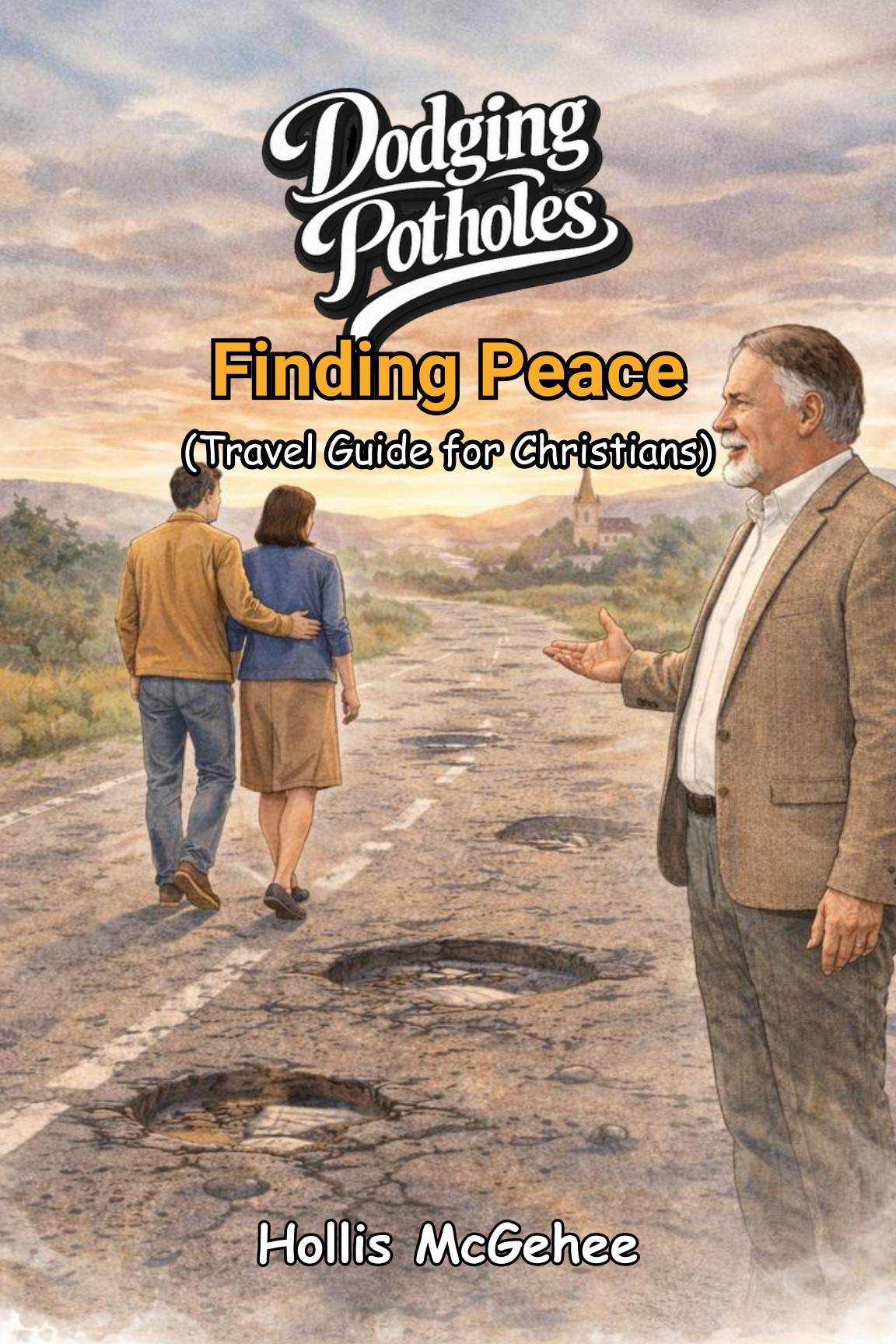
Dodging Potholes

Finding Peace

(Travel Guide for Christians)



Hollis McGehee

Introduction

Life can only be negotiated along its intended course when **a person has been born again, born a second time in the Spirit** by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone.

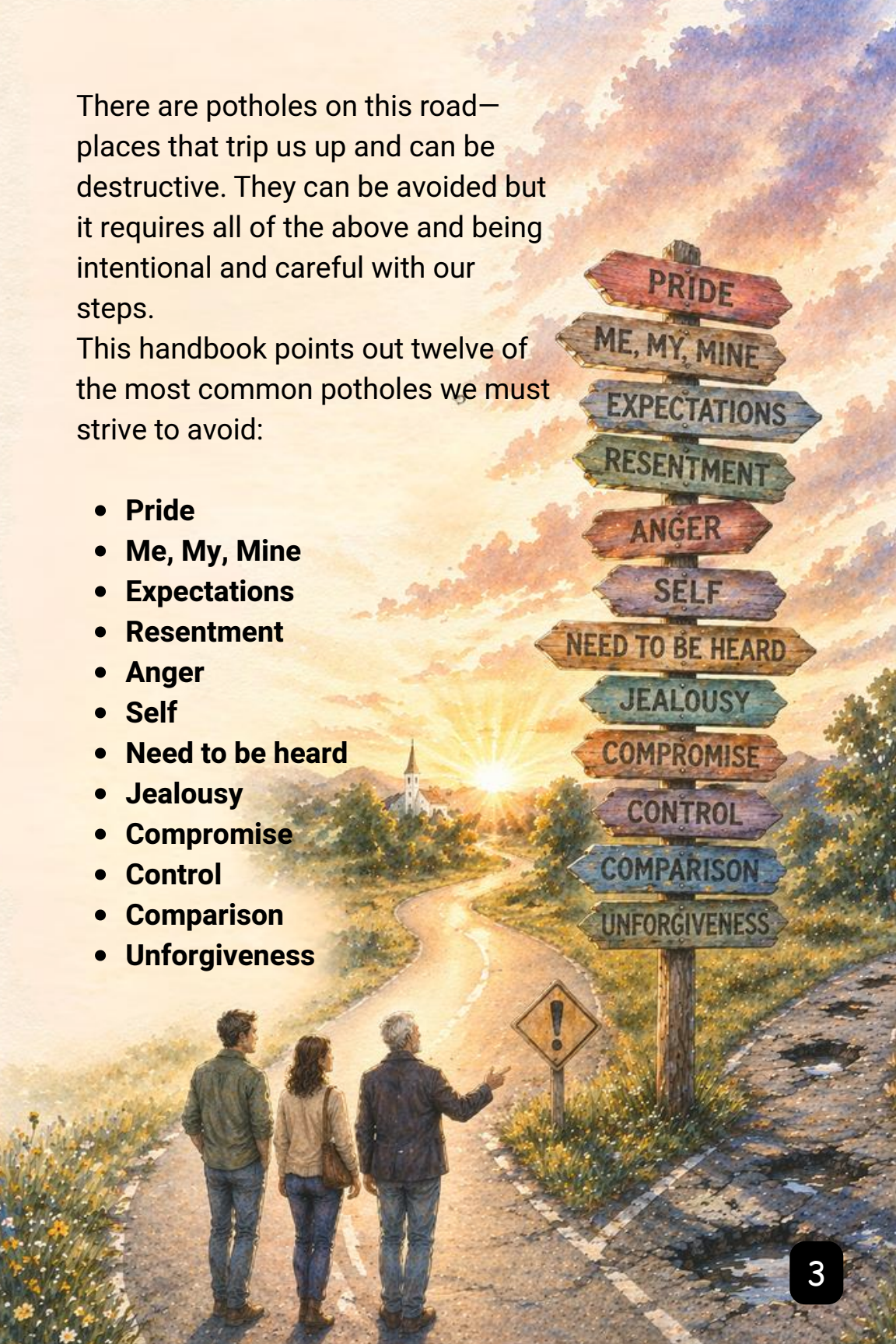
From that point forward we set our course to live where:

- **God is first.**
- **The Word of God is the ultimate guidebook to life.**
- **Receiving and applying counsel from God.**
- **Talking with God daily.**
- **Seeking God daily.**
- **A firm commitment to follow Jesus—not self.**



There are potholes on this road—places that trip us up and can be destructive. They can be avoided but it requires all of the above and being intentional and careful with our steps.
This handbook points out twelve of the most common potholes we must strive to avoid:

- **Pride**
- **Me, My, Mine**
- **Expectations**
- **Resentment**
- **Anger**
- **Self**
- **Need to be heard**
- **Jealousy**
- **Compromise**
- **Control**
- **Comparison**
- **Unforgiveness**



I have earned a “PHD” (pot hole degree) in each of these and hope to give you encouragement on how to miss a few of these on your journey and how to get yourself out of potholes when you do land there.
We all step in potholes but being intentional in avoiding them and **refusing to campout in your “pet” potholes** is the goal of this writing.

