THE LEVEL 7 SYNDICATE · A CHRIST-CENTERED EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE JESUS WAY

LEVEL 7 FIELD MANUAL

The Tier One Standard for Christian Men Who Lead — in Body, Being, Balance, and Business

BODY · BEING · BALANCE · BUSINESS

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THE JESUS WAY — LEVEL 7 SYNDICATE FIELD MANUAL
The Tier One Standard for Christian Men Who Lead

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THE BRIEFING

YOU BUILT THE EMPIRE. NOW BUILD THE MAN.

Every man in this room has already won.

You built the company. You made the payroll. You closed the deals, survived the bad years, and grew something most men only talk about. By every scoreboard the world uses, you are a success.

And yet you are here.

You are here because you know something the scoreboard does not show. You know that a man can grow revenue and shrink as a person. You know that a man can be respected by 200 employees and be a stranger to his own kids. You know that a man can have a thousand contacts and NOT ONE brother who would sit with him in a hospital waiting room at 3 a.m.

Jesus asked the question every high-performing man needs burned into his mind:

> *"What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"*
>
> MATTHEW 16:26

That is why the Level 7 Syndicate exists.

The Syndicate is a Christ-centered executive council for men who openly follow Jesus Christ and refuse to let success be the ceiling. Men who want their faith to shape their leadership, their decisions, their marriages, their fathering, and their stewardship. Men who are done being average anywhere — including at home.

The standard we train to is called **TIER ONE**.

WHAT TIER ONE MEANS

In special operations, Tier One units are the smallest, most selected, most trained teams in the military. They are not elite because they are born better. They are elite because they hold a standard that most men will not hold — every day, in every condition, whether anyone is watching or not.

That is what Tier One means in the Syndicate. Not a title. A STANDARD.

A Tier One man is not elite in one area and average in the rest. He does not have a world-class business and a second-rate marriage. He does not have a strong body and a weak soul. He does not lead 200 people well and lead his own children poorly.

He is Tier One in all four areas of the Core 4:

- **BODY** — the vessel God gave him.
- **BEING** — his identity and his walk with God.
- **BALANCE** — his marriage, his children, his brothers, and the men he builds.
- **BUSINESS** — how he leads, earns, keeps, and grows what God has entrusted to him.

THE TREE OF LIFE

The Core 4 works like a tree.

BODY is the soil. Nothing grows in bad soil. A man running on four hours of sleep, fast food, and caffeine is trying to grow an oak in sand.

BEING is the root. The deeper the root, the stronger the tree holds when the storm comes. A man with shallow roots looks strong until the wind blows.

BALANCE is the tree itself. The trunk is your wife. The branches are your children, family, and friends. The leaves are your wider connections and the men you invest in.

BUSINESS is the fruit. Fruit is the RESULT of a healthy tree, not the reason for it. Most men try to force the fruit while the soil is depleted, the roots are shallow, and the trunk is cracking. It never works for long.

"You do not have a business problem, a marriage problem, and a health problem. You have ONE problem showing up in three places. Fix the man and you fix the map."

— DONALD BURNS

THE WAY

This field manual is built on one idea: the way Jesus lived is the most complete leadership system ever lived.

Jesus did not say, "Admire Me." He said, "Follow Me."

He was a tradesman before He was a teacher. He was physically strong enough to walk the length of Israel on foot. He was rooted in prayer. He loved His friends, honored women, stopped for children, built twelve men who outlasted Him, and carried more pressure than any executive who has ever lived — without once losing control of Himself.

That is the Tier One standard. Not a man who admires Jesus. A man who FOLLOWS Him — in his body, his being, his home, and his business.

Following is a verb. Let's go to work.

— db

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO USE THIS FIELD MANUAL

This manual has six parts:

- **PART ONE — THE SOIL: BODY**
- **PART TWO — THE ROOT: BEING**
- **PART THREE — THE TREE: BALANCE**
- **PART FOUR — THE FRUIT: BUSINESS**
- **PART FIVE — THE CAMPAIGN** — a 90-day Tier One plan.
- **PART SIX — THE ARMORY** — assessments, field card, Scripture, and the Syndicate council protocol.

Every chapter follows the same mission format, so you always know where you are:

1. **SITREP** — the real situation most high-performing men face in this area.
2. **INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID** — what the Gospels actually show us.
3. **DOCTRINE** — the one principle to carry out of the chapter.
4. **FIELD REPORT** — a short story of a man who ran this mission.
5. **THE OPERATION** — the step-by-step process.
6. **FIELD ORDERS** — what you will execute in the next seven days.
7. **DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES** — for your journal and your council.
8. **COMMS** — a short prayer to close.

One chapter per week. Execute the Field Orders before you move on. Reading without executing is entertainment.

Never alone. This manual is built to be worked inside the Syndicate. Jesus sent His men out two by two. Bring your Field Orders and your Debrief answers to your council.

Brutal honesty. The Debrief questions only work if you answer them like nobody is grading you. Nobody is. God already knows. The questions are for YOU.

About the Field Reports. The men in the Field Reports are composites. Names, companies, and details have been changed and combined, but every situation is drawn from patterns that play out again and again among high-performing men.

A note on Scripture. Scripture quotations are taken from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), which has been released into the public domain. Read the full passages in the translation you love. The context is always richer than the quote.

PART ONE

THE SOIL: BODY

Nothing grows in bad soil

CHAPTER 1

THE CARPENTER'S BLUEPRINT

The Core 4 audit every Tier One man runs first

SITREP

High performers love systems. You have a system for sales. A system for hiring. A system for cash flow, inventory, and reporting. You have dashboards that tell you exactly how the business is doing at any minute of the day.

And most of you run your life with NO SYSTEM AT ALL.

Ask a successful man what his system is for his health, his walk with God, his marriage, his kids, and his friendships, and you will usually get a blank stare — or a vague promise to "get to it after this quarter."

Life by default is not neutral. It drifts. It drifts toward busy, toward tired, toward distracted. And the quarter never ends.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Before Jesus preached a single sermon, He spent roughly 30 years in obscurity. Most of those years, He worked a trade. The people of Nazareth knew Him as "the carpenter" (Mark 6:3). He quoted jobs, delivered on promises, dealt with difficult clients, and closed up shop at the end of long days.

Luke gives us one sentence about those hidden years that works as a complete blueprint for a man's life:

> *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."*
>
> LUKE 2:52

Look closely. That sentence is the Core 4.

- **Stature** — His body. BODY.
- **Favor with God** — His spirit. BEING.
- **Favor with man** — His relationships. BALANCE.
- **Wisdom** — His mind, His judgment, His work. BUSINESS.

He grew in all four. Not one at the expense of the others.

DOCTRINE

A Tier One man is not elite in one area and average in three. The same discipline that built your business must now build your body, your soul, your home, and your brotherhood. ONE MAN. FOUR AREAS. ONE STANDARD.

The word integrity comes from the same root as integer — a whole number. One undivided thing. Most high performers are split. "Business Me" is sharp and relentless. "Church Me" is calm for 90 minutes. "Home Me" is exhausted. That split is where integrity cracks. And cracks always spread.

FIELD REPORT

Ryan — Founder, commercial construction company, 140 employees

Ryan's company crossed $40 million in revenue the same year his doctor told him he was pre-diabetic, his wife moved into the guest room, and his 15-year-old stopped speaking to him except to ask for money.

He did not see it coming because he was not measuring it. He knew his backlog to the dollar. He could not have told you the last time he prayed, worked out, or asked his daughter a real question.

At his first Syndicate council, he scored himself on the Core 4. Business: 9. Body: 3. Being: 2. Balance: 2. Another man at the table said, "So you're a 9 in the one area that won't be at your funeral."

Ryan said later it was the most expensive sentence he ever heard — and the most valuable.

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Name your roles. Write down every role you carry: follower of Jesus, husband, father, CEO, leader, friend, mentor, son, brother, church member. It is usually longer than you think.

Step 2: Rank them twice. First, rank them by how important you SAY they are. Second, rank them by where your time, energy, and attention actually went last week. The gap between those two lists is the most honest picture of your life you will ever see.

Step 3: Run the Core 4 audit. Score yourself from 1 to 10 in each area. Your first number is usually the true one.

PILLAR	THE QUESTION	SCORE
BODY	Am I sleeping, training, and fueling like a man who plans to lead for 30 more years?	
BEING	Am I meeting with God daily, or visiting Him on Sundays?	
BALANCE	Would my wife, kids, and brothers say they get the best of me?	
BUSINESS	Am I leading, earning, keeping, and growing wealth as a faithful steward?	

Step 4: Write your Tier One sentence for each role. "When I am living the Jesus Way as a _____, the people closest to me experience _____." Example: "When I am living the Jesus Way as a father, my kids experience a dad who is present, patient, and proud of them."

Step 5: Pick your starting point. Do not try to fix everything this week. Choose the ONE pillar where the gap hurt most to look at. The rest of this manual will get to everything else.

FIELD ORDERS

- Complete Steps 1 through 5 in a journal. Paper, not your phone.
- Show your scores to your wife or a Syndicate brother. Ask, "Is this accurate?" Then stop talking and listen.

- Read Mark 1 through Mark 3. Watch how Jesus spent His time.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Which pillar have you been neglecting the longest — and what excuse have you used?
2. Where is "Business Me" different from "Home Me," and who pays for that difference?
3. If your wife scored you in each pillar, how would her numbers differ from yours?
4. What would your kids say is your number one priority?
5. What have you told yourself you will fix "after this season"?
6. What would change in a year if you treated your life with the discipline you give your business?
7. What is one thing you will do in the next 24 hours to prove you mean it?

COMMS

Lord Jesus, You grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. I confess I have built systems for everything except the things that matter most. I have given my business my best and my family my leftovers. Put me back together. Make me one man in every room. Show me where to start — and give me the courage to start today. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

THE VESSEL

Stewarding the body God gave you

SITREP

High-performing men treat their companies like assets and their bodies like rental cars.

You would never run your best piece of equipment without maintenance. You would never let your top facility go years without an inspection. But you sleep five hours a night, eat at your desk, live on caffeine, skip the annual physical, and wonder why your patience, your focus, and your energy are not what they used to be.

