

Old Man, New Man

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A newspaper reporter asked me recently why charismatic churches grow. I said it's because most of them welcome "hurting people." And, Lord knows, there are plenty of hurting people out there looking for answers that only Jesus can bring.

Sadly, I've found that many continue to hurt after they're in the church—especially men, who often are too proud to admit they struggle with secret sins and what the Bible calls the "old man."

Though men who have accepted Jesus are destined to soar like eagles, too many don't. It's time, I believe, to put aside the "old man" and become "new men" in Christ.

That's why I've written my first book, Old Man, New Man, which will be published in mid-September. I consider it an extension of the ministry of New Man magazine. In fact, those who buy the book will automatically receive a free one-year subscription to New Man.

Old Man, New Man is an outgrowth of two things:

- * My experience in mentoring a small group of committed men for the last eight years

- * My own spiritual odyssey.

I was raised in a Christian home but went through a rebellious stage as a teen-ager. I had genuine experiences with God at summer youth camps but lost the fervor to serve God after I went back to school.

It wasn't until halfway through college that I made a radical, life-changing commitment to follow Jesus. Early on I experienced the inner struggle between knowing what was right but not being able to do it. And I learned the need for discipleship—what we sometimes call mentoring today.

In recent years I've become a mentor to men who have this struggle—wanting to follow Christ but not being able to overcome spiritual strongholds in their lives. As I've opened my heart and my life in New Man magazine, I've found I've hit a chord. Men want to change. They want to serve God. They want to overcome the hurts of the past, but they don't know how.

And what a pity. God has a plan and purpose for each man. Yet too many suffer in quiet desperation, bound by habits and addictions they are too ashamed to admit they have and not knowing how to break free.

One of the biggest areas of weakness for men is the sexual area. Even men in the church struggle. The few studies that have been done show alarmingly high percentages of Christian men who are bound to pornography and lust.

I deal head-on with these addictions in the book. I tell men: You don't have to be bound. Jesus has come to set you free. Satan is out to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus has come to

give life more abundantly.

Of course men deal with other problems, too. Many are wounded because they had no father or were never fathered by the one they had. Others hurt because they were abandoned or abused. As a result, they have no vision for their own lives and are unable to minister to their sons.

I know I don't have all the answers to these problems, but Jesus does. So the focus of the book is to point men to Him. There are chapters on overcoming the strongholds that hold men back and receiving the power of the Holy Spirit to live an overcoming life.

I also give practical ways for men to renew their minds. I tell them how to form meaningful accountability relationships with other men.

Toward the end of the book I share with readers practical ways to get their acts together spiritually, financially and physically. I give suggestions on setting goals and making marriage great. My prayer is that thousands of men will be shown how they can become new men in Christ.

I believe the book has something for every man—the one who struggles not to backslide and the one who is spiritually mature but wants practical suggestions for moving ahead. None of us ever arrives. We all are working out our salvation on a continual basis, moving toward the goal of becoming the “new man in Christ” we are destined to become.

Stephen Strang is the founding editor of Charisma magazine. He encourages men who would like to attend the first ever New Man event Sept. 15-16 in Jacksonville, Fla., to register today by calling (800) 837-0378.