

## WALKING INTO WALLS

### Introduction LEARNING TO SEE OUR WALLS

*Before you begin, watch the “Learning to See Our Walls” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

#### **The Main Point**

Millions of people feel preoccupied with hurtful events and incidents that took place a long time ago in their past; and consequently, they allow erroneous beliefs to become barriers that keep them from a life of freedom, purpose, and meaning. Rather than resolve the pain and move on, they continue to bump against their walls, living as if a painful past were a present reality. But your story can be different!

#### **Taking Stock**

What erroneous beliefs or half-truths might be keeping you from seeing and acting on the truth? Take a look at the following statements, and after each one, circle the response that most closely reflects your own story.

- **This is not my fault.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **My parents just didn’t get it.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **Nobody can help me but me.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

## Study Guide

- **I know how to deal with this on my own.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **I am not the one with the problem here.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **How could this person hurt me, knowing how others have hurt me?**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **You have to be crazy to see a counselor.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **Anyone would feel this way if he or she knew what I have been through.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **When the person who hurt me makes a move toward resolution, I am prepared to respond, but not until then.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **I'm so guilty that God can never forgive me.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

Based on your responses to the preceding questions, what walls (if any) do you think may need your attention? Why?

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## WALKING INTO WALLS

### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

As you think about the invisible walls that may exist in your own life, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What walls of guilt, shame, anger, regret, or anxiety might be hurting me?

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2. What erroneous beliefs might I hold, either about myself or about others (especially those who have hurt me)?

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3. What do I see as my purpose in life?

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4. How do I see my life in light of my past and current relationships?

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5. What lies do the walls in my life represent? What truths do they hide?

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## *Study Guide*

### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. What is “the mystery of misery”? Why is it important to understand?
2. Why is it necessary to deal with the walls in one’s life?
3. How can you use the hurt in your past as a lens to observe your life?
4. How can friends and loved ones help us see and fulfill our life’s purpose?
5. What does it mean to be free of a past that cannot be changed?

### **Listen for God’s Voice**

Saul, the first king of Israel, ultimately failed in his role as ruler, largely because he kept crashing into the wall of fear and never learned to move beyond it.

*Read 1 Samuel 10:22; 15:24; 18:12, 15, 29; 28:5.*

1. What do all of these texts have in common?
2. How did Saul respond to the wall of fear? What do you think he was afraid of?
3. What kind of legacy did Saul leave behind?
4. How might Saul’s story have turned out differently? What choices could have helped him?

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### ***Read 2 Timothy 1:7.***

1. What did God *not* give to us?
2. What *did* God give to us?
3. How can the message of this verse help believers to destroy the wall of fear?
4. How might you need to integrate the truth of this verse in your own life?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading the introduction, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to identify and move beyond the walls that are keeping you from enjoying the blessed future God has for you.

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## 1

### PHANTOM WALLS THAT STOP US

*Before you begin, watch the “Phantom Walls That Stop Us” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

## *Study Guide*

### **The Main Point**

The walls that keep us from experiencing joy and health—walls such as anger, resentment, and guilt—are often built out of incomplete or misunderstood pieces of reality, and from half-truths that prevent us from perceiving the real truth. We focus so resolutely on an ugly pebble that we miss the majestic mountain on which it rests. Don't let that pebble keep you from enjoying the majestic view!

### **Taking Stock**

Do you find yourself often mulling over some painful event from your past, even your distant past? If so, what does that mental conversation look like? Who is the hero? Who is the villain? Who is the victim? What happened? What was the result? With that hurtful incident in mind, respond to the following statements.

- **I know all I need to know about the one who hurt me.**  
True/False
- **My current problems are the perpetrator's fault.**  
True/False
- **The one who hurt me is pure evil.**  
True/False
- **I consider myself a victim.**  
True/False
- **I am the innocent target of undeserved abuse.**  
True/False

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- **This one horrible event ruined my life forever.**

True/False

Based on your responses to the preceding questions, do you believe you might have some phantom walls that need to come down in order for you to move ahead? If so, what might they be? What can you do about them?

