

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**E**meal “E.Z.” Zwayne is the president of Living Waters, the spokesman and host for the National Bible Bee Competition, and a cohost of *The Living Waters Podcast*. He serves as an executive producer of the *Way of the Master* television program and multiple Living Waters films. A passionate communicator, he speaks at conferences and churches nationally and around the world. E.Z. served as an associate pastor for several years. He and his wife, Rachel, have five children.

# FOREWORD

**W**e live at a time when there is a great lack of godly male leadership in the world. God gave men the role of being influential leaders in every sphere of society, but so many men have shirked this important responsibility. And Scripture warns us that because of our sin nature, men will not want to be leaders as they should be.

Also, as descendants of Adam, we have a sin nature that wants to be master over our lives. In this fallen world we live in, it is so easy for men to let sin master them and allow destructive sinful desires to rule over them, thus destroying their ability to be the godly leaders they've been called to be.

In a masterful way, my good friend Emeal Zwayne, or "E.Z." as he is called, deals head-on with the issues of male leadership and sexual sin that so need to be addressed in our church culture.

It's "no holds barred" for E.Z. as he challenges men concerning sexual purity. The statistics of men addicted to pornography and other sexual sins, even in the church, are horrific. But E.Z. doesn't just give statistics and his opinions (though he does include engaging stories from his family and travels). I love the way he begins by building his entire case on God's Word, beginning in Genesis. Genesis 1–11 is the foundation for everything, for the rest of the Bible, for a truly Christian worldview, and for all doctrine. That is the only place to start to build the correct worldview for roles and behavior.

Remember, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 ESV). E.Z. uses God's Word to challenge men concerning their thoughts and behavior. Warning: this book is extremely convicting.

Men can have victory in the area of sexual purity by not letting this sin become master over them. They can overcome any temptation in Christ. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond

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what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV). That’s why we all need to judge our behavior and thoughts against the absolute authority of God’s Word. And E.Z. challenges men to do just that.

It’s time for Christian men to rise up and be real men—men as God intended men to be.

I’ve heard marketing for tours of the Holy Land say that after you visit Israel, “you’ll never be the same.” Men, read this book, and I guarantee you will never be the same.

*Ken Ham*

Founder and CEO of Answers in Genesis, the Creation Museum,  
and the Ark Encounter

# PREFACE

**N**ecessity and passion. Critics have rightly said that these two elements must be present for any book to reach its highest potential and achieve its greatest impact. I can't think of a time in the annals of human history when there was a greater necessity for addressing the topic of sexual purity. And the thought of liberating men from bondage to sexual sin infuses this writer with more passion than words could ever express.

There's no question that sexual immorality has reigned supreme across the generations since Adam and Eve's fall in the garden of Eden. However, man's ever-deepening plunge into depravity over many millennia and the aid that modern technologies provide for the enhancement of carnal pleasures have combined to create a climate of perversion unlike anything this planet has seen since its creation.

It may be safe to say that authors within the span of multiple generations have sufficiently covered certain topics and that new books dealing with the same subject matter would be painfully redundant. But I would contend that the issue of sexual purity is a rare exception in this regard—and this is true for two main reasons. First, owing to the insidious, pervasive, and overtly destructive nature of sexual immorality, enough books could never be written to help men find victory in this arena. Secondly, there is an unfortunate and glaring dearth of books written on this topic from a soundly biblical perspective.

The tragic and inevitable by-product of such an atmosphere is a debilitating desensitization to the seriousness of sexual sin. A worldly "Christianity" that has sold its soul to this godless age for the sake of acceptance, relevance, and ease has partly facilitated this desensitization. Tragically, this confluence of elements has left the men of this era in a very precarious predicament. And the church's abdication of duty has deprived men of the correction, exhortation, guidance, and scriptural truth that they so desperately need.

I know—this all sounds quite dismal, doesn't it? But it's against the stifling darkness of such bleak backdrops that the glorious gospel shines brightest. The gospel of Christ is far more than an instrument through

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which souls are saved. It's also the inexhaustible source and ever-flowing fountain of spiritual riches that supplies the redeemed with every necessary component for developing and nurturing a God-oriented life. So it's by no coincidence that this book is thoroughly gospel-centric, and it's expressly because of the hope that the gospel lavishly supplies that I've written it. What a glorious hope that is! Christ became sin for sinners so that He can impute His spotless righteousness to their account (Romans 5:21). He then takes those who stand in that perfect righteousness and begins to sanctify them day by day as He progressively conforms them into the image of Christ (Hebrews 10:14; Romans 8:29).