Your body is the soil of the entire Core 4. When the body is depleted, everything else gets harder. Tired men are shorter with their wives, harsher with their teams, more tempted, and less clear in their decisions.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

People often picture Jesus as soft and frail. The Gospels show a different man.

He was a tradesman who worked with wood and stone. He walked nearly everywhere He went — across Galilee, through Samaria, up to Jerusalem — often for days at a time. He climbed mountains to pray (Luke 6:12). He went 40 days in the wilderness fasting (Matthew 4:2). He drove the money changers out of the temple with a whip of cords (John 2:15).

He also rested. He slept in a boat during a storm (Mark 4:38). He led His men away to rest when they were worn out (Mark 6:31). He ate with people constantly — so often that His critics accused Him of eating and drinking too much (Matthew 11:19).

Scripture is clear that the body matters to God:

> *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body."*
>
> **1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20**

Your body is not just yours. It is a temple, entrusted to you. It is a stewardship issue, not a vanity issue.

DOCTRINE

Your body is the only vessel you get for the mission God gave you. Neglect it, and you shorten the mission. Steward it, and you extend your impact on your family, your company, and the men you lead.

"In Pararescue, your body was mission equipment. You did not get to skip maintenance and still expect it to perform when lives were on the line. Your family's lives are on the line. Maintain the equipment."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Darren — CEO, regional logistics firm

Darren was 52, 60 pounds heavier than he was at 30, and proud of being "the first in, last out." He prided himself on running on four to five hours of sleep. Then he had chest pains on a flight to a board meeting.

It was not a heart attack. It was a warning. His cardiologist said, "You have the blood pressure of a man who wants to leave his company to someone else soon."

Darren started treating his body like he treated his business — with metrics, a plan, and accountability. He got a full physical. He walked every morning before work and prayed while he walked. He hired a trainer three days a week. He set a hard rule: lights out by 10 p.m. He told his Syndicate council his numbers every month.

Eighteen months later, he was down 45 pounds, his blood pressure was in a healthy range, and his executive team noticed something they had not seen in years: patience.

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Get the data. Schedule a full physical with bloodwork this month. You cannot manage what you do not measure. Know your numbers.

Step 2: Guard your sleep. Set a lights-out time and protect it like a board meeting. Most adults need seven to nine hours. Phone out of the bedroom. Sleep is not laziness. Even Jesus slept in the storm.

Step 3: Move every day. Walk, lift, run, ride, train — whatever you will actually do. Build it into the calendar like a meeting. Pair it with prayer: a prayer walk feeds the body and the root at the same time.

Step 4: Fuel for the mission. Eat like a man with a long assignment. More real food, less processed food, more water, less alcohol. If you need help, get a qualified professional, not a fad.

Step 5: Practice disciplined fasting. Jesus said "WHEN you fast," not "if" (Matthew 6:16). Start small — skip one meal and spend that time in prayer. If you have any medical condition, talk with your doctor before fasting.

Step 6: Report your numbers. Give your Syndicate council or one brother your key numbers monthly — sleep, training sessions, weight or blood pressure. What is reported improves.

FIELD ORDERS

- Book your physical this week.
- Set your lights-out time and keep it for seven straight nights.
- Train or walk at least five times this week. Track it.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. When was your last full physical — and what are you afraid it will show?
2. How many hours did you actually sleep each night last week?
3. What is your real reason for not training consistently?
4. How does your fatigue show up with your wife and kids?
5. What are you using to manage stress — food, alcohol, screens, work?
6. If your body were a company asset, would you fire the manager?
7. What will you change in your body in the next 7 days, and who will you tell?

COMMS

Father, my body is not my own. It is a temple, bought at a price. Forgive me for treating it like it does not matter. Give me the discipline to sleep, train, and fuel like a man on mission. Strengthen this vessel so I can serve my wife, my children, my company, and Your kingdom for many years to come. Amen.

PART TWO

THE ROOT: BEING

The deeper the root, the stronger the tree holds

CHAPTER 3

FATHER FIRST

Identity before activity — work FROM approval, not FOR it

SITREP

Ask a successful man, "Who are you?" and listen to the answer. Nine times out of ten, you will hear a title. "I'm the CEO of..." "I own..." "I built..."

That answer is a trap.

When your identity is your company, every bad quarter becomes a verdict on your worth. A lost client feels like a personal insult. A competitor's success feels like your failure. And when the business is doing well, you become proud, untouchable, and impossible to coach.

An identity built on performance is always one bad quarter from collapse.

And here is the part high performers rarely admit: many of us are still trying to win the approval of someone who is no longer watching — a father who never said "I'm proud of you," a coach who said we would never amount to anything, a version of ourselves we are still trying to prove wrong.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Watch the order of events at the start of Jesus' ministry. Before He preached, healed, or called a single disciple, He was baptized. As He came up out of the water, the Father spoke:

> *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"*
>
> MATTHEW 3:17

Jesus had not done ANYTHING yet in public ministry. No miracles. No crowds. No results. And the Father was already well pleased.

Identity first. Activity second.

Immediately after, Jesus went into the wilderness and was tempted. Look at how the enemy opened the attack: "IF You are the Son of God..." (Matthew 4:3). The first temptation was not about bread. It was about identity. Prove it. Perform. Earn it.

Jesus refused to perform for an identity He already had.

On the night before the cross, He gave His men the operating principle for everything else:

> *"I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing."*
>
> **JOHN 15:5**

A branch does not strain to produce fruit. It stays connected. The fruit is the result of the connection.

DOCTRINE

You do not work FOR approval. You work FROM approval. A man who knows whose he is no longer needs his company, his wife, his kids, or his peers to tell him who he is — and that is exactly what makes him dangerous in every room.

A leader who works from approval can take criticism without collapsing. A husband who works from approval does not need to win every argument. A father who works from approval does not need his kids' achievements to feel successful. A brother who works from approval can tell the truth without fear of rejection.

"The man who needs the room to love him can never lead the room. Get your approval settled upstairs, and you will be dangerous in every room downstairs."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Marcus — Managing partner, private equity firm

Marcus had done everything his father told him would make him a man. The Ivy League degree. The partnership. The house on the golf course. His father died before Marcus made partner, and Marcus had spent ten years chasing a "well done" that could never come.

Every deal was another attempt to earn it. When a deal fell apart, he could not sleep for a week. When one closed, the high lasted a day.

At a Syndicate retreat, Marcus read Matthew 3:17 out loud and broke down in front of eleven men. "God said that before Jesus did anything. I have never once believed it about myself."

He made an identity card. He read it every morning before he opened his laptop. Six months later, his wife said, "You don't come home from bad days like you used to. You come home."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Catch your identity statements. For one week, notice every time you introduce yourself or think about who you are. Write down exactly what you say. It will show you what you actually believe.

Step 2: Find your performance triggers. What events make you feel like a failure? A lost deal? A critical comment from your wife? A kid who struggles in school? Each trigger shows you where you have tied your worth to an outcome.

Step 3: Name the voice you are still trying to win. Whose approval are you still chasing? A parent? A coach? An old rival? Write their name down. Then write: "I release you from the job of telling me who I am."

Step 4: Write your true identity. Go to Scripture and write down what God says about those who belong to Him. Start here: beloved (1 John 3:1), a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), God's workmanship created for good works (Ephesians 2:10), a friend of Jesus (John 15:15). Put them on a card.

Step 5: Connect to the Vine before the market. Before you open your email, your dashboard, or the news each morning, spend at least ten minutes connected to God. NOTHING ELSE gets your first ten minutes.

Step 6: Separate your worth from your numbers. Before every financial review, say out loud: "These numbers tell me about my business. They do not tell me about my worth."

FIELD ORDERS

- Carry your identity card for seven days. Read it every morning before any screen.
- Write down the name of the person whose approval you are still chasing. Share it with one Syndicate brother.
- The next time a performance trigger hits, stop and read your card before you respond to anyone.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. If your company were sold or closed tomorrow, who would you be?
2. Whose approval are you still trying to earn?
3. What outcome right now has the most power over your mood?
4. How does your team experience you on a bad day?
5. Where have you been performing for an approval God already gave you?
6. What would you do differently this week if you truly believed you were already approved?
7. What lie about your identity are you ready to stop believing — today?

COMMS

Father, thank You that I am Your son before I do anything for You. Forgive me for chasing approval in my numbers, my reputation, and the voices of my past. I release every person I have been trying to prove something to. Teach me to remain in the Vine. Let my work flow out of my connection to You, not my need to prove myself. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOLITARY PLACE

Prayer, journaling, and the rhythms that kept Jesus strong under pressure

SITREP

High performers are addicted to motion. We confuse busy with productive and exhausted with faithful. We answer emails at red lights, check reports in bed, and sit in church drafting tomorrow's agenda in our heads.

Then we wonder why we snap at our kids, why our marriage feels thin, why our team walks on eggshells, and why God feels distant.

You cannot pour from an empty tank. And most successful men are running on fumes and calling it drive.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus had the most demanding schedule of anyone who ever lived. Crowds followed Him everywhere. He had twelve men to train, enemies trying to trap Him, and three years to change the world.

And yet:

> *"Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went out to a solitary place to pray."*
>
> MARK 1:35

Read what happened next. The disciples hunted Him down and said, "Everyone is looking for You!" (Mark 1:37). That is every executive's daily pressure in one sentence.

Jesus did not panic. He did not cave. He had already gotten His direction in the solitary place, so He knew exactly where to go next.

This was His rhythm, not a one-time event: "Yet He frequently withdrew to the wilderness to pray" (Luke 5:16). Before He chose His twelve men, He spent the entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12). He led His team into rest: "Come with Me privately to a solitary place, and let us rest for a while" (Mark 6:31). And He reminded people that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

DOCTRINE

The power Jesus showed in public was built in private. Your rhythms decide your results. If you do not schedule the solitary place, the crowd will schedule your whole life.