The Bible—the Word of God—is the real handbook, and this simple book should only be relied on as a distant second additional resource for negotiating the minefield of life.

Right priorities avoid potholes and build peace.



Preface

As a human author, this book may include errors, yet it strives to serve as a guide for a life well-lived, recognizing always that the ultimate handbook is the Word of God, the Holy Bible.

Throughout my years, I have encountered many potholes and discovered where the solid ground lies. My intention is not to provide a new map but to guide you back to the Original One - HIS NAME IS JESUS AND HE IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

As you journey through these pages, remember to look beyond the author and toward the Scriptures these words reflect. Use this guide to steady your feet, keeping your eyes on the Living Word.

Ultimately, the goal of this book is for you and me to live purposefully for God.



Trust in the Lord



Trust in the Lord
With all of your heart
Do not lean on your own understanding
In all your ways acknowledge Him
And He will make straight your paths.
Proverbs 3:5-6

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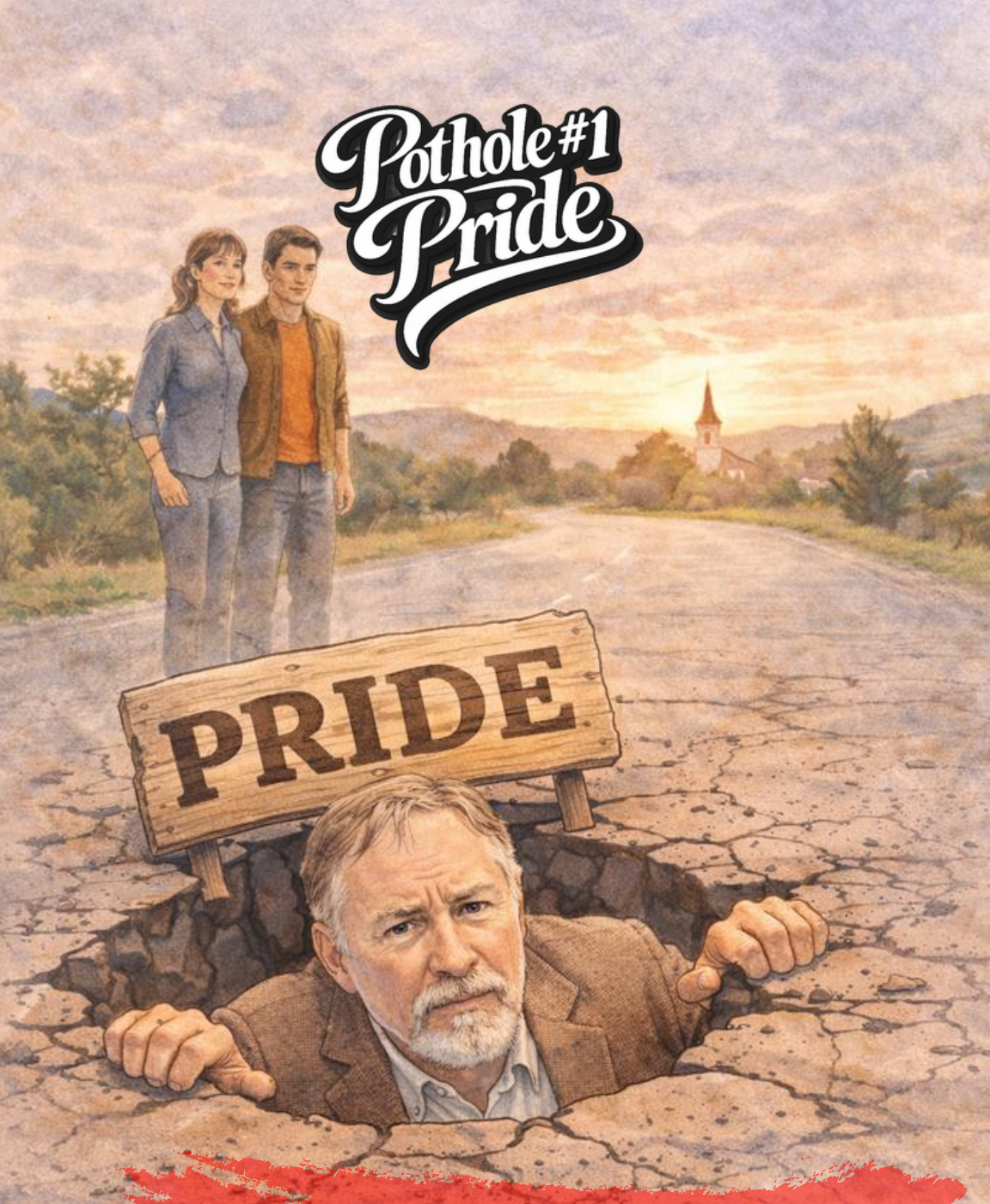
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Beware some potholes may look small but they can be very deep. Look at this one - it's the granddaddy of them all:



This is what my daddy called “being too big for your britches”. God calls it pride and haughtiness. Thinking highly of oneself is the deepest and most destructive of all of the potholes in life. We will not dodge this pothole - its trap is universal. We don’t have to stay there, we can escape immediately but turning to God and acknowledging our condition. Trusting God not self.

Warning: Pride is most lethal at the very moment you think you have missed it or passed it by.

The anti-dote to pride is to fix our eyes on God; know that we all have sinned and fallen short; there is not one of us who is righteous except in Christ Jesus; and, by looking up to others rather than down at them. We learn to think of others more highly than ourselves. Warning, if you think you are doing this well you are just about to fall or have already fallen and are too ‘high on self’ to realize how deeply you have fallen.

This pothole will try its best to trip you up every day. Never let your guard down. The only fool proof plan for tackling pride is found in God's Word and here is an excellent example on point to the pothole (pothold because that is what it does grab you and hold you) of pride.

Think like Jesus thought who said He came to serve not be served!

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
(Philippians 2:3-8, ESV)

It ain't about you - don't try to make it about you
Put others ahead of yourself
Let the needs of others be first
Trust in God always in all things.

Following Jesus is always the right path for dodging the pothole of pride. Jesus said He didn't come to be served but to serve.... (Matthew 20:28)

(Additional scriptures to battle pride: Proverbs 16:18; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-6; Proverbs 11:2; Micah 6:8)





Praying Against Pride

Lord, help me to keep my eyes on You - seeing Your greatness, Your beauty, Your perfection, Your eternality, Your power - know that You are the Creator of all things. Help me to never forget that my life is like a mist that appears for a brief while and then I am gone. The point of my life is to be in a love relationship with You - putting You first - loving You, loving my neighbor as myself. The minute I find myself gazing with admiration at my own reflection may I confess my pride, ask Your forgiveness and turn my eyes back to Jesus.

Amen.

