

**A LESSONS FOR Life Book**



**Pastors  
ARE NOT PERFECT**

**KEITH HAMMOND**

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# INTRODUCTION

Proverbs 24:16 says  
“For a just man falleth seven times,  
and riseth again...”

If God waited on people to become perfect for them to pastor a church, lead people, or to work in the ministry, there would never be anyone ready for God to use.

God uses willing vessels, with weaknesses, so that His strength, power, and anointing can be revealed, so He can get the glory.

People are not perfect. We have imperfections, flaws, weaknesses, issues, and many iniquities that we work daily, to overcome, so that we can do our best, to be our best, and give God all that we have.

There is no excuse for sin, especially when it's done willingly. Hebrews 10:26 says, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” This Scripture has an even greater impact when it comes to pastors, but let's talk a little about others in leadership, first.

We choose, by election, imperfect people to lead us in one of the most important areas of society, POLITICS. We know the history. The country was founded by stealing it away from the natives, then built on the backs of slaves. Many in the same construct of politics today lie, cheat, steal, etc., but we still elect them. Then we are shocked when scandal around or about them surfaces.

The same is true for many CEO's. While the same foundational events may not be true, meaning they didn't steal a business or enslave people to run it, and aren't really elected to lead us, but the same behind closed doors are often true. The methods and practices many of them used to obtain riches are being exposed by the billions of dollars today. And again, we are shocked when scandal around or about them is uncovered.

The same is true for many ACTORS. People we support by paying our hard-earned money, going into a theatre, and watching a movie with them starring in it. We know the history. Many of them lie, cheat, steal, have affairs and get divorced more often than anyone on the planet. And, even with their public lives and personas, we are shocked when scandal around or about them surfaces.

So why are scandals or situations involving Pastors any different? Because they have been chosen to lead people? No. The same is true for politicians. And the answer is simple. Because they have been held to a higher standard than the rest of us?

Pastors are not perfect. They are people just like me, and you. They simply have been chosen by God to shepherd and lead His people. This often starts the process of them "becoming" better people, but no one, anyone, and let me say it again, anyone, will ever overcome EVERY sin, as long as we live in these 'fleshly' bodies. There is no perfect man, and no perfect pastor.

There are sins that occur in the mind that members of the congregation never hear of, and a pastor may get up in the pulpit and say he doesn't sin, or no longer sins, which proves him a liar, because of the very thoughts of his mind. However, he may say that as long as the sin within his mind, doesn't lead to an action, it isn't sin, but that IS NOT what the Bible says [verse].

Take my situation for example. I've known many years that I'm called to pastor a church and shepherd God's people. And for many years I struggled with the fact that I have been a womanizer, fornicator, thief, and liar, so how could God possibly use me to lead anyone. But it wasn't until He began to use my gifts in many areas of the church in leadership roles that He began to teach me and show me how it was and is possible. And it has lasted for the past 15 years.

Pastors are people. And people are not perfect. It is God's anointing that enables us to do what it is that we do. We may have lived one way in our past, but at the moment we make the decision to follow God's calling on our life, we MUST walk away from our past, and the sins we committed in the past.

We cannot and should not continue living the way we used to. If we do, we dishonor God. And God has already told us, and showed us, through the lives of many who have fallen before us, that He will bring down, any Pastor who is not living right as a man of God, especially when God gives him multiple chances, and the pastor does not truly repent by walking away from the sin he committed. God is not mocked. And He cannot be deceived. So it is vital, that from the very day that we decide to walk this walk, we must practice what we preach. This does not mean we will not sin, because the Bible is clear that we all sin. What it means is that we must confess it, repent, and tell the truth about it, to be set free. And we should not be preaching to God's people one minute and lying to them the next.

A righteous man falls seven times. But his deliverance is in him rising up the eighth time.