"We trained so hard in private that the mission felt familiar in public. Your quiet time is your training. Skip it, and pressure will find the weak spot every time."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Kevin — Owner, three-location auto dealership group

Kevin's phone started buzzing at 5:45 every morning and did not stop until midnight. He prayed "on the go" — which meant he barely prayed at all. He felt far from God and could not remember the last time he had heard anything from Him.

His Syndicate council challenged him to a 30-day test: 20 minutes every morning in the same chair, with a Bible and a journal, before his phone came out of the drawer.

The first week felt like a waste of time. By the third week, he noticed something. He had written the same concern about one of his general managers four mornings in a row. He acted on it, had a hard conversation, and discovered the GM was about to walk out and take two top salespeople with him. Kevin kept all three.

"I used to think I didn't have time to pray," Kevin said. "Now I realize I didn't have time NOT to."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Claim your solitary place. A chair, a porch, a truck parked in the same spot, a walking path. Same place every day. Your body will learn this is where you meet God.

Step 2: Run the 4R Morning.

- **READ** — one short passage of Scripture. Start with the Gospels.
- **REFLECT** — "What does this show me about Jesus? What does it ask of me today?"
- **REQUEST** — pray for your wife, your kids, your team, your clients, your day.
- **RESOLVE** — write one action you will take today because of what you read.

Step 3: Journal like a commander. Keep a written log. Date every entry. Write what you read, what you prayed, what you sensed, and what you decided. Over time, you will see patterns — and answered prayers — you would have forgotten.

Step 4: Build a weekly Sabbath. Choose a 24-hour window each week where you do not work on the business. Tell your team and your family. Protect it like your most important meeting.

Step 5: Plan a quarterly retreat. Once every 90 days, take a half day or a full day alone with God. No laptop. Bible, journal, calendar. Review the last 90 days. Ask God for direction on the next 90.

Step 6: Lead your people into rest. Do not send emails on your Sabbath. Do not praise people for skipping vacations. A team that never rests will eventually break — usually during your most important week.

FIELD ORDERS

- Claim your solitary place today. Run the 4R Morning for seven straight days.
- Put your Sabbath on the calendar for the next 12 weeks. Tell your wife and your executive team.
- Book your first quarterly retreat day before the end of the month.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. When was the last time you were alone with God for more than 15 minutes?
2. What does "Everyone is looking for you" sound like in your life right now?

3. What is your real reason for not praying first thing every morning?
4. What do you fear will happen if you take a full day off every week?
5. How does your lack of rest show up at home?
6. What decision are you facing right now that you have not brought to God?
7. What will you give up to make room for the solitary place?

COMMS

Jesus, You withdrew to quiet places even when the crowds were calling. I confess that I have let the noise run my life. Teach me to rise early and meet You. Give me the courage to rest without guilt. Fill my tank before I try to fill anyone else's. Let everything I do in public be built on what You do in me in private. Amen.

PART THREE

THE TREE: BALANCE

The trunk, the branches, and the leaves

CHAPTER 5

THE TRUNK: LOVE THAT LAYS DOWN

Sacrificial love, full apologies, and keeping short accounts

SITREP

In the Core 4 tree, your wife is the trunk. Everything else — your children, your friendships, your fruit — is held up by the strength of that trunk. When the trunk cracks, the whole tree is in danger.

Many high-performing men married a woman who believed in the dream before anyone else did. Then the dream moved in and took over the house.

The business gets the first call of the morning and the last thought at night. She gets what is left — a tired body, a distracted mind, a phone face-up on the dinner table. Over time, the marriage becomes a business partnership at best and a cold war at worst.

"I'm doing all this for my family," we say. Our families do not want "all this." They want US.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Scripture uses marriage as a picture of Jesus and His people:

> *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her."*
>
> EPHESIANS 5:25

Notice the standard. Not "love her when she deserves it." Not "love her when you have time." Love her the way Christ loved the church — and Christ loved the church all the way to the cross.

Jesus defined the highest form of love: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Most of us will never be asked to die for our wives. But we are asked every day to lay down smaller things — our schedule, our phone, our preferences, our right to be right.

Jesus also refused to let anyone keep score. When Peter asked whether forgiving seven times was enough, Jesus said:

> *"I tell you, not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!"*
>
> **MATTHEW 18:22**

He was not giving Peter a bigger number. He was telling him to stop counting.

DOCTRINE

Love is not a feeling you wait for. It is a decision you make — over and over — to lay down your life for your wife's good. Feelings follow decisions. Keep short accounts. Stop keeping score.

"Your wife is not your most important employee. She is your most important covenant. Stop managing your marriage and start serving it."
— DONALD BURNS

A word of care: forgiveness is not the same as tolerating abuse. If anyone in your home is being harmed, the Jesus Way includes getting to safety and getting wise help from a pastor and a qualified counselor.

FIELD REPORT

James — Founder, software company

James and his wife had been married 19 years. He described the marriage as "fine." She described it, to her sister, as "lonely."

When James finally asked her the servant's question — "What is one thing I could do this week that would make you feel loved?" — she was quiet for a long time. Then she said, "Ask me about my day and don't look at your phone while I answer."

That was it. Not a vacation. Not jewelry. Attention.

James started leaving his phone in his truck when he got home. He asked about her day every night. When they argued, he started giving full apologies instead of defending himself. He told his Syndicate council, "I negotiate eight-figure contracts for a living. I never realized I was negotiating with my wife, too."

A year later, she told their pastor, "I feel like I got my husband back."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Give her the first and best. Look at your calendar. Where is your wife? If she is "wherever there's room," fix it. Put her in the calendar FIRST, then build the business around her.

Step 2: Hold a weekly date — non-negotiable. Two hours, just the two of you, every week. No business talk for the first hour.

Step 3: Lay down one thing daily. Each morning ask, "What is one thing I can lay down for her today?" Your phone at dinner. Her choice of restaurant. Listening without fixing.

Step 4: Ask the servant's question. "What is one thing I could do this week that would make you feel loved?" Then do it exactly the way she asked.

Step 5: Give full apologies. "Sorry you feel that way" is not an apology. A full apology has four parts:

- **I was wrong when I...** (name the action)
- **It hurt you because...** (show you understand)
- **Going forward, I will...** (commit to change)
- **Will you forgive me?** (ask — and wait)

Step 6: Keep short accounts. Do not let the sun go down on unresolved anger (Ephesians 4:26). Ban "you always" and "you never." Talk about the event, not her character.

Step 7: Pray together. Even one sentence each before bed. Couples who pray together build an intimacy nothing else creates.

FIELD ORDERS

- Put eight weekly dates on the calendar tonight.
- Ask her the servant's question. Do what she says within seven days.
- Identify one unresolved hurt you caused and give a full four-part apology this week.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. If your wife were honest, where would she say she ranks in your life?
2. What does she get from you at the end of a long day?
3. When did you last have a conversation with her that was not about logistics, kids, or business?
4. What are you still holding against her that you have said you forgave?
5. When did you last give a full apology without defending yourself?
6. Do you argue to understand or to win?
7. What would your marriage look like in five years if nothing changed?

COMMS

Lord Jesus, You gave Yourself up completely for the people You love. Forgive me for giving my wife my leftovers. Teach me to lay down my pride, my schedule, and my need to be right. Guard my mouth and soften my heart. Let her feel cherished, chosen, and safe with me. Make our marriage a strong trunk that holds up everything You want to grow. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

GUARD THE COVENANT

Building the fence before you need it

SITREP

Success is a jealous mistress. The business never says "enough." There is always one more deal, one more flight, one more fire. And most high-performing men have no fence around their marriage at all.

The danger is not only time. It is temptation. Travel, late dinners, alcohol, admiration, and close working relationships create openings. Money and power make them bigger. Many marriages are not destroyed by one big decision. They are destroyed by a hundred small compromises nobody guarded against.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus moved the battle line from actions to the heart:

> *"But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*
>
> MATTHEW 5:28

Then He used shocking language — "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away" (Matthew 5:29) — not to command self-injury, but to show how ruthless a man must be about removing what leads him into sin.

He treated marriage as permanent: "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mark 10:9). That includes your business. Your company does not get to separate what God joined.

He taught that "no one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). Your business can be a tool for God. It must never become a god.

And in Gethsemane, He gave His men the defense plan: "Watch and pray so that you will not enter into temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

DOCTRINE

A marriage without boundaries is a field without a fence. Eventually, something wanders in. The higher you climb, the higher the fence must be. Build it BEFORE you need it.

"You put security on your servers, locks on your warehouse, and audits on your books. Most successful men guard their inventory better than they guard their marriage."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Scott — President, national sales organization

Scott traveled three weeks a month. He was proud of never having "done anything." But he had a habit of long late-night texting conversations with a female colleague who "really understood the pressure."

At a Syndicate council, a brother asked him a simple question: "Would you show your wife those texts right now?" Scott went quiet. He said, "No."

That night, he wrote his guardrails. He told his wife about the texting and ended it. He installed transparency on his phone. He set a rule: no drinks alone with any woman but his wife. He started calling his wife from every hotel room before 9 p.m. — on video.

"Nothing had happened," Scott said. "But I was walking toward the edge. My brothers saw it before I did."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Write your guardrails. Put your personal rules in writing. Examples: no closed-door meetings without a window, no one-on-one dinners or drinks with a woman who is not your wife, no late-night personal texting, no sharing marriage struggles with a female colleague. Share them with your wife.

Step 2: Practice total transparency. Your wife should be able to see your phone, email, and accounts at any time. You do not hide what you are proud of.

Step 3: Build a travel protocol. Call your wife every night on the road. Avoid the hotel bar. Know your weak hours — usually late at night, alone, tired — and pray before them, not after you fall.

Step 4: Set your "home by" time and phone-free zones. Dinner, the bedroom, date night. Phone in another room.

Step 5: Bring her into the vision. Share the big picture: wins, struggles, decisions coming up. Ask her opinion. Partnership in vision protects partnership in marriage.

Step 6: Hold a monthly marriage review. Three questions: What is going well between us? Where do you feel disconnected from me? What is one thing we will change next month?

Step 7: Give your Syndicate brothers access. Ask one brother to ask you every month: "Is there anything you are hiding from your wife?"