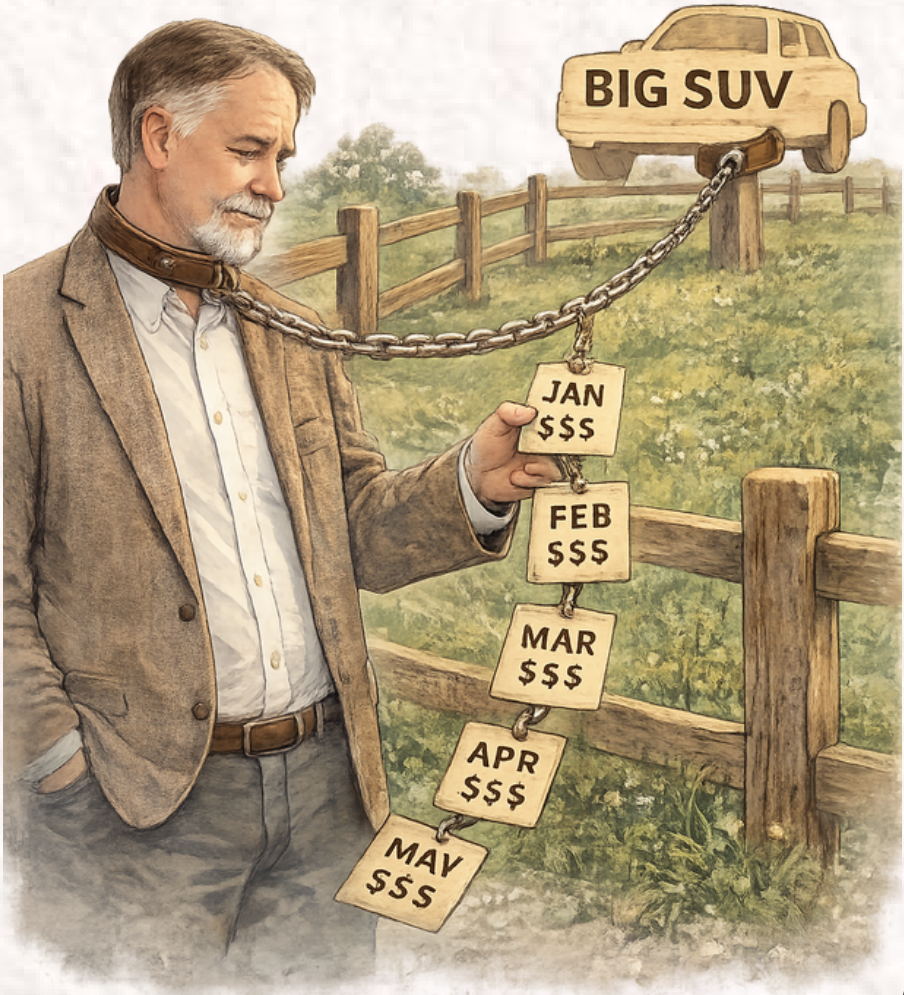


"Me, My, Mine" is contrary to everything God calls us to be. The only effective treatment for any thought and / or word that begins with "I" "ME" "MY" or "MINE" – is from the deep theological pet phrase of Deputy Barney Fife (Andy Griffith Show):

NIP IT

NIP IT IN THE BUD

Our heart will never find rest and peace in a ‘me’ centered state of mind. Be warned; that “Me, My, Mine” looks like fine green grass across the fence – BUT – up close it is empty and bitter as gall. Furthermore, If we jump the fence to ‘make it ours’ we will soon realize we don’t own it - it owns us.



What becomes ‘mine’ is soon in charge of all my thoughts and determines my priorities because now I have to shift everything around so I can pay for this thing that is ‘mine.’ Now I have to ‘take care of my stuff’, I have to guard it, insure it, clean it, refurbish it, show it off blah blah blah. We find that instead of being something that is ours – we belong to it – whatever it is. The sooner we learn this the better life will be. Frankly, I have made great progress here but it is still a daily battle. The world’s ‘goodies’ are so deceptive.

It gets worse, ‘Me, My, Mine, I . . .’ excludes God and others as objects of love. The important things in life, things that have eternal value and meaning have to take second place to stuff that is already rusting, aging, devaluating….. Stuff that brings stress and worry and is the destroyer of peace and joy.

Loving God and others are the only two commandments Jesus gave us (Matthew 22:36 -40).

When we blow these we are in a pothole that is a devilish twin to pride.

Here is a filter for this whole broken way of thinking and living:
We should look to have and hold only those things which represent 'tools' for us to live out the two great commandments (above). When we find something we just have to have – put it in God's hands and leave it there until He opens the door. If God doesn't open that door we must not make our own door.

I have personally burned through several fortunes pursuing wrong empty worthless things in life. The waste, the hurt, the missed opportunities are a heavy burden in my mind. There is not one thing I ever owned that I can say today "Oh, how I wish I had that back" or "Oh my life would be so much better if I could only get that back…." I don't even wallow around in the thought that I wish I had the opportunities back because God is sovereign and even my time in the pothole of 'me, my, mine' He is working out for His glory today. Do not allow yourself to wallow in the pigpens of the past, that is just another pothole that becomes a pothold. Keep your mind where your feet are.

Jesus said:
"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:33 (ESV)



Paul writing from prison to the Church at Philippi said:
"Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:11-13 (ESV)

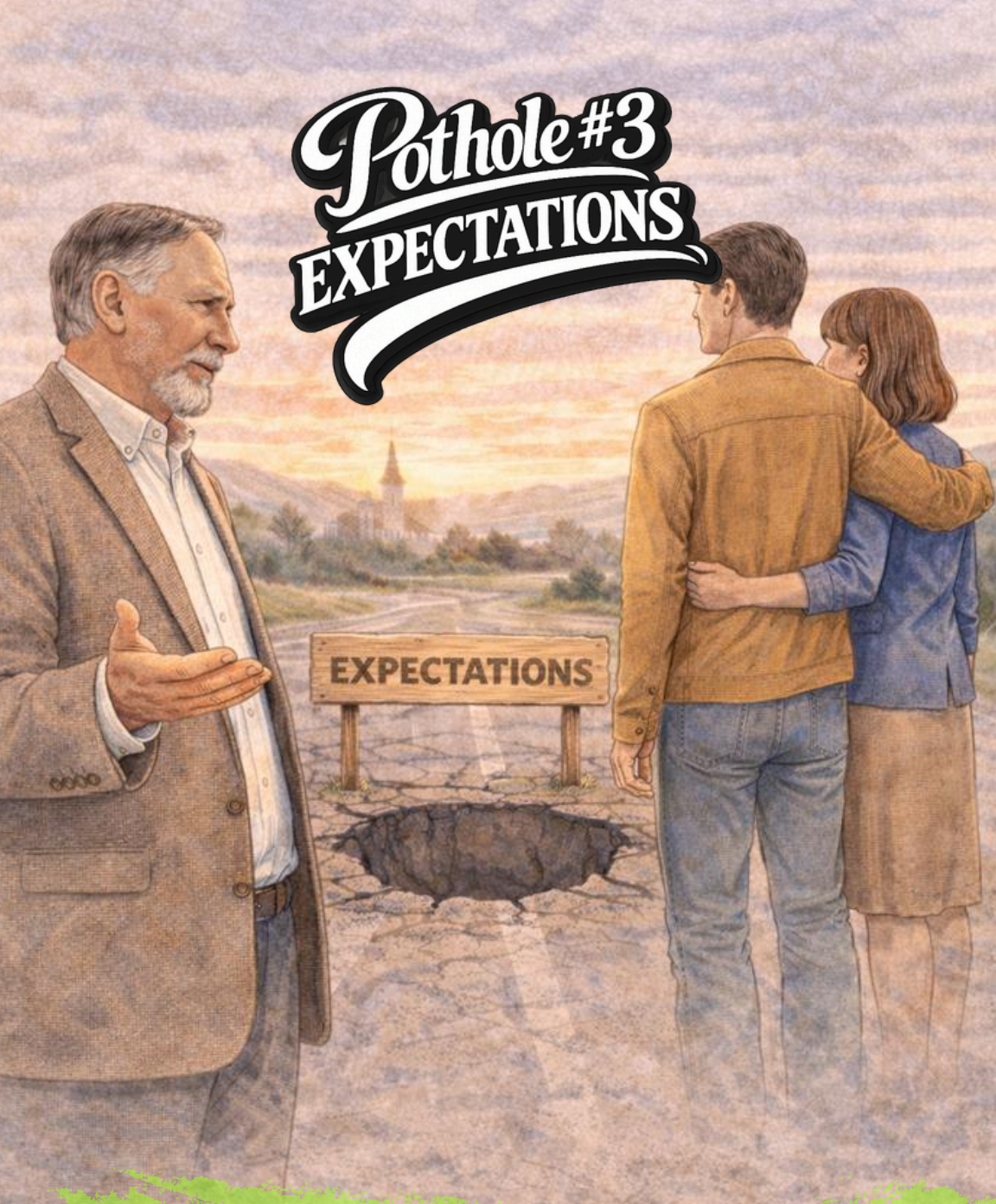


Prayer

Father, I submit myself to You. May I want only those things that will honor You and further Your kingdom. May I never seek the things of this world as a way of filling the God size 'hole' in my heart that You alone can mend and fill. May I trust You, love You, and obey You in all things and especially in setting aside myself when it comes to the things of this world.

In Jesus' name

Amen.



We need to know and never forget that God is always the same. People are not. We can and we must trust God completely. When it comes to other people we have to recognize that they are going to let us down.



Jesus himself said:

"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man."
– John 2:23-25

Jesus gave His life for us but He had no illusions about our dependability. He knows that we all have sinned and fallen short. He knows what God the Father said about us through the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah: 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it [perceive, understand, be acquainted with his own heart and mind]? [Matt. 13:15-17; Mark 7:21-23; Eph. 4:20-24.]

