

*“Fight the good fight of the faith.
Take hold of the eternal life
to which you were called
when you made your good
confession in the presence
of many witnesses.”*

1 TIMOTHY 6:12

PRESENTED TO:

30 Devotions for MEN

BIBLICAL WISDOM FOR REAL LIFE

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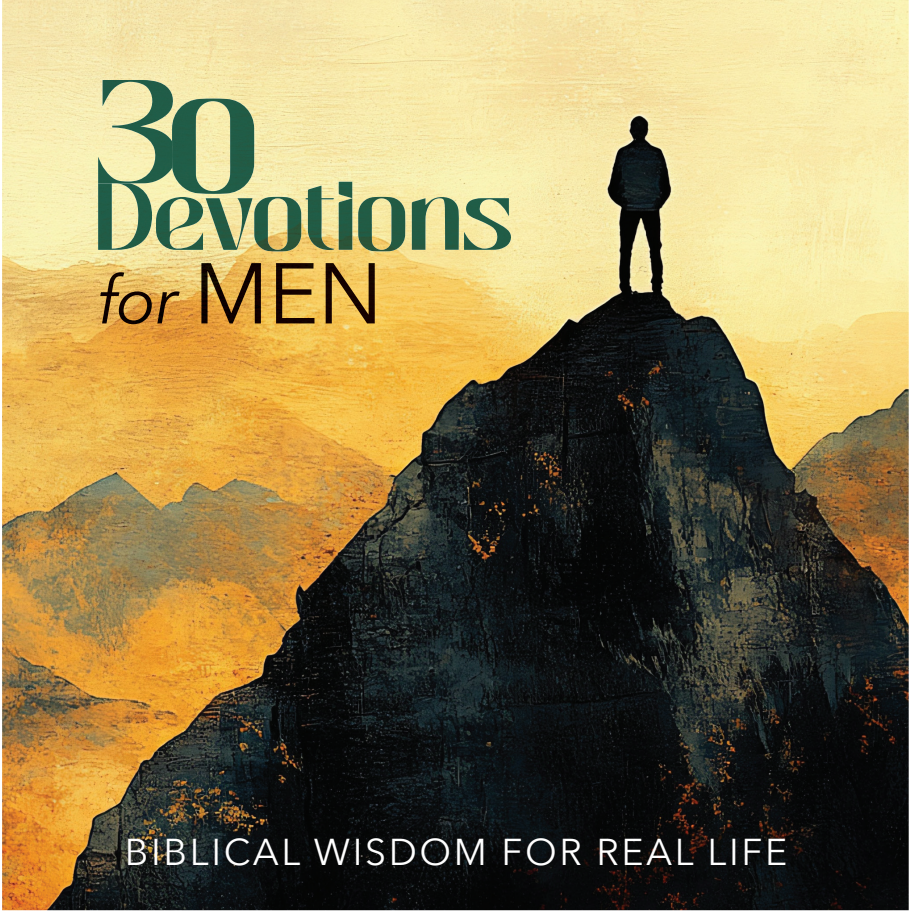
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**CHURCH
LEADERS**

P R E S S

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The background of the entire image is a textured, painterly illustration. It depicts a man in silhouette standing on the very peak of a dark, jagged mountain. The sky is a warm, golden-yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the distance, other mountain ranges are visible, also rendered in a soft, painterly style. The overall mood is contemplative and inspiring.

30 Devotions *for* MEN

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WHAT MAKES A MAN?

If you're like most guys, there's more than one answer. There's that coach who told you to never show weakness, to suck it up and walk it off when you were hurting. The girlfriend who preferred her men caring and sensitive, always ready for an hour of soul-searching conversation.

Perhaps a pastor told you real men were leaders, making important decisions for their families. And your first boss made it clear a man was worth only what he could get done in a day.

Maybe your father—or another man who filled that role—didn't say much, but you watched him navigate life. Maybe you learned playing by the rules was for suckers, or just the opposite: A real man had the integrity to always do what was right.

No matter who told you how to be a man, here's a suggestion...

Turn off the voices.

For the next month, as you go through these devotions, let just once voice guide you. Listen for God to tell you who you are as a man, and how you fit in the world.

One month. That's all.

It could change everything.



DON'T LIVE LONELY

A

survey conducted by Talker Research of 2,000 men revealed some worrisome results.

More than a third of the men said they have fewer friends today than they had five years ago. And nearly a fifth said they feel lonely at least once per day.

Which means you, too, may be occasionally lonely...perhaps alone. And lonely is a dangerous place to find yourself.

Not only is it emotionally tough, it also means maybe you've not yet forged meaningful, transparent relationships with other Christians. If you're doing life alone as a believer....well...that often doesn't work very well.

Think about those nature shows where lions attack a herd of gazelles. The lions target loners, gazelles that aren't tightly connected to the herd. Like that gazelle destined to become a lion's lunch, when you're alone you're more vulnerable.

You don't have other believers praying for you. Providing support. Coming alongside you when you're hurting.

The Christian life was never designed to live solo.

Grab a pen and jot the names of three believers you'd trust to take your call at 2:00 a.m. and not hang up on you. Who do you know who'll walk through the ups and downs of your faith journey with you?

Thank them (not at midnight!) for caring. Express your appreciation. Ask them to pray for you as you pray for them.

Then do life...together.



FEAR GOD

W

hen the Bible says to “fear the Lord,” it’s kind of a lousy translation.

This “fear” mentioned in the Bible is less about cowering in the corner and more about something else. Something far, far deeper.

It’s seeing God clearly for who He is and responding appropriately. It’s approaching God with sober respect, obeying Him from the heart. It’s accepting His discipline, and ever and always worshipping God with the awe He deserves.