When the gospel's power is fully unleashed, it quickens a complacent church to proclaim the truth to its people, reverses the curse of desensitization to sin, and tenderly draws believers toward genuine repentance. This, after all, is what God designed His glorious gospel of grace to do: "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12).

I hope this liberating and transforming gospel grace will activate a zeal for righteousness in every man who reads this book. I pray that the awareness that they are not their own but were bought with the precious, priceless blood of Christ will cause them to flee sexual immorality and to glorify God with their body and spirit, which belong to Him (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).



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## SETTING THE STAGE

### A Man Forged in Fire

**A**s exploding grenades and mortar bombs lit up the night sky on the island of Guadalcanal, the beleaguered warriors from First Battalion, Seventh Marines were in for the fight of their lives. Stranded in the South Pacific on one of the more than nine hundred islands that make up Solomon Islands, the small US contingent of World War II combatants was under siege by three thousand Japanese troops. Outnumbered and outgunned, the marines bravely held their ground and repelled wave after wave of enemy fighters. Just when it seemed like they were turning the tide, incoming fire damaged and disabled one of the combat crews' main artillery. Defying every instinct of self-preservation, the commanding officer, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, did the unthinkable. Exposing himself to flying bullets and hidden enemies attacking at random, he ran six hundred feet to the defunct pit while carrying close to one hundred pounds of weapons and ammunition. Back and forth he went between his foxhole and that of his comrades, providing supplies and aid while simultaneously picking off opposing soldiers with nothing but a pistol in hand.

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Having lost his special gloves, which were necessary protection from the searing heat generated by his machine gun, Basilone sustained burns from holding it barehanded. He was credited with killing thirty-eight enemies himself, and as one of his fellow marines, Nash W. Phillips, reported, “Basilone had a machine gun on the go for three days and nights without sleep, rest, or food.”<sup>1</sup>

After the battalion victoriously survived the battle, Phillips was being treated for his injuries when the sergeant came in to check on him. “He was barefooted, and his eyes were red as fire,” Phillips recalled. “His face was dirty black from gunfire and lack of sleep. His shirt sleeves were rolled up to his shoulders. He had a .45 tucked into the waistband of his trousers. He’d just dropped by to see how I was making out; me and the others in the section. I’ll never forget him.”<sup>2</sup>

After receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, John Basilone was given the opportunity to spend the rest of the war in the safety of Washington, DC. John refused and instead returned to the heat of battle. In his final act of courage, bravery, and selflessness, he stormed the shores of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. While Sergeant Basilone’s life ended there, the ripples created by his sacrificial heroism continue to touch lives around the world to this day.<sup>3</sup>

I wonder how John Basilone’s story strikes you. Does his legendary altruism rouse a sense of admiration in your heart? Does his harrowing sacrifice evoke terror in the core of your being as you imagine yourself running across the raging battlefield in his boots? Is it possible that perhaps—in a sort of defining moment—it inspires a longing in you to follow in his footsteps as you fight your way through the biggest war of all—the one we call life?

### **A Man-to-Man Talk about Real Manhood**

I wish you and I were sitting together at my favorite coffee shop right now. It’s a rustic kind of place. A mixture of used bricks, rough wood, metal fixtures, and distressed concrete floors makes it the perfect setting for a good old-fashioned, man-to-man talk. I would look you straight in

1 John Simkins, “Valor Friday: The Legend of John Basilone,” *Marine Corps Times*, June 29, 2018, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com>.

2 Simkins, “Valor Friday.”

3 Simkins, “Valor Friday.”

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the eye and ask you a fundamental question, the kind of question that every man should be asked—or at least the one that every man should be asking himself: *What defines a real man?*

Does this bring back memories of a US Supreme Court nominee saying no after a senator asked her if she could define the word *woman*? You and I both know that the world has completely lost its perspective on all things related to gender. When so-called influencers tell us that “men” can menstruate and conceive babies and when expectant mothers are now called “birthing persons” who have the ability to “chest feed,” you know that, Houston, we’ve got far more than just a problem. We’ve got an epic catastrophe on our hands. At a time when those who occupy the highest and most respectable echelons of society are publicly declaring that they can’t define what a man or a woman is, is it any wonder that men are losing sight of what it really means to be a man?

What I’m about to say has become so taboo in our upside-down world that those who would dare even to whisper this sort of thing are instantly shunned, cast out, and “canceled” as immoral dregs by the self-appointed guardians of this godless age. For the pleasure of my Savior and out of love for others, I’ll gladly endure that ill-treatment—and much worse. Here goes! Note this well: John Basilone’s life bears the marks of real manhood.

