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Insights

The Way to a New Life

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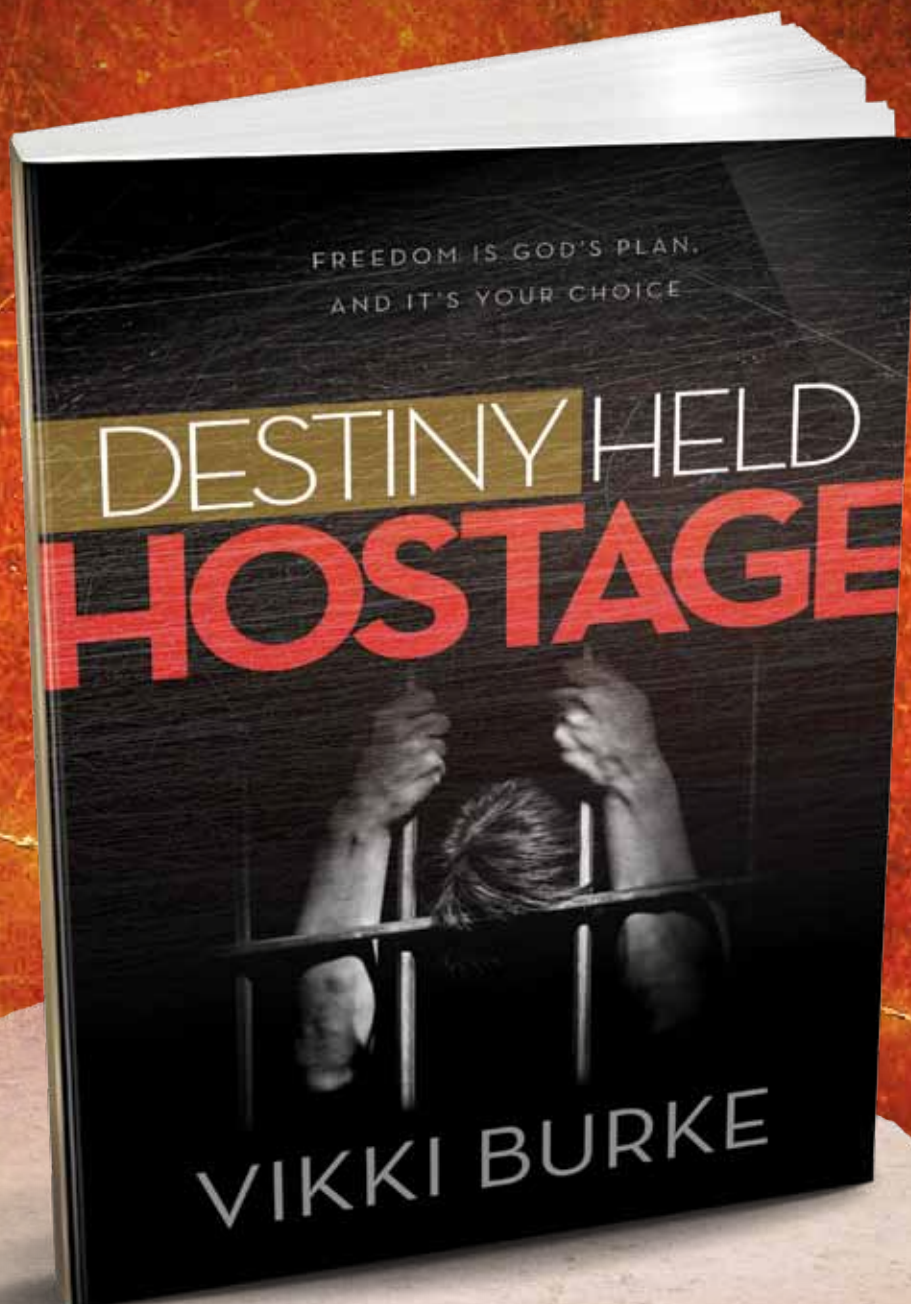
GOD'S

FAIL-SAFE
ESCAPE
PLAN



NEW

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Christians everywhere have been blindsided by betrayal at some point in their lives.

