

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;<sup>8</sup> I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.<sup>9</sup> *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*<sup>10</sup> Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.<sup>11</sup> Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.<sup>12</sup> Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

<sup>13</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. *Revelation 3: 7-13*

## INTRODUCTION

Why on earth pick a title like “Why Men Kill,” and Why they don’t have to? Isn’t it obvious? When I first thought about writing this book I was compelled to come up with a practical catchy title that might make someone pick up a book in the first place. On a more personal level in order to be authentic I needed to convey honestly what it was like to live as a person of faith and have everything I believed in challenged and put to the test. This book is about faith and how it matures although the struggle was through a divorce and subsequent journey of lunacy in the family court system, (in my particular case California). As my journey unfolded (for which I can now say I am truly thankful for it), I became a man who lost hope and I found myself caught in an odyssey that engulfed my life and at times which is evident as one reads this book. I also understood as a counselor by trade, that men speak a different language when it comes to experiencing pain. I found that very few leaders in the Christian church I had experienced truly understood it. They could talk about it of course, i.e. pain but talking is one thing living it is another. Men experience pain in a very different way than a woman particular in how they try and resolve it. Men isolate by nature, and internally attempt to cognitively process their pain and inadvertently as a result lose one of the best resources for healing, other Godly men to walk with in a path of camaraderie.

I also came to realize the path of healing for most of us, men or women for that matter requires we “go backward” before we move forward.

The book is written to help you the reader understand how spiritual transformation takes place. As such I hope the reader can appreciate the transformation that was taking place in my heart soul and mind, as it was written. I am an avid book reader, I have found I gravitate towards books where the author is struggling to overcome or press into questions that I myself have likewise tried to find answers to. This is usually revealed within the first few pages of most literature which discusses or makes observations on a social ill a moral dilemma or ethical pathos. I have never resonated with authors who comment on circumstances or philosophical beliefs that they themselves have not had to struggle with. Perhaps this is to my detriment and somewhat related to my own background of struggle that seemed to dominate several decades of my life. Assuming there were others who have similarly struggled I tried to write a book that honored an authentic portrayal of the struggle on my part the reader could relate to that honored their own struggle, regardless of the circumstances that “defined their struggle.” For all true struggling or wrestling with severe trial have the same common elements. We end up questioning meaning and purpose and are either made or marginalized by the process.

It was while standing in a church service in June 2010 I knew something had to change, the life I was living was hollow, dissatisfying, and pointless to the point I had simply lost the desire to keep pressing on with no rationale for existence. I asked God to make himself real. I had enough background in church at that point to fortunately not have to engage in a struggle over the existence of God as some but I was struggling with the desire to have a personal relationship with God as opposed to a cognitive understanding of Him concealed with church approved belief systems. What I didn’t expect was how God would answer. It was nearly two years later when I suspected God was answering that prayer in what was taking place. Shortly thereafter I decided

to write this book. Not so much to write a book but as to put down on paper something that would help me release some of the darkness that surrounded me while at the same time hoping to help other men who had experienced wounding in their childhood that translated into who they became as adults. My journey revealed I had underestimated how wounding in early life has profound impact on how we function as adults. Becoming a Christian doesn't take this stuff away despite some of the ridiculously simple catch phrases we sing and memorize in the church! It was in the midst of my own adult trial that my shortcomings as a man became painfully apparent. My ordeal just happened to be in a prolonged legal fight. The point life's trials produce transformative moments and seasons in life. Whatever your personal trial is, this book has something for you.

"Why Men Kill" is an honest attempt to accomplish such a task. Having been a somewhat successful grant writer I thought I could put my thoughts on paper. However not ever having written anything like a book and then make the assumption I could say anything people might want to read was a step of faith to say the least! I also wanted specifically to not produce another angst ridden rage against the system and its injustices but produce something that could help others, men or women endure severe trial and come out on the other side as God intending them to. While this book is written from a male perspective and does cover some of the lunacy associated with a very broken family court system, this is not a defense of men who commit atrocities in the midst of self perceived persecution. It is attempt to help men particularly fathers to appreciate they are not alone for "God is with the broken hearted and saves those crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34: 18) and let the broader public have access to and understand the psyche of men (and women for that matter) who being pushed to the brink appear to collapse morally and psychologically and engage in what seemed inexplicable behaviors.

I also got the final push for the book due to recent events in the case of Joshua Powell, a father who on February 5, 2012 took the lives of his sons Charles, seven, and Braden, five in an event of self imploding rage that I believe is an example of how the courts particularly in domestic custody fights help propagate the worst progressions of anger in its most darkest form. If this book can prevent such occurrences in the future for one child it's worth the writing, if it can affect the system at large, even better.

