

THE SWORD & SHIELD LETTER

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"Stepping Into What God Has Prepared"

As we enter a new year, we are reminded that God is already ahead of us, preparing the path, shaping the opportunities, opening the doors, and strengthening our steps. What lies before us is not accidental or uncertain. It is intentionally prepared by the God who goes before His people. Stepping into what God has prepared means letting go of what held us back, lifting our eyes from what is behind, and placing our full trust in the One who promises to make a way even in the wilderness. In this new year, we will walk forward with confidence, not in ourselves, but in the God who prepares the journey before He calls us to take the first step.

Stop Looking Back, God Is Ahead of You

When God calls us into something new, the greatest obstacle is often our own tendency to look back. The past may hold regrets, failures, or even comfort, but God invites us to release what was so we can receive what will be. Let's choose to focus our gaze onward trusting that what God prepares is always greater than what we leave behind.

"See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland."

Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

January 2026

Upcoming!

- Men's Ministry meeting January 4th @ 8 AM. **Session 1**, "LOVING GOD'S WOMAN BY PARTNERING WITH HER."
- Tullahoma SDA Men's Ministry monthly local "CONNECT" meeting January 15th @ 8:00 PM via Zoom or phone
- Men's Ministry meeting January 18th @ 8 AM. **Session 2**, "LOVING GOD'S WOMAN BY PROVIDING FOR HER"

Areas to Forge in 2026

- Consistent daily prayer
- Scripture meditation, not just reading
- Listening for God's direction
- Sabbath rest as a priority
- Growing in discernment

"Before we lead others, we must walk closely with God."

"Let the past sleep, but let it sleep in the sweet
embrace of Christ."

- Oswald Chambers

"There are far better things ahead than any we leave
behind." - **C.S. Lewis**





Resource Spotlight:

Wild at Heart Podcast

Hosted by John Eldredge

This podcast is hosted by John Eldredge, an author, counselor, and president of Wild at Heart, a ministry that helps people find God's love and Kingdom.

With his experience as a counselor and teacher, John shares insights on how to discover the heart of God, recover one's heart in God's love, and learn to live in God's Kingdom. The podcast covers topics related to faith, personal growth, and discovering one's purpose in life, providing guidance and encouragement to listeners who are seeking to deepen their relationship with God.

Men, as we stand at the beginning of a new year, I want to remind you of the unshakable truth of God's Word:

"The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in His way." Psalm 37:23 (ESV)

God is not asking us to wander into this year blindly. He is calling us to walk with Him, to trust Him with each step, and to join in the purpose He has already prepared. Will you join him? This year is not just another stretch of time. It is an opportunity, a calling, for us to grow deeper, stand stronger, and lead more faithfully. Our homes need spiritual leadership. Our church needs committed men of God. Our world needs men whose lives reflect Christ.

Men, we are those men. So here is my charge to you as we move into this year together: Pursue God with renewed passion. Seek His Word before the world's voices. Lead your families with courage and love. Fight the good fight alongside your brothers. And refuse to settle for anything less than the man God created you to be.

Let us echo the conviction of Paul in **Philippians 3:14**:

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me."

Rak Chazak!



"The Call Is Clear: Men Are Needed More Than Ever"

- A widely cited ministry statistic reports that only about **1** out of every **18** men is actively involved in discipleship ministries, meaning roughly 6 million men are discipled out of approximately 90 million who are not. This highlights a huge opportunity for intentional spiritual growth and leadership development. (WACMM)
- Research shows that while many recognize the importance of spiritual leadership, only about **21%** of young adults involved in churches report having access to meaningful leadership training, and only **26%** have been inspired to lead because of someone in their church. This points to the importance of equipping men to lead spiritually in their homes and communities. (Lifeway Research)
- According to older survey data, among adults with children under 18, only about **36%** rated themselves "above average" in leading their family spiritually, with about half rating themselves average and about **14%** below average. This suggests many men see room for growth in spiritual leadership at home. (Barna group)

