

Blood Staff: Keys to Victory

A Testimony of Pain, Truth, and Healing Through Christ

IMPORTANT NOTE TO THE READER

This book is a testimony, not a substitute for professional medical or mental health care.

If you are experiencing thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or feel that you may be in immediate danger, please seek help right away by contacting emergency services, a trusted professional, or a crisis support line in your area.

Faith is a powerful source of hope and resilience, but it is not meant to be lived out in isolation. God often works through people, community, and professional care.

Asking for help is not a failure of faith—it is an act of wisdom and courage.

FOREWORD: BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

This book is not a self-help guide. It is a survival manual.

I am not writing as an expert, a pastor, or a saint. I am writing as someone who should not be here.

What follows is not polished spirituality. It is what remains after pride collapses, after solutions fail, and after God intervenes anyway.

If you are reading this in desperation, pause. Breathe. You are not alone. God is not late.

PART I — THE DESCENT (IDENTIFICATION)

Goal: Help the reader say, “That’s me.”

Chapter 1: The Panic You Can’t Outrun

I did not wake up one day with anxiety. It felt like anxiety woke up with me.

Long before I had language for panic or trauma, my body learned vigilance. I learned to scan rooms, read tone, anticipate danger, and brace for impact. This was not emotional weakness—it was conditioning. Survival training without a manual.

As an adult, this vigilance hardened into panic attacks. They were physical, overwhelming, and humiliating. My heart raced. My chest tightened. My vision narrowed. Adrenaline flooded my system as if I were about to die—except I was often alone, on a plane, in a hotel room, or driving to work.

Trying to explain panic to someone who has never experienced it is nearly impossible. The closest comparison I've found is this: imagine doing wind sprints with a hangover while someone hits your toe with a hammer. That becomes your baseline. Exhausted. Aggravated. Trapped in your own body.

I tried everything. Therapy. Medication. Breathing techniques. Performance. Control. Some of these helped me survive. None of them healed me.

The most dangerous part of panic is not fear—it is isolation. You begin to believe you are uniquely broken. That everyone else received a manual you somehow missed. That if people really knew how fragile you were underneath, they would not trust you, love you, or stay.

At this point, faith existed—but it was thin. God was real, but distant. I believed He existed. I did not yet believe He was safe.

Chapter 2: Born Fighting, Raised Vigilant

I entered the world nine weeks early.

I was born with hyaline membrane disease, a condition where the lungs lack surfactant and collapse with each breath. Machines breathed for me. Every inhale and exhale was controlled externally. At the time, the mortality rate was high. I lived because doctors rushed me to a hospital using an experimental ventilator. I was the first baby to survive on it.

Decades later, I began to understand something crucial: trauma does not require memory to be real. The body remembers what the mind cannot articulate. Before I could think, my nervous system learned a lesson—stay alert, stay alive.

Life reinforced that lesson. Instability. Fear. Alcoholism. Abuse. Isolation. I learned vigilance because vigilance worked. It protected me.

But what protects a child can imprison an adult.

As I grew older, vigilance hardened into control. Control hardened into pride. Pride disguised itself as competence, intensity, and achievement. People praised those traits. Internally, I was exhausted.

I did not know how to rest—not physically, not emotionally, and certainly not spiritually.

Chapter 3: Faith Without Trust

I grew up in the church.

I knew Scripture. I understood doctrine. I had theology under my belt. But faith had become compartmentalized. God was welcome—as long as outcomes remained under my control.

I believed in God. I did not trust Him.

Instead, I trusted performance, intellect, discipline, and material success. I believed—quietly—that if I did everything right, God would cooperate.

This is not faith. It is negotiation.

Over time, my identity fused with achievement. Career success became anesthesia. Money became insulation. When those idols failed, fear returned stronger.

When life worked, I felt righteous. When it didn't, I blamed God.

Chapter 4: Medication, Control, and the Illusion of Relief

I believe in medication.

I also believe it is often misunderstood, overprescribed, and treated as a substitute for deeper healing. Over the course of twenty years, I cycled through psychiatric medications. Some helped. Some harmed. Most delayed the inevitable confrontation with surrender.

Therapy gave me insight. Medication gave me function. Neither taught me how to trust.

Insight is not healing.

I watched psychiatrists become legal drug dealers. I watched discernment disappear under layers of prescriptions. I lost years of my life to a cycle that dulled pain without addressing purpose.

There is a difference between stabilization and transformation. One keeps you alive. The other gives you life.

Chapter 5: The Night Everything Broke

There is a point where strategies fail.

For me, that point arrived quietly—through bankruptcy, job loss, debt, shame, and isolation. I was exhausted, financially cornered, emotionally numb, and spiritually angry.

I was no longer asking how to fix my life. I was calculating how to end it.