We are called to love our neighbor as ourself and this is not a suggestion but a command from Jesus. BUT, Jesus didn't tell us to believe in another person. When we put our hope in the actions of another person then we are setting ourselves up for a major let down that will be wrapped up in resentment which blossoms into anger which soon produces hate.

God says if we don't love our neighbor who we see, how can we love God whom we cannot see (I John 4:20).

We must trust God but when it comes to people, we have to remember they are just like us - we are going to let people down. It is inevitable. When it happens what is our response - forgive them just as God in Christ has forgiven us. (parable of the unmerciful servant who was forgiven much but refused to forgive his fellow servant).

Expectations are dangerous and must be disposed of promptly. If someone does something good or right, just be thankful. WHEN they let you down never forget that pattern is in you also. Think how often God could / should have given up on us after we let Him down for the eleventy dozenth time.

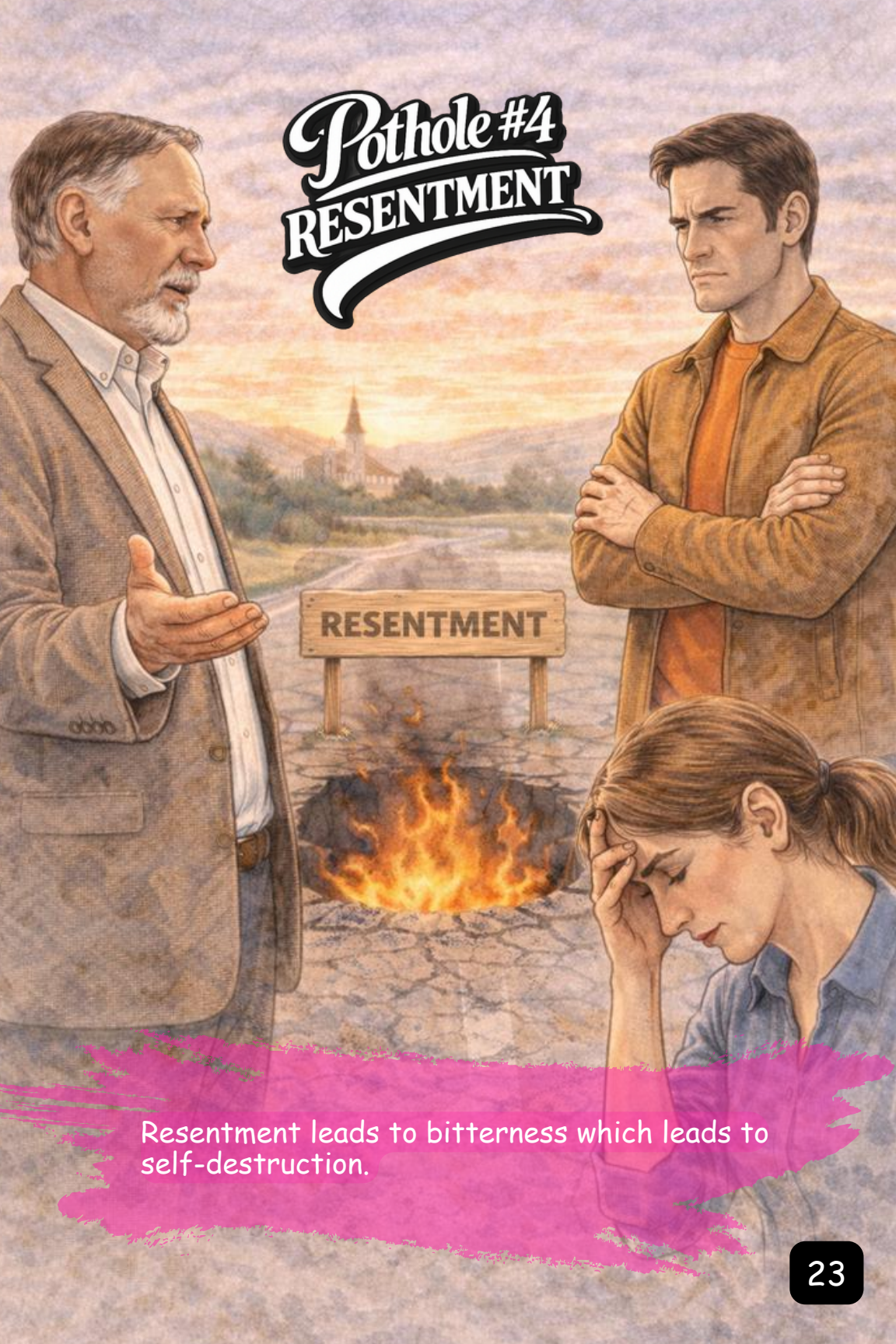


Prayer

Father, help us to never project expectations on others. May we ever and always remember that You are the same yesterday, today, and forever - You never let us down but people will always let us down in one way or another. We love one another but we must not project unrealistic expectations on each other. When people love us and do things for us, let us receive those blessings as a great joy. When they inevitably let us down, may we be charitable with forgiveness as You have been with us.

In Jesus' name

Amen.



Resentment leads to bitterness which leads to self-destruction.

To have and hold resentment is pretty much an anti-God state of mind. For me to develop and hold on to a resentment is a deadly demonstration of a lack of faith in God. God has commanded us not to seek revenge but leave it to Him.
"Revenge is mine, I will repay says the Lord..." (Romans 12:19)

Because that person "didn't show me the respect I am due", didn't speak to me like he did to others, didn't come to me in my 'time of need' I am holding and steadily building on a big resentment against him. My resentment is not hurting him at all but it is eating me up on the inside and stands as a wall of difficulty for my fellowship with God.

A W Tozer said a person filled with resentment cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time and the bitterness works as a poison that blinds me to the beauty of God's holiness.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32)



Resentment is also referred to as a 'root of bitterness' (Hebrews 12:15).

What do roots do? They grow into plants and so a 'root of bitterness' will blossom into a poisonous plant that spreads quickly and destructively to others. Then the spirit of bitterness infects the family or a church family or a business…. Divisiveness is a high sin (my word) that is the underlying cause of many church splits, family splits and causes the Holy Spirit to 'split town' so to speak.

"As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned." (Titus 3:10-11, ESV)

The enemy loves division but God hates it (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Resentment and division are the result of me choosing my preferences over what God has said to us in the Bible.

The proper state of mind here is to be on guard against the spread of resentment. We must be vigilant about this dangerous and destructive force: watch for signs of resentment; counsel forgiveness and repentance from the poison of resentment and restoration.

If we really trust God there is no reason for us to hold on to resentment or anger that leads to resentment. We have to forgive and repent. Forgiving may not eradicate the feeling from our mind but it is the first step in seeing its removal and without forgiveness the resentment will grow and attack the Body of Christ. Everytime it tries to raise its ugly head pull out old Barney and “Nip it in the bud!”



Prayer

Father, help me to keep a short account of anger, resentment, hurts, and bruised ego. May I quickly confess to You and to forgive and seek forgiveness. May I not be a willing or unwilling participant in the poison of resentment within the family of Christians or anywhere else. Give me a heart of forgiveness and gentleness toward others.

In Jesus' name
Amen.



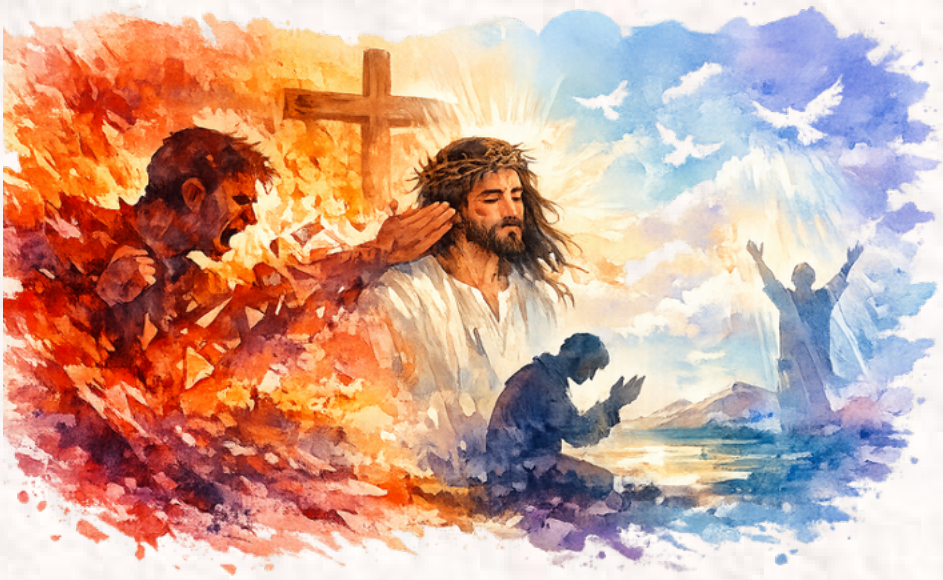
Anger is another dangerous pothole on this road we're walking. I've hit it more times than I care to admit.