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### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

Phantom walls create barriers of anger, resentment, and guilt. They also prompt you to view your strengths as weaknesses, to exaggerate the deficits in your life, and to crowd out any sense that God made you to be a capable person.

1. Do you ever play the victim? Explain.

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2. Is there some event or incident from your past that tends to act as the framework from which you interpret life? If so, describe it.

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## *Study Guide*

3. What do you know about the personal history of the person who has hurt you deeply?

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4. What false conclusions do you think you might have come to in regard to yourself and your life?

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5. What aspect of Jesus' truth do you think he most wants you to grasp?

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. How can half-truths cloud one's perception of the full truth? Give some examples.
2. How is it possible to look at life from a broader perspective than the one you currently may have? How do we expand our perspective?
3. What does it mean to "personalize the hurt" when thinking about some painful incident from the past? How can this, in itself, cause further hurt?
4. What does it mean to take responsibility for your life in the area of your emotions? How can this be done?

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5. How might God use your common experience of pain or “bonds of neglect” to heal you and help others?

### **Listen for God’s Voice**

#### ***Read Matthew 16:5-12.***

1. What did the disciples not understand? What kept them from understanding?
2. To what false conclusion did their failure to understand lead them?
3. How did Jesus correct their misunderstanding?
4. In what way did the disciples’ failure to understand become a wall that kept them from experiencing all that God had for them?
5. Why do you think Jesus made his disciples work to correct their misunderstanding? Why didn’t he just explain their error and then provide the right answer? What does this suggest for how God will work in your own life?

#### ***Read Luke 24:13-32.***

1. What incomplete or misunderstood pieces of information caused problems for the two disciples described in this passage?
2. How did Jesus deal with this misunderstanding? What actions did he take to dismantle the wall?

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3. How did this incomplete understanding affect the emotions of the two disciples?
4. What happened once the wall came down? How did the emotions of the disciples change?
5. What does this incident suggest to you about the way God tends to deal with the walls in your own life?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 1, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move beyond your phantom walls and toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## 2

### THE WALL OF STUBBORN RESISTANCE

*Before you begin, watch “The Wall of Stubborn Resistance” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

Stubborn resistance is an unhelpful, contrarian attitude that leads people to think, *Since I already know everything there is to*

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*know on this topic, no one can help me.* Stubborn resistance keeps people stuck in their problems and keeps them from seeing their blind spots—and so they continue to walk into walls they can't see, and so they continue to hurt themselves. Here's help for getting out of the rut and getting on with your life.

### **Taking Stock**

Read the following statements and respond with the answer that most closely matches your own situation. How stubbornly resistant do your answers suggest you might be?

- **I frequently admit I am wrong.**  
True/False
- **I frequently ask people for their opinion.**  
True/False
- **I often admit that I have approached problems in unhealthy ways.**  
True/False
- **I willingly admit that I may need help to move beyond the walls in my life.**  
True/False
- **I have said to my spouse, “You knew I was this way when you married me.”**  
True/False
- **I tend to be a “my way or the highway” kind of person.**  
True/False

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- **People have told me (or I feel) that I have a strong need always to be right.**

True/False

- **I stop listening to people who try to get me to see things in different ways.**

True/False

Based on your answers to these questions, what might you have to do in order to become more open-minded to listening to outside perspectives? List some possible actions below.

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### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

Several key things must happen in order for someone to escape the grip of stubborn resistance and move forward into God's best. This section asks you to look deeper into your own experience and explore what you might need to do in order to get unstuck.

#### ***Become more self-aware.***

1. What do you see as your most difficult problem?
2. What blind spots have others tried to discuss with you in this area of your life?
3. What walls do you keep running into that stop your forward progress?

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4. Might there be a deeper reality that lies behind your problem? What guilt or shame might you be carrying regarding some deeply painful event in your past? What is the “it” that keeps you from moving forward?
5. How could your parents or grandparents have contributed to the problem you now face?

### ***Look honestly at yourself.***

1. What walls in your life have you refused to recognize?
2. How have you defended and rationalized your behavior?
3. In what ways have you tried to project your own problem on to others?
4. How do you normally react to those who challenge you regarding this problem?
5. How might the loss of your walls make you afraid? How have these walls brought you comfort in the past? How do these walls help you avoid the pain of self-examination?

### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

#### ***Seek the wisdom of others.***

1. How have others dealt successfully with the wall that confronts you?
2. How have others overcome the guilt or shame that once kept them stuck?

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3. What counsel might others offer to help you get beyond your fear?

### ***Advance to willingness.***

To move forward into God's best for you, you must be willing to overcome any stubborn resistance that you discover in yourself. Discuss the following questions to gauge that willingness, and to discover how to experience God's best.

1. To whom do you need to listen more carefully in order to overcome the wall of stubborn resistance in your life?
2. What plan do you have to accomplish your dreams? Describe it.
3. What are you willing to do to improve your life? Be specific.
4. What work must you do to replace stubborn resistance with an open-minded willingness to look objectively at your life, listen to the wisdom of others, and move toward real change?

### ***Make yourself accountable to others who care about you.***

1. Who are the safe truth-tellers in your life?
2. Who specifically might make a good accountability partner for you?

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### **Listen for God's Voice**

The book of Jeremiah speaks more about the dangers of stubborn resistance than perhaps any other book in the Bible. Jeremiah warned his people repeatedly that if they did not turn from their stubbornness, change their ways, and begin to look at life from God's perspective, they would face hardship, pain, and even tragedy. Yet if they would listen, a world of great possibilities would open to them.

#### ***Read Jeremiah 7:23-24.***

1. What kept the people from moving forward? Why did they go backward?
2. What was the result of this failure?
3. What is God's desire for all his people? (v. 23)
4. What is required to stop following the stubborn inclinations of an evil heart? What does it mean to "listen" and "pay attention" (v. 24 NIV)? What do those actions require?

#### ***Read Jeremiah 18:11-17.***

1. What does the command to "turn" (NIV) involve?
2. What does the command to "reform" (NIV) involve?
3. What consequences come with a commitment to stubborn resistance?

#### ***Read Exodus 5:1-14:31.***

The Pharaoh of the biblical exodus is perhaps the best illustration in Scripture of someone who hardened his heart and

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refused to listen to outside perspectives. Through his stubborn resistance, he caused not only his own destruction but also the ruin of his people.

Compare two sets of verses about this incident:

***Read Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32.***

***Read Exodus 9:12, 34; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8.***

1. What is similar about these two sets of verses?
2. What is different about these two sets of verses?
3. What do you conclude about someone who repeatedly hardens his or her heart against God's best?

Stubborn resistance was a problem in the New Testament era as well as in Old Testament days. Read the following verses, recount the issues described in each passage, and then suggest how the issues back then continue to pose a problem for us today.

***Read Mark 3:1-6; 16:14.***

***Read Romans 2:1-5.***

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 2, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move beyond the wall of stubborn resistance and toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## THE WALL OF ARROGANT ENTITLEMENT

*Before you begin, watch “The Wall of Arrogant Entitlement” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

The wall of arrogant entitlement grows out of an adolescent state of mind that sees itself as the center of the universe. Those afflicted with it believe they have a right to be happy at all costs, and so they rationalize selfish and destructive behaviors in order to get what they think they deserve. The predictable result is pain, both for them and for others. Thankfully, maturity—and a positive, purposeful life—await those who will persist in getting past “my way” thinking.

### **Taking Stock**

People trapped by the wall of arrogant entitlement often not only rationalize their behavior but speak it out loud. They justify their actions with comments such as those below. How often do you find yourself saying . . .

- **I deserve this.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **I have real needs that are not getting met.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

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- **I am in a crisis, and this one thing will ease it.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **This really isn't betrayal; and besides, he/she won't ever know.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **This person really disappointed me. So it's actually his/her fault.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **Anyone in my situation would do the same thing.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

- **I'm not fully responsible for my actions, because I'm an addict.**

*Frequently say it    Occasionally say it    Seldom say it    Never say it*

If you say these things to yourself enough, you will eventually build a bridge that enables you to cross over into arrogant entitlement. You will rationalize your actions in a way that makes the wrong seem quite acceptable, "given the circumstances." What do your responses to the preceding questions indicate to you? What action, if any, do they suggest you need to take?