One night, alone in a small apartment, I found myself doing math I never wanted to do. I believed I had reached the logical conclusion of a life that had become unmanageable.

I blamed God for abandoning me.

What I didn't know was that this moment—what felt like the end—was the interruption.

PART II — THE INTERRUPTION (ENCOUNTER)

Goal: Show God entering time.

Chapter 6: Jeremiah at 3 A.M.

The worst night of my life did not begin with drama. It began with logistics.

Creditors had been calling for weeks. That Saturday, the IRS seized what little remained in my checking account because I had not yet officially filed for bankruptcy. I discovered this in a grocery store when every card I owned was declined. I left the cart at the register and walked out empty-handed, shaking.

Outside my apartment, I struggled to get the key into the lock. My hands would not stop trembling. Inside was a sparsely furnished place I had come to resent—not because it was small, but because it represented everything I had lost.

I had not slept in weeks. Stress and ulcers were draining my body. Earlier that Friday, my bankruptcy lawyer had told me what I already feared: unless I could produce a large lump-sum payment, the court would likely dismiss my case. Five years under government supervision or total collapse—those were the options.

I snapped. I yelled. He hung up. We would speak again Monday at noon.

That left the night.

At around three in the morning, an email arrived from a close friend—Jewish, analytical, not given to religious platitudes. The message contained no explanation. One line.

“Jeremiah 29:11.”

I opened my Bible.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

I was enraged.

It felt like mockery. I had lost my job, my money, my family structure, and my dignity—and now God was offering a verse I had heard a hundred times. I argued out loud with a God I was no longer sure existed.

That night, what remained of my faith collapsed.

Chapter 7: The Vulnerability That Stopped Me

Saturday became what I now call *The Darkest Hour*.

The phone kept ringing—collectors, automated warnings, final notices. I didn’t answer. I drank instead, trying to slow my mind enough to sleep.

I began looking for Excedrin PM.

I wasn’t crying. I wasn’t hysterical. I was numb and methodical. I didn’t have a dramatic plan, but I knew the math well enough to know what would push me past the point of no return.

I was still living out of boxes. Clothes, paperwork, toiletries—everything scattered. God was in the details that night.

While searching, I found a pair of infant shoes. Then socks. Then pictures of my son, Jack. Then a photograph of me holding him in surgical scrubs after his birth. Finally, a letter I had written to him about his future—about the man I hoped he would become and the life I hoped he would have.

Something broke open.

I had unknowingly written Jeremiah 29:11 over my own son.

The verse sent at three in the morning now stared back at me through my child's life. God had used something in the past—an email, a letter, a moment of preparation—to interrupt my present.

In that moment, coincidence died.

For the first time that night, I wasn't crying for myself. I saw Jesus not as judgment, but as vulnerability—as a child, as a Father, as love that could reach me only through what I loved more than myself.

The avalanche stopped.

Chapter 8: A Father's Voice, God's Timing

Not long after that night, my father showed up unexpectedly.

He looked at me and said, calmly and firmly, "Nothing is going to harm you. Not on my watch."

I believed him.

A week later, he died.

Only later did I understand what God had done. Protection does not always mean preservation. Sometimes it means presence—delivered at the exact moment it is needed.

God gave me a living parable. A human echo of His promise.

Chapter 9: When God Reclaims the Battle

In the aftermath, I questioned everything—free will and destiny, pride and suffering, sin and illness. I saw myself clearly for the first time: exhausted, angry, terrified, and still hopeful.

I realized something fundamental: anxiety was the fruit. Pride was the root. I had been fighting battles that were never mine to win.

Scripture came alive—not as condemnation, but as orientation. Peter sinking beneath the water. Moses carrying a staff marked by memory. Victories won not by strength, but by focus.

God was not asking me to fight harder.

He was asking me to let Him take His battle back.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

This was not my first storm. Medical trauma, abuse, loss, failure—God had been preparing me all along.

Shame had driven me away. Humility brought me back.

And slowly, the noise in my mind began to quiet.

PART III — THE REFRAME (UNDERSTANDING)

Goal: Meaning after safety.

Chapter 10: Why Faith Comes Before Love

For most of my life, I believed love was spontaneous.

I assumed it arrived naturally, unpredictably, and emotionally. What I did not understand was that love is never accidental. Love is always downstream from faith.

Thought precedes action. Faith precedes love. Love precedes sacrifice.

Even when we claim not to believe in anything, we have already placed our faith somewhere. Money. Control. Achievement. Other people. Certainty. Self.

I had placed my faith in outcomes. When those outcomes collapsed, my ability to love collapsed with them. Anxiety rushed in to fill the vacuum.

Faith in Christ works differently. It is chosen before it is felt. It is anchored before it is proven. When faith is placed correctly, love follows—not as sentiment, but as action.