FIELD ORDERS

- Write your guardrails and share them with your wife this week.
- Set your travel protocol before your next trip.
- Hold your first monthly marriage review before the end of the month.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. What small compromise have you allowed that could grow into a big one?
2. Is there anything on your phone you would not want your wife to see?
3. When are your weak hours?
4. Does your wife feel like a partner in your vision or a spectator to it?

5. Where has your business become a master instead of a tool?
6. Who has permission to ask you the hard questions?
7. What fence will you build this week?

COMMS

Lord Jesus, guard my eyes, my heart, and my marriage. Show me every gap in the fence and give me the courage to close it. Keep my business in its place — a tool in Your hands, never a master over my home. When I am tired and alone, let me watch and pray. Make our marriage a picture of Your faithful love. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

THE BRANCHES: THE PRESENT FATHER

Presence, blessing, and discipling your children

SITREP

High performers' kids often grow up watching the back of their father's head. Dad is on the phone during the ballgame. On the laptop during bedtime stories. On a flight during the school play. Physically present, mentally somewhere else.

Kids spell love T-I-M-E. And they keep score better than any accountant.

Many successful men had fathers who were absent, harsh, or silent. We swore we would be different. Then the business took over, and we found ourselves repeating the pattern in a nicer house.

You can always rebuild a company. You cannot rebuild a childhood.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Parents were bringing their children to Jesus. His leadership team decided He was too busy and too important for kids, and tried to send them away.

Mark tells us Jesus was INDIGNANT (Mark 10:14). He got angry at His own leaders for treating children as an interruption.

> *"Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*
>
> MATTHEW 19:14

Then He took them in His arms, placed His hands on them, and blessed them (Mark 10:16).

Jesus knew God's design for fathers by heart: "And you shall teach them diligently to your children and speak of them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:7). He also showed how real teaching happens — not in a classroom, but in a life. His men learned by walking with Him, watching Him, and being asked questions: "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).

DOCTRINE

Your children are not an interruption to your important work. They ARE your most important work. Faith is more caught than taught — your kids are watching how you treat their mother, your team, the waiter, and the man who cut you off in traffic. That is the real sermon.

"In martial arts, the student learns from watching the master move — every day, for years. Your kids are your students. Move well."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Brandon — Owner, multi-state franchise group

Brandon's 12-year-old son, Caleb, stopped asking him to come to games. When Brandon finally asked why, Caleb shrugged and said, "You'd just be on your phone anyway."

That landed.

Brandon got the season schedule and put every game into his calendar before anything else. He made 11 of 14. He started the full turn — stopping, turning his body toward Caleb, and looking him in the eye whenever he talked. He started blessing his kids at bedtime. And once a month, he took Caleb with him to a franchise location on a Saturday, explaining how he made decisions and why he treated people the way he did.

At the end of the season, Caleb wrote a school paper about the person he admired most. It was about his dad — and how his dad "treats the people who clean the restaurants the same as the managers."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Audit your interruptions. For one week, notice every time your child approaches you while you are working or on your phone. What does your face say?

Step 2: Practice the full turn. When your child talks, stop, turn your whole body toward them, and look them in the eyes. Even for 30 seconds.

Step 3: Protect the big moments. Every game, recital, and school event goes on your calendar BEFORE you schedule business. Promise less. Deliver every time.

Step 4: Schedule one-on-one time with each child. Weekly for younger kids, at least monthly for teens. Let them choose the activity.

Step 5: Bless them out loud. Hand on their shoulder: "I love you. I am proud of you. God has a great plan for your life." Many grown men are still waiting to hear those words. Do not make your kids wait.

Step 6: Use the Deuteronomy 6 moments.

- **SIT** — at dinner, ask one faith question: "Where did you see God today?"
- **WALK** — in the car, turn off the radio and talk.
- **LIE DOWN** — pray together at bedtime.
- **GET UP** — speak one encouraging truth before they leave.

Step 7: Narrate your faith and repent out loud. Let them hear how faith shapes your business decisions. And when you blow it, say, "I was wrong. Will you forgive me?"

FIELD ORDERS

- Practice the full turn every time your kids talk to you this week.
- Put every upcoming event on your calendar before Friday.
- Speak a blessing over each child every night for seven nights.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. What does your face tell your kids when they interrupt you?
2. What big moment have you missed that you still think about?
3. What did your own father give you — or fail to give you?
4. If your kids only knew about Jesus from watching you, what would they believe?
5. When did you last apologize to your child?
6. What would your kids say is your number one priority?
7. What do you want your kids to say about you at your funeral?

COMMS

Jesus, You stopped for the children when everyone said You were too busy. Turn my heart toward my kids. Heal what my own father could not give me, so I can give my children what they need. Help me see them, hear them, bless them, and train them in Your ways. Let them see You in me. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

THE FATHER WHO RUNS

Grace, boundaries, and the prodigal

SITREP

At some point, your kids will disappoint you. They will make choices you hate. Some will walk away from your values, your faith, maybe even from you.

High-performing fathers face a specific risk. We are used to fixing problems. When a child struggles, we try to manage them like an underperforming division. We control, pressure, and fix — or, when that fails, we withdraw and write them off.

A child is not a project. A child is a person.

And there is a second risk: children of successful men often grow up with every material advantage and no real responsibility. Grace without boundaries raises entitled kids.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus told a story that shows us the Father's heart (Luke 15:11–32).

A younger son demanded his inheritance early — essentially saying, "I wish you were dead." The father gave it to him. The son wasted everything. When he hit bottom, feeding pigs and starving, he decided to go home and beg to be a hired servant.

> *"But while he was still in the distance, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him."*
>
> LUKE 15:20

The father SAW him from far away — he had been watching the road. The father RAN — undignified for a respected man in that culture. He did not make the son grovel. He threw a party.

But notice what the father did NOT do. He did not chase his son into the far country and pay off his debts. He let the son experience the consequences of his choices.

And the older brother — the "good" son who stayed home — was furious. The father went out to him too: "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (Luke 15:31). Both sons needed their father's heart.

DOCTRINE

Love your children with open arms and clear boundaries. Do not chase them into the pigpen. Do not lock the door behind them. Watch the road — and when they turn toward home, RUN.

"Grace without boundaries raises entitled kids. Boundaries without grace raises angry kids. The father in Luke 15 gave us both."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Phil — Founder, regional real estate firm

Phil's oldest son dropped out of college, moved in with friends, and stopped returning calls. Phil's first instinct was to fix it — pay off the credit cards, buy him a car, offer him a job at the firm. His second instinct, after none of that worked, was to cut him off completely.

His Syndicate council walked him through Luke 15. "You don't chase him into the far country," one brother said. "But you keep watching the road."

Phil stopped paying his son's bills. He also started sending a text every Sunday: "Love you. Proud of who you can be. Door's always open." No lectures. No conditions.

Eleven months later, his son called and asked to get lunch. Phil drove three hours to meet him. The son had a job, an apartment, and a question: "Can you teach me how to manage money?"

Phil said he has closed a lot of deals. None of them felt like that lunch.

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Separate the child from the choice. Make sure they hear both messages: "I do not approve of this choice" AND "Nothing you do will ever make me stop loving you."

Step 2: Set clear boundaries. Write down your family's non-negotiables and the consequences. Agree on them with your wife. Follow through calmly.

Step 3: Let consequences teach. Resist rescuing your kids from every hard thing. Small consequences now prevent big ones later. Give them real work, real responsibility, and the dignity of earning.

Step 4: Keep the porch light on. If a child has drifted, make sure they know the door is open. Send the text. Pray for them by name every day. Watch the road.

Step 5: Celebrate the return. When they come back — after a fight or after years — do not make them earn their way in. The lecture can wait. The welcome cannot.

Step 6: Do not forget the older brother. Tell your faithful, compliant child often: "I see you. I am proud of you. Everything I have is yours too."

FIELD ORDERS

- Write your family's top five non-negotiables with your wife.
- If you have a child who has drifted, reach out this week with no agenda but love.
- Tell your most compliant child specifically what you appreciate about them.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Are you more likely to control or to give up when your child disappoints you?
2. Where are you rescuing your kids from consequences they need?
3. What real responsibility have you given your kids?
4. Which child is the younger son? Which is the older brother?
5. What would it look like to "run" toward your child this month?
6. Have you managed your child like a project?
7. How has God been the running Father to you?

COMMS

Father, You ran toward me when I was still far away. Give me Your heart for my children. Help me love them without condition and lead them with clear boundaries. Keep me from controlling and keep me from giving up. For any child who has wandered, keep my porch light on and my eyes on the road. Bring them home to You — and to me. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

THE LEAVES: BROTHERHOOD

Networks versus brothers — and the four men on the roof

SITREP

The higher a man climbs, the lonelier it gets. You cannot tell your team you are scared. You do not want to worry your wife. Your competitors are not safe. Your board wants results. Your vendors want something from you.

So you build a network instead of a brotherhood. You have hundreds of contacts and nobody to call at 2 a.m. You know a lot of men who want to talk about business. You know very few who want to talk about YOU.

Isolation is not strength. It is exposure. In the wild, the animal separated from the herd is the one that gets taken down.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus — the Son of God — chose to have friends:

> *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you."*
>
> JOHN 15:15

Friendship, by Jesus' definition, means openness. He let His men in.

He had circles — the crowds, the Twelve, and the three (Peter, James, and John). On the hardest night of His life, He did not go alone. He took His three into Gethsemane and said, "Stay here and keep watch with Me" (Matthew 26:38).

And Mark 2 tells one of the greatest brotherhood stories ever recorded. Four men carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus. The house was packed. They could not get through the door. So they climbed onto the roof, dug through it, and lowered their friend down in front of Jesus.

> *"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"*
>
> **MARK 2:5**

THEIR faith. The paralyzed man could not get himself there. His brothers did.

DOCTRINE

Your network will come to your grand opening. Your brothers will come to your hospital room. Real brothers do not say "let me know if you need anything." They show up with a ladder and start digging through the roof.

"Pararescue lives by four words: That Others May Live. That is not just a military motto. That is the standard for brotherhood in the Syndicate."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Tom — CEO, manufacturing company

Tom knew everyone. Chamber president. Board member. Golf on Fridays with the men who ran the city. When his marriage fell into crisis and his company lost its largest contract in the same month, he realized he did not have one man he could call.