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## WALKING INTO WALLS

### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

1. Do you find yourself talking and thinking more about “rights” or about “responsibilities”? Explain.

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2. What things have you done to achieve so-called happiness that actually led to grief? Why do you think this happened?

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3. In what ways are you actively involved in helping others?

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4. What are you doing to improve your relationship with God?

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5. In what areas of your life are you content? In what areas do you lack contentment? Explain.

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. What other songs besides “My Way” can you think of that reflect an attitude of entitlement?

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2. Describe some rationalizations you have heard from individuals who tried to explain why their “right” to happiness led to questionable behavior.
3. Why and how does arrogant entitlement tend to destroy relationships?
4. How would you describe humility? Why is it the key to overcoming the wall of arrogant entitlement?
5. What does it mean to surrender everything to God? How is this done?

### **Listen for God’s Voice**

#### ***Read Philippians 2:3-11.***

1. What personal quality or trait is highlighted in this passage?
2. How does Jesus exemplify this quality or trait?
3. How should this quality affect the way we treat others?
4. How does this quality help to break down the wall of arrogant entitlement?
5. How are we to nurture this quality in ourselves? How can we make it grow?

#### ***Read 1 Peter 5:5-7.***

1. What does it mean to submit to one another? What does this look like in practice?

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2. How do you “clothe yourself” (NIV) with humility? What is significant about the metaphor of putting on humility like a change of wardrobe?
3. What reason does Peter give for humbling ourselves in verse 6?
4. What is the connection between the promise of verse 6 and the statement of verse 7? How does verse 7 make it easier for us to count on the promise of verse 6?
5. Who is the most humble person you know? How do others react to him or her? How can humility improve your own life?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 3, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move beyond the wall of arrogant entitlement and toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## *Study Guide*

### 4

## THE WALL OF JUSTIFIABLE RESENTMENT

*Before you begin, watch “The Wall of Justifiable Resentment” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

Many people languish behind a wall of justifiable resentment, remaining angry and bitter over some injustice done to them. They stew over the hurt and dream of ways to force the perpetrator to make things right (or at least to suffer for the wrong committed), even as they live in a self-imposed prison that blocks off their future. But you can find release from resentment and breathe the fresh air of freedom if you'll work through your experiences and emotions, step by step.

### **Taking Stock**

Unresolved bitterness and resentment can eat you up inside and leave you chained to a hurtful past—long after the one who hurt you has forgotten about the whole painful affair. Read the following statements and, after each one, circle the answer that best represents your perspective.

- **Forgiving that person would be tantamount to letting him/her off the hook.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

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- **I have every right to be angry about what he/she did to me.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I fantasize about bad things happening to the perpetrator.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **He/she is to blame for my crummy life.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I often tell others what this person did to me.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I seem to be angry a lot of the time.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

Based on your answers to the preceding questions, what do you think you may need to do in order to avoid the wall of justifiable resentment?

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### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

Human beings were not designed to live with resentment, justifiable or otherwise. Bitterness in the heart works like a corrosive on the soul, eating away at our insides and poisoning everything.

## *Enhanced Study Guide*

It also makes little practical sense, since in harboring a grudge, we chain ourselves to the very person who hurt us.

1. How do you normally react when someone does something to hurt you? Do you easily forgive, or do you tend to hold on to the slight and keep replaying what happened? Explain.

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2. How easy would it be for you to put yourself in the offender's shoes for a time? Explain.

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3. Think of the worst thing anyone ever did to you. Have you forgiven this person? Explain.

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4. What would it mean for you to focus on your response, rather than on the actions of the one who hurt you?

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. What does it mean to “humanize” the offender, and why is this important?
2. How can people work through their fear of the future,

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especially a fear caused by the worry that someone will hurt them again? What are some good strategies?

3. What are some proven ways to help others who are hurting? What have you seen that works?
4. In what way is forgiveness a process, and not merely a one-time event? Describe what this process might look like.
5. How can a person know they have truly forgiven their offender?