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God created you to be a victor, not a survivor. But in order to come out on the other side victorious with your destiny intact, you need to know the tricks of the enemy and learn how to outsmart the devil at his own game.

Vikki Burke shares those truths within the powerful pages of this book.

With the knowledge you'll gain in this book, you'll finally be able to silence the offense in your life and use your voice to declare His Word, confident that God will repay you whatever the devil has stolen through injustice, mistreatment, or offense. It's time to take back what belongs to you. It's time to reclaim your destiny!

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GOOD

BY VIKKI BURKE

WE ARE ALL TEMPTED

to sin at one time or another. In fact, as long as we are alive, the devil will tempt us to engage in some kind of sin. Sometimes we're tempted to eat a second piece of pie or give

the crazy driver on the road a piece of our mind. We all know these temptations should be resisted, but if we occasionally give in to them, they don't necessarily shatter our future.



to free us from sin's power. Our rightstanding with God is absolute. But we cannot deny that when we engage in habitual sin, our Christian walk is adversely affected, whether that stronghold

in our lives was self-imposed or we were taken advantage of by the devil.

For some of us, fighting lifelong sin has made us feel fearful and ashamed. But God's grace is designed to enable us to do what we are unable to do on our own. That includes conquering habits and addictions—and getting free from the burdensome weight of unsundered sin, once and for all.

Hebrews addresses the hindrance caused by the weight of sin: "Since we

have such a huge crowd of men of faith watching us from the grandstands, let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up; and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us."¹ Even though the witnesses of the Old Covenant only had types and shadows of what was to come, they are applauded for the accomplishments of their faith. The knowledge that these Old Covenant spectators are watching us, cheering us on to the finish line, should provoke us to live a more honorable lifestyle. We should not be outdone by these Old Covenant witnesses when we have greater and more precious promises available to us! Regretfully, some Christians are being tripped up year after year by the same sin—one that is wrapped tightly around their feet. If that describes you, it's time to get free—*really* free—of the weight caused by longstanding wrong habits and addictions so you can finally run your race unconstrained.

Paul encouraged those plagued by chronic sin with this thought: *You are not alone*. He said, "No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it."²

However, far too many Christians have struggled with lifelong habits and addictions that have locked them a prison of secrecy. This includes what I call "socially acceptable addictions," such as the one I once sported as a workaholic. Not only do these chronic habits hinder us from reaching the degree of success God intends for us, but they also bring a truckload of guilt, shame, and condemnation to weigh us down.

We know that Jesus paid the price

S → FAIL-SAFE ESCAPE PLAN

Maybe you've been convinced that freedom from the recurring sin is impossible, but it's not. God will be there to help you come through it! Your emancipation can begin with the realization that others have faced the same sin you're dealing with. You're not alone; others have successfully navigated this course before you and won—so you can win too! Don't allow the devil to convince you it's hopeless. God will not let you down!

The first time I read a book about codependency (which dealt with my work addiction), it gave me such a boost just to know that I wasn't crazy! Others had gone through the same thing I was going through, and they had overcome it. That set me on the path to conquering addiction and codependency.

There is a degree of comfort in knowing that others have faced what you are dealing with and have overcome it. It demonstrates that sin cannot keep anyone bound who will appropriate God's Word. It provides evidence that you can be free as well!

Guilt and shame will tell you that you're the only one who succumbs to temptation. But that kind of thinking will cause you to cover yourself with a "fig leaf" and hide like Adam did after he had sinned. It will cause you to put up with sin instead of dominating it.

As believers, we're not supposed to just "cope with" whatever the devil

decides to impose on us; instead, we are to conquer it! If we are to successfully run our race, we must deal with the sin that weighs us down.