There were moments when my temper got out ahead of my faith, and I said things I wish I could gather back up and put in my pocket. The truth is, not one of those moments feels good looking back. Not one.

And Jesus didn't treat anger like a small bump in the road. In the Gospel of **Matthew 5:21–22**, He said that anger in the heart puts us on the same dangerous path as far worse things. That'll stop you in your tracks if you let it. He's telling us plain—this isn't just about what we do, it's about what's growing inside us - the very thought of these things is destructive and sinful.

So what do we do with that? Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is… nothing at all for a moment. Just pause. Take a breath. Then another. Let the words sit on the shelf instead of throwing them like a rock. Scripture says be "slow to anger" **(James 1:19)**, and there's wisdom in slowing down long enough to let God get a word in before we do. Give it a little time—most fires lose their heat if you don't keep feeding them.

We also need to remember how important it is to not just speak the truth of the Gospel but to live it. Setting anger aside and choosing to be silent in the face of a challenging circumstance tells more about our true love for God than any message ever preached. Living the Gospel. Leaving it with the LORD. Be angry and sin not.



Anger is usually the result of our having had our ‘rights’ violated. To follow Jesus we must surrender our rights and follow Him. He is our leader, our example in all things. Think of when he was struck in the face and he said if what I said was wrong then bear witness to the wrong but if not why did you strike me? Adrian Rogers observed that anger is a form of temporary ‘madness’ and a “man is as big as the things that make him mad.”

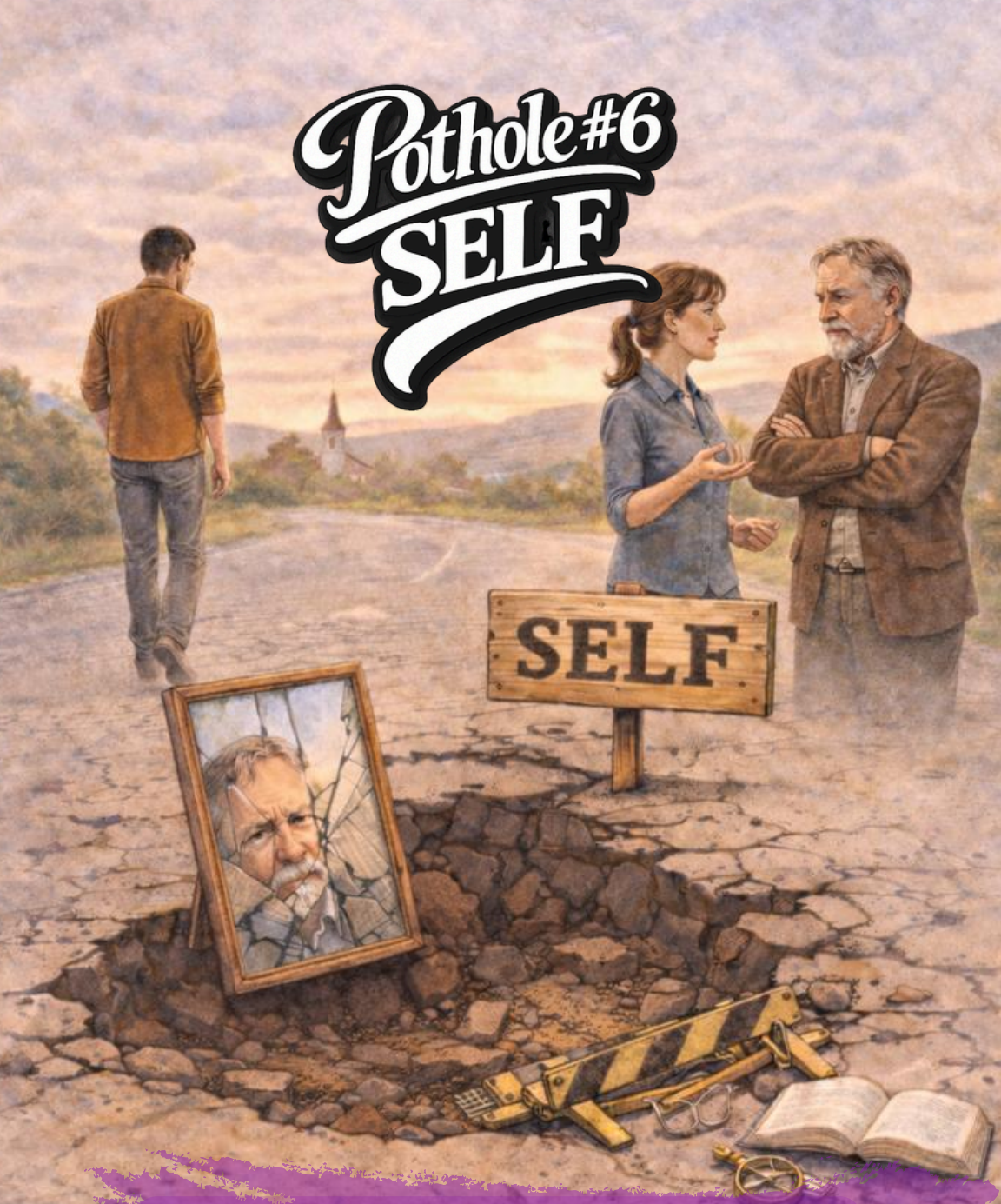
One of the greatest feelings and transformations we can experience is not having to be angry. Not having to be right. Not having to respond. When we find that we no longer are getting angry all the time we stand amazed in God’s presence knowing that control is pure grace given to us from God. Consistent control over emotions is something we would never ever experience in our own strength.



Prayer

Lord, by your grace may I learn to control my emotions. May I get over the need to express anger. Help me to remember how patient You have been with me. When my temper starts to rise, steady my heart. Put a guard over my mouth. Teach me to pause, to breathe, to choose grace over reaction. I don't want anger to steer my life—I want You to

Amen.



There is a pothole on this road that doesn't look dangerous at first glance—it just looks familiar. It's called self. Trusting self. Following self. Leaning on our own understanding like we've got better sense than God.



The Bible warns us straight:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." – Proverbs 3:5

That sounds simple… until life gets hard and we start thinking, "I know what I need to do here." I've gone down that road more times than I'd like to admit. Every time I chose my way over God's way, it led to a ditch—regret, confusion, sometimes a mess I had to live in for a while. Scripture doesn't flatter us about self either:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" – Jeremiah 17:9

That means the very thing we trust the most—our own heart—can mislead us the quickest.

Jesus didn't call us to improve self—He called us to deny it:

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." – Luke 9:23

That runs against everything the world tells us. The world says, "Follow your heart." Jesus says, "Follow Me." Big difference. One leads you in circles. The other leads you home. When self sits on the throne, God gets pushed to the side, and that's when trouble starts. The truth is, self makes a poor savior and a worse guide. If I want to get along with God, I have to stay off of His throne. There's not enough room for both of us!

So what do we do? We lay self down—daily. Not once, not occasionally, but every day we wake up and say, "Lord, not my will, but Yours be done." We slow down before making decisions, we check our motives, we bring our thoughts under His Word. Because left unchecked, self will always drift toward pride, control, and independence from God—and that's a pothole deep enough to wreck a life.