He told no one. He worked more and drank more.

At his second Syndicate council, another member noticed he was quieter than usual and asked, "How are you really doing?" Tom almost said "busy." Instead, he told the truth.

Within 48 hours, three Syndicate brothers had called him. One flew in and took him to breakfast. One connected him with a Christian marriage counselor. One walked through his contract loss and helped him rebuild his sales pipeline. None of them said "let me know if you need anything." They just showed up.

"I had a thousand contacts," Tom said. "I needed four men on a roof."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Take the 2 a.m. test. Write down the men you could call at 2 a.m. who would answer and come. If you have fewer than three, brotherhood is your most urgent project.

Step 2: Map your circles.

- **The Many** — acquaintances, colleagues, community.
- **The Few** — 8 to 12 men you trust (your Syndicate council).
- **The Core** — 2 to 3 men who know everything.

Step 3: Go one level deeper. In your next conversation with a brother, share something real — a struggle, a fear, a failure. Openness invites openness. Someone has to go first.

Step 4: Identify who is on the mat. Look around your circle. Who is struggling? Divorce, a business in trouble, grief, a dark season. Write their names down.

Step 5: Replace "let me know" with a specific offer. "I'm taking you to breakfast Thursday at 7." Specific offers get accepted.

Step 6: Get on the mat when it is your turn. When YOU are struggling, tell your Core. Pride keeps more men paralyzed than any injury ever could.

A word of care. If isolation has turned into a darkness you cannot shake — hopelessness or thoughts of not wanting to be here — tell someone today. In the United States, you can call or text 988 any time. Asking for help is what strong men do.

FIELD ORDERS

- Take the 2 a.m. test tonight.
- Make one specific offer of help to a man on the mat this week.
- Tell one brother the real answer to "How are you?"

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Who would you call at 2 a.m.?
2. Are most of your relationships built on usefulness or openness?
3. What mask do you wear most often with other men?
4. Who has carried you in a hard season — and have you thanked him?
5. When was the last time you dug through a roof for someone?
6. What keeps you from letting others carry you?
7. Who in your circle is on the mat right now?

COMMS

Jesus, You called Your disciples friends and asked them to keep watch with You. I confess I have built a network and neglected brotherhood. Give me the courage to take off the mask. Open my eyes to the men around me who are on the mat. Make me a brother who digs through roofs — and humble enough to be carried when it is my turn. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

IRON ON IRON

The faithful wound — truth between brothers

SITREP

Success attracts flattery. The more money you make, the fewer people tell you the truth. Your team is afraid of you. Your vendors want your business. Your acquaintances want your approval.

Eventually, you are living in an echo chamber where everyone agrees with you — right up until it all falls apart.

The most dangerous person in a successful man's life is the one who only tells him what he wants to hear.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus loved His friends enough to tell them the truth.

When Peter tried to talk Him out of the cross, Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me" (Matthew 16:23). A hard word to a close friend — because Peter's thinking was dangerous.

When Martha was frantic and resentful, Jesus named her real problem with tenderness: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is necessary" (Luke 10:41–42).

He taught His men to handle conflict directly: "If your brother sins against you, go and confront him privately" (Matthew 18:15).

And the wisdom of Proverbs, which Jesus knew well, gives the Syndicate its standard:

> *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."*
>
> **PROVERBS 27:17**
>
> *"The wounds of a friend are faithful, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*
>
> **PROVERBS 27:6**

DOCTRINE

A friend who will not tell you the truth is not your friend. He is your fan. Fans cheer. Brothers correct. Tier One men need brothers.

"Iron does not sharpen iron by being polite. It sharpens by contact. If nobody in your life is allowed to make contact, you are going dull."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Andre — Owner, investment advisory firm

Andre was the most successful man at his Syndicate table — and the hardest to coach. When someone challenged him, he had an answer for everything.

Then a brother in the council said, very calmly, "Andre, every time we talk about your marriage, you change the subject to your business. I've noticed it four meetings in a row."

The room went silent. Andre's first instinct was to argue. Instead, he said, "Thank you. I need to think about that."

He went home and asked his wife what she thought. She said, "He's right." It started the most important season of their marriage.

Andre now opens every council meeting by saying, "Somebody tell me something I don't want to hear."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Give your brothers permission. Say it out loud to your Core and your council: "I give you permission to tell me the truth about my life, my marriage, my business, and my faith. I want it, even when I do not like it."

Step 2: Ask the hard questions monthly.

- Where are you compromising right now?
- How is your marriage — really?
- Are you meeting with God daily?
- What are you hiding?
- Did you just lie in any of your answers?

Step 3: Earn the right before you wound. Truth lands in a relationship of trust. Invest before you correct.

Step 4: Check your motive. "Am I saying this to help him or to be right?" Jesus' corrections always aimed at restoration.

Step 5: Speak privately and specifically. Follow Matthew 18. Be specific. Do not exaggerate. Then ask a question and listen.

Step 6: Receive the wound with thanks. When a brother corrects you, your first words are: "Thank you for caring enough to tell me." Do not defend. Pray about it. Respond later.

FIELD ORDERS

- Give the permission speech to at least one Syndicate brother this week.
- Answer the five hard questions honestly at your next council.
- The next time someone corrects you, say "thank you" before anything else.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Who has permission to tell you the hard truth?
2. When was the last time someone corrected you — and how did you respond?
3. Is there a brother you need to confront privately?

4. Are you surrounded by more fans or more brothers?
5. What topic do you always steer away from?
6. Where has success made you hard to coach?
7. What truth have you been avoiding hearing?

COMMS

Jesus, You loved Your friends enough to tell them the truth. Surround me with brothers who will do the same. Give me a teachable heart that receives correction with thanks. When I need to speak a hard word, let it come wrapped in love and aimed at restoration. Make me iron that sharpens. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

CHOOSE YOUR TWELVE

Mentoring the men who come after you — show, then send

SITREP

Every high-performing man was helped by someone. A coach. A boss. An older man who saw something in him before he saw it in himself.

Most of us never pay that forward with intention. We give advice when asked. We take a younger man to lunch now and then. But we rarely choose a few men and pour our lives into them the way someone once poured into us.

Information is not transformation. Lunch is not discipleship.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Before Jesus chose His core team, "He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). Then He chose twelve — fishermen, a tax collector, a political zealot. Not the elite. Men who were teachable and available.

> *"He appointed the twelve, whom He designated as apostles, to accompany Him, to be sent out to preach."*
>
> MARK 3:14

First to BE WITH Him. Then to be sent. Relationship before assignment.

Then He trained them in stages. They watched Him. They helped Him — organizing the crowd when He fed the five thousand (Mark 6:39–41). He sent them out with clear instructions (Luke 9:1–6) and debriefed them when they came back (Luke 10:17–20). When they failed, He used it as a teaching moment (Mark 9:28–29).

And He commanded them to multiply: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Paul later captured the pattern in four generations: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be qualified to teach others as well" (2 Timothy 2:2).

DOCTRINE

Success is what you build. Legacy is WHO you build. Choose a few men with prayer. Look for the Faithful, the Available, and the Teachable. Then give them the most valuable thing you have: access to your life.

"Talent gets attention. Teachable gets my time. Nobody earns a black belt by reading about kicks. You learn by doing — thousands of reps, with a master correcting every one."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Greg — Retired founder, engineering firm

Greg sold his company at 60 and felt lost. He had money and time and no idea what to do with either. His Syndicate council asked him one question: "Who are you building?"

Greg prayed about it for a month and chose three younger men — a 34-year-old business owner, a 29-year-old project manager at his old firm, and a 40-year-old who had just come to faith. He met each one every other week. He brought them into his life: board meetings, hard conversations, his morning prayer time, dinner with his wife.

Two years later, the 34-year-old had doubled his business and was mentoring two men of his own. "Greg didn't just give me advice," he said. "He let me watch him live."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Pray before you pick. Set aside real time and ask God who to invest in. Write down every name.

Step 2: Run the FAT filter.

- **Faithful** — do they follow through on small things?
- **Available** — do they have the time and hunger to grow?
- **Teachable** — do they receive correction without defending?

Step 3: Choose your Three. One to three men get your life — regular time, open access, real conversations.

Step 4: Make the call clear. "I want to invest in you. Here is what that looks like. Here is what I will ask of you. Are you in?"

Step 5: Show, then send. Transfer one skill at a time:

- I DO, you watch.
- I DO, you help.
- YOU DO, I help.
- YOU DO, I watch — then I send you.

Step 6: Debrief every rep. Three questions: What went well? What would you do differently? What did you learn?

Step 7: Build the 2 Timothy 2:2 chain. Ask each man you mentor to choose someone he will mentor. You are not building followers. You are building generations.

FIELD ORDERS

- Spend one evening or morning this week praying about who to mentor.
- Run every name through the FAT filter. Circle your top three.
- Have the "Are you in?" conversation with one man in the next 14 days.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Who poured into you when you were young and unproven?

2. Have you ever thanked him?
3. Who are you building right now — by name?
4. What is your real reason for not mentoring anyone?
5. What skill or wisdom lives only in your head?
6. How do you respond when someone you are developing fails?
7. Four generations from now, who will be following Jesus because of you?

COMMS

Lord Jesus, You prayed through the night before You chose Your men. Give me that same seriousness about the men I invest in. Open my eyes to see potential the way You see it. Lead me to faithful, available, teachable men, and give me the generosity to share my life with them, not just my knowledge. Let my legacy be men who follow You. Amen.

PART FOUR

THE FRUIT: BUSINESS

Fruit is the result of a healthy tree — not the reason for it

CHAPTER 12

LEAD FROM THE TOWEL

Servant leadership is not soft. It is the hardest kind there is.

SITREP

Most high performers were promoted because they were great at the work. Then one day they had people — and no one ever taught them how to lead.

So they lead the way they were led. Some copy the screaming boss. Some copy the absent owner. Some copy the leader who was everyone's buddy and nobody's leader.

The result is predictable: turnover, low trust, and a CEO who believes "you just can't find good people anymore."