This is why Scripture says faith without works is dead, and works without faith are empty. They are inseparable.

Chapter 11: Pride, Anxiety, and the Lizard Brain

For years, I believed anxiety was my enemy.

It took a long time to realize anxiety was a symptom, not a cause.

Pride does not always look like arrogance. Often it looks like self-reliance. Responsibility taken too far. The quiet belief that it is your job to hold everything together.

When that burden becomes unbearable, the nervous system revolts.

The amygdala—the brain’s threat detector—does not distinguish between physical danger and perceived loss of control. Once it is trained to stay on high alert, it is difficult to turn off.

My panic was not weakness. It was evidence of carrying weight never meant for me.

Humility did not eliminate anxiety overnight—but it disarmed it. When pride loosened its grip, the volume dropped.

Anxiety is the fruit. Pride is the root.

Chapter 12: Mental Illness, Sin, and Discernment

Mental illness is real.

So is sin.

Confusing the two leads to cruelty on one side and irresponsibility on the other.

There were seasons when my brain was sick and needed medical support. There were seasons when my heart resisted surrender. Discernment meant learning the difference.

Medication can stabilize a mind. Therapy can bring insight. Neither replaces repentance, humility, or faith.

Insight is not healing.

Healing begins when truth is accepted—not merely identified.

Chapter 13: Testimony as a Weapon

Testimony is not self-expression.

It is evidence.

“They triumphed by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.” — Revelation 12:11

The blood belongs to Christ. Testimony names what He has already done.

Under pressure, fear rewrites history. Testimony restores it.

This is why God commanded remembrance. This is why Israel marked victories. This is why Moses carried a staff.

Your history with God is not baggage.

It is your weapon.

PART IV — THE TOOL (BLOOD STAFF)

Goal: Give the reader something to hold when fear returns.

Chapter 14: The Blood Staff Explained

The Blood Staff is not a poetic metaphor.

It is a tool.

In Scripture, Moses' staff was not powerful because of the wood it was made from. It was powerful because of what it represented. Each time God intervened—before Pharaoh, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness—that staff became a record of memory and trust.

Human beings forget under pressure. Fear edits the past.

The Blood Staff exists to interrupt that distortion.

Your Blood Staff is the written, recorded, or otherwise preserved history of moments when God intervened in your life—deliverance, protection, provision, clarity. These are not vague blessings. They are specific events.

When anxiety spikes, logic disappears. Memory anchored in truth restores orientation.

Chapter 15: Notching the Victories

Most people wait until a crisis to ask God where He is.

The Blood Staff is built *before* the crisis.

Notching victories means deliberately recording moments when fear felt justified—but God proved faithful anyway. These are not general impressions. They are concrete experiences.

Write them down.

Where were you? What were you afraid of losing? What did you believe would happen? What actually happened?

Over time, patterns emerge. God's character becomes visible. Confidence grows—not in yourself, but in Him.

This is how Israel moved forward battle after battle. They remembered.

Chapter 16: Interrupting the Avalanche

Suicidal thinking rarely begins with a desire for death.

It begins with a desire for pain to stop.

The Blood Staff interrupts the avalanche of thought long enough for truth to re-enter. It slows the mind and reorients attention when emotion is demanding escape.

This is not denial. It is discipline.

Fear says, *This has never worked*. The Blood Staff responds, *That is not true*.

You are not imagining hope. You are remembering it.

Chapter 17: Preparing for the Next Storm

Faith is not insurance against suffering.

It is preparation.

Storms do not indicate failure. They confirm humanity.

The Blood Staff does not eliminate fear—it trains focus. When the next storm arrives, you already know where to look.

God does not ask you to fight harder.

He asks you to remember who has already won.

PART V — THE SENDING (LOVE OUTWARD)

Goal: Turn healing outward without creating saviors.

Chapter 18: Going Back Into the Fire

Healing does not end in retreat.

Those who have been rescued are often sent back—not to fix, not to save, but to *witness*. There is a critical difference.

A savior complex is rooted in pride. It believes outcomes depend on you. Presence is rooted in humility. It trusts God with what you cannot control.

I learned the hard way that returning to dark places requires restraint. You do not enter them with answers. You enter them with availability, honesty, and limits.

Healed people are not fearless. They are oriented. They know where to look when fear appears.

Chapter 19: Talking to Someone Who Wants to Die

This chapter is intentionally written in two parts.

The first is for those who are struggling. The second is for those who are sitting beside them.

Both matter. Both are sacred.

Part A: If You Are the One Who Wants the Pain to Stop

If you are reading this while wishing you could disappear, hear this clearly:

Wanting the pain to stop does not mean you truly want to die.

In moments of suicidal thinking, the mind narrows. Time collapses. The future feels sealed. Your nervous system is screaming escape.