For this reason the books first few chapters are not particularly reflective of what one might find in "Christian literature." I chose to be open about what really goes on in our minds as human beings even if we are "church going Christians." I feel many of us are compelled to wear masks in the church in particular because it is so difficult to be authentic in church, in marriage, or in any of our relationships in life for that matter. The book also goes into depth on the progression of dysfunctional relationships for the purpose of understanding why men do what they do and how the chaos of the unresolved past was checked in my own life through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I try to support major points as needed with a reference to established studies or clinical theories but this is not a research book nor is it meant to be. But where I find significant commentary that is worth reading or enlightening on a particular difficult subject I provide reference.

This book also discusses spiritual principles in the context of my own spiritual journey and how that has helped me in my own recovery. And yes I do call it a recovery and I do suspect it will

last a life time as in the words of one of my professors in graduate school “Life isn’t fair, life is hard on everyone!” Undoubtedly this is true! Thank you professor Gene Zwilling.

As I mentioned this book is about transformation and the journey to find and understand grace and relationship with the Creator of the universe. I have unapologetically chosen to write this book while the transformation took place so the reader would experience what spiritual transformation in Christ looks like in actuality and was authentic. I like some of you, have grown tired of those writing from the outside what many of us experience on the inside. While the journey takes place in the first several chapters within the legal system, please forgive me for being overly detailed on this aspect. This in particular was simply put down for three reasons:

The first is having two Masters Degrees at this point in counseling and some 40 years in the church and my own experience with divorce, I can say I believe with some authority the church has in general failed, miserably to minister to those in broken marriages and post divorce recovery. This came home personally in our church in 2016 when this book was being finished for which I will explain. It is my belief that the church grossly misunderstands the nature of mental and spiritual health and often confuses the two, particularly in the realm of what may be construed as mental illness. While I will spare the reader a explanation of the traditional thought on mental health and demonic influence some people are mentally and emotionally ill due to unforeseen adversity. It is more evident with advancing work in genetics that certain people are chemically imbalanced from birth, (or possibly as a result of an accident or medical condition) that suffer truly from mental illness. Whether one attributes this to the work of the enemy is a matter of semantics in my opinion as anything that wrecks the image of God in a human being ultimately has its source in the efforts of the kingdom of darkness. Too many churches approach “healing” individuals” with the wrong tools. Church going folk are often “prayed over” (prayer is a starting point by the way for any adversity) when what they need is a counselor, a mentor or even a psychiatrist or combination of the above.<sup>1</sup> Therefore wind up being subjected to unorthodox and potentially harmful interventions by well intended Pastors and lay people when the real need is professional help. Our church suffered one such incident at a time when an effort was underway to establish a ministry to divorced men. The ministry was declined in favor of a rather unorthodox “spiritual formation” program which resulted in an individual who needed marital help and professional psychotherapy “dropping through the cracks.” After a period of several months the couple in questions marital relationship continued to deteriorate, which culminated in the death of a mother and the imprisonment of the father. At the time of this writing the trial to discern what happened is in its early stages. The couple had three children, two elementary school age and an infant. The church again in general needs to do a better job, not only with the issue of divorce but of dealing with mental illness.

Secondly the book has value to anyone who has been exposed to the broken judicial system in this country and feels due to the experience they can never overcome it. I believe firmly there are hundreds of men and women sitting in jails and prisons who should never have been incarcerated and the increasing amounts of vindicated prisoners who are being released (primarily through the increasing sophistication of DNA forensics) testify to this fact. If this is you, take the hand of the Master who you are in good company with. Jesus Christ is available to the broken man of woman who has been isolated and fragmented. He is available right now to

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<sup>1</sup> Add my book as a reference.

get to the heart of the matter on how to heal, possibly forgive yourself, and forgive others. Living with resentment and bitterness is the worst possible life that can be lived.

The third reason and what I think is the most important by far, is to explain how the process of true spiritual maturity takes place, what the fruit of spiritual maturity looks like, i.e. love for others, and why it happens the same way for those seeking intimacy with God. If your faith in God or life has revealed something missing in this aspect perhaps this book will help you.

*I am thankful to the men of the Sentinels For Christ who through their willingness to be open and “doers of the word” have taught and continue to teach me about the ways of God. It is to them and to those who have endured and blossomed and those who are hoping to find something on the other side of divorce this book is written.*

*I am eternally thankful to God and Christ Jesus for allowing grace to have its way and reveal itself in the person of the Holy Spirit.*

*I am dumfounded that God would give me an example of Grace in my wife Merry.*