### **Listen for God's Voice**

The Bible has a lot to say about the necessity of forgiveness and the devastation caused by unresolved bitterness, long-held resentment, and smoldering anger. God designed forgiveness not only to cleanse us spiritually but to make us whole emotionally and physically. Consider just four of the Bible's many passages on this issue.

#### ***Read Matthew 6:14-15.***

1. What does this passage tell us about the importance of forgiving those who injure us?
2. What does an unwillingness to forgive reveal about our hearts?

#### ***Read Ephesians 4:31-32 and Colossians 3:13.***

1. What command are we given in verse 31? How comprehensive is this command?

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2. How is it possible to obey the command of verse 32? What outside help do we need?
3. Why are we to forgive, according to verse 32 and Colossians 3:13?

***Read Hebrews 12:14-15.***

1. How are the pursuit of peace and the pursuit of holiness related? What connects them?
2. What does a root of bitterness have to do with falling short of the grace of God? How does bitterness cause trouble and defile people?

**What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 4, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move beyond the wall of justifiable resentment and toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## THE WALL OF DISCONNECTED ISOLATION

*Before you begin, watch “The Wall of Disconnected Isolation” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

We have been created to develop strong relationships with other people and with God, but painful experiences can prompt some of us to isolate ourselves in the vain hope of escaping further pain. What’s wrong with that? In isolation, a person will have a much tougher time knowing who they are. They’re also prone to remain ignorant of their need for growth in many key areas of life—and this leads to greater pain, not less. Don’t isolate yourself. Strive to develop and build relationships that will give your life meaning and purpose.

### **Taking Stock**

How connected are you with others? How deeply do others know you? Respond to each of the statements below with the answer that best corresponds to the way you think, feel, and operate.

- **I’m just fine the way I am—God is all I need.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

- **I really don’t like being around people who are in pain.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

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- **I have too many of my own needs to be of much help to others in need.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I'm known as an especially empathetic person.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I'm well acquainted with the areas in which I most need personal growth.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **Others tend to see me as a needy person.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

Based on the answers you've just given, what might you need to do to overcome the wall of disconnected isolation?

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### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

1. In the space below, write down the three areas in which you think you see the greatest need for your own spiritual or emotional growth.

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2. Think back on the most personal conversations you've had over the past month. What do you think others would say are the areas of growth that you most need to address?

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3. How easy is it for you to empathize with the pain of someone else? Explain.

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4. Among your friends and close associates, who are the most objective and insightful observers you know who could speak truth into your life? List them.

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5. This week, how can you practice being more vulnerable with the people who are closest to you?

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. Why do we need others to help us see who we really are and the areas of our lives that need the most attention?
2. Name some helpful and affirming ways that we can encourage our loved ones to do some honest self-evaluation.
3. How does relational intimacy (as opposed to merely sex-

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ual intimacy) lead to joy, fulfillment, and a broadened perspective?

4. Name some effective strategies for getting to know people for who they really are, warts and all.
5. What does mutual submission look like in the body of Christ?

### **Listen for God's Voice**

The New Testament is famous for its “one another” passages, all of which emphasize the necessity of connecting at deep levels with other believers in Christ. Look up a few of these passages, and discuss why interconnectedness is so important in God's kingdom.

#### ***Read John 17:10-11, 20-24.***

1. What kind of intimacy did Jesus pray for in this passage? How much of this intimacy have you experienced? Explain.
2. What did Jesus mean when he prayed that his followers would be “one as we are one” (v. 11 NIV)?
3. Why does Jesus pray that his followers may be “one”? What does such unity communicate to the outside world? Why is that important?

#### ***Read Romans 14:19.***

1. What kind of things tend to lead to peace? Are you pursuing them? Explain.

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2. What kind of things edify, or build up, other believers? What are you doing to build up other believers? Are you doing anything that might tend to tear them down? If so, how can you turn things around?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 5, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move beyond the wall of disconnected isolation and toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## 6

### THE WALL OF BLIND IGNORANCE

*Before you begin, watch “The Wall of Blind Ignorance” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

#### **The Main Point**

All of us have blind spots that, if left unattended, will cause us great pain and make satisfying relationships difficult, if not impossible. To see our lives and ourselves from another’s perspective can

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make all the difference between frustration and fulfillment. Don't be afraid to seek out the mirrors God has provided to help you get on with your life. His truth, in combination with the feedback of other people, can transform your life!