You can find good people. The question is whether good people can find a good leader.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

On His last night before the cross, John tells us Jesus knew "the Father had delivered all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was returning to God" (John 13:3).

With ALL authority in His hands, Jesus got up from the table, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin, and washed His disciples' dirty feet — the job of the lowest servant in the house.

> *"So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet."*
>
> JOHN 13:14

When two of His men angled for top positions, He gave the leadership philosophy of His kingdom:

> *"It shall not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."*
>
> **MATTHEW 20:26**
>
> *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."*
>
> **MARK 10:45**

Notice the order in John 13. Jesus served BECAUSE He was secure in His identity. Insecure leaders cannot serve. They are too busy protecting their position.

DOCTRINE

Servant leadership does not mean doing whatever your people want. It means doing whatever your people NEED to become who God made them to be — even when it costs you comfort, time, or status. The towel and the standard go together.

"Your title gives you authority. Your towel gives you influence. People follow authority because they have to. They follow influence because they want to."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Derek — CEO, healthcare staffing company, 600 employees

Derek's executive team respected him and feared him. Meetings were tense. Bad news came late, if at all.

His Syndicate council challenged him to do one "lowest job" each week for a month, without telling anyone. He spent a morning answering phones in the recruiting center. He worked a Saturday with the facilities team. He sat with the billing department during month-end close.

He learned more about his company in four weeks than in four years of reports. He also started asking every direct report the same question: "What do you need from me to do your best work?" And he acted on every answer within a week.

Within six months, his executive team started bringing him problems early. His COO said, "We stopped hiding things from you when you stopped acting like you were above them."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Take the lowest job — on purpose. Once a week, do a job nobody wants. Do not announce it. Do not post about it.

Step 2: Ask the servant's question. In every one-on-one: "What do you need from me to do your best work?" Write the answer down and act within seven days.

Step 3: Know your people by name and story. Jesus called people by name — Zacchaeus in the tree, Mary at the tomb. Know your leaders' families, goals, and struggles.

Step 4: Remove obstacles before you demand results. Before you hold someone accountable, ask: "Did I give them the training, tools, and time to succeed?"

Step 5: Hold the standard with a towel in your hand. Correct privately, clearly, and kindly. Name the standard. Name the gap. Offer help. Expect it to be met.

Step 6: Give credit away. When it goes right, it was the team. When it goes wrong, it was the leader.

FIELD ORDERS

- Do one "lowest job" this week without telling anyone.
- Ask every direct report the servant's question. Act on at least one answer.
- Write down one personal detail for every person who reports to you.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Which leader from your past are you unknowingly copying?
2. Is there a job in your company you believe is beneath you?
3. Where have you demanded results before removing obstacles?
4. Who on your team would say you serve them? Who would not?

5. How early does bad news reach you?
6. When did you last give credit away publicly?
7. What would your company look like if every leader led from the towel?

COMMS

Lord Jesus, You held all authority and You picked up a towel. Forgive me for the times I have used my position to be served instead of to serve. Make me strong enough to hold the standard and humble enough to wash feet. Let my team experience a little of You through me. Amen.

CHAPTER 13

LET YOUR YES BE YES

Clarity, truth, and integrity that holds under pressure

SITREP

Confusion is one of the most expensive things in your company. It never shows up as a line item, but you pay for it every day in mistakes, rework, turnover, and lost clients.

Most teams are not lazy. They are unclear. They do not know what winning looks like. And they do not know if their leader means what he says.

There is a second cost: integrity drift. The "small" exaggeration in a pitch. The promise to a vendor you knew you would not keep. The number rounded in your favor. The commitment to your team that quietly disappears. Every one of them tells your people your word is negotiable.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus was the clearest communicator who ever lived. He used stories about seeds, sheep, coins, and banquets — things His audience touched every day.

He gave His men a one-sentence mission: "Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

He demanded clear, honest speech:

> *"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' Anything more comes from the evil one."*
>
> MATTHEW 5:37

He taught that small integrity predicts big integrity: "Whoever is faithful with very little will also be faithful with very much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with very much" (Luke 16:10).

And He told the truth even when it cost Him followers. After a hard teaching in John 6, many people walked away. Jesus did not chase them with a softer message. He turned to the Twelve and asked, "Do you want to leave too?" (John 6:67).

DOCTRINE

Clarity is kindness. Truth is a gift. A leader who will not say the clear, true thing is not being nice — he is being afraid. And a Tier One man's word is worth more than his contract.

"If your team cannot repeat your mission without looking at the wall, you do not have a mission. You have decoration."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Luis — Founder, commercial roofing company

Luis was famous for saying yes. Yes to every client deadline. Yes to every employee request. Yes to every vendor. Then he quietly missed half of them.

His Syndicate council asked him to keep a list of every commitment he made for two weeks. The list had 63 items. He had kept 29.

Luis was stunned. He started saying, "Let me check and get back to you by Thursday" instead of an automatic yes. And then he got back to them by Thursday — even when the answer was no. He also had the hard conversation he had avoided for a year with a project manager who was cutting corners on safety.

A year later, his close rate was up because clients trusted his timelines. His foreman told him, "We used to wait to see if you meant it. Now we just know."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Write your one-sentence mission. Like "fishers of men," it tells your people who you are and what you exist to do. Test it on your newest employee.

Step 2: Name three to five core values — with behaviors. A value without a behavior is a poster. Write what each value LOOKS LIKE on a bad day.

Step 3: Tell stories, not just rules. Collect stories from inside your company where someone lived the values. People forget rules. They remember stories.

Step 4: Audit your commitments. For two weeks, write down every promise you make — to clients, team, vendors, family. Close the loop on every one, even if the answer is no.

Step 5: Have the hard conversation within 48 hours. "Here is what I saw. Here is the standard. Here is what I need going forward. How can I help?"

Step 6: Clean up integrity drift. Pitches, numbers, contracts, taxes, reports. If anything is not fully true, fix it now. Integrity is cheaper than consequences.

FIELD ORDERS

- Write your one-sentence mission and test it on three people.
- Start your commitment log today.
- Have the hard conversation you have been avoiding within 48 hours.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. If five people on your team described your mission, would you get five different answers?
2. Where has your yes not meant yes lately?
3. What hard conversation have you delayed — and what has the delay cost?
4. Where are you "a little dishonest with very little"?
5. Are you more afraid of losing people or losing the standard?
6. What would your clients say about your word?
7. What will you make right this week?

COMMS

Jesus, You spoke truth with love and never left Your people confused. Forgive me for the times I have been unclear, inconsistent, or afraid to say the hard thing. Let my yes be yes and my no be no. Make me faithful in the small things so You can trust me with big things. Amen.

CHAPTER 14

LEAD THROUGH PRESSURE

Gethsemane, betrayal, and the restoration of Peter

SITREP

Anybody can lead when revenue is up and the team is happy. Leadership is tested when the biggest client leaves, when a partner betrays you, when the bank calls, when your best executive quits without notice.

Under pressure, most leaders do one of two things. They explode — yelling, blaming, micromanaging. Or they disappear — hiding in the office, avoiding the team, numbing out. Both are fear wearing different clothes.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

No leader has ever faced more pressure than Jesus in the final 24 hours of His life. One of His own team sold Him out. His closest friends fell asleep when He needed them. His top lieutenant denied knowing Him three times.

He was honest about the weight. "My soul is consumed with sorrow to the point of death" (Matthew 26:38). He did not fake strength.

He took it to the Father.

> *"Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done."*
>
> LUKE 22:42

He stayed in control of Himself. When Peter swung a sword and cut off a servant's ear, Jesus told him to put it away — and healed the man who came to arrest Him (Luke 22:50–51).

He restored the one who failed Him. After the resurrection, Jesus met Peter on the beach. Peter had denied Him three times beside a charcoal fire. Jesus built a charcoal fire, made him breakfast, and asked him three times, "Do you love Me?" Then He gave him the mission: "Feed My sheep" (John 21:17).

Jesus did not fire Peter. He restored him and promoted him.

DOCTRINE

Pressure does not build character. It reveals it. The leader who has been to the garden in private can stand calm in public — and can restore people instead of throwing them away.

"In rescue work, the first rule is simple: you cannot save anyone if you become a casualty. Control yourself first. Then you can help everyone else."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Nathan — Co-founder, technology services firm

Nathan discovered that his co-founder had been negotiating a side deal with their largest client — one that would cut Nathan out. He found out on a Friday afternoon. His first instinct was to fire off an email to the entire leadership team and call his attorney to "burn it all down."

Instead, he called a Syndicate brother, who said, "Do nothing irreversible for 24 hours. Go to the garden first."

Nathan spent Saturday morning in prayer and his journal. On Monday, he handled it calmly: documented the facts, involved his attorney, protected the client relationship, and spoke to his team with clarity and no gossip. The partnership ended, but the company survived — and the client stayed with Nathan.

"If I had sent that Friday email," he said, "I would have lost the client, the team, and probably the company."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Name it before it names you. Say out loud — to God, a brother, or your journal — exactly what you feel. "I am scared." "I feel betrayed."

Step 2: Go to Gethsemane before you go to your team. Before you respond to a crisis, take five minutes alone. Pray: "Here is what I want. Not my will, but Yours."

Step 3: Lower your voice as pressure rises. The more chaotic it gets, the calmer you speak. Your team takes its cues from you.

Step 4: Put away the sword. No irreversible decision made in anger for 24 hours — no firing, no angry email, no public statement.

Step 5: Separate the failure from the person. "Is this a character problem or a growth problem?" Judas had a heart problem. Peter had a courage problem. Know the difference.

Step 6: Build the charcoal fire. When someone fails and comes back, create a moment of restoration: meet privately, name what happened, ask for recommitment, give a clear next mission.

Step 7: Forgive the man. Fix the system. Forgiveness is not trust. Protect the company with controls, agreements, and documentation — and keep your heart free of bitterness.

FIELD ORDERS

- Write down your default pressure response: explode or disappear? Ask your wife if you got it right.
- Practice the five-minute Gethsemane pause the next time something goes wrong.
- Think of one man who failed you. Ask God whether he is a Judas or a Peter.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. What does your team see on your face when things go wrong?
2. When did you last make a decision in anger that you regretted?

