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# Chapter 1

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## 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 7:24-25*

Is your life built upon the rock? Are you sure? Why does it matter? Because God's Word says that the rains are going to come in your life and mine. These "rains" may be in the form of a financial crisis, the death of someone you dearly love, the unfaithfulness or betrayal of a friend, your parents divorce, health problems, or any number of crises that plague young women today.

So, the question is: Will **you** be able to endure a real crisis? Because that is not what happens in the lives of most Christians—instead, most follow this pattern that Jesus spoke about when He said, "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:26–27).

Thankfully, Jesus also said what we read as our chapter verse, "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 7:24-25).

Therefore, for us to withstand the rains that Jesus said will come into all of our lives, we must, all of us, build or rebuild our lives **firmly** on the Rock of Jesus Christ—on His Word, and through a deep relationship with Him.

Have you ever noticed how it is the women, not the men, who love to go to Bible studies and just about every conference we hear about? As women we seem to throw ourselves into learning more and more, yet our lives and our relationships are chaotic, crumbling, and full of drama. Interesting. But that is what the Bible tells us. It says, "For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:6–8).

From the very beginning, we see women wanting knowledge above all else. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, **and that the tree was desirable to make one wise**, she took from its fruit and ate..." (Genesis 3:6).

At the same time, most of the men in our lives (fathers, brothers, and boyfriends) are so preoccupied with hobbies, sports, their jobs, and/or school that they spend little or no time studying God's Word for themselves—nor do many of them desire a true relationship with the Lord.

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the *knowledge of good and evil* you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it *you will surely die*’” (Genesis 2:16).

The fall of man opened the eyes of both the man and woman giving them the knowledge of good *and* evil. Unfortunately, what is being studied today and what women are craving is knowledge of any kind. They pursue education in any form without discretion, to their ruin. Not only do they educate themselves in everything in the world that can be imagined beginning in elementary school all the way through college and beyond, but even within the church the woman is getting false doctrine and building her life upon it.

I know. I was one such woman.

Not only are the schools filled with the ways of the world, the knowledge of all kinds of evil, very little of the “good” we need to use to build our lives, but the ways of the world have also penetrated the church and her teachings. That is why, though we try, what we have learned will only *guarantee* the sinking of our hopes and plans for our future. Why is that? Well let me ask you honestly...

Do you really know what God’s Word says to us as a woman, a daughter, and for your future as a wife, or possibly as a mother? Because I didn’t.

Have you taken the time to read God’s blueprint for life? How **He** sees things, (which believe it or not are found in the Bible) and modeled your life after them? I didn’t.

Do you really know what God says about every area of *your* life so you, too, can share His opinion and build your life on these principles rather than on popular opinion? Once again, I didn’t.

Well where can you find sound doctrine?

Christian women enjoy the messages from their pastors, Christian radio, Christian television, and Christian music—things that fire us up for the Lord. But will you embrace a message that is sure to bring about conviction? This book is going to shake you up.

So, the question is: Will you choose to run from or embrace the truth when you begin reading things that are sure to bring about conviction instead of those lovely goose bumps you are used to?

A lot of our pastors and speakers today feel they need to draw in the large audiences so they tell their listeners what they *want to hear* rather than what they really *need* to hear. Can you blame them? By pulling in the largest crowds they gain the greatest offerings for their ministries, right? But, they are to be blamed because they are destroying all of us! This is not my opinion, but God’s warning to us. Read this... “For the time will come when they [Christians] 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 Timothy 4:3-4).

**Ravenous wolves.** Jesus warned us of the spiritual leaders who would 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 . . .” (Matthew 7:15-16). We can see the financial “fruits” of many 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 . . .” (Hosea 4:6).

When you listen to the most popular Christian speakers, are you sure their information is based solely on Scripture, OR is it based on psychology and the ideas of man? Are you very sure you know the difference? “‘The prophet who has a dream may relate *his* dream, but let him who has My Word speak My Word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?’ declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:28). Are you able to discern

grain from straw? Are you knowledgeable enough not to be taken in by those who God told us would come and deceive the Christian—the ravenous wolves?

**My ways, My thoughts.** What you'll read in the following chapters may seem foreign to you. Most of what I am about to share are truths that 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" (Isaiah 55:9). Would you believe that what I am about to teach you is found easily in Scripture, but is 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" (Proverbs 30:5-6).

**A broken and a contrite heart.** May I ask you: is your heart broken and contrite [showing sincere remorse]? Because I have found that only a broken heart can absorb the truth. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

A broken heart 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" (Matthew 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**" (Matthew 13:16-17). You will need an "ear to hear," which means listening and desiring to gain the complete wisdom that the Bible has to offer.

