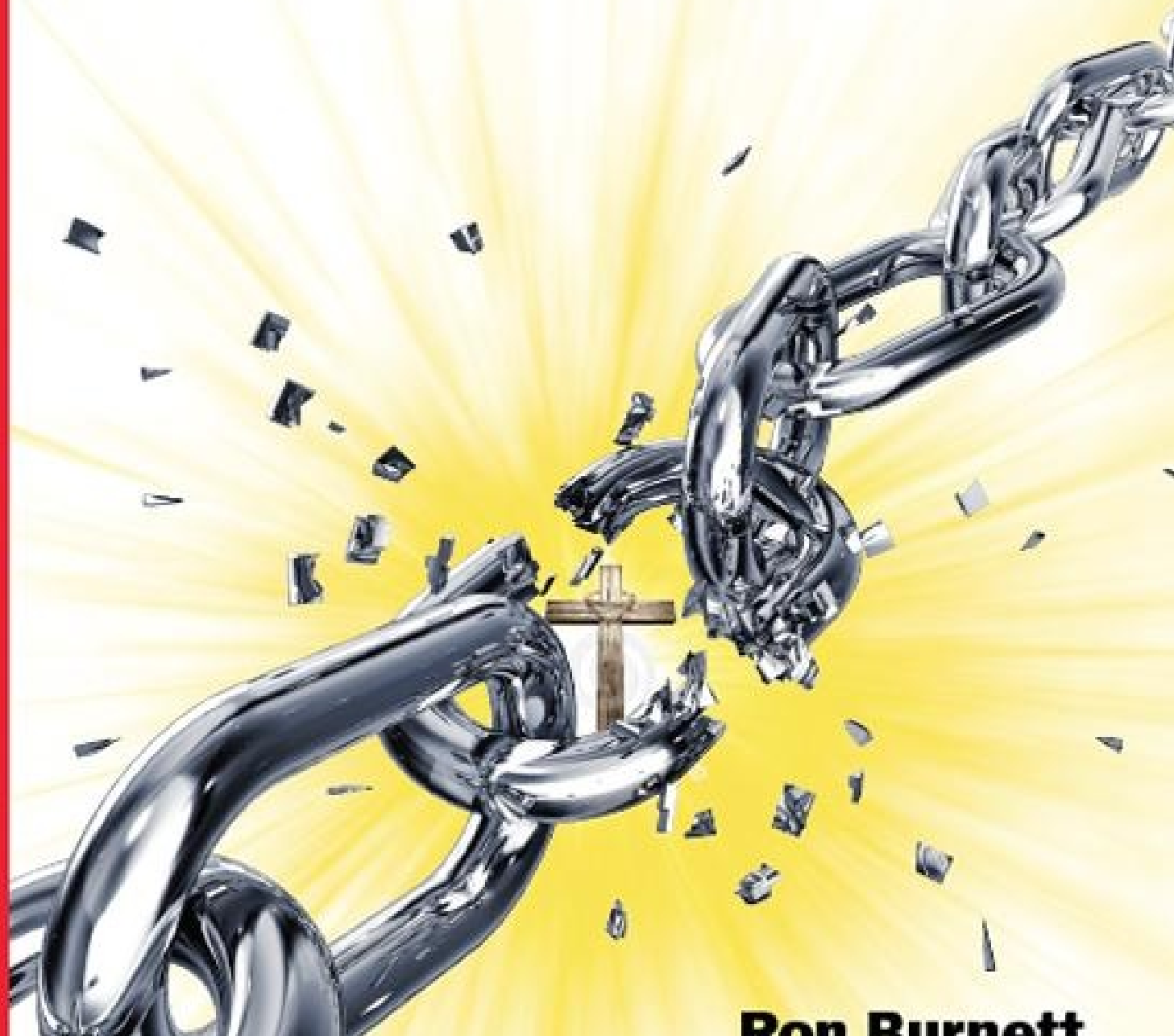


Breaking the Spirit of Rebellion

Your Choice to a Better You



Don Burnett

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 1

What Is Rebellion

Chapter 2

The Source of Rebellion

Chapter 3

Characteristics of a Rebellious Heart

Chapter 4

Consequences of Rebellion

Chapter 5

Partnering with Satan Causes Us to Rebel

Chapter 6

Changing Our Rebellious Heart

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

While visiting my hometown of Miami, Florida, one summer, Craig Coney, a childhood friend, said to me in jest, “I might be dumb, but I’m not dumb-dumb.” To fully appreciate his statement, you would need to know the depth of our friendship that began in the third grade at Floral Heights Elementary in 1968, the same year Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.

During my visit with Craig, we laughed and had a great time reminiscing about our youthful days growing up in the heated streets of the Magic City, but his statement that day resounded in my soul like waves crushing against California’s coastlines.