That state lies.

You do not need to solve your life tonight. You need to slow it down.

Reach out—to a friend, a family member, a pastor, a therapist, a doctor, or a crisis line. Faith does not mean walking alone. God often works through people, community, and professional care.

If prayer feels impossible, that does not disqualify you. Silence counts. Tears count. Sitting on the floor counts.

You are not weak for needing help. You are human.

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Part B: If You Are Sitting With Someone Who Wants to Die

When someone tells you they want to die, your job is not to fix them.

Do not argue. Do not debate theology. Do not rush to silver linings.

Stay.

Listen more than you speak. Ask simple questions. Reflect what you hear. Presence lowers the temperature of despair.

Say what is true and small:

- “I’m here.”
- “You’re not crazy.”
- “We don’t have to solve this tonight.”

If you are unsure about their safety, involve professionals. This is not betrayal—it is love. You are not God. You were never meant to be.

Chapter 20: Love That Costs You Something

Love is not a feeling.

It is an action that often costs comfort, pride, time, and certainty.

Following Christ does not make life easier. It makes love possible.

Sometimes love looks like staying. Sometimes it looks like calling for help. Sometimes it looks like stepping back.

Obedience is rarely dramatic. It is quiet faithfulness in ordinary moments.

CONCLUSION: THE WAY THROUGH

This book was never about eliminating fear.

It was about learning how to walk through it without walking alone.

God is faithful.

Your history with Him matters.

Remember what He has done.

You have nothing to fear.

WORKBOOK & STUDY GUIDE

Building and Using Your Blood Staff

This workbook is designed to help you slow down, reflect honestly, and recognize the ways God has been present in your life—especially when you could not see it at the time.

It can be used individually, with a trusted friend, or in a small group. Take your time. There is no finish line.

PART I — FAITH SELF-ASSESSMENT

Purpose: To understand where your faith is currently resting.

Answer honestly. This is not a test to pass or fail.

1. When you feel anxious or afraid, what do you instinctively reach for first?
2. What do you rely on most for security—money, control, people, health, success, God?
3. What situations most reliably trigger fear or panic?
4. What do those fears threaten to take away?

Reflection: Faith always rests somewhere. Awareness is the first step toward alignment.

PART II — YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY TIMELINE

Purpose: To identify specific moments of God’s faithfulness that fear tends to erase.

This is not about rewriting your life positively. It is about telling it truthfully.

Create a simple timeline of your life. Move slowly. Leave space.

For each significant season, transition, or crisis, reflect on:

- What was happening at the time?
- What were you most afraid of losing?
- What outcome did you expect or dread?
- What actually happened?
- Looking back now, where do you see God’s presence—clearly or faintly?

Some answers may come immediately. Others may take time. That is normal.

These moments become the notches on your Blood Staff—evidence that God has met you before.

PART III — BUILDING YOUR BLOOD STAFF

Purpose: To create a living record of God’s faithfulness you can return to under pressure.

Choose a format that feels natural and accessible:

- A notebook or journal
- Notes on your phone
- Voice recordings
- Written letters

For each entry, record:

1. The fear you were facing.
2. What you believed would happen.
3. What actually happened.
4. What this reveals about God’s character.

Do not rush this process. Accuracy matters more than eloquence.

Return to this record when fear tries to rewrite your story.

PART IV — FOCUS & MEDITATION IN THE STORM

Purpose: To slow the body and reorient the mind when anxiety escalates.

When fear rises, try the following:

1. Pause your body.
 - Breathe slowly and deeply for several cycles.
2. Read one Blood Staff entry.
3. Name gratitude for that moment—even if it feels forced.
4. Refocus on what is true, not what is loud.

Suggested Scripture for grounding:

- Matthew 6:33
- 2 Corinthians 12:9
- Psalm 46:10

The goal is not to eliminate fear, but to restore perspective.

PART V — PREPARING FOR FUTURE BATTLES

Purpose: To move forward with humility, awareness, and confidence.

Reflect honestly:

1. What patterns do you notice in how fear appears in your life?
2. How has God responded to similar situations in the past?
3. Who are your safe people when storms come?
4. What early signs tell you it's time to slow down and refocus?

Faith does not pretend storms will not come.

It remembers who has already carried you through them.

GROUP STUDY GUIDE (OPTIONAL)

This guide is designed for small groups, recovery settings, or trusted communities.

Guidelines:

- Read one chapter per week.
- Share only what you are comfortable sharing.
- Listen without interrupting or fixing.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Keep prayers simple and honest.

Suggested flow:

1. Read the chapter silently or aloud.
2. Sit quietly for a moment before discussion.
3. Share reflections, not advice.
4. Close with a brief prayer or moment of silence.

The goal is not performance or consensus.

The goal is presence.