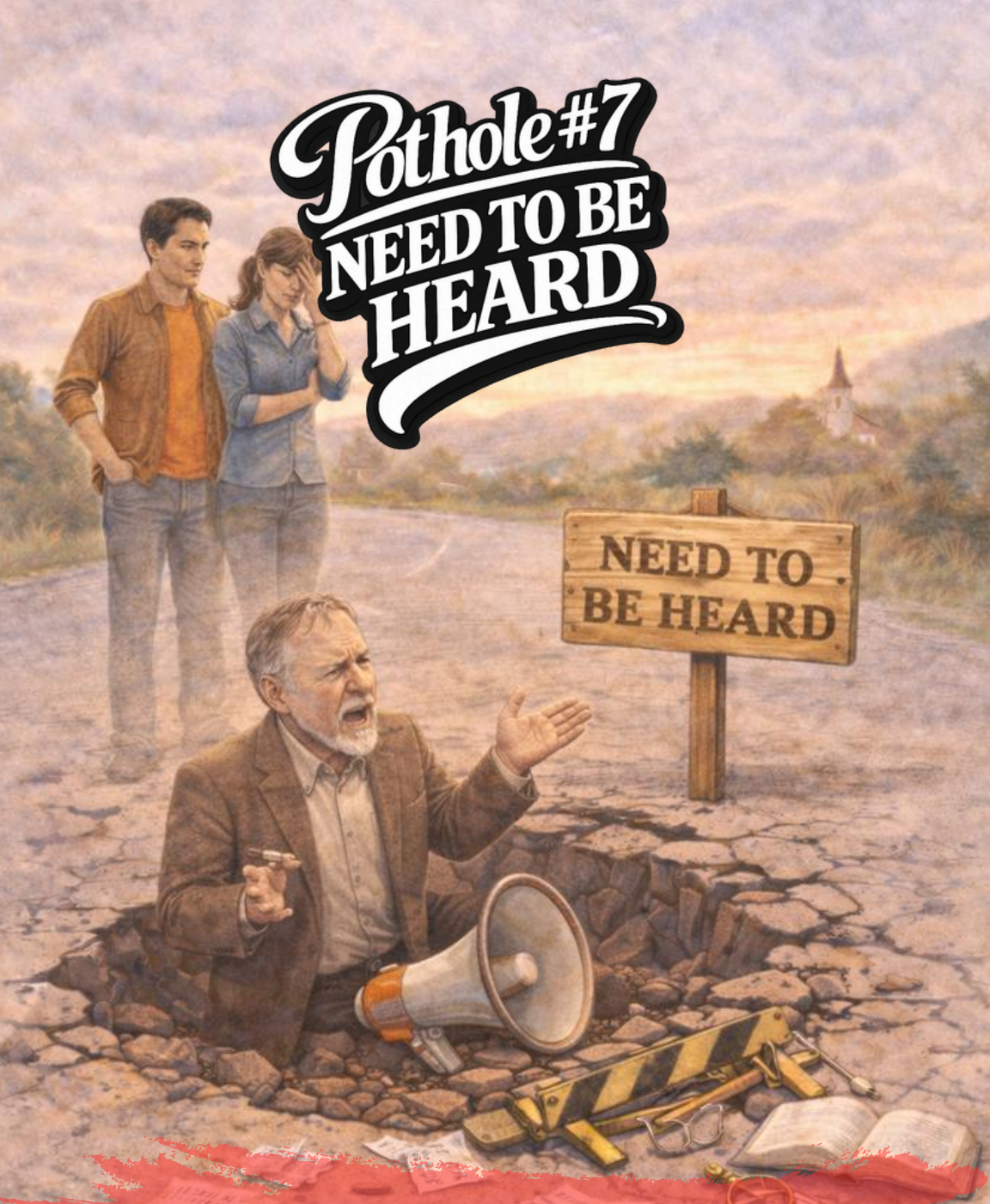


Prayer

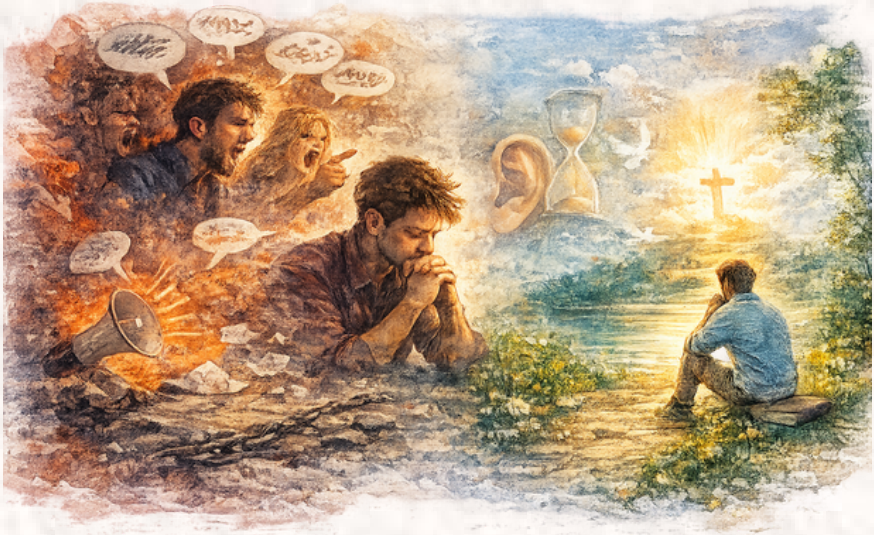
Father, help me not to lean on my own understanding, not even one little bit because a little bit out of Your will is OUT OF YOUR WILL. My way of thinking will lead me astray - Your way leads straight to You the very place I need to be. Teach me to lean on You in everything. When self rises up, give me the strength to lay it down. Help me to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow You daily. I don't want to be led by my own understanding—I want to be led by Your truth.

In Jesus' name

Amen.



There's a pothole on this road that sneaks up on you—it's that strong pull inside that says, "I've got to say something… I've got to be heard."



Now listen, there's nothing wrong with speaking truth, but there's a danger when we have to be heard, when we feel like every thought needs a voice and every moment needs our input. I've stepped in that one pothole so much, saying things that didn't need saying, pushed my point just to make sure it landed, and walked away wishing I had just kept quiet. The Bible gives it to us straight:

"When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent." – Proverbs 10:19

And again:
"Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." – James 1:19

That runs opposite of our instincts. We want to be quick to speak and slow to listen. But God says flip that around.

Jesus never struggled with needing to be heard. There were times He stayed completely silent, even when falsely accused. In Gospel of **Matthew 27:12–14**, He didn't defend Himself, didn't argue His case—He trusted the Father. That takes strength. Most of us feel like silence is weakness, but in God's kingdom, silence can be power under control. Sometimes the wisest thing you can say is nothing at all. Not every thought needs to be spoken, not every argument needs to be won, and not every silence needs to be filled.

So what do we do? We learn to pause. Let the moment breathe. Ask ourselves, "Is this helpful? Is this necessary? Is this honoring to God?" If not, let it go. A quiet spirit is not a weak spirit—it's a controlled one. And control is a mark of the Holy Spirit at work in us.

Here is an even greater reason to not 'have to be heard'. Sometimes we are combining pride, self-absorption, and a little meanness and it makes us want to show the other person that even though they are right we are 'more right'. We want to show them that we have this down a little better than they do - especially if there is an audience of more than one. I know in some of my teaching efforts I am trying to teach myself to not feel the need to give my 'better' answer when someone else has spoken the truth. The opportunity to build them up and encourage them far outweighs the benefit of my slightly better (at least in my own prejudiced mind) 'mouse trap.'

One more, we revel in being the first one with important information. If someone else is telling us something that they think is important but we have already heard it, don't steal their thunder. Let them enjoy their moment - after all the whole need to be first here is more like pre-k stuff than serious Christian maturity. We can consider it a teaching / learning moment for both of us. Thank them for the information. We are teaching ourselves we do not need attention and we are learning how to love our neighbor better.

We must never lose sight of the sovereignty of God. If our expectations are dashed then we must remember trusting God isn't because we know what to expect but that we trust God is leading in whatever comes and it is well with our soul.