Little did Craig know that his words stirred within me several soul-wrenching questions: “What areas of my life had I allowed Satan to dumb-me-down? Had I unknowingly allowed the demonic realm permission to gain an unintended invite into my life that allowed them to reap havoc against me, my family and my resources? What had I done that permitted them to string me along like a yo-yo?”

As a collegiate, Air Force retiree, husband, father, youth basketball coach, a respected member in my local church, and a qualified performer in corporate America, were there signs in these areas too that revealed that I may not only be dumb, but dumb-dumb too?

It was no longer a laughing matter. I had to examine my affairs and get my personal house and life in order.

As I began to take inventory and honestly evaluate the differing facets of my life, I discovered that many of my personal failings, challenges and misfortunes could be summed up in one word: REBELLION. Yes, you read correctly: REBELLION. I did not stutter.

In all honesty, I couldn’t blame my life’s hardships on being ignorant, naïve, immature or inexperienced. Let the truth be told; it was simply a rebellious spirit. I could no longer blame it on my past or make accusations against my parents, immediate family members, relatives or others that “did me wrong.” I had to take an honest assessment of my character, get back on track, and model the characteristics that would bring glory and honor to my Heavenly Father in addition to protecting me.

Now, before you decide to return this book to the shelf and find something more pleasant and user-friendly to read: STOP! This book just may change the course of your life for the better...and possibly the lives of your loved ones and trusted friends.

Although I was challenged by my life experiences to write this book, I am convicted in my heart that I have rebelled on numerous occasions when God had tried so lovingly to reprove and teach me His ways. And I confess that I suffered great personal losses for doing so.

I am writing my story with the hope that you will continue reading and glean some “life-truths” that will save you the trouble of traveling down the road that so many others like myself have ventured, only to leave debris of shame, heartache, missed opportunities,

and, more importantly, alienation from the One we should love the most, Christ Jesus.

Be not deceived, Satan's ultimate goal is to take you as far away from God's plan for your life as he can to your own destruction. He will use every trick in his arsenal to do so. And unfortunately, his most often frequent and proven weapon is to encourage you to rebel against God.

I caution you now: make a decision to stop rebelling today. It is never too late to do what is right...NEVER. If you will take heed to God's words and obey His instructions, you will eat the good of the land and prosper while derailing the plans of your adversary.

However, if you choose otherwise, beware. You will destroy yourself, hurt and harm others, and derail the promises of God in your life. I implore you to choose life over death and take heed to the instructions of our God.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS REBELLION?

Webster's defines rebellion or a rebel as someone who is (1) in an armed resistance to a government or ruler, (2) defiant of any authority, or (3) shows utter repugnance.

When I initially read these definitions, an uneasy feeling resonated over me as I felt the connotation of the words: armed resistance, defiant, and utterly repugnant. Webster could not possibly be speaking about me? Not Mr. Nice Guy me? I felt a momentary sensation to place my face inside the toilet bowl and throw-up.

Webster's defines rebellion or a rebel as someone who is (1) in an armed resistance to a government or ruler, (2) defiant of any authority, or (3) shows utter repugnance.

I couldn't escape the thought that this was representative of my character. Had I become the very person that I despised? I spent a career in one of the most prestigious American institution – The United States Air Force – taking directions from superiors who were given charged over me. I knew how to follow orders, and I had the medals and citations to prove it. During my tenure of service, I received two meritorious service medals and five good conduct medals for towing the line. I knew how to salute, obey and follow through. I had exceptional performance evaluations that vouched for me.

With more self-assessing, I further determined that rebellion is a deliberate practice of hardening one's heart to do what it wants to do on one's own terms. This is a deadly place to be spiritually. In essence, a rebellious person says to God and others, "I don't care what you say. I'm going to do what I want to do, and no one (including God) is going to tell me otherwise." A person with this misguided attitude becomes a law unto himself. In essence, he wants to live and manage his life on his own terms with no input from others. He wants to be left alone to live life as he sees fit. He has become a little 'god' who may be unaware of the blasphemy he speaks against the only wise and eternal God.

Rebellion is a deliberate practice of hardening one's heart to do what it wants to do on one's own terms.

According to The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, in Hebrew, the word marah (pronounced mar-raw) means to disobey, provoke, to rebel or resist. Throughout history, and in Scripture, we find men have rebelled in many different ways, but how has man specifically rebelled against God?

In searching the Scriptures, we see that man rebels against God by not following His commands (Joshua 1:18); in our attitudes and thoughts (Nehemiah 6:6); against God's Word (Numbers 20:24); against people God has placed in positions of authority (2 King 24:20); and finally by teaching others to rebel (Jeremiah 28-16 and 29:32). Whenever we are disobedient or rebellious, we intentionally fracture the relationship with God and men, and our unwillingness to submit is an attempt to live life without His assistance.