David is a great encouragement to me. He was such a strong, proactive kind of guy. He didn't dilly dally with giants—he *slew* them! David's assertive attitude is displayed throughout Psalm 18, one of my personal favorites. This is a psalm of victory after God delivered David from his enemies. Notice verse 17 from the *New Living Translation*: "He delivered me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated me and were too strong

so they could not get up; they fell beneath my feet. You have armed me with strength for battle; you have subdued my enemies under my feet. You made them turn and run; I destroyed all who hated me. I ground them as fine as dust carried by the wind. I swept them into the gutter like dirt."³

David didn't fool around with his enemies! He didn't just push them back until the pressure was more bearable. And he didn't just pass the time until his enemies were in hot pursuit of him. No,

If airlines, hotels, and theaters can provide a way of escape when there isn't an emergency, then we can plan (with the Holy Spirit's help) a way of escape to avoid disaster too!"

for me." If you're dealing with chronic sin that appears to be too strong for you, then continue to read how David obtained victory from those who were too strong for him.

"I chased my enemies and caught them; I did not stop until all were conquered. I struck them down

not David! He pursued his enemies and destroyed them so they were unable to return to harass him ever again!

You have to be just as ruthless and persistent with the enemies of your soul! You can't wait until you're under tremendous pressure and temptation to desperately cry out to God for help. That's not how David handled it. He didn't

wait until he was in trouble. He chased his enemies and beat them until there was nothing left except a little dust to be swept into the gutter! What a man! It's no wonder God called him a man after His own heart!

It doesn't really matter what enemy you're dealing with or how long it's been embedded in your soul, God will always come alongside you to help when you pursue your enemies with His power! The Apostle John makes this bold declaration regarding the things that try to lead you astray: "But they're no match for what is embedded deeply within you—Christ's anointing, no less!..."⁴

There is nothing in the universe more powerful than the anointing of God. The prophet Isaiah brings to light just how powerful this anointing is when he penned these words: "The burden will depart from off your shoulder, and his yoke from off your neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing."⁵ This anointing was the source of power that raised Jesus from the dead. It will remove sin's burden and destroy the yoke that has tripped you up if you'll pursue your enemies with the same determination and resolve David had.

In dealing with temptation Paul wrote, "But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently."⁶ Notice Paul said that God provides a way of escape for "every" temptation, test, trial—not just those *we* regard as frivolous or lightweight! He *always* provides a way of escape for *every* temptation.

When we are pressed into a corner, that's exactly what we need: a fail-safe way of escape! God is, after all, Jehovah Jireh, our Provider. Whatever we need, whenever we need it, God promises to provide it. This means that with every temptation we experience, God provides a way of escape,

and we merely need to tap into His escape plan!

If you are familiar with the names of God, you know that Abram called God *Jehovah Jireh* when He provided a ram to be sacrificed instead of Abram's son, Isaac.⁷ If you're like me, you've heard many sermons preached on Jehovah Jireh



providing your every need. Most of the time, these sermons are in reference to financial need. But too often, when we become familiar with a concept such as God providing our financial needs, we limit Him to becoming "our financial provider."

However, God doesn't limit Himself to one area of our lives. He meets *all* our needs. Jehovah Jireh promised to provide a way of escape when we are being tempted. Although that need isn't financial, it is a crucial need nonetheless! God is familiar with what tempts each of us and will provide an escape plan every time.

When Joseph was tempted sexually by Potiphar's wife, his way of escape was to *run!* Certainly if Joseph had been able to decide where he worked, he wouldn't have chosen to work in the same house with Mrs. Potiphar! He would have chosen to work anywhere else just to avoid her. But slaves didn't get to choose how they served their master, so when Joseph was faced with temptation, he took the only way of escape—he ran for his life! A man's got to do what a man's got to do!