All sin dishonors God. There is no little sin or big sin. All sin is sin. All sin breaks God's law. There are sins that do not break man's law. And there are sins that break man's law. For example, in my opinion, any priest who is a child molester, should be exposed, jailed, and punished. That is a sin that breaks both God's law and man's law.

Adultery, is sin. It breaks God's law. And although it causes the same type of hurt and pain, does not break man's law.

The Bible clearly teaches us how to avoid sin by denying our flesh. We are supposed to die daily to ourselves, our lusts, our desires, our selfishness, and our wants, all of which go against what God is trying to do in our lives.

The more we deny our flesh, the stronger God's spirit in us gets. The stronger God's spirit in us gets, the easier it is for us to deny our flesh, resist temptation, and therefore, refuse to commit sin.

As Pastors, denying our flesh is easier and gets easier, the better we are at being able to turn off the things of the world. This means, not watching television, unless it's public broadcasting or Christian television, both of which should not and are expected not to contain images that tempt us or cloud our thinking.

This also means staying away from things that weaken us. And in this one area that I personally know is very difficult. If we eat things we know we're not supposed to eat, we weaken our flesh to other things we're not supposed to do. Flesh is flesh. If you give it one thing it's not supposed to have, but then tell it that it cannot have another thing it wants, it's going to call you a hypocrite every time.

The war between our flesh and God's spirit in us, is real, and it is active and in battle every single day. Sometimes you may not notice it at all, and then other days it may be so strong that you can hardly stand it.

For Pastors, because of the greater level of responsibility we have for being shepherds, leaders, teachers, prayers, and many other titles and categories over God's people, our flesh/spirit battle is enhanced to what seems to be one hundred fold, magnified by the microscope we constantly live under, where sin is never hidden for long, exposed immediately when seen or suspected, and illuminated by light and cameras and news reports, when it finally surfaces.

Pastors do not have it easy. In no way shape or form. We sacrifice our time, including time we should be spending with our wives and kids, in order to be available to God's people any time they need us.

This book, as I am writing it, is ministering to me in ways that I never imagined or saw or expected when I received the vision to write it. And God knows, that through the many news reports of scandal and sin surrounding various pastors around the country, someone needed to be used to step out and tell the truth about the life of a pastor.

Some may say that because I am just becoming a pastor, that I haven't even experienced what most pastors who have been in their pulpits and positions for many years, but the 15 years I faithfully served in the leadership roles I was called, elected, appointed, and asked to, including ten years as the right hand to my pastor, I undoubtedly feel that I have been on the battlefield just as long as some others.

And given, that the sin and darkness that plagued situations in my life, have been exposed to light via news reports and cameras, more than once, I've experienced what many pastors could not survive.

Pastor Jakes, in his sermon and teaching about Hemotions, put it this way... *"I cannot be mentored by someone who does not have sin in their life. Because my problem is, how can I be mentored by someone i cannot relate to? It is not just your victories that help me understand who you are, it's your frailties and your failures that convince me, that if God can use you with all of your mistakes, then maybe it might be possible that God could use me too.*

*So you look for your superhero (pastor) with their blue boots and their capes and their S's on their shirts (fancy clothes), and lift them up and make them demi-gods all you want to. I want to announce to you that superman was really Clark Kent. It was not that Clark Kent was superman.*

*The real strength of any man is knowing his own limitations. And you will never be powerful until you know what your kryptonite is. Ever man has something that is his kryptonite. That sin that so easily besets us. And if you are past your 5th birthday, you already know what it is. And i need to see you struggle with it, to convince me that i can overcome mine.*

*I don't need you to tell me that you have no problems. Never had any issues. Never made a mistake. Because then I cannot relate to you and you cannot help me. You don't inspire me, you intimidate me. And besides, you self-righteous bigot, I don't believe you. You tried to make me spiritual, but all you really did was make me suspicious. Because I know you're hiding something."*

Pastor Jakes is right. Every man has his kryptonite.