Furthermore, whenever we attempt to distance ourselves from God through our

rebellion, we restrict the blessings of God from flowing freely in our lives (Numbers 20:24). This is a serious offense and we cannot afford to live victorious in this life without God's favor abiding with us.

Rebellion is not a one-time isolated action. In most instances, it begins like a slow cooked meal in a crock-pot. Rebellion brews slowly over a period of time, and suddenly, without notice, raises its head. Before long, a rebellious root takes the heart captive. When a person reaches this point, he is in serious trouble and needs the Holy Spirit to deliver him from this defiant condition.

Rebellion is not a one-time isolated action.

And if the truth be told, we all have a tendency to wear our rebellion as a badge of honor, being deceived into believing that we are truly walking upright and that we have our lives in perfect order. Little do we know that we are headed for the pits called destruction, pain, shame, embarrassment and public humiliation.

The more I rationalized that I wasn't rebellious my conscience indicated otherwise. I needed to take ownership for my behavior and actions that were causing me to experience life's difficulties. The chickens had finally come home to roost and were sitting on the front porch of my heart, clucking loudly at me. I could no longer ignore their call. I had to give them an audience.

I began taking inventory of my past and present outcomes to see where I had allowed Satan to deceive me. My future was at stake, and I was tired of experiencing life's heartaches and disappointments.

This was no longer a laughing matter, and I knew that I had to be honest and do some soul searching to get to the root of this repugnant condition. I began the process by asking myself, "When was the first time I remember rebelling against an authority? What lessons should I have learned in and through that experience, but failed to do so?"

It didn't take long for me to remember an incident that brought heartache to my mom, Ms. Egola Bradley, a single parent trying her best to raise six children with the assistance of a great uncle, Mr. Jimmy Shine, and her mother and father, my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William and Maggie Bradley, and my mother's siblings.

When I was eleven years of age, someone stole my bicycle, so I decided to take matters in my own hand. I reasoned that whatever was good for the goose had to be good for the gander. So I formed an alliance with two neighborhood friends, Keith Westmoreland and, you guessed it, Craig Coney, to conspire with me to steal some other helpless soul's bike.

I knew what I was about to do was wrong. I had attended Sunday school at church and been taught to do the "right thing" by my mom, relatives and other community members. I often heard, "Don't embarrass yourself or your family."

I should have known that our plan to venture into an unfamiliar neighborhood would be our first mistake. We quickly located a bicycle that had been left unlocked alongside of what we thought was an unattended home. The bike was perfect...almost brand new! I was energized, convincing myself that this bike would definitely alleviate the

anger I felt from having my own bike stolen. So I quickly took possession of the bike and bolted off riding.

Unknowingly to my co-conspirators in crime, an older gentleman who was most likely the chairman of his neighborhood watch program spotted the theft and dialed 9-1-1, reporting us to the authorities. A police officer of the Miami-Dade Police Department apprehended the three of us less than thirty yards from the scene of the crime.

I was devastated! Mr. Neighborhood Watch came running towards us while shouting, "I saw them with my binoculars and called the police!" The police officer placed us in custody and escorted us to our homes. I was first to be taken home. Why me? Well, I did have that boyishly charming face.

The officer knocked on the door and my mother answered. She took one glance at the officer and me and gave me that "you are going to get it" look. He began to explain what had occurred, and my mother was shocked. I tried to explain my actions, but Mama didn't want to hear it. She thanked the officer for his generosity and hastened him out of our home. I knew exactly why she was in such a hurry. Get the officer out of the house so she could administer corporal punishment.

I knew I was in deep trouble. I couldn't rely on calling 9-1-1 for assistance or reminding my mother that if I attended school with welts on my body she could go to jail, or worse, lose custody of me (how times have changed). We didn't have a house phone and it would not have mattered anyway.

With my brother and sisters looking on, she turned to face me. I could see her varicose veins pulsating in her legs, and that's when she went old school on me. She began lecturing me, telling me that I had better stop hanging out with the wrong group of boys. I stood in the center of our family room, crying that "I was sorry and that I wouldn't do it again." Mama didn't want to hear my excuses and pseudo-promises. She requested that I go and get "her belt," the one I hated.

If I recall correctly, I couldn't find it. That only aggravated her. She located it and began to wear me out. I didn't mind the thirty-or-so lashes, but it was the verbal assault that came with it that really struck home. With every whack came a southern-drawl, rhythmic cadence:

"Didn't...I...tell...you...not...to...steal?"

"Didn't...I...tell...you...to...stop...hanging...out...with...those...boys?"