3. Who needs to be restored, not replaced?
4. Where are you still holding a sword you need to put away?
5. What bitterness are you carrying from a past betrayal?
6. What controls are missing that would protect your company?
7. What would it look like to be the calmest man in the room during your next crisis?

COMMS

Father, when the pressure comes, let me run to You before I react to anyone. Like Jesus in the garden, teach me to be honest about my fear and surrendered to Your will. Help me put away the sword. Give me the strength to stay calm and the grace to restore the men who fail me — just as You have restored me again and again. Amen.

CHAPTER 15

THE FAITHFUL STEWARD

Making, keeping, and growing wealth without losing your soul

SITREP

Money is a test every high-performing man takes, whether he knows it or not.

Some men fail the test by making money their master — chasing the next number, the next deal, the next toy, and never feeling like it is enough. Others fail by hiding behind false humility — underpricing, under-asking, refusing to grow because they think wealth itself is unspiritual.

Both miss the point. God does not hand out resources to be hoarded or buried. He entrusts them to be multiplied — for His purposes.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus talked about money more than almost any other topic — not because God needs our money, but because money competes for our hearts.

He told the story of a master who entrusted his servants with talents before leaving on a journey (Matthew 25:14–30). Two servants invested and doubled what they were given. The master said to each:

> *"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master!"*
>
> MATTHEW 25:21

The third servant buried his talent out of fear. He was the one rebuked.

Jesus also warned, "Watch out and guard yourselves against every form of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15). He told His followers to count the cost before building (Luke 14:28). He taught that "no one can serve two masters… You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

And after feeding the five thousand, He said, "Gather the pieces that are left over, so that nothing will be wasted" (John 6:12).

Multiply. Do not hoard. Do not waste. Do not worship.

DOCTRINE

You are not the owner. You are the steward. A Tier One man makes money with excellence, keeps it with discipline, grows it with wisdom, and gives it with joy — because none of it was ever his to begin with.

"Profit is not the goal. Profit is the fuel. When the fuel becomes the destination, you have already lost the mission."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Michael — Owner, specialty food distribution business

Michael's business was doing well — over $20 million in revenue — but he felt a quiet guilt about money that he could not explain. He underpriced his services, avoided talking about margins with his team, and gave sporadically, usually out of pressure.

At the same time, his personal spending had crept up. A new boat. A second home. He realized he was both afraid of money AND controlled by it.

His Syndicate council walked him through the parable of the talents. Michael built a simple stewardship plan with his wife: a clear pricing strategy for the business, a monthly money review, a personal spending ceiling, and a giving commitment set in advance rather than out of guilt.

Three years later, his margins were healthier, his family was giving more than ever, and he told his council, "For the first time, money feels like a tool in my hand instead of a weight on my chest."

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Settle ownership. Write it down: "God owns it. I manage it." Pray over your balance sheet the way you would over a child.

Step 2: MAKE with excellence. Price your work based on value, not fear. Review your pricing at least annually. Underpricing is not humility; it is poor stewardship.

Step 3: KEEP with discipline. Hold a weekly money meeting. Know your margins, cash, and burn. Find the leaks — forgotten subscriptions, vendor creep, waste. "Gather the pieces."

Step 4: GROW with wisdom. Invest in the business, in your people, and in long-term assets. Use wise counsel — "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22).

Step 5: GIVE with joy. Decide your giving in advance, with your wife. Give first, not last. Generosity breaks money's grip on the heart.

Step 6: Set a finish line. Decide what "enough" looks like for your personal lifestyle. Everything above that line becomes kingdom capital — invested, given, or used to build others.

Step 7: Bring your wife all the way in. No financial secrets. Make the plan together.

FIELD ORDERS

- Hold your first weekly money meeting this week — with prayer.
- Write your personal "enough" number with your wife.
- Decide your giving commitment for the next 12 months.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Does money feel like a tool in your hand or a weight on your chest?
2. Where are you burying talents out of fear?
3. Where has money become your master?
4. What is your "enough" number?
5. Does your wife know everything about your finances?
6. Is your giving planned or pressured?
7. If Jesus audited your books, what would He say?

COMMS

Father, everything I have is Yours. I am a steward, not an owner. Free me from fear of money and from love of money. Give me excellence to make it, discipline to keep it, wisdom to grow it, and joy to give it. Let me hear one day, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Amen.

CHAPTER 16

BUILD LEADERS WHO OUTLAST YOU

The Great Commission as a succession plan

SITREP

Ask most successful men about their succession plan and they laugh. "I'll figure it out later."

But every leader eventually leaves. Retirement, sale, illness, death — it is coming for all of us. The only question is whether what you built keeps going or falls apart the day you walk out.

Many high performers are also bottlenecks. Every important decision runs through them. They say, "It's faster if I do it myself." It may be faster today. It is a disaster tomorrow.

The true test of a leader is not what happens while he is in the room. It is what happens after he leaves it.

INTEL: WHAT JESUS DID

Jesus built the greatest succession plan in history. He spent three years with a small group of ordinary men, and then left them in charge of His mission.

Before He left, He told them something astonishing:

> *"Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."*
>
> JOHN 14:12

Then He handed them the mission:

> *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*
>
> **MATTHEW 28:19–20**

And look at who He built it on. Peter — the man who denied Him three times — preached at Pentecost, and about three thousand people were added that day (Acts 2:41). Jesus did not build His succession plan on perfect men. He built it on restored men.

DOCTRINE

Success is what you build. Legacy is who you build. The goal is not to be needed forever. The goal is to raise leaders who can do greater things than you — and who will raise leaders too.

"If your company dies when you do, you did not build a company. You built a job with a sign on it. Build people. People outlive buildings."
— DONALD BURNS

FIELD REPORT

Rick — Founder, family-owned HVAC company, 35 years

Rick was 68 and still signing every check, approving every hire, and answering his phone on vacation. His son and two senior managers had been "almost ready" to take over for a decade.

A Syndicate brother asked him, "Rick, are they not ready — or are you not ready?"

Rick admitted the truth. He was afraid of being unneeded. He settled that in prayer, then built a two-year transition plan. Every quarter, he handed off one major decision — pricing, hiring, purchasing, banking — and refused to take it back. His son made mistakes. Rick coached him instead of rescuing him.

Two years later, Rick stepped back. The company had its best year ever. Rick now spends his Tuesdays mentoring young business owners at his church.

THE OPERATION

Step 1: Define what must outlast you. Write down three to five things that must survive you: values, culture, standards, faith, how people are treated.

Step 2: Name a successor for every critical role — including yours. If there is no name, that is your first development priority.

Step 3: Count the interruptions. Track every decision that comes to you for one week. Build decision rules so your leaders can handle most of them without you.

Step 4: Hand off one major decision every quarter. Announce it. Then do not take it back when they do it differently than you would.

Step 5: Celebrate when they pass you. When someone you developed outperforms you, throw a party. That is the goal.

Step 6: Leave a written legacy. Write down your systems, stories, faith, and hard-won lessons. Write a letter to your successors and your children.

Step 7: Remember who does the real building. Jesus said, "I am with you always." You are not the hero of your legacy. He is. Your job is to be faithful.

FIELD ORDERS

- Write your "must outlast me" list this week.
- Name a successor for every critical role, including yours.
- Hand off one decision within 30 days.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. What would happen to your company if you disappeared for 90 days?

2. Are your successors not ready — or are you not ready?
3. What decision are you most afraid to give away?
4. Who are you actively preparing to do greater things than you?
5. How do you feel when someone you trained outperforms you?
6. What wisdom lives only in your head?
7. What do you want people to say you built — and WHO do you want them to say you built?

COMMS

Father, thank You that Jesus did not leave His mission to chance but poured His life into men. Free me from the need to be needed. Show me the leaders You want me to build, and give me courage to hand them real authority. Let my legacy be people, not just profits. And let everything I build point back to You. Amen.

PART FIVE

THE CAMPAIGN

From reading to Tier One

CHAPTER 17

THE 90-DAY TIER ONE CAMPAIGN

Thirteen weeks. Four pillars. One standard.

SITREP

You have read 16 chapters. You have probably underlined a lot. Maybe you felt convicted. Maybe you made promises.

None of that matters if nothing changes.

Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount with two builders. Both HEARD the same words. Only one DID them. When the storm came, only one house stood (Matthew 7:24–27).

This is where you stop hearing and start building.

DOCTRINE

You do not rise to the level of your intentions. You fall to the level of your training. Ninety days of daily discipline across all four pillars will change more than ninety years of good intentions.

"I do not care how fired up you are at the retreat. Show me your calendar on Tuesday. That is where your faith lives or dies."
— DONALD BURNS

THE CAMPAIGN MAP

One chapter per week. Keep every habit running as you add the next one. Bring your progress to your Syndicate council.

WEEK	PILLAR	FOCUS	HABIT TO INSTALL
1	BODY	Ch. 1–2	Core 4 audit, physical booked, lights-out time, train 5x
2	BEING	Ch. 3	Identity card read before any screen
3	BEING	Ch. 4	4R Morning daily, Sabbath on calendar
4	BALANCE	Ch. 5	Weekly date, full apology, pray together
5	BALANCE	Ch. 6	Written guardrails shared, travel protocol
6	BALANCE	Ch. 7	Full turn, nightly blessing, events calendared
7	BALANCE	Ch. 8	Family non-negotiables, reach out to a drifting child
8	BALANCE	Ch. 9–10	2 a.m. test, permission speech, hard questions
9	BALANCE	Ch. 11	FAT filter, "Are you in?" conversation
10	BUSINESS	Ch. 12–13	Lowest job, servant's question, commitment log
11	BUSINESS	Ch. 14	Gethsemane pause, 24-hour rule
12	BUSINESS	Ch. 15	Weekly money meeting, "enough" number, giving plan
13	BUSINESS	Ch. 16 + Review	Successor list, retake the Core 4 audit

THE DAILY OPS

Every day of the 90 days, run these checkpoints.

