

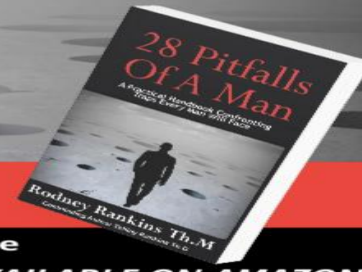


28 Pitfalls Of A Man

A Practical Handbook Confronting Traps Every Man Will Face

Available Formats: Book, Journal, Manual, and Workbook

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



As the original founder of Redemption 100, a nonprofit, he's provided over 6000 essential resources to individuals reentering society after incarceration.

Committed to their successful integration, Rodney actively engages with statewide and national organizations focusing on humanitarian and criminal justice issues.

Rodney's book "28 Pitfalls Of A Man" has reached over 100 correctional institutions in Florida and is also available in state institutions in Tennessee, Alaska, Illinois, and Nebraska. This reflects his commitment to educating and empowering incarcerated individuals as they transition back into society successfully.

This insightful book brings awareness and responsibility through accountability. The topics range from regret to pride as the author and co-author share from their lived experiences.

From incarcerated individuals to ministry groups to leadership to reentry departments 28 Pitfalls Of A Man is a proven must read for personal enrichment.

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Tolliny Rankins, Th.D., is a certified Personal Enrichment Life Coach, Speaker, and published Author in Christian Theology. She's known for her original courses like "The Art Of Discovering You" and "Race & Reconciliation" taught at Northwest Florida State College. As the Co-founder of Redemption 100, she's provided thousands of essential items to returning citizens.

Tolliny's workshops and her co-authored book, "28 Pitfalls Of A Man," have made a significant impact, reaching over 100 institutions. She's a sought-after keynote speaker for national and local organizations and serves on the Board of Directors for the Florida Restorative Justice Association. Hosting the "Silverlinings Today" radio show, she celebrates community heroes and shares practical wisdom with a touch of humor.

Available as:

- Keynote Speakers
- Breakout Speakers
- 28 Pitfalls Workshops
- Panel Discussions
- Summits.



Rodney Rankins, Th. M, Author
Tolliny Rankins, Th. D (Contributing Author)

28 Pitfalls Of A Man

**A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK
CONFRONTING TRAPS EVERY MAN
WILL FACE**

Prologue

Pitfall: A trap or snare, especially a roughly camouflaged pit hidden or unrecognized danger.

28 Pitfalls is a personal journey of 28 of the pitfalls I have fallen into so many times and the daily struggle to stay out of them. By God's grace we can avoid and overcome as many as possible. Nobody wants to be remembered for the worse day of their life, for doing the worse thing they've ever done, but that's what could happen when you fall into a pit. My pit was a real prison. Yours could be a metaphor; a figure of speech. Regardless to what your pit may be; mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, financial or relationally a pit is still the pits. Rock bottom. We should never cover up things that need to be uncovered. It's not easy to accept the fact that Jesus already overcame the same things we face daily, but it's true.

So come on, get ready to go on a journey hopefully recognizing, addressing and overcoming pitfalls in own your life, as I share these particular 28 pitfalls with you.

Someone may even say who do I think I am that qualifies me to think I can even write a book? My answer to that is everyone has their own story to tell, it's called life, I'm just sharing a few things I've experienced in hopes to let someone else know they're not alone. Everybody has their own story. Everybody deals with something. Be encouraged, you can get through it. God is faithful.

Table of Contents

Prologue

Dedication

Pitfall 1 Dishonesty

Pitfall 2 Pride

Pitfall 3 Unforgiveness

Pitfall 4 Anger

Pitfall 5 Jealousy

Pitfall 6 Discouragement

Pitfall 7 Selfishness

Pitfall 8 Bad Habits

Pitfall 9 Regret

Pitfall 10 Desperation

Pitfall 11 Immaturity

Pitfall 12 Rebellion

Pitfall 13 Irresponsibility

Pitfall 14 Ignorance

Pitfall 15 Fear

Pitfall 16 Rejection

Pitfall 17 Criticism

Pitfall 18 Perversion

Pitfall 19 Pornography

Pitfall 20 Alcohol Abuse

Pitfall 21 Drug Abuse

Pitfall 22 Prejudice

Pitfall 23 Hatred

Pitfall 24 Mocking

Pitfall 25 Impatience

Pitfall 26 Adultery

Pitfall 27 Lack of Discipline

Pitfall 28 Lying

Pitfall 29 Not Loving

Yourself

After Thoughts

Salvation Prayer

Acknowledgements

About the Author

**"Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by
how many times I fell down and got back up
again."**

Nelson Mandela

Matthew 25:35-40 NIV

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

I relate to these verses from my heart, I’m one of the least of these brothers my King Jesus was referring to.