Before you tune out here, let me put some meat on those bones. Sergeant Basilone’s masculinity was not determined by the fact that he was a marine, nor was it because he was physically tough or adept at combat. It was not even because he might have been athletic, had a thick beard, or spoke in a deep voice. A male can be all those things and still not act like a real man. And by the same token, Basilone could have been none of those things and still have been the manliest of men.

Our war hero’s life bears the marks of real manhood because real men demonstrate character, courage, commitment, conviction, devotion, and loyalty. And what’s more, they’re willing to sacrifice for the sake of others and for causes greater than themselves. Most importantly, real men are willing to fight for what’s right, and they do so in the energy and spirit of those indispensable attributes I just highlighted. Pastor and author Robert Lewis reinforces and aptly articulates what I’m trying to convey:



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What is a real man?...A real man is one who:

- rejects passivity
- accepts responsibility
- leads courageously
- expects the greater reward...God's reward.

This manhood vision desperately needs to be proclaimed throughout our society.<sup>4</sup>

### What Type of Warrior Are You?

So back to that other kind of war that I mentioned. While a tiny percentage of the world's men will ever traipse across the theater of conventional warfare, every man born of a woman—and that's *every* man—enters this world as an enlisted private in the inescapable war of life. While that automatic designation, by default, includes the title of warrior, a man's chosen conduct in that capacity will determine the qualifying adjective that precedes that inherited title. Certain men choose irresponsibility and go AWOL. Others opt to become traitors and consort with the enemy. Some pick the pathway of faintheartedness and raise the white flag of surrender. And then you have the men of mediocrity—the ones who do the absolute minimum to get by and barely survive. These are the irresponsible, traitorous, cowardly, and mediocre warriors. But a few determine to tread the road less traveled and become the faithful, honorable, relentless, dedicated, and victorious warriors.

Within the broader context of the war of life, there is a sort of sub-war that every man finds himself engulfed in. It typically starts at the onset of puberty and fluctuates in intensity across the varying seasons of adulthood, even into the senior years. I'm obviously talking about the war of sexual temptations.

It would be silly to ask you which type of warrior you want to be in this relentless war. Which God-fearing man would ever seriously say, *Oh, I most certainly want to be an irresponsible, traitorous, cowardly, and mediocre warrior in the war of sexual temptations?* Chances are that most of the men reading this book will have, by now, crossed over the

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 60–61.

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threshold of puberty. This means that you, my friend, have already made your warrior debut. So instead of asking you what type of warrior you would like to be, it's better to ask what type of warrior you have been in your various battles thus far.

### Hope for the Weary

I realize at this point that the thought of quietly putting this book to rest may seem very appealing to you. Perhaps you've failed miserably with one stumble into sexual sin after another. Your list may include pornography or masturbation. Maybe you've gone as far as fornication or adultery. It could even be a combination of some or all those things. And it's also possible that you can honestly say that your only struggle in the sexual realm has been with the sin of proactively lusting after women in your heart. This could be through images of clothed women (whether in skimpy swimwear or other immodest apparel) that you've searched out or have come across online and via other mediums. Or maybe your main battle has entailed lusting after women you've seen in public or that you've conjured up in your imagination.

No matter how big or prolonged or shameful your sexual sins have been, an overwhelming abundance of hope is available to you in the inexhaustible love and grace of God. The glorious gospel, secured by the death and resurrection of Christ, not only redeems and regenerates but also enables transformative change as it empowers you in ways you may never have thought possible.

In *Finally Free*—one of the most insightful and practical books written on the subject of sexual purity—Heath Lambert beautifully extolled the hope we have in Christ with these powerful words:

There is no porn user so enslaved that Jesus cannot set him or her free. There is no struggle for purity so intense that Jesus' grace cannot win the battle. There is no consequence so steep that Jesus' power cannot carry you through. Jesus' grace to change you is stronger than pornography's power to destroy you. Jesus' grace is stronger than your own desires to watch sex. While there is no hope for you in

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looking at pornography, there is all the hope in the universe when you look to God and His grace.<sup>5</sup>

Despite how much you may have failed thus far in your calling to be a faithful, honorable, relentless, dedicated, and victorious warrior, your magnificent Redeemer has made provision for you to change the trend and begin fighting like a man.