### **Taking Stock**

Given our blind spots, we require outside perspectives to help us see the truth. How open are you to those outside perspectives? Circle the answer to each of the following statements that you believe most accurately reflects your situation.

- **I am quite good at seeing my life from the perspective of others.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

- **I see the faults of others much more readily than I see my own faults.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

- **I often invite others to speak truth into my life.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

- **I am very good at applying God's truth to my life, even in difficult areas.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

- **I can easily name my top three blind spots.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

## WALKING INTO WALLS

- **I am totally committed to obeying whatever God might command me to do.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

Based on the answers you've just given, what might you need to do to overcome the wall of blind ignorance?

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### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

We are all ignorant about some things, but when we remain willfully ignorant about things we should know, that's when problems arise. Though God calls us to take off the blinders, we feel a certain comfort in remaining in the dark, especially when stepping into the light would require us to make some changes in how we live. To make those changes, we need to be open to the truth God reveals to us so we can become aware of our blind spots and learn to *see*.

1. Describe the last time you became aware of a blind spot in your life. What happened?

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2. What "log" might Jesus be telling you to take out of your own eye before you criticize the speck in someone else's eye?

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## *Study Guide*

3. What are some of the lies that you tend to tell yourself?

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4. What biblical commands are the hardest for you to heed?  
Why?

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. How has seeing things from another's perspective brought healing to your friends and loved ones?
2. In what ways can probing beneath the surface be helpful?
3. How can you best encourage one another to obey the Lord, even when it seems difficult to do so?
4. Not everyone effectively speaks truth into the lives of others. How have you seen this done well . . . and not so well?
5. Why is obedience the key to overcoming blind ignorance? Why does one have to obey the truth in order to know it?

### **Listen for God's Voice**

*Read Matthew 7:3-5.*

1. Why does Jesus ask the question in verse 3?
2. Why does Jesus repeat the question in another form in verse 4?

## WALKING INTO WALLS

3. What counsel does Jesus give in verse 5?
4. What would “removing the log” look like in your life?

### ***Read John 7:17; 8:31-32.***

1. What promise does Jesus give in John 7:17? What practical implications does this suggest to you?
2. What does it mean to abide in Jesus’ word (8:31)?
3. How can we know the truth? How does this truth set us free? Free from what?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 6, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move beyond the wall of blind ignorance and toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## *Study Guide*

### 7

## GETTING UNSTUCK

*Before you begin, watch the “Getting Unstuck” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

Many people remain stuck behind hurtful walls because they fear what might happen if they break through those walls; they fear that they might have to take risks, or take responsibility for their painful situations, or engage fully in life. Yet by changing how they think about their past, they find a key to the door of a great new future. Take a chance on yourself, your future, and God today. Reach out—and open the door. You are not alone!

### **Taking Stock**

When you remain stuck behind walls, you hold on to thoughts and feelings that distort your outlook and damage your health. Consider several examples of inaccurate thinking about yourself and others, and circle the response after each that most closely reflects your situation.

- **I have a crummy set of genes, and therefore I am always going to be sick, just as my parents were.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

- **I have always been a bit down at every stage of my life.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

## WALKING INTO WALLS

- **My loneliness keeps me locked up and in bed a lot.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **It's just my lot in life to feel miserable.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **The person who hurt me is all bad.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **The perpetrator has no regrets.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **The offender is beyond redemption.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **That person deserves nothing good.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **That person has nothing of value to offer this world.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

Based on your responses to the preceding questions, what might you have to do adjust the way you think about either yourself or others?

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## *Study Guide*

### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

1. Think about situations in your past when you refused to make some needed changes because you saw benefit to living in the old way. What “benefits” were you reluctant to give up? In the end, how beneficial to you were these “benefits”?

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2. Describe how it might truly benefit you to start thinking differently about your past.

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3. Think about the person who hurt you. What kind of broken past does he/she also have?