**Meditates day and night.** The only way to build on the Rock is to renew your mind with God's Word: you will need to renew your mind to line it up with what God says about everything. Sadly, most of us tend to rely on what is "popular" according to the world's standards, which I said is basically the same thing the church now teaches. We follow the so-called "experts" in a particular field, or trust that our teachers are giving us the full truth when we have no idea if it is truth or a myth. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge . . ." (Hosea 4:6).

Let's never forget that **God** is our Creator. Therefore, He knows, above anyone else, how to deal with every circumstance or relationship He has 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*" (Psalm 1:2-3).

**Thy Word is Truth.** And just as we read above when Jesus was speaking of the sower, even after you do take time to read and study the truth, the enemy will come to steal what you have just learned! A favorite scheme of the enemy \* is to tempt you, the reader, to reject what you read in this book by getting you to think or say that you do not *agree* with the *author*.

Well, first of all, it doesn't matter what *this author* is writing or saying: Am I right? **All that matters** is what **God** says, since He is the Author and Creator of life! ***That's why you must read each and every Scripture so you know what GOD is saying.***

\*“Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).

Secondly, we must remember that the enemy will try to discourage you, and division is another one of his favorite schemes. If you don’t believe what you read, you have three choices: 1) You can talk to someone who *you know* will agree with you and your opinion; 2) You can just take what you want and pass over the rest as you would choose food at a food bar; or 3) You can *search for the Truth*.

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are **lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will *spit you out of My mouth*” (Revelation 3:15-16).

Please choose to search for Truth. “Sanctify them in the Truth; **Thy Word is Truth**” (John 17:17).

The Truth is nothing to fear; instead, it will set you free. “If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the Truth, and **the Truth shall make you free**” (John 8:31-32). Again, if you question anything you read, please do NOT take my word for it—seek God and His Word to find the Truth. “But if any of you **lacks wisdom**, let him *ask of God*, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

\*Over the many years that I have been ministering to women, there have been many times that I have been challenged by what I have written. When this occurs, I have been forced to seek deeper the truth I claim. And each time I walked away stronger in my faith and better able to defend my faith. I hope *you* will do the same. And don’t go to another book (even one of my books). Instead, go right to THE BOOK, the Bible, and search it.

The site I use almost every day is Biblegateway.com to search different versions or a particular topic. Take time to go deeper into the things of God! Look up words in the dictionary; go back to the original translation, which is Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament. There are many sites to help, like BlueLetterBible.org where you can use the concordance to dig deeper into the true meaning.

**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 Bible concordance, or the site above, and allow the Lord to guide you into all truth. If there is a verse that you want to understand more fully, search other versions of the Bible, write it down on a 3x5 index card, then read it every day and ruminate on it over and over again in your mind. Then one day it will be as if the light is turned on in a dark room—you will know the Truth! “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he *meditates* day and night” (Psalm 1:2).

**Testimony:** All these scriptures are so life changing that I want to memorize them all, but after I’m finished reading a chapter, writing them on a 3x5 card takes time, so I was asking the Lord to show me a faster way of gathering them. This is when He led me to download the Bible Gateway App on my phone so that I can look up the verse and then take a screenshot of it. With them cropped and saved on my photos—I’m able to “carry” them with me everywhere I go and swipe through, reading them until *hopefully* they’re all memorized, hidden in my heart so I can recall them whenever I need them. I’d still encourage you to use the 3x5 method if you enjoy writing, but either method, be sure to memorize these verses and hide their truths in your heart—it has totally worked for me! —Tara, Erin Thiele’s daughter

Is seeking the truth worth the effort? Do you have time? “So teach us to number our days, that we may **present to Thee a heart of wisdom**” (Psalm 90:12). If we seek Him first, He **promises** that everything else will be given to us—what a wonderful promise! Look, it says it right here: “But *seek first* His kingdom and His righteousness; and **all these things** shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

**Hunger and thirst.** If we are believers, if we are Christians, followers of Christ, 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 the Lord many times before, but you stumbled and gave up. If you can open your heart to God right now, and continue to read the Scriptures that are found in this book, His Word will cause you to hunger and thirst for more and more of Him, and for His truths. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1). Isn't that the way you want to feel about the Lord and His Word?

I promise that if you will simply finish reading this chapter now, read it again tomorrow, write down your favorite verses that touched your heart on a 3x5 card, and read your cards over again the next day—you will begin to CRAVE the Lord and His Word.

**His Word.** The Scriptures will *always* be the most important Words on the following pages because they are God's Word! Therefore, *never, ever skip over the verse* because:

**His Word heals.** "He sent **His Word** and *healed them*, and *delivered them* from their destructions" (Psalm 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*" (Psalm 119:105).

**His Word is Truth.** "The sum of Thy Word is Truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting" (Psalm 119:160).

**Just do it!** Once you begin to understand and accept God's truths, you then must 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 or fruit in your life!

