

A FIELD GUIDE FOR MEN

Day One

The new man's first thirty days

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Something happened. You know it did. Maybe it was a quiet minute alone, maybe it was a room full of people, maybe it was a parking lot at two in the morning. You told God the truth about yourself, you turned from it, and you believed what He did about it. You crossed over. That's not a figure of speech. It's real, and it already happened, and nothing you do today can undo it.

The relief is real. Let it be real. You feel lighter because you are lighter. Something got carried off you that you'd been dragging for years.

But there's a second feeling right behind the relief, and you'd be lying if you said it wasn't there. What now. What do I do with this. Nobody handed you instructions. That's what this is for. Not a religion to perform. A field guide for the next thirty days, written by a man who wants you to actually make it.

1. You are a son now, not a man on probation

Here's the first thing to get straight, because it decides everything after it. You did not just enlist in a program where you prove yourself for a while and maybe, if you're good enough, you get to stay. That's not what happened. You got adopted. You have a Father now, and you got Him the same way every man in the Bible got Him: as a gift, not a wage.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

Read that again slow. Not of yourselves. You didn't earn one inch of it, which means you can't lose it by falling one inch short either. Grace got you in. Grace keeps you in. You're not on trial.

2. Expect the fight

Nobody told you getting saved deletes temptation, and if they did, they lied to you. The old pulls don't vanish the day you believe. Anger's still going to rise. The old habits are still going to knock. The enemy of your soul does not throw a party when a man walks out of his territory. He comes after him.

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

I don't want you scared. I want you awake. There's a difference. A man who expects the fight isn't shocked when it shows up. A man who thought salvation meant smooth sailing is the one who gets knocked flat by the first wave and starts wondering if any of it was real.

3. When you fall, get up

You will fall. Not might. Will. Some old sin is going to catch you off guard, or some new one you didn't know you had. Here's what you do with that: you get up, and you go straight back to your Father, not away from Him.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Shame tells you to hide. Confession is you walking back into the light on purpose and naming the thing out loud to the God who already knew before you said it. He's not surprised. He's faithful. That word matters more than you know right now.

4. Open the Book

Start in a Gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, doesn't matter which, pick one and read it like you're meeting Him for the first time, because in a way you are. Don't start in Leviticus. Don't start in Revelation. Start where Jesus is walking around talking to people, because that's how you learn His voice.

"Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

You're a newborn right now. Newborns don't need a theology degree. They need milk, and they need it regular. Ten minutes a day beats an hour once a week. Build the habit before you build the depth.

5. Talk to Him like He's your Father

You don't need the right words. You don't need to sound like anybody's pastor. Prayer is a son talking to his Father, plain and honest, and that's it.

"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Tell Him what actually happened today. Tell Him what you're scared of. Tell Him thank you. A prayer said honest in your truck on the way to work is not a lesser prayer than one said on your knees in a sanctuary. God isn't grading your delivery. He's listening to His son.

6. Get around real men in a real church

You were not built to do this alone, and the enemy knows it. A man off by himself is a man easy to pick off. Find a church that actually preaches the Bible, and don't just show up on Sunday and leave. Find men there. Let them know your name and your struggle, not just

your face.

"And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

This isn't optional. It's not a nice extra for men who have time. It's not what keeps you saved. It's how you keep standing.

7. Get baptized

Get baptized as a believer, by full immersion, as soon as your church can walk you through it. Here's what it is and what it isn't. It is not a payment. You already paid nothing, remember, it was a gift. Baptism doesn't add to what grace already finished. What it is: a picture. You go under, and that's you saying Christ's death is now your death to the old life. You come up, and that's you saying His resurrection is now your new life too.

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

It's a public marker. A line in the sand your own eyes and everyone else's can see. Don't put it off out of nerves. Do it.

8. Tell somebody what happened

You don't need a script. You don't need every doctrine locked down before you open your mouth. Tell one person what actually happened to you.

"Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19).

Start with one name. A wife, a brother, a buddy who'd never guess. Say it plain. "Something changed in me." Let the rest come out as it comes.

You didn't do this to yourself, and you're not the one who has to finish it either. This is Christ's work in you now, start to end, and He does not start a job and walk off partway through.

"He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

One inch at a time, brother. You're not on probation. You're a son who just came home, and your Father isn't going anywhere.

The verses to have ready

- **When you doubt you're really in:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).
- **When shame tries to convict you:** "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).
- **When you fall and don't know what to do:** "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
- **When the fight feels like proof it isn't working:** "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).
- **When you need to walk toward God instead of away:** "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).
- **When you wonder if He'll finish what He started:** "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

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