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4. What new “frame” or perspective might help you to see yourself in a more accurate, biblical light?

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5. What new “frame” or perspective might help you to see the perpetrator in a more accurate, biblical light?

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## WALKING INTO WALLS

### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. How does acknowledging our sin (Romans 3:23) take away any morally superior ground we might have thought we owned?
2. How are we able to access the Holy Spirit's power for whatever challenge we face?
3. How can we develop a forgiving spirit or mind-set, as opposed to merely granting instances of forgiveness? Why should a forgiving attitude be our goal?
4. How is accessing God's grace a key to getting unstuck? What does it mean, in a practical sense, to access God's grace?
5. Have each person share some instances when they managed to get unstuck. What did they do to get unstuck? What happened as a result of getting unstuck?

### **Listen for God's Voice**

***Read Ephesians 2:10-18.***

1. List all the truths about yourself that this passage teaches.
2. List all the benefits of belonging to Christ that this passage teaches.
3. Explain how this passage describes your former life, outside of Christ.

## *Study Guide*

4. What difference does it make to you, on a day-to-day basis, that you are now “in Christ” (NIV)? How does this knowledge shape your daily experience?

### ***Read Galatians 5:16-25.***

1. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit” (NIV)? How is this accomplished?
2. What is the result of not walking in the Spirit? (see vv. 19-21)
3. What is the result of walking in the Spirit? (see vv. 22-24)
4. What is the difference between “living” in the Spirit and “walking” in the Spirit? How are they related?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 7, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to get unstuck and move toward the blessed future God has for you.

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## MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

*Before you begin, watch the “Moving into the Future” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

While it takes hard work to build a fulfilling present out of the embers of a painful past—and there are no easy answers or shortcuts to gaining a more fulfilling life—those who want to move forward will do whatever it takes to grasp God’s best for them. And by making such a commitment to upgrading their life, they exchange fear for a confident peace. That peace and confidence is yours for the taking. Pursue that “better life” that God has for you with all your heart, mind, and strength!

### **Taking Stock**

Walls don’t dissolve or disappear on their own; resolving the painful issues of your past requires a firm commitment from you to bring down those walls. To see how ready you might be for this step of resolution, respond to each of the following statements with the answer that best reflects your current situation.

- **I am ready for the hard work it takes to build a new and better life.**

*Strongly agree   Moderately agree   Moderately disagree   Totally disagree*

*Study Guide*

- **I often tell myself, “All I have to do is \_\_\_\_\_ ” to solve my problems.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I have a “whatever it takes” approach to moving on to a future of freedom.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I feel as though I am stuck in the past and can’t move forward.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I have turned my life and my will over to God, trusting him for the outcome.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

- **I believe my painful past can actually assist me in building a bright future.**

*Strongly agree Moderately agree Moderately disagree Totally disagree*

As you consider your preceding answers, what might you need to do now in order to resolve your issues with painful events from your past and get ready to move into a brighter future?

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## WALKING INTO WALLS

### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

1. In what areas of your life do you think you most need to move forward?

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2. What fears in your life most need to be replaced with a confident peace?

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3. What sinful patterns do you need to acknowledge, confess, and forsake?

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4. With whom do you need to make amends? What kind of restitution may be necessary?

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5. Outline your plan to protect yourself in the future.

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. What does it mean to “reframe your past” in order to move forward?

## *Study Guide*

2. In what way(s) would you like to upgrade your life? Dream a little together.
3. How can you encourage each other to focus on *now* rather than on *then*?
4. It's usually easier to reach out to others when you're with a supportive group. How can you come together to reach out?
5. How can you effectively remind each other that your past doesn't have to keep taking from you, but instead can add something valuable to your life?

### **Listen for God's Voice**

#### ***Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20.***

1. What would a choice for "life" (NIV) look like for you?  
How would it benefit you?
2. What would a choice for "death" (NIV) look like for you?  
How would it hurt you?
3. How can the choices you make now affect your children and your descendants?

#### ***Read Galatians 4:28-5:1.***

1. What does it mean to be a "child of promise" (NIV)?
2. What does it mean to be free in Christ?
3. How can you stand firm in your liberty in Christ? How can you avoid getting entangled in bondage or slavery?