I know I'm a simple person, but it seems reasonable that if God said He would provide a way of escape, we should be able to ask Him to show us the details of His plan. In fact, we can even become skilled at recognizing triggers that put us

in position to be tempted and then taking advantage of the escape He provided us *in advance!*


Don't allow yourself to get in that position again—*run!* It stands to reason that if the same temptation keeps dogging our trail, He can help us plan ways of escape ahead of time. He is not hiding

anything from us. He will show us His escape plan in advance if we will seek Him for it.

Jesus spoke to us in parables, or word pictures, that were designed to help us understand not just His story, but principles that can be applied in many areas of life. In one of these word pictures, He compared the Kingdom of Heaven to ten virgins. He described five of them as wise virgins because they'd brought oil with them to light their lamps. Regarding the five virgins who did *not* bring oil for their lamps, Jesus called *them* foolish.

When the time came to use the lamps, the wise virgins were prepared with the necessary oil to light them. And in typical fashion, the foolish virgins who did not bring oil for their lamps expected the wise virgins to help them out of their self-induced jam! The distinguishing factor that set the wise virgins apart from the foolish virgins is straightforward: *The wise virgins had prepared in advance.* They didn't wait until they were in desperate need like the foolish virgins—because by then, it was too late.

What principle did Jesus establish with this word picture? It's simple: *Preparation time is never wasted time.* It's an extremely important part of any successful endeavor—whether business,



family, finances, or a recurring temptation. “Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.”⁸

Planning is so important that Jesus called those who were prepared *wise* and those who were unprepared *foolish*. Those are very strong words! In order to avoid being categorized with foolish, we must be *prepared*.

Several years ago, a pastor’s wife criticized me for being a planner. She said, “People who plan leave out the Holy Spirit.” I have to be honest—her words heaped a load of condemnation on me for a long time. But one day while I was beating myself up for planning something, God broke into my thoughts. (I’m so glad He does that!) He made it clear to me that He was the Ultimate Planner. “After all,” He said, “I planned redemption before the foundation of the earth!” (I realized that in comparison to Him, my planning skills are at “rank amateur” level!) From that point on, instead of feeling condemned for being a planner, I realized that my propensity for planning put me in pretty good company!

If God is the ultimate Planner, and He is, we can be confident that His escape plan will be ready long before we need it. In fact, I wouldn’t be surprised, because I’m somewhat familiar with God’s ways, if He planned our escape from the foundation of the world! He is more committed to our success than we are, so why wouldn’t He?

Jesus said one of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to “...tell you things to come.”⁹ In other words, He can show you how to escape temptation *before* you become its casualty.

What makes us think we can wait until we are in the thick of temptation to plan a way of escape and succeed? Most

of the time, when we are being tempted, we aren’t in any condition to think clearly enough to make a plan! The better idea—the prepared approach—would be to *plan ahead!* If a temptation is chronic or recurring, wouldn’t it be best to map out a plan of escape while you’re *not* being tempted and still able to think clearly?

We can find countless examples in life of this kind of wise planning that can help us escape in times of danger. For example, in case of an emergency, the airlines announce an escape route prior to take off—long before there is a need for it. “White lights,” they say, “will illuminate and direct you to an exit, which is clearly marked over the cabin door.” Hotels have an evacuation map directing you to an escape route posted by the elevators and in each room. Exits are clearly marked above each door with red illuminated signs. The same is true with movie theaters. If airlines, hotels, and theaters can provide a way of escape when there isn’t an emergency, then we can plan (with the Holy Spirit’s help) a way of escape to avoid disaster too!

Romans 8:26 assures us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. The Greek word for “help” means *to take hold together with someone against weakness*. The Holy Spirit is prepared to help us overcome the areas of weakness that we have tolerated for so long. However, although the Spirit of God takes hold together with us against

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the weakness in our lives, *we* must be against that area of weakness first; otherwise, the Holy Spirit has nothing to take hold of. He cannot do it for us. However, He is completely committed to getting in the trenches with us and fighting on our behalf. God will take hold *with* us, but we must initiate it.