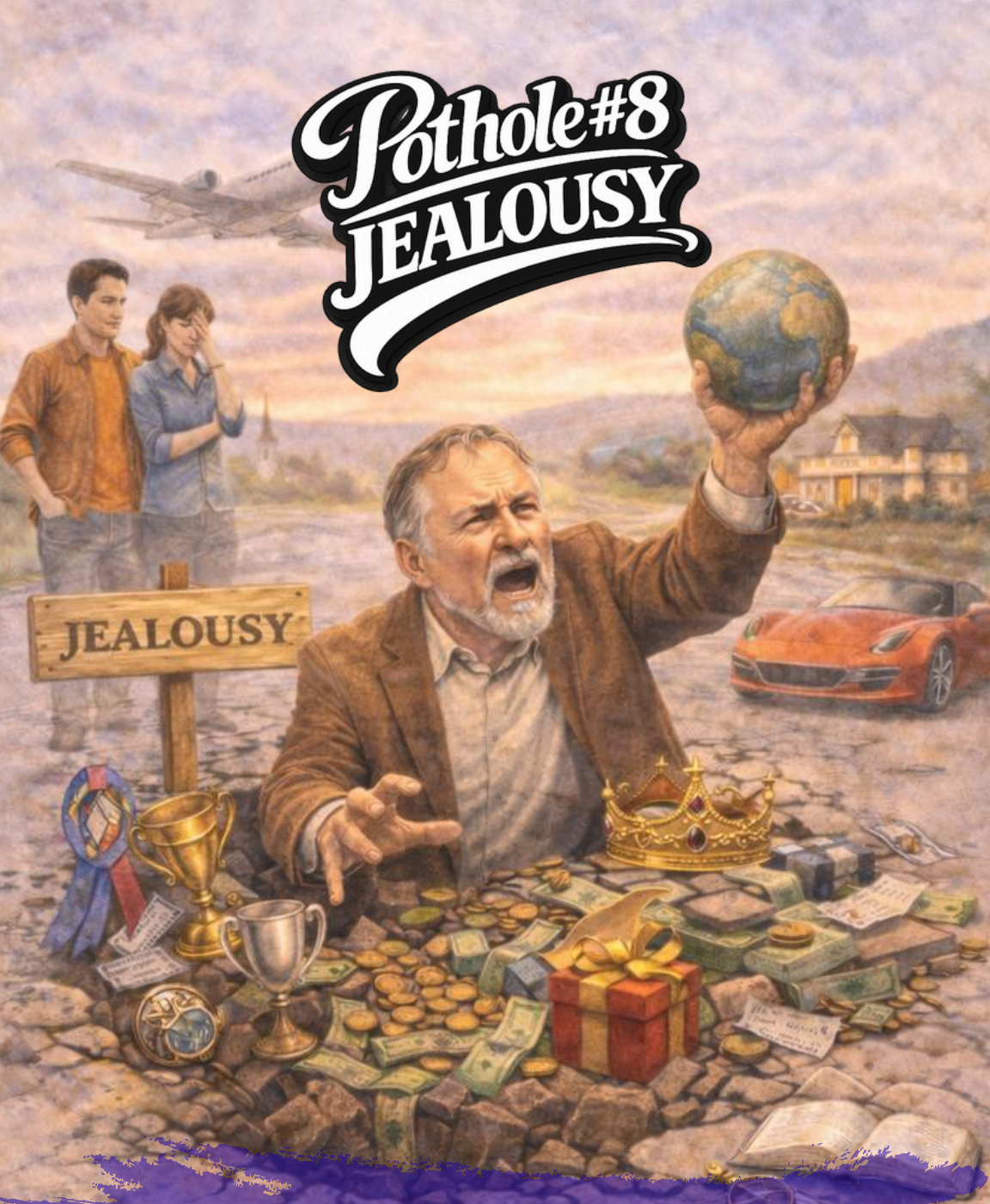


Prayer

Father, help me with this need to always be heard. Teach me to listen more than I speak. Put a guard over my mouth and wisdom in my heart. When I'm tempted to speak out of pride or impulse, give me the strength to pause and be still. Help me to trust You enough that I don't have to win every conversation or prove every point. Let my words be few, and let them honor You

In Jesus' name

Amen.



Jealousy is a pothole that doesn't just trip you—it eats at you from the inside. It shows up when we start looking sideways instead of looking up.

Somebody else gets blessed, recognized, promoted, or favored… and instead of joy, something tightens in our chest. I've felt that. And I can tell you plain—nothing good grows there. The Bible doesn't soften it:

"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice." – James 3:16

That's strong medicine with many side effects like humility, peace, rest, and joy in the LORD. Dosage should be labeled as 'can't get too much.'

Every vile practice. Jealousy doesn't stay in its lane—it spreads. It steals joy, poisons gratitude, and quietly makes us question God's goodness toward us.

God has already warned us about this pull:

"You shall not covet..." – Exodus 20:17

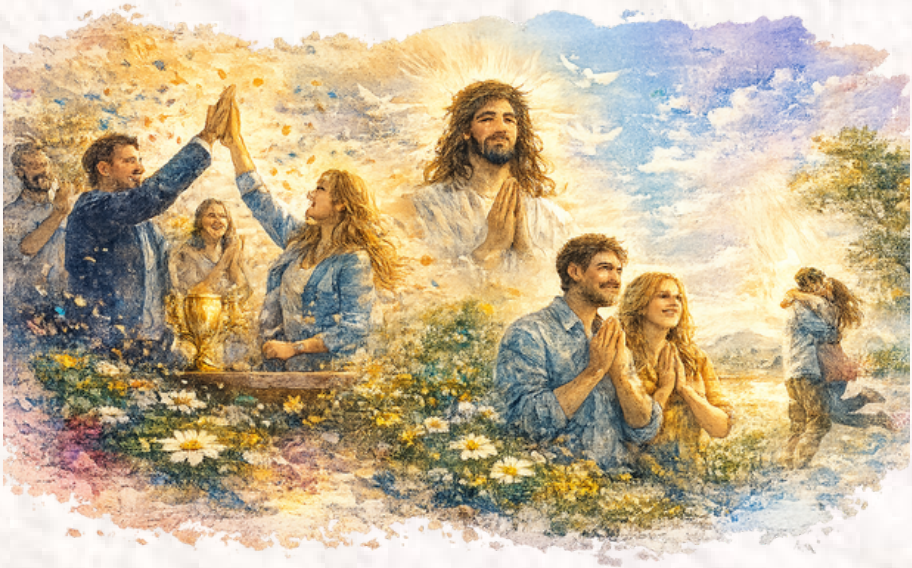
That's not just about things—it's about people, positions, blessings, lives. When we start wanting what God gave someone else, we're saying, in a roundabout way, "Lord, You didn't get it right with me." And that's a dangerous place to stand. The truth is, God writes a different story for each of us. Comparing chapters will only confuse you.

So what do we do? We turn our eyes back where they belong. We thank God for what He's given us, and we learn to genuinely rejoice when others are blessed:

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." – Romans 12:15

When we allow God to bless us with the calm control of not needing life to be about us. When we learn to truly rejoice in the victory of others. When we don't have that need to find a way to outdo them - the pure pleasure of getting past that can't be measured. It is a peace that is rich,full, and growing.

That kind of heart doesn't come naturally—it comes from walking close with God. **Jealousy shrivels when gratitude and humility grow.**





Prayer

Father, guard my heart from jealousy. When I'm tempted to compare or to want what someone else has, remind me that You are good and that what You've given me is exactly what I need. Teach me to be thankful, to be content, and to truly rejoice when others are blessed. Keep my eyes on You and not on others.

In Jesus' name
Amen.



Compromise is a one of the most dangerous potholes on this road because it rarely looks dangerous at first. It usually shows up small… reasonable… just a little step off the path.

It usually shows up small… reasonable… just a little step off the path. I've told myself before, "This isn't a big deal… just this once…" But those "just this once" moments have a way of piling up. Before long, you look back and realize you're not where you started. Scripture warns us clearly:

"A little leaven leavens the whole lump." – Galatians 5:9

It doesn't take much. A small allowance, a quiet excuse, a subtle bending of what we know is right—and it begins to spread. God never calls us to partial obedience. It's all or nothing. And when we start trimming truth to fit our comfort, we're not following God anymore—we're negotiating with Him.

God's Word also says:

"Whoever is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much…" – Luke 16:10

That cuts straight to it. The small choices matter. The private decisions matter. The things nobody else sees matter. Compromise doesn't usually wreck a life overnight—it slowly loosens the bolts until something finally gives way. And by then, the damage is real.

So what do we do? We draw a line and we keep it. Not halfway, not when it's convenient—but all the way. We decide ahead of time that God's way is the only way, even when it costs us something. Especially when it costs us something. Because every time we choose obedience over compromise, we're strengthening our walk instead of weakening it.

Another part of compromise that sounds so natural and so innocent is just trying to 'get along' with the world around us. Sort of a "let's just live and let live kind of attitude. NO! NO! NO! We cannot say yes to what God has said no to. Not a little bit, not never, not ever. We must not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of our minds **(Romans 12:2)**. We are renewed by truth. Jesus is truth.

"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,"
– I Peter 3:15 (ESV)

Alistair Begg expressed it in this manner:

"The goal of our defense is not to win an argument, but to win the person. Gentleness is the evidence that the 'reason for our hope' has actually changed our hearts."



Compromise is dressed up as love - but it is anything but loving. It's just as loving as it would be to tell someone what they want to hear even the lie we are telling them leads to death. But they will feel good as they go, right? Wrong. Truth is vital medicine to our soul. Speaking the truth in love is the most loving thing we can ever do. To compromise truth is to betray it.