## WALKING INTO WALLS

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 8, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use the space below to outline a plan of attack to move into the blessed future God has for you with confidence and hope.

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## 9

### **IS IT A WALL OR A BOUNDARY?**

*Before you begin, watch the “Is It a Wall or a Boundary?” online video presentation from Stephen Arterburn at [worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/](http://worthypublishing.com/books/Walking-Into-Walls/).*

### **The Main Point**

As we step into the future God has for us, the differences between building a wall and setting a boundary may not always be clear. And yet we need to understand the differences so that we can avoid a “more of the same” life and realize a “better than imagined” life ahead. Properly set boundaries will allow you to walk in freedom and light. You have a lot to look forward to!

## *Study Guide*

### **Taking Stock**

Have you been setting up walls that keep *you* restrained? Or boundaries that encourage a bright future? Mark which statements below represent a wall, and which ones represent a boundary. Then circle any statements that resemble ones you've made in the past six months.

- **We are done. You've run out of second chances.**  
Boundary/Wall
- **When you're ready to change, then maybe we can talk about moving forward with our relationship. But not until you deal with your issues!**  
Boundary/Wall
- **I will not be spoken to like that. I will discontinue the conversation until we both can get our emotions in check.**  
Boundary/Wall
- **The opposite sex can't be trusted, so I'm not going to take any risks.**  
Boundary/Wall
- **If you choose to act that way when I've told you that it hurts me, here is how I will respond . . .**  
Boundary/Wall
- **From now on, I am going to get the help I need, whether you want to be part of that or not.**  
Boundary/Wall

## WALKING INTO WALLS

As you consider the answers you've just given, what might you need to do now in order to eliminate any remaining walls and start setting wise boundaries?

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### **Move Forward: For Personal Reflection**

1. In what areas of your life do you need to replace walls with healthy boundaries?

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2. How are you perpetuating the past? Where have you failed to draw a line in the sand to keep the past from being repeated?

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3. Which lifelong patterns have you realized are no longer working?

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4. Choose one of those lifelong patterns, and start brainstorming some new solutions here.

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## *Study Guide*

5. What are some of the truths you've realized while reading this book that you can use to start building healthy boundaries?

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### **Move Forward: For Discussion**

1. What are some of the emotions that boundaries should never be built on? Why are these emotions detrimental to healthy boundary-setting?
2. How can a person discern the false safety of a wall versus the authentic safety of a boundary?
3. Discuss the meaning of this statement: "A wall is a barrier, whereas a boundary is a beginning."
4. What role can we play in helping each other set good boundaries?

### **Listen for God's Voice**

King Saul is a prime example in Scripture of someone who failed to set boundaries for himself, much less abide by the boundaries that were set for him. And he kept running into walls until it cost him the kingdom of Israel.

***Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-26.***

1. What clues are we given in v. 17 about one of Saul's walls from the past?

## WALKING INTO WALLS

2. What does v. 24 indicate was another of Saul's walls?
3. List some of the boundaries that God himself set through the prophet Samuel?
4. How would Saul have been blessed had he heeded these boundaries?
5. What's your attitude toward boundaries? Do you typically resist them? Distrust them? Embrace them?
6. How can you avoid making Saul's mistakes?

Proverbs is packed with truths that speak to the benefits of exercising boundaries and the consequences of failing to work around our walls. Check out a few samplings of God's wisdom here.

***Read Proverbs 17:9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 27-28; 18:7, 9, 13.***

1. List some of the areas in our lives that Proverbs identifies as needing boundaries.
2. Which of these areas do you struggle with? Which ones are contributing to your success in life?
3. What are some of the stated consequences of failing to set and heed boundaries? What are some of the blessings?

### **What You Can Do Now**

After reading chapter 9, pondering its message on your own, discussing its ideas with others, and working through the preceding exercises and questions, *what do you need to do now?* Use

## *Study Guide*

the space below to outline a plan of attack to replace your prison walls once and for all with helpful boundaries that will keep you on the path toward the blessed future God has for you.

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