God is faithful. His Word can be trusted to see us

through “any temptation.” Not only will the Holy Spirit help us when we are weak, but we can build ourselves up prior to an attack and have our shield of faith poised for any fiery darts that trigger temptation. Jude tells us one way to do this: “...building each other up in your most holy faith, praying in the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰

Too many people wait until they are being attacked before they pray or declare the Word. I call this *defensive living*. When living defensively, people wait until there’s an attack. Then they pray, pray, pray and confess like never before, and expect something miraculous to happen.

But the best way to live is to pray and speak the Word long before we’re under attack. This is what I call *offensive living*. When we practice an offensive lifestyle, most of the fiery darts are thwarted before they even get to us. Similarly, we can build ourselves up prior to temptation and dispel many of the attacks.

While I was studying the verse from

dennis & vikki burke
upcoming meetings



June 8

The Word Church of Lloydminster
 1802 49th Ave
 Lloydminster, SASK S9V 1T2
 CANADA
 306-825-9673

June 22

Victory Christian Center
 7625 IH-35 North
 Austin, TX 78752
 512-458-9100

July 20

Praise Center Church
 420 West Murray Ave
 Visalia, CA 93291
 559-733-2744

July 27

Faith Church
 4080 South Danville Bypass
 Danville, KY 40422
 859-236-4995

May 2-4

Heritage of Faith Family Church
 52406 Highway 12
 Frisco NC 27936
 252-995-6677

May 18

Living Word Christian Center
 7600 W. Roosevelt Rd
 Forest Park, IL 60130
 708-697-5000

May 31-June 1

Houston Faith Church
 5630 N. Eldridge Pkwy #400
 Houston TX 77041
 281-870-1010

continued from pg. 7

First Corinthians 10:13, I was compelled to read the entire chapter daily, and that's when I made a powerful discovery. Paul begins the chapter by recounting the miraculous signs the children of Israel witnessed in the wilderness. But, even after all they had seen and experienced, they displeased God because they continued to crave evil things; some of them even died as a result of their behavior. This is written as a warning, Paul said, to us who live at the end of the age so we won't follow their example of witnessing the power of God and then continuing to crave evil things.

Here's what surprised me. In the middle of exhorting us on temptation, Paul seemed to change subjects. He said:

"When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ? And though we are many, we all eat from one loaf of bread, showing that we are one body.... You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too."¹¹

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I didn't make the connection between sin and Communion until I was in a meeting where the minister began speaking by the Spirit about addictions. He said if those who were dealing with addictions would receive Communion daily, that addiction would have to go! Then it struck me what Paul said that supported this word of wisdom. When you break bread and drink of the cup, you share in Christ's body, and you cannot partake of the Lord and demonic addictions at the same time! Christ—the anointed One and His anointing—will break the bondage of addictions! The anointing breaks bondage and destroys yokes!

If you are dealing with chronic sin or wrong habits, let this word encourage you. Begin receiving Communion daily as you seek the Lord for a fail-safe escape plan. Pray in the Holy Spirit until He reveals His escape plan. Don't wait until you're tempted again; instead, *pursue* the enemies of your soul! Grind them as fine as dust that is carried by the wind. Then sweep it into the gutter like dirt!

Next, *don't quit until your enemies are destroyed*. It doesn't matter how long it takes, what matters is that you conquer them, once and for all!

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he *will* flee from you."¹²

¹Heb. 12:1, ²TLB | ³1 Cor. 10:13 MSG | ⁴Ps. 18:37-40, 42 | ⁵1s. 10:27 WEB | ⁶1 Cor. 10:13 AMP | ⁷Gen. 22:13 | ⁸Prov. 24:3 TLB
⁹John 16:13 NKJV | ¹⁰Jude 20 | ¹¹1 Cor. 10:16, 21 | ¹²James 4:7



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