1. **0500–0600 — BEING: The Solitary Place (15–20 min).** Identity card. Read. Reflect. Request. Resolve. Journal.
2. **BODY: Train (30–60 min).** Move every day. Pair it with prayer when you can.
3. **BUSINESS: The Towel (all day).** Serve one person on your team. Keep every commitment you make.
4. **BALANCE: The Full Turn (all evening).** Phone in another room. Face your wife and kids. Bless your children.

5. **BEFORE BED — The Short Account (5 min).** Settle any conflict. Pray with your wife. Lights out on time.

THE WEEKLY TIER ONE SCORECARD

Score yourself 1 to 5 on each line every week on your Sabbath evening. Report your score to your Syndicate council.

PILLAR	THE QUESTION	SCORE (1–5)
BODY	Did I sleep, train, and fuel like a man on mission?	
BEING	Did I meet God before the day met me — every day?	
BALANCE — Wife	Did my wife feel first this week?	
BALANCE — Children	Did my kids get my full attention and my blessing?	
BALANCE — Brothers	Did I show up for a brother or let a brother in?	
BUSINESS — Leadership	Did my team experience a servant who holds the standard?	
BUSINESS — Stewardship	Did I make, keep, grow, and give faithfully?	

Scoring: 30–35 is Tier One. 22–29 means you are moving — pick one line to strengthen next week. Under 22 means slow down, simplify, and get back to the solitary place. No guilt. Reset and go again.

WHEN YOU STUMBLE

Somewhere around Week 3 or Week 4, the business will get loud. A deal will blow up. You will miss mornings and feel like quitting.

Do not start over. Start again tomorrow.

Peter denied Jesus three times — and still became the rock the church was built on. Grace is built into the Way. Tier One is not a perfect streak. It is a standard you return to every single time you fall short.

THE DAY 90 REVIEW

At the end of 13 weeks, take a full day alone with God. Retake the Core 4 audit and the Tier One Assessment in Appendix A. Compare them to your Day 1 numbers. Write down what changed in your body, your soul, your home, your brotherhood, and your business. Share it with your council. Then plan the next 90.

DEBRIEF: 7 QUESTIONS TO BREAK YOUR EXCUSES

1. Which week of the campaign will be hardest for you? Why?
2. Which Syndicate brother will hold you accountable weekly?
3. What will you need to say "no" to in order to say "yes" to this campaign?
4. What does a win look like on Day 90 in each pillar?
5. What excuse have you used in the past to quit a plan like this?
6. What will you do when you miss a day?
7. What is the very first thing you will do tomorrow morning?

COMMS

Lord Jesus, I do not want to be a hearer only. I want to be a builder on the rock. Give me the discipline to start, the humility to stumble, and the grace to start again. Walk with me through these 90 days. Make me Tier One in every pillar — not for my glory, but for Yours. Amen.

THE FINAL WORD

FOLLOW ME

The first words Jesus spoke to Peter were "Follow Me" (Matthew 4:19).

The last words Jesus spoke to Peter in John's Gospel were nearly the same: "You follow Me!" (John 21:22).

Between those two invitations, Peter's whole life happened. He left his nets. He walked on water — and sank. He made bold promises — and broke them. He swung a sword, denied his Friend beside a fire, and wept bitterly.

And at the end of it all, Jesus did not give Peter a new set of rules. He gave him the same invitation He gave him on day one.

Follow Me.

That is the whole manual. The soil, the root, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, and the fruit. The physical, the solitary place, the towel, the full turn, the four men on the roof, the faithful wound, the twelve, the faithful steward. Every page is just a way of answering two words.

Tier One was never about being better than other men. It is about becoming the man God had in mind when He made you — in every room you walk into.

You will not do it perfectly. No man has except Him. Perfection was never the standard. Following was.

So go home tonight and put the phone in another room. Look your wife in the eyes and ask what she needs. Bless your kids. Call the brother on the mat. Choose the man you will build. Pick up a towel tomorrow.

Then do it again the next day. And the next.

That is the Jesus Way. That is Tier One. That is the Level 7 Syndicate.

"You built your business with sweat. Build your life with surrender. The first one pays your bills. The second one pays forever."
— DONALD BURNS

See you on the Way.
— db

PART SIX

THE ARMORY

Tools for the mission

APPENDIX A

THE TIER ONE ASSESSMENT

Find your weakest pillar before you start

Score each statement from 1 to 5. **1 = this is NOT true of me. 5 = this is VERY true of me.** Answer how things actually are, not how you wish they were.

#	PILLAR	STATEMENT	SCORE
1	BODY	I have had a full physical in the last 12 months and know my key numbers.	
2	BODY	I sleep at least seven hours most nights and train at least four times a week.	
3	BEING	My identity does not rise and fall with my company's performance.	
4	BEING	I meet with God, read Scripture, and journal most mornings before any screen.	
5	BEING	I take a full Sabbath every week.	
6	BALANCE	My wife would say she comes before my business.	
7	BALANCE	I have written guardrails for my marriage and keep them.	
8	BALANCE	My kids would say I show up for what matters to them.	
9	BALANCE	I have at least three men I could call at 2 a.m.	
10	BALANCE	At least one brother has permission to tell me hard truths — and uses it.	
11	BALANCE	I am intentionally mentoring at least one younger man.	
12	BUSINESS	My team would say I serve them and hold a clear standard.	
13	BUSINESS	My yes means yes — to clients, team, vendors, and family.	

#	PILLAR	STATEMENT	SCORE
14	BUSINESS	I stay calm and in control under pressure.	
15	BUSINESS	I make, keep, grow, and give money as a faithful steward.	
16	BUSINESS	My company could run well for 90 days without me.	

Pillar totals: BODY (1–2) **_ /10** · **BEING (3–5)** _ /15 · BALANCE (6–11) **_ /30** · **BUSINESS (12–16)** _ /25

My weakest pillar: _____ **My first mission:** _____

APPENDIX B

THE TIER ONE FIELD CARD

Cut it out. Keep it in your wallet. Read it every morning.

WHO I AM — I am a son of God before I am anything else. I work FROM approval, not FOR it.

BODY — THE SOIL — I sleep, train, and fuel like a man on mission. My body is a temple.

BEING — THE ROOT — I meet God before the day meets me. Read. Reflect. Request. Resolve.

BALANCE — THE TRUNK — I lay down my life for my wife. I keep short accounts. I guard the covenant.

BALANCE — THE BRANCHES — I make the full turn. I bless my children. I watch the road and RUN.

BALANCE — THE LEAVES — I dig through roofs. I give and receive the faithful wound. I build my Twelve.

BUSINESS — THE FRUIT — I lead from the towel. My yes is yes. I stay calm under fire. I steward, I do not own. I build men who outlast me.

MY TWO WORDS — Follow Me.

APPENDIX C

SCRIPTURE BY PILLAR

Passages to read, pray, and memorize

PILLAR	KEY PASSAGES
The Blueprint	Luke 2:52 · Mark 6:3 · Matthew 16:26 · John 14:6
BODY	1 Corinthians 6:19–20 · Matthew 4:1–2 · Matthew 6:16–18 · Mark 4:38 · Mark 6:31
BEING — Identity	Matthew 3:13–4:11 · John 15:1–17 · 1 John 3:1 · 2 Corinthians 5:17 · Ephesians 2:10
BEING — Rhythms	Mark 1:35–39 · Luke 5:16 · Luke 6:12 · Mark 2:27 · Matthew 11:28–30
BALANCE — Wife	Ephesians 5:21–33 · John 15:13 · Matthew 18:21–35 · Mark 10:6–9 · Matthew 5:27–30 · Matthew 26:41
BALANCE — Children	Mark 10:13–16 · Deuteronomy 6:4–9 · Luke 15:11–32
BALANCE — Brothers	John 15:12–15 · Mark 2:1–12 · Matthew 26:36–46 · Proverbs 27:6, 17 · Matthew 18:15
BALANCE — Mentoring	Luke 6:12–16 · Mark 3:13–19 · Luke 9:1–6 · Luke 10:1–20 · 2 Timothy 2:2
BUSINESS — Leadership	John 13:1–17 · Matthew 20:20–28 · Mark 10:42–45 · Matthew 5:37 · Luke 16:10 · John 6:60–69
BUSINESS — Pressure	Luke 22:39–53 · John 18:1–11 · John 21:1–19
BUSINESS — Stewardship	Matthew 25:14–30 · Luke 12:13–21 · Luke 14:28–30 · Matthew 6:19–34 · John 6:12 · Proverbs 15:22
BUSINESS — Legacy	John 14:12 · Matthew 28:18–20 · Acts 2:14–41

APPENDIX D

THE SYNDICATE COUNCIL PROTOCOL

Running this field manual inside your Level 7 council

This manual is built to be worked inside the Syndicate. Here is the standard format for a 90-minute council meeting.

1. **OPEN IN PRAYER (5 min).** Rotate who leads.
2. **TIER ONE SCORECARD (15 min).** Every man reports his weekly scorecard by pillar and one win. No explaining. Just the numbers and the win.
3. **INTEL (5 min).** Read the "What Jesus Did" passage for the week's chapter out loud.
4. **DOCTRINE (15 min).** Discuss the principle. Where is each man living it? Where is he missing it?
5. **THE HOT SEAT (25 min).** One man brings a real issue — business, marriage, kids, health, faith. He has five minutes to lay it out. The council asks questions for ten minutes — questions only, no advice. Then ten minutes of direct counsel and faithful wounds. He ends with one commitment.
6. **FIELD ORDERS (15 min).** Every man states out loud what he will execute before the next council.
7. **COMMS (10 min).** Pray for each man by name — his wife, his kids, his company, and his weakest pillar.

Council rules of engagement:

- What is said in the council stays in the council.
- Every man has given every other man permission to tell him the truth.
- No fixing during the questions phase. Ask first.
- No one hides behind business talk when the real issue is at home.

- Show up even when you did not execute. Especially then.
- Grace is the culture. Tier One is the standard.

The monthly hard questions:

- How is your marriage — really?
- Are you keeping your guardrails?
- Are you meeting with God before the day meets you?
- What are you hiding?
- Did you just lie in any of your answers?