Adrian Rogers rightly observed: "It is better to be divided by truth than to be united by error." I say it like this, we must choose rather to stand divided by truth than to come together under a lie. **Compromise of God's Word is lethal.**



Prayer

Father, help me to see compromise for what it is. Don't let me excuse small steps away from You. Give me the strength to stand firm in what is right, even when it's hard or uncomfortable. Teach me to be faithful in the little things, and to walk in full obedience to You. I don't want to drift—I want to stay on the path. I want to live in truth even if it means I am separated by others - I want to be united in Christ rather than embrace the compromise of this broken world.

In Jesus' name

Amen.



Control is a pothole that feels like strength but is really just fear in work clothes. It shows up when we try to manage everything—outcomes, people, timing—because deep down we're not sure God will handle it the way we think He should.

I've been there… gripping things too tight, trying to fix, arrange, and steer life my way. But the truth is, the tighter we hold on, the more restless we become.

Scripture speaks plainly:

"Be still, and know that I am God." – Psalm 46:10

That's hard for us. Stillness feels like losing control. But God never asked us to control life—He asked us to trust Him with our lives!

And then this:

"Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." – 1 Peter 5:7

You can't cast and clutch at the same time. One hand has to open. Control keeps us anxious because we're carrying things we were never meant to carry. God didn't design us to run the world—He already has that job covered.

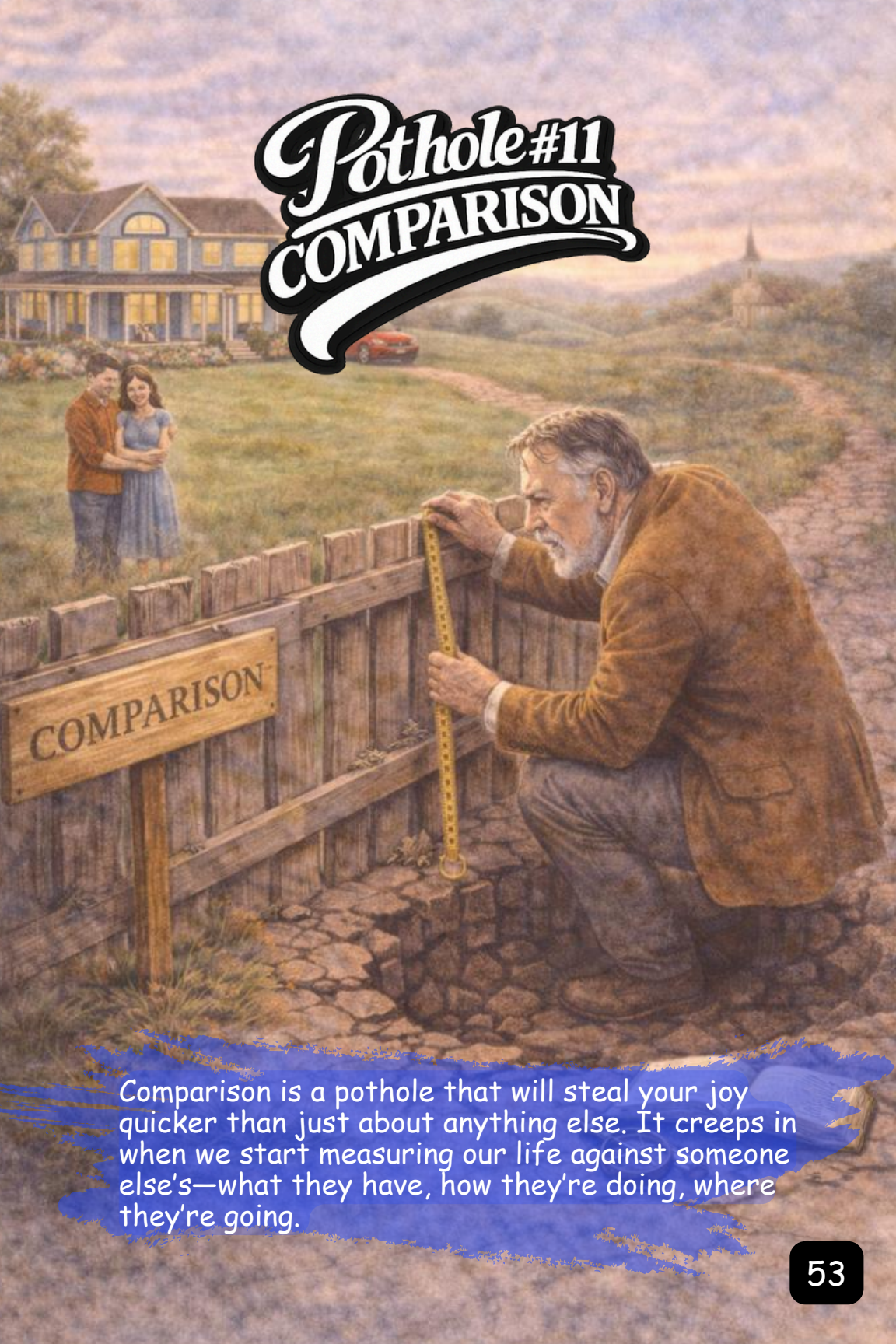
So what do we do? We loosen our grip. We pray, we plan, but then we release the outcome to God. We trust that His way is better, even when it doesn't match our timeline or expectations. Control says, "I've got this." Faith says, "God, You've got this."



Prayer

Father, help me let go of the need to control everything. Teach me to trust You more deeply. When I feel the urge to take over, remind me that You are God and I am not. Give me peace in releasing outcomes into Your hands. I trust You with my life, my circumstances, and the people I love.

In Jesus' name
Amen.



Comparison is a pothole that will steal your joy quicker than just about anything else. It creeps in when we start measuring our life against someone else's—what they have, how they're doing, where they're going.

I've caught myself doing it… looking over the fence and wondering why things look greener over there. But that kind of thinking never leads anywhere good. Scripture gives us a clear warning:

"But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding."
– 2 Corinthians 10:12

That's about as plain as it gets. Comparison doesn't make us wiser—it clouds our thinking.

God has a different path for each of us:

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand…" – Ephesians 2:10

That means your road is not their road. Your timing is not their timing. Your calling is not their calling. When we compare, we lose sight of what God is doing right in front of us. We either become proud or discouraged and sometimes both.



So what do we do? We keep our eyes forward and upward. We thank God for what He's doing in our life and trust Him with the rest. There's freedom in staying in your lane and walking faithfully where God has placed you. We answer to God alone. God will never ask us why we weren't like 'so and so' but why weren't we ourselves in surrender to Jesus.



Prayer

Father, guard my heart from comparison. Help me to be content with what You've given me and faithful in what You've called me to do. When I'm tempted to look at others, turn my eyes back to You. Remind me that You are writing my story with purpose and care. Let me walk in gratitude and trust.

In Jesus' name

Amen.



Unforgiveness is a pothole that will keep you stuck longer than almost any other. Refusing to forgive breaks your fellowship with God, leaves you on edge and off kilter - and hurts only you and those you love.

God has been clear:

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." – Ephesians 4:32

When we refuse to forgive, we are holding on to something God has told us to release.

It builds walls.
It hardens the heart.
It blocks fellowship with God.

Forgiveness does not mean what happened was right. It means we trust God enough to let it go. Forgiveness is a direct reflection that we are
Trusting in the Lord with all of our heart.
We are not leaning on our own way of thinking.
We are acknowledging God and He will direct our paths. Amen.

If while we were still sinners Jesus was willing to die for us **(Romans 5:8)** and He did, then how can we not forgive others as God has forgiven us. Freely, freely we have received (forgiveness) freely freely we must also give forgiveness. This is the way of Christ Jesus.



One respected pastor put it like this: “Forgiveness is not the absence of anger; it is the refusal to seek revenge and the commitment to wish the other person well.”

Unforgiveness is the poison that eats the container it is in. John Piper.

Right priorities avoid potholes and build peace.



Prayer

Father, help me to forgive as You have forgiven me. Where I am holding on, give me the strength to let go. Soften my heart and restore what bitterness has damaged. Create in me a clean heart - free from unforgiveness

In Jesus' name
Amen.

Conclusion



There are more potholes than these, but these represent many of the most common ones. At the root of them all is one issue—what is first in our lives.

"Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father though him." Colossians 3:17

Let's live accordingly.

Right priorities avoid potholes and build peace. At the end of the day, every pothole we've talked about comes back to one thing—who is this life about? If it's about us, we'll keep falling in. If it's about Him, we'll start walking straighter. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Stay in His Word. And when you do hit a pothole—and you will—don't camp there. Get up, look up, and keep walking.