**Zealous for what is good?** While reading this book I want you to keep just one thing in mind: this book was written by a zealot, nothing more than a fanatic! Darling, I got that way when I was backed into a corner in my life. I got that way when I was sinking and looking for something or Someone to save me. "But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!'" (Matthew 14:30). I got that way when I saw a real void in my life that made my heart and my gut ache because I desperately needed that void filled.

Darling, is this where you are in your life? Then praise God! You, too, will become a zealot. Embrace and obey His Word zealously—enthusiastically!

**Zealous teachings need zealous obedience.** "And who is there to harm you if you prove **zealous for what is good?**" (1 Peter 3:13). "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be **zealous** therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). Many times I have been mocked and ridiculed for my zealous behavior by following the Lord to the extent that I have. But Jesus Himself called each of us to that kind of zealous obedience while He walked on earth! How can you get more zealous than what He says here? "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" (Matthew 18:8-9). I'd say these are very zealous instructions from our Lord because He is trying to prove a point.

**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 you and I like the rich man, unwilling to follow Jesus because we are afraid of what He might ask us to do or give up? How many times has He called you before today? How many times have you been all tied up with the things of this world so you chose *not* to follow Him? Don’t miss it now—He is calling your name. You have no earthly idea how much He *longs* for you!! “Therefore the LORD *longs* to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you For the LORD is a God of justice; How *blessed* are all those who long for Him” (Isaiah 30:18).

**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 . . .” (Hebrews 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” (Romans 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 . . .” (Ephesians 4:22). You must immediately make changes in your life and commit yourself to following Jesus Christ. You must lay aside all the busyness that will keep you from finishing this study. When will He call you again? Could this be your last opportunity? Now ponder this eye-opening thought: “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). Make every moment, every day, count.

**Lukewarm.** For those of you who are convinced that you have a happy life and live in a stable environment, this book may be too zealous since there is nothing motivating you to change. “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are **lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will *spit you out of My mouth*” (Revelation 3:15-16). God spits out lukewarm Christians every single day. He calls, we ignore, then we find ourselves on our faces in a crisis we never thought we would ever have to endure!

Are *you* on fire for God or are you lukewarm? Because if you’re not on fire, have you ever thought about what God might need to allow to come into your life to move you toward Him and His Word? I know what it took for me (and most of my ministry members)!

**Poor in spirit.** Those who are poor have nothing; therefore, it is easier for them to leave everything to follow Him and His Word. “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

Are you spiritually bankrupt? “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). If you were financially bankrupt, you’d certainly be diligently praying to be able to pay your bills so that you and/or your family would be fed. But what about those around you—people who don’t know the Lord yet? How will you help feed them when you are not feeding *daily* on God’s Word and living out His principles in your life?

**Built on the sand.** Let’s face it: many of us have built our lives on the sinking sand of the world’s ways and the world’s values. We seek after everything our Lord Jesus Christ lived and preached *against!* You and I must know that it’s only a matter of time before our house of cards will fall. We’ve seen the signs; we’ve seen other Christians fall. What makes us think we will remain standing when adversity strikes? I love the way the Message Bible says it: “. . .we are just as capable of messing it up as they were. Don’t be so naive and self-confident. You’re not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else...” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

The women who discover this book and read it are often those whose lives have already fallen apart, and usually, “*great* was its fall.” These women (and men who read *A Wise Man*) really have the advantage as I said before.

Since they have nowhere to live, 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**” (Mathew 7:26-27).

Whether or not your life has fallen, begin now to rebuild every area of your life, step-by-step, board-by-board, upon the rock of Jesus Christ. Use His Word *alone* as your blueprint. Let this book motivate you and help illuminate those areas that pertain to the circumstances and situations of your life that need to be changed.

**Do not be afraid of them—remember the Lord.** And as I also said, you must *expect* ridicule. People, even your closest friends and family, will begin to mock you as you begin to rebuild your life on God’s Word, calling you a nut, a fanatic, a zealot. To get you motivated, take time to read the entire fourth chapter of Nehemiah. Here is just some of what it says, Speaking “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!’” (Nehemiah 4:2). Mocking will confirm you are headed in the right direction!

**Counsel you with My eye.** To help you continue through the following chapters with the zealous commitment needed, let me share this one very important truth—you and I are not capable of making the changes in our lives or in ourselves. We are sinners; our righteousness is nothing but filthy rags. However, when we allow **God** to work in us and through us, He will begin to make the changes from deep 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” (Psalm 32:8-9).

**According to His purpose.** The Lord comes to us at the exact time we need Him. He allows us to come to the turning points in our lives (through various trials) to learn dependence upon Him. It’s during the times of distress that we seek Him, and then He lets us find Him. It’s only during brokenness that real lifelong changes are made. We can praise Him in all things because 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” (Romans 8:28).