And it is only through confessing it, exposing it, repenting for it, telling the truth about it, walking away from it, never returning back to it, so we can receive deliverance from it, that we can truly be set free.



Pastors are not perfect, we are people just like you. And we fall, sin, and have difficulty just like you. So if you're looking for a perfect pastor, or a perfect church, you'll be searching for the rest of your life, because it doesn't exist here on earth. What does exist, are pastors that have been chosen by God, as imperfect people anointed to lead imperfect people. And on top of that foundation, is often built a church that contains imperfect people striving to become perfect.

EVERYONE INSIDE THE CHURCH NEEDS THE SAME THING FROM GOD: SALVATION. Including Pastors. And although pastors are held to a much higher standard than the members, because we have been called by God, anointed and positioned by God, we continue to grow right along with the members.

I was called at the age of 17. But because my dad has just passed away, and I was still angry behind my mom's death 8 years earlier, I ran from God's calling for 17 years. And for those years, although I always prayed for others, I refused to listen to God about my own life. As a result of my disobedience, God gave me over to a reprobate mind, where I thought I was in control of my own life, which could not have been further from the truth.

In 1997, the day I walked into a church to repent, and place my life back in His hands, through His Son, Jesus Christ, I was so filled with grief, sadness, sorrow, and pain, because I was truly sorry that I had spent 17 years running from the very place He had established for me to be, that I never made it to the Sanctuary. I laid on the floor in the vestibule, crying, uncontrollably, for two hours.

Why? Simple. Because I knew that me turning my back on God was the very reason I had been struggling and living in darkness for so long, when all I had to do was walk back into the loving and forgiving arms of God, that it seriously grieved me that I had waited so long.

I can't explain to you what I felt or experienced during those two hours. I was being forgiven, healed, welcomed back, and loved on so much that I couldn't speak or move. And even though God was always right there waiting patiently to welcome me back with the loving embrace of His open arms, He let me know in no uncertain terms, that I would be punished for my disobedience.

Here it is, in the 15th year since that day, I am still living in that punishment, in spite of the fact that I've been active and committed to the church and ministry for 15 years. I often tell myself that I have two years left of my sentence. Because I feel that God made me suffer 17 years, to punish me for the 17 years I ran from His wanting to use me. I prevented Him from getting glory out of my life for 17 years. And He's made me feel it, know it, and be certain about that which I have seen, in order for Him to help me to understand His call on my life was irrevocable, and I should have responded to it.

This book was written out of my love for God and His people. First and foremost to use the gifts that God has imparted and entrusted to me to lead and teach His people, and secondly because I hear the mumuring and chatter of church members globally, searching for that which they know in their heart of hearts does not exist on earth.

There are no perfect pastors. There are great men chosen by God to lead His people. And those great men are given extraordinary gifts of being apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, through the five-fold ministry, but only through the life-giving, correcting and rebuking power of God's Word, constant prayer, fasting, denying our flesh, being steadfast, and longsuffering, will we ever, as pastors, be considered anywhere close to perfect. Being chosen by God to be a pastor, is truly one of the greatest blessings anyone can receive. And it is because of that blessing, that I now strive, to be as close to perfect as I can become in Him.

For 15 years, I served under two pastors. Rev. Agnew in Minneapolis for 12 1/2 years from 1997-2009; and Pastor Claiborn in Bloomington for 2 1/2 years from 2009-2011, when God gave me the vision to step out on faith and start a church for Him. I had informed Pastor Claiborn almost from the day I joined His church, that I would most definitely and eventually be following God's call to start a church.

Being under the leadership of these two great men of God, I learned many valuable lessons and I am truly honored and grateful to them both for their love, patience, teaching, prayers, and too many other things to list, including their willingness to put up with me. Under their pastoral covering I served in many leadership roles.