But unfortunately, real men are in short supply today. Cultural theologian P. Andrew Sandlin couldn't have said it better: "One of the most tragic cultural shifts of the U.S. in the last quarter century is the loss of rugged manliness. In my experience, most young men, including young Christian men, suffer from laziness; lack of ambition; obsession with cheap entertainment; a void of chivalry or protection of women; and a whiny, self-centered, non-risktaking disposition."<sup>6</sup>

And yet, God's Word exhorts us to pursue a higher standard—the standard of real manhood. "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13 ESV).

In his exposition of this verse, Dr. John MacArthur said the following about what it means to act like a man:

"Act like men" essentially means to conduct one's self in a courageous way...

Courage is the stock-in-trade of a man: courage in the face of danger, courage in the face of temptation... There's nothing more manly than a man with consummate conviction, courage, and endurance, who is marked by love. That's a man—not weak, not vacillating, not fearful; and loving.

Real men face life with this kind of fortitude. They're watchful of the dangers around them. They're alert. They're protectors of their wives and children, and of their friends and all the people over whom they have influence.<sup>7</sup>

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5 Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 28.

6 P. Andrew Sandlin, "One of the most tragic cultural shifts of the U.S.," Facebook, July 30, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com>.

7 John MacArthur, "Act Like Men," Grace to You, June 21, 2020, <https://www.gty.org>.

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Are you willing to stand with that kind of fortitude and fight like a man, my brother? Will you determine to stand and be counted? Will you exert every ounce of energy within you to battle through your war of sexual temptations in the same fashion that John Basilone battled his way through World War II? Will you demonstrate character, courage, commitment, conviction, devotion, and loyalty? Will you sacrifice for the sake of others—like your wife, your children, your grandchildren, your parents, your siblings, your friends, your church family, the young people who look up to you as an example, and the older people who have invested their lives in you? And will you lay down your life, through death to self, for causes greater than yourself—like the testimony of the gospel and the glory of God?

### **A Battle Plan for Your Battle**

Let's not be self-deceived about the seriousness and intensity of this war. It's easy for us to psych ourselves up and get inspired by a rousing story like John Basilone's. But as I'm sure you've learned from life by now, feelings of inspiration come and go. It's one thing to envision ourselves doing something with great gusto and enthusiasm. But when the rubber meets the road, it's an entirely different matter.

Can you relate? If you're a man with red blood flowing through your veins and you've never shouted out words such as, "I feel like I'm about to go crazy!" or at least belted them out in the echoey corridors of your exasperated mind, perhaps an emergency pulse check is in order. And while you may have used those words in any number of circumstances, you and I both know that they were never infused with more passion, intensity, and frustration than when you've unleashed them in the context of a struggle with sexual temptations.

It's often been said that there's no force on earth more powerful than the sex drive. There are days when every man has felt like his sex drive could give nuclear energy a run for its money. Though it's true that the overwhelming majority of men at some time find themselves under the sway of sexual urges, this struggle bears an altogether different dynamic for the Christian man. While the unbeliever is a helpless slave to sin and typically exerts no resistance against its dictates, the believer is

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a slave to Christ and, therefore, finds himself constantly fighting against sexual urges out of a genuine desire to please the Master.

As the battle for sexual purity rages hot in the sincerest and most committed of Christ's servants, many grow exasperated, disheartened, and disillusioned when trying to find a pathway to victory. Some of this is due to misunderstanding the nature of the struggle itself. In other cases, it's because the Christian does not realize that he has received all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), which includes victory over sexual temptations. But one element that many men often overlook is the fact that they don't have a comprehensive and gospel-centered battle plan that integrates the fear of God and dynamic spiritual discipline with a biblical understanding of the fallen nature of this world and the spiritual resources available to them in Christ.

A soldier who runs out onto a military battlefield clad in a bathrobe and fluffy slippers with "champagne wishes and caviar dreams" will quickly realize that he really has a death wish and a nightmare on his hands. You're self-deluded if you think that you're on a luxury yacht cruising toward a resort in Bora-Bora when, in reality, you're on a Higgins boat heading for the shores of John Basilone's Guadalcanal. Both disillusion and demise will be the inevitable outcome because, let's face it, vacationers aren't looking to fight or to carry out battle plans; they're fixin' to feast and frolic.

A wartime mentality is hard to cultivate when we live in an atmosphere of ease and luxury—with overwhelming distractions and allurements constantly enticing us to relax, kick up our feet, and coast. The war that rages about us is an invisible one, and this is where the deception lies. While we feel the tension of spiritual battle in the heat of sexual temptation, we don't really sense it very keenly at other times—and this is the very thing that fosters and perpetuates the deceptive illusion, leading us to become complacent and live out most of our days with a peacetime mentality. Then, when the battle suddenly becomes apparent to us, we scramble to fight like an equipped soldier, though we have done nothing whatsoever to adequately equip ourselves.