We can see from the passage in Romans that our goal must be according to *His* purpose. What then is His purpose for our lives? Most of us are familiar with Romans 8:28, but to really understand His purpose we must continue reading. “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?” (Romans 8:29-31). Life is not just for pleasure. We live so that we can become conformed to His image so others will see Him in us!

**Hardens his neck.** If we are truly Christians, followers of Christ, then we will yearn to be closer to Him. Do you yearn for Him? Or do you, instead, surround yourself with things that deaden that desire? If so, you are not a Christian on fire for God, but a backslider. “The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways...” (Proverbs 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**” (Proverbs 29:1).

**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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For

consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:1–3).

**Confess your sins to one another.** I know that those who have allowed themselves to become convicted while reading this chapter are now ready to allow change into their lives. If you are ready, 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). Find at least one other close female friend (or your sister or mom or cousin), and do this study together in order to really grow in your relationship with the Lord. Don’t miss what God has for you! He loves you and *longs* to be gracious to you!!

**Removed lover and friend.** God very often needs to remove a friend or someone we love in order to place *Himself* first in our lives. If you have experienced a loss, or are in a painful relationship, it is often God who has removed this person, or persons, from your life in order for you to get to know Him more intimately. “Thou hast **removed lover and friend** far from me; My acquaintances are in darkness” (Psalm 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” (Psalm 88:6-8).

\*Selah is found often in the book of Psalms to ask us, the reader, to stop, ponder and think over what has just been read. Obey this command by pondering what the Psalmist has written. Reread it if you need to. Don’t be in such a hurry that you miss the deeper, truer meaning.

**They were radiant.** Do you want to reflect the love and radiance of the Lord? *Right now*, my sweet sister in Christ, is your chance—don’t miss it. Don’t turn away; do it now. Turn to Him and to Him alone. Do it right now!

“They *looked to Him* and **were radiant**, And their faces shall never be ashamed” (Psalm 34:5). Have you checked your countenance lately? Has it fallen? “Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it’” (Genesis 4:6). How are you doing? If you are *not* doing well, God says, “sin is crouching at the door.” Perhaps, you’ve already let sin in. **Then pray this now:** “Whatever it takes to soften my heart to your Word, Lord, please do it!”

## Practical Application

**Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned.** In order to rebuild upon the Rock, we need to acknowledge our sinfulness before God. Unless we understand that we are sinners, we cannot take another step. As you read this chapter, were you made aware of your sin or did you make excuses or blame others? My beloved, if you are imitating the world by rationalizing your sins or faults and making excuses for what you do or have done; or, if you (like everyone these days) have been blaming your sin on what was done *to* you, you are missing out. If you have justified your sin, while at the same time quickly pointing out the sins of other people and their shortcomings, you most certainly are headed for spiritual death. Instead of looking at others who have fallen in certain areas, or those who have hurt you, take a hard look at yourself.

“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:2-4).

If you are under strong conviction, please stop now, get alone with God, and ask the Holy Spirit to show **you** and convict **you** of **your** sinfulness before God. Ask Him to reveal your offenses and whom you have offended. Begin by praying this prayer found in Psalm 51:1-17:



“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.”

**Confess your sins.** Once we confess our sins before God, we may need to admit we have fallen short and confess our faults to one another. “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). This is when doing the study with a close friend really helps. Each of you can confide in each other, and praying for each other, which means that God is going to heal you!

**Even a righteous man falls.** Be aware that stumbling and failures will come. What is important is that when you fall *you must get back up*. “For **a righteous man falls** seven times, and *rises again . . .*” (Proverbs 24:16). Every one of us falls, but what you and I do *after* we fall divides the righteous from the unrighteous! Many of us are being held with the cords of our past sins, but God is faithful to cut those cords once we hate the sin so much that we will *cry out to God* continually to be forever delivered from those sins. “His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin” (Proverbs 5:22).

**Boast about my weaknesses.** And finally, once we “through Christ” have gained the sweet victory, we must share our testimonies with all those whom God brings into our lives. Some of us find it easier to share what the Lord has done in our lives, yet others fail to share with *anyone* even their “shortcomings” and how through God’s grace they overcame—it is their little secret with the Lord. Without a doubt, God will bring women, young and old, into your life that will open a door for you to share what the Lord 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 Peter 3:15). “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long” (Psalm 32:1, 3). “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 Corinthians 12:9).

You don’t have to broadcast your sins to the world, but just to those who need to know they are not alone, and who will be encouraged by what God has done in your life. Share it discreetly, but honestly... you will be so glad you did.

## **Let the Power of Christ Dwell in Me!**

**Personal commitment to trust the Lord to build or rebuild my life on the Rock.** “Based on what I have just learned from God’s Word, I confess my lukewarmness toward Jesus at times and ask that He renew my mind to conform to His Word. I surrender my life to Him and as He changes me, I commit to give God the praise and honor He deserves by sharing my testimony with others.”

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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