Which means if you’re in the habit of tossing God’s name around casually, or now and then asking Him to wait in the car while you go do something you know you shouldn’t, it’s time to begin fearing the Lord.

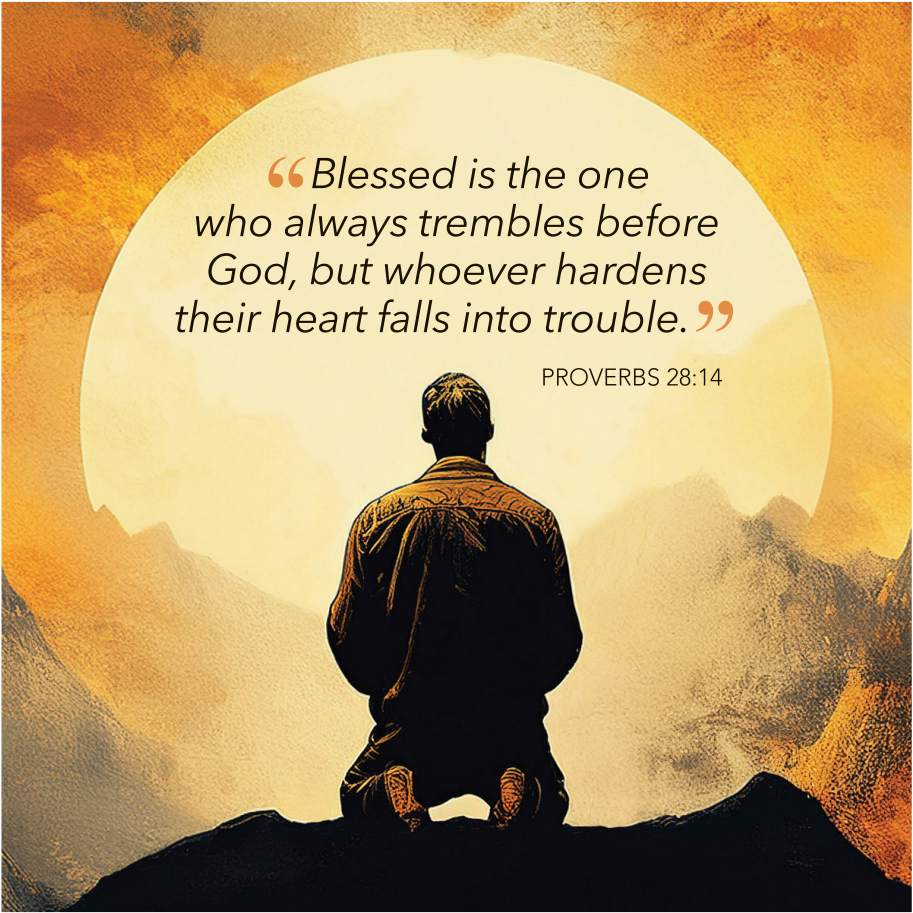
And if you’re unwilling to obey Him or you worship half-heartedly...well, those are issues, too.

Pay attention today to how you speak to and about God. Are your words and actions marked by respect and awe? Do you come to God fully aware He’s the all-powerful Creator, the spinner of galaxies, the only One who can speak and life springs up from dust?

You don’t need to fear God the way we normally use the word because He loves you. He’s for you. His patience stretches and then stretches some more.

But He deserves your respect.

And it should show.

A man is kneeling on a dark, rocky mountain peak, seen from behind. He is looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of mountains under a large, bright, golden sun. The scene is bathed in warm, orange and yellow light, creating a contemplative and spiritual atmosphere.

*“Blessed is the one
who always trembles before
God, but whoever hardens
their heart falls into trouble.”*

PROVERBS 28:14

SURRENDER THE STEERING WHEEL

Maybe you came to faith in Christ after hearing He loves you, died for you, and forgives you. That He's inviting you into heaven. That in Him you'll find peace.

And that's true—all of it. But it's not the whole story.

It's also true that while Jesus loves you as you are, He's not content to leave you as He found you. He's out to transform your heart and mind, and through that transformation to see your actions change, too. He's expecting obedience as well as gratitude.

Here's the reality: Jesus is your Savior *and* your Lord. He doesn't need more fans—He wants you to be a follower.

Some of us men don't take kindly to turning over the wheel so someone else can steer our lives. We like control, even if we're aware there's plenty we can't bend to our liking.

So, hear this: Now that you're part of the kingdom of God, you're not in charge. You're not setting the agenda or calling the shots. The King is—and that's a good thing. A very good thing.

The next time you climb into your car, as you take the steering wheel, let it remind you to offer this prayer: *I'm yours, Lord. What would you have me be and do today?*

Then hit the gas.



BANISH BITTERNESS

Men are surprisingly good at keeping score. We can remember who smacked us on the playground in third grade. Who humiliated us with a “no” when asked for a prom date. Who cut corners to beat us out for that bonus at work.

No doubt you can recall even deeper injuries across your life, perhaps some that have been life-altering.

It’s not always easy to let go of the bitterness from the wounds you’ve endured. Anger is justified. Hurt and disappointment take hold.

But bitterness isn’t the place to stay. Here’s why: Bitterness handcuffs you to painful past events. It’s fertile soil for growing an unforgiving spirit and poisons relationships. It can even cause physical harm as you experience stress while replaying past injustices.

Perhaps you’ve been abused in significant ways. If that’s the case, bitterness is a natural response. But it’s not a helpful one if you’re unable to move past what happened or forgive. It’s a place you can’t stay.

Don’t get sucked into bitterness. Turn instead toward grace—for yourself and those who’ve hurt you. Tell God what happened and ask for help moving forward. He may point you toward therapy, self-reflection...maybe even forgiveness.