"You...just...won't...listen!"

"You...are...hard-headed!"

"I...know...you're...not...ever...going...to...do...it...again!"

"I'm...going...to...make...sure...of...that!"

"He...should...have...taken...you...to...jail!"

"I'm...not...going...to...have...a...son...of...mine...embarrass...me!"

This classic whipping must have lasted all of five minutes, but it felt like it went on forever. My brother and sisters watched me, their eyes bouncing to the rhythm and

cadence that mom used to display her displeasure towards me.

This spanking was a reminder to them that if they chose to take the same road as I did, then they too could expect the same treatment that I received.

Some of you are laughing (while others may be angered), because you can identify with my situation. Trust me; it was no laughing matter forty-plus years ago. I can still feel the emotional sensation of that loving discipline. Others, however, may feel heart-struck that my mom would resort to physically applied discipline to modify my behavior. I'm not debating whether what she did was right or wrong, but I clearly understood that I had crossed a moral line and done something terribly wrong. Mom was going to ensure that I faced the consequences of my bad choice. When Mom calmed down enough to stop, I laid on the tiled floor, rolling around with my legs in the air trying desperately to soothe the blows she had given me. I didn't have enough hands to rub the injured areas. I was hurting big-time!

It didn't take me long to realize that I had set-off Mom's trigger. When she finished her disciplining and counseling session, I lay there crying and licking my wounds. I was as mad as a pit-bull in a dog fight. I was emotionally drained, embarrassed and physically in agony. A day that started out so well had ended so badly.

What had I failed to learn prior to this incident? What was Mom trying to achieve by physically spanking me? Why was she so upset? It was only a bicycle! No, it was much more complicated than just stealing a bicycle. Mom was desperately trying her best to drive rebellion as far away from me as possible.

King Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, was called the wisest man that ever lived. He offered a divine application for driving out rebellion in Proverbs 23:13-14:

“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish [severely rebuke, spank] him with the rod [belt, shoe, tree switch, school ruler], he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”

It would take many years before I could completely appreciate what Mom had done for me. She literally saved my soul.

I wish I could confess that that was the last time my Mom had to discipline me with her belt, but rebellion isn't driven out so easily.

Rebellion isn't driven out so easily.

Why is it so difficult to do so? What is the root of this repugnant sin? What causes rebellion to reside so deeply in the soul of man? Where is its root system? How long has it existed? Where did this insidious and sinful condition of man originate? Who was at fault? What purpose does rebellion serve? These questions are unavoidable and must be answered.

REFLECTIONS

1. Can you recall the first time, with malice and intent, you rebelled against an authority figure? Who was it against and why did you do so (be honest)?

2. What emotions are you feeling at this very moment from reliving this event?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the worse), how would you rate your level of submission for the choices below? Leave blank if it doesn't apply.

- a. Parents: Mom _____ Dad _____
- b. Spouse _____
- c. Coach _____
- d. Pastor _____
- e. Teacher _____
- f. Close Friend _____
- g. Policeman _____
- h. Supervisor _____
- i. Traffic Signals _____
- j. God _____
- k. Civic Rules _____

Total your points: _____

4. What do you think your total point score says about your level of submission?

5. In your own words, define what rebellion is and how is it different from being

disobedient? Is there a difference?

6. Do you ever find yourself wanting to go your own way when you know it isn't the best choice for you to make? If no, what keeps you from doing so?

7. Tell of a time you intentionally distanced yourself from God? Why did you do so?

8. How do you manage your conscience when you rebel against God and others?

9. Are you considering taking an inventory of your past and present life-challenges to see where you may have allowed the Enemy to dupe you?

“Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may your love and your truth always protect me.”

– Psalm 40:11

confession for restoration. And when He does we should expect His compassion and loving kindness to restore us back into His marvelous Kingdom of Light, thus breaking the spirit of rebellion in us.

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Are you sick and tired of experiencing unnecessary hardships in your life?

If so, then this book is definitely for you! This book will help you identify why you have experienced some of your life challenges and by completing the Reflections at the end of each chapter, you will discover:

- How to improve your relational, financial, and emotional outcomes.
- That you have the ability to reshape your future regardless of your past mistakes.
- Self confidence and others will notice the change in you too.
- How to help others who may be experiencing similar life crisis.
- By empowering yourself you will stop blaming others.
- Forgiving others reduces your life-stress and makes you a better you.
- A closer relationship with God and His favor will rest on your life!



Ron Burnett has the “gift of service” and spends countless hours volunteering as a youth basketball coach and ministering to men incarcerated. He and his wife, LaTanya, live in beautiful Colorado and their favorite pastime is traveling.

Breaking the Spirit of Rebellion will help you regain control of your life. You deserve a better you... why not start today?

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