### Under Pastor Agnew

The Pastor's right hand  
Led the Deacons  
Led Sunday School Teachers  
Taught Adult Sunday School  
Designed flyers, banners, cards  
Printed programs, posters  
Installed technology systems  
Designed new church building  
Programmed the web site  
Published the church newsletter  
Published the membership book  
Published the church cookbook  
Designed the church database  
Gave numerous presentations  
Chaired many successful ministries  
Worked to expand a prison ministry  
Worked to develop a TV ministry

### Under Pastor Claiborn

Produced 1 hour church TV show  
Redesigned/Printed church bulletins  
Redesigned/Printed annual programs  
Trained members in graphic design  
Trained members in website design  
Designed flyers, banners, cards  
Designed/Printed programs, posters  
Upgraded/Repaired computers  
Redesigned the church web site  
Redesigned the church newsletter  
Redesigned the member handbook  
Designed new church logo  
Designed YouTube Channel  
Directed Brotherhood Choir  
Developed a church info DVD  
Developed a marketing campaign  
Designed new church campus

These experiences, were invaluable. And in part, it is what God used to help to mold, shape, reshape, gift, train, educate, empower, and prepare me to start and pastor a church. And each of them, in their own way, is what I glean from to help me on this incredible journey. To God, and to these two men of God, I thank you for your unwavering and unfailing love, without which, I could not have come this far.

Over many years, I've been called "Rev" by many men. I received this nickname while serving as their spiritual leader during both of my prison terms.

On Sunday, August 28th, 2011, my wife, our kids, and a couple of other members from our church went to a church in north Minneapolis where some friends of ours are active in the ministry. We went to hear Pastor Hezekiah Walker preach.

During the service, I looked up and saw the shadow of a dove with its wing flapping. I raised my hands and for the first time in a public worship service, lifted both my feet up off the floor and praise God by jumping up and down.

That night, in a vision while I was asleep, I was standing outside in a field of grass, by myself. I looked up and saw two doves, with their wings flapping and a single cloud. As I looked closer, each dove grabbed the cloud on one side, and started bringing it down to me. When they lowered the cloud just above me, I saw a white robe come out of the cloud, and on the breastplate of the robe was a golden glow, brighter than any light I've ever seen, and it was pulsating.

This vision was not the first time I had seen this robe. Months before, I had seen myself in it, standing in a pulpit getting ready to preach. I've had many visions over the years, but these two most recent ones, let me know beyond any shadow of doubt, what message God was giving and confirming for me.

One week later, on Sunday, September 4th, 2011, my wife was leaving for church a few minutes before me. While walking her to the door, I asked her to pray about me walking into the next level of my calling because I knew it was time for me to do just that.

The following Sunday, September 11th, 2011, the day before the 20th Anniversary of our family relocating to Minnesota, we attended a church service where a pastor was celebrating his 20th year.

Later that day, my wife and I met, and told our kids that I was about to start a church. I had told my wife the Sunday before. Stepping out was not easy and the devil was not happy. In fact, just an hour before I told the kids, my wife and I had the biggest argument we've had in 27 years of being together. We almost ended our marriage that day.

It was evident to me that being the day another pastor was celebrating his 20th year; and being the eve of our 20th year in Minnesota, the argument was not a coincidence. I know opposition is always greatest when breakthrough is at the door. Our job, is to fight through the opposition, make it to the door, and open it.

What is most significant, is that the very moment I told the kids, our youngest daughter looked at her older sister and said, "I knew it! I told you so!" Confirming to me that God had already placed the very idea of me walking into the next level of my calling, as a pastor, on her heart, without her ever mentioning it to me.

God is a mighty, awesome, wonderful, loving and forgiving God. And I, Pastor Keith Hammond, am a living witness to His patience, His plan, His path, His purpose, and His prosperity.

As you read the chapters in this book, do so with one fact in mind...

Pastors are people and people are not perfect.

If God waited on people to become perfect for them to pastor a church, lead people, or to work in the ministry, there would never be anyone ready for God to use and the work would never get done.