

'Blueprint' For Living

In his new book, gospel music star Kirk Franklin draws  *God's plan for abundant life*

Unwanted. Abandoned. Addicted.

Promiscuous. These are only a few words that describe Kirk Franklin's

early life. But they no longer define him.

In his latest book, *The Blueprint*

(Gotham Books), Franklin offers straight-up, honest advice taken from

his own experiences to show that you can rebuild your life based on the

blueprint, or plan, God has for you.

The Grammy-winning artist offers a

practical template, not just good buzzwords. "It's [crucial] ... having

someone that can really show you step-by-step how to respond through

some difficult issues in life," he says.

Franklin tackles tough topics and writes

candidly about marriage, singles, men, women and racism. He addresses

the consequences of premarital sex and the responsibility of being a

parent. He even calls the church to accountability.

"If you preach to people without loving them, then you've wasted your time."

Franklin believes God will use all

circumstances, good and bad, to work for our good. He's also living

proof that the past doesn't have to determine the future. Men

can be
great fathers even if they lacked a great dad. Women can be
loving
mothers even if their own abandoned or hated them. We will
have to let
go of things that could hold us back, the author says, while
assuring
us the pain of loss will not compare to what we will gain.

Franklin also strongly believes in
mentoring. "It's one thing to give somebody the tools, but
it's another
thing to walk them through that process."

His own transformation came largely
through his relationship with his pastor, Tony Evans. And
though his
book positions Franklin to be for others what Evans was for
him, he
hopes to connect in a way some sermons or other self-help
books can't.

"Sometimes the pulpit and the pew
separate us," he says. "[This book is like] the pastor coming
down,
taking off his shoes and he's sitting up on the pew with you
and ya'll
are laughing and cracking up and joking—and in between the
laughing
there's some crying and some questions and some back-and-
forth."

Writing with a no-excuse attitude,
Franklin still presents the truth in an encouraging way,
making it
obvious that his deep desire is to see others experience the
fulfilling, abundant life God specifically created for them.