But before the spiritual battle has reached the boiling point of intense sexual temptation, a thousand other fierce clashes and skirmishes are being waged against our souls—at times directly, at other times behind

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the scenes—and we cannot let our guard down or turn our back on the Enemy for even one second. Ephesians reminds us of the invisible nature of the warfare that I just referenced, making it clear that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood; our battle is a spiritual one. And our armor and weaponry are invisible and spiritual as well (Ephesians 6:10–17).

This sobering exhortation by Charles H. Spurgeon is worthy of note: “If you will tell me when God permits a Christian to lay aside his armour, I will tell you when Satan has left off temptation. Like the old knights in war time, we must sleep with helmet and breastplate buckled on, for the arch-deceiver will seize our first unguarded hour to make us his prey. The Lord keep us watchful in all seasons, and give us a final escape from the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear.”<sup>8</sup>

To help you further grasp the indispensable necessity of this kind of posture and mindset for every Christian man, focus on these eye-opening words from *Passions of the Heart*, Dr. John Street's exemplary and authoritative work on the subject of sexual purity:

You must go to battle against sexual lust with the attitude of a soldier—but a soldier who recognizes his own inability to secure a victory. As a soldier, you must be willing to die to self to gain final freedom from sexual slavery. Only then will you realize the transforming grace of Jesus Christ that will bring the final conquest. In the meantime, you are in this battle, waging war against the flesh on the battlefield of the heart. The war is tough because the enemy is often varied, layered, and constantly reproducing. The enemy also knows the territory.<sup>9</sup>

### Preventative Preparedness

Remember that war doesn't just involve direct confrontation on the battlefield. That's the typical culmination of the grander scheme of war. Every wise nation that has enemies, just like every wise man who has

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8 Charles H. Spurgeon, “February 20, Evening,” in *Morning and Evening*, accessed August 30, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com>.

9 John D. Street, *Passions of the Heart: Biblical Counsel for Stubborn Sexual Sins* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019), 210.

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spiritual foes seeking to destroy him in the war of sexual temptations, will do everything necessary to avert a direct attack by those who seek to destroy it.

We might think that strong national security is the possession of a sovereign state that maintains overwhelming military might. This, of course, is true but not for the reasons that may seem immediately apparent. We subconsciously conclude that this type of security exists because a particular nation constantly uses its robust military capabilities to directly war against other countries, thus vanquishing them and rendering them a nonthreat. But that's often not the case. In many instances, the strong security of a particular nation is a reality because most other nations would never dare attack it on the battlefield. This is specifically due to what I call its extreme *preventative preparedness*. This includes hyperorganizing, advanced and rigorous training, amassing devastating and state-of-the-art weaponry, and implementing superior defense capabilities, not to mention forming strong alliances with other powerful nations that would immediately come to its defense. This kind of provident, preventative preparedness minimizes such a nation's need to unleash its military might. Simply, as I stated already, other nations wouldn't dare attack it in a conventional way. This is what many military leaders call *peace through strength*. And in the rare event that some misguided regime would be foolhardy enough to launch an assault against such a nation, they would undoubtedly rue the day.

It's in this spirit, as it relates to one of our main enemies (and principally applies to the rest), that Scripture reminds us to "submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:7-8).

Once again, Charles H. Spurgeon captured this well:

Satan does not often attack a Christian who is living near to God. It is when the Christian departs from his God, becomes spiritually starved, and endeavours to feed on vanities, that the devil discovers his vantage hour. He may sometimes stand foot to foot with the child of God who is active in his Master's service, but the battle is generally short: he who slips as he goes down into the Valley

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of Humiliation, every time he takes a false step invites Apollyon to assail him.<sup>10</sup>

### Know Your Enemies

In the war of sexual temptations, you have three ruthless enemies who are bent on your destruction. Knowing who they are and understanding the lethal strategies they have formulated against you is a foundational step toward building up the type of preventative preparedness that will neutralize them and give you victory in your quest for sexual purity as you fight like a man. This book aims to present you with that knowledge, provide you with the necessary tools to cultivate that preparedness, and, through inspiration and encouragement from God's Word and the truth of the gospel of grace, help propel you toward that victory.

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<sup>10</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, "June 13, Evening," in *Morning and Evening*, accessed August 30, 2023, <https://www.biblegateway.com>.