angry with the persons or circumstances He uses. We try to break the relationships, only to find they follow us. Dear believer, it is the Lord who is trying to turn us, gently at first, and then a little more firmly. (See Chapter 10, “Various Trials,” for more knowledge on the

spiritual warfare that you face daily. “But if they do not hear, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge” (Job 36:12). “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you . . .” (Hos. 4:6).

Removed lover and friend. God oftentimes must remove a friend or our loved ones in order to put *Himself* in first place in our lives. We may be in a cold marriage or even separated or divorced. We may have children or parents who are not speaking to us. Possibly our brothers or sisters may no longer be communicating with us either. “Thou hast **removed lover and friend** far from me; my acquaintances are in darkness” (Ps. 88:18). “Thou hast put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths. Thy wrath has rested upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves. *Selah*. Thou hast removed my acquaintances far from me; Thou hast made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out” (Ps. 88:6–8). (*Selah is found often in the book of Psalms. When you read the word Selah, the Psalmist is asking you to ponder and think over what you just read. Reread it if you need to. What’s your hurry?*)

They shall see God. But how can *I* see the Lord? First, you must have had a born again experience; then, He will begin to bring about internal purification. If we do not understand God’s ways, we will become discouraged and many doubts will creep into our minds. “Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for **they shall see God**” (Matt. 5:8). God wants to be first in our lives. (See the next chapter, “Your First Love,” for more knowledge.) He wants our life to reflect Jesus Christ.

They were radiant. Do you want to reflect the love and radiance of the Lord? Right now is your chance. Don’t blow it, my brother in Christ. Don’t turn away. Turn to Him and Him alone. Right now! “They *looked to Him* and **were radiant**, and their faces shall never be ashamed” (Ps. 34:5).

Practical Application

Hearer of the Word and not a doer. At the end of each chapter there will be either a test or practical application. “For if anyone is a **hearer of the Word and not a doer**, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; but one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does” (James 1:23–24).

Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned. The first thing we need in order to rebuild upon the Rock is to become aware of our sinfulness before God. Unless we understand that we are sinners, we cannot take another step. As you were reading this chapter, were you made aware of your sin, or did you make excuses and blame others? My friend, if you are imitating the world by rationalizing your sin and making excuses, while at the same time quickly pointing out the sin of others, you most certainly are headed for spiritual death. When you read these pages, did you think of how other men you know have fallen in certain areas but never really took a hard look at yourself?

If you are under strong conviction, please stop now, get on your knees, and ask the Holy Spirit to show **you** and convict **you** of **your** sinfulness before God. Ask Him to reveal to you your offenses through His eyes and the eyes of others whom you have offended. Begin by praying this prayer:

“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned**, and done what is evil in Thy sight, so that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy

presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will be converted to Thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; then my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Thy praise. For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:1–17).

Confess your sins. Once we have confessed our sin before God, we need to admit we have fallen short, or confess our faults to one another. Again, if our conscience is seared (1 Tim. 4:2), we will minimize our sin and we will *never* have victory over sin in our life! “Therefore, **confess your sins** to one another, and pray for one another, so that *you may be healed*. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16).

His Word healed them. It is God’s Word that will change us and heal us. “He sent **His Word and healed them**, and delivered them from their destructions” (Ps. 107:20). We must begin to renew our minds. Using 3x5 cards, write down the verses from this chapter that have brought about the greatest conviction in your heart. Then, do the same with each of the following chapters. Keep these cards in your pocket and bring them out regularly as the Holy Spirit prompts you. If you are not being prompted, pray that you will be.

With God. We must not operate in the flesh. We must work “with God,” moving in His direction by allowing His Spirit to direct us to do what we ought. “With men this is impossible, but **with God** all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). “But He said, ‘The things impossible with men are possible **with God**’” (Luke 18:27). Any other plan will eventually wear us out and cause us to give up. “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the **flesh reap corruption**, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8). Operating in the flesh will only bring about a temporary external change versus a permanent internal change. “. . . For the things which are seen are **temporal**, but the things which are *not seen* are **eternal**” (2 Cor. 4:18).

A righteous man falls. Be aware that stumbling and failure will come, but *you must get back up*. “For a **righteous man falls** seven times, and *rises again* . . .” (Prov. 24:16). Every man will fall, but what you do *when* you fall divides the righteous from the unrighteous! The entire tenth chapter of this book is dedicated to making us keenly aware of the trials of Christian life. But for now, let us be aware that we may be held with the cords of our sin until we hate it so much that we will be forever cured of these temptations. “His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin” (Prov. 5:22). Again, we must work “with God” because He knows best. “Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’” (Isa. 45:9).

Boast about my weaknesses. And finally, once we, “through Christ,” have gained the sweet victory, we must share our testimony with all those whom He brings into our lives. Some find it easy to share Jesus Christ as their Savior with every person they meet. If you are on fire like that for the Lord, praise God! Others fail to share their salvation with anyone; it is their little secret with the Lord. However, God will bring men into your life who will open a door for you to share what Christ has done for you. “. . . But sanctify Christ as *Lord in your hearts*, **always being ready** to make a defense to everyone *who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you*, yet with gentleness and reverence . . .” (1 Pet. 3:15). Will you open your mouth? Let us retrain our lips to share God’s power over sin by humbling ourselves and boasting about our weaknesses. “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather **boast about my weaknesses**, that the *power of Christ may dwell in me*” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Let the Power of Christ Dwell in Me . . . Amen and Amen!

Personal commitment: To begin to build or rebuild my home on the Rock. “Based on what I have learned from God’s Word, I commit to confess my lukewarmness toward Christ and to take the proper steps to renew my mind. I commit to allow the Lord to work through me so that I may gain the sweet victory over my sinful life. I also commit to give God the praise and honor He deserves by sharing my testimony with others.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____

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For more help

Please visit one of our Websites:

EncouragingMen.org

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