Pitfall 1

Dishonesty

Being dishonest is one of the many ways to end good things in our lives, from families, marriages, relationships, business deals, and anything we see as sacred or moral. When people feel that you're dishonest, it will limit trust and hinder what could've been a lifelong relationship on many levels. People will be reluctant to extend grace to you or anyone when they feel someone is being or has been dishonest. Practice truth at all costs, the truth will set us free.

Pitfall 2

Pride

I didn't realize that pride stops a person from growing. It will hinder spiritual and mental growth. Pride will keep you in a place of denial, delusion, and deception. It will make you believe you know it all and have everything all figured out.

The Bible says pride goes before the fall. I've had to deal with this one in ways I couldn't imagine. I was prideful and didn't know it. I lost just about everything I thought was important.

I'm sure, like so many other men and women too we think we know better or even have all the answers when we really don't. No one does. If you meet or know someone who has an answer for everything, beware that's a problem. Like I said I lost just about everything that I valued. An incredible twenty year plus marriage to the woman of my dreams, a successful career, community love and respect, relationships, beachfront condo, luxury cars, and a host of material things I had worked for, all gone in a matter of days. My wife and I had built a successful sales business. After over twenty years in business we had semi-retired, moved to the beach and was working on starting a Ministry of helping others. All gone. God stayed right with me, though many times I didn't

know it. I was too mad at myself and Him. As hard as it was and still is sometimes, I will tell you what my wife always says that's absolutely true. She says 'God is faithful, full of grace and mercy, He always deals with us His children privately, before He deals with us publicly.' I went from living off thousands of dollars a week, to literally living off of dollars a week and that was in commissary. I did not touch actual paper currency money for years. It's illegal in prison. Everything is on your books, connected electronically to your Inmate ID card. It was a painfully hard, horrific fast, humiliating, shameful fall. I alone take complete responsibility for this today and every day for the rest of my life and pray God's healing over all of us that have been impacted. Pride is no joke, it will derail a man, destroying not only him but anyone and everything around him.

Pitfall 3

Unforgiveness

Bitterness and unforgiveness will usually make you have ill feelings, sometimes for yourself but especially toward others. We know that God forgives, so we must forgive others, or should forgive because we've been forgiven, especially when we didn't deserve it. Many times, it's easier said than done. Regardless, forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling.

Unforgiveness, bitterness, and even anger have been linked to sickness, from a simple headache to terminal cancer—which is why doctors advise you to be optimistic. Try starting with forgiving yourself, sometimes people really struggle with that; not being able to forgive themselves. It's worth it, man, it really is. *You're* worth it. The next thing you gotta do is forgive others, it's not worth holding onto.

The old saying is: unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.

Make the decision to not hold on to things, to not hold grudges of unforgiveness or have unforgiveness in your heart. It's dangerous and deadly, not just for others but for you as well.

Pitfall 4

Anger

Anger is definitely a contributing factor to why there are so many people in prison, especially men, I believe, because at a critical split second, they didn't know how to control their anger. Their emotions got the best of them. I can't tell you how many men I talk to who told me if they had only taken a second, not a minute but a second, to think, it would've changed their whole situation and outcome. They let their anger control them.

What would've been useful would've been learning how to handle conflict instead. Growing up on Chicago's south side in the Robert Taylor Home projects, we didn't have conflict resolutions classes, we had fists and guns. That's how conflict usually got handled. It was wrong, but I never knew or was taught another way until I literally became a grown man.

I've had to attend Anger Management and Conflict Resolution classes. Unfortunately, it was not while I was growing up, it was actually when I was enrolled in a Modality program while I was incarcerated. A little late, but I did learn a few things.

I think everyone should take a Conflict Resolution class, people definitely could benefit, and it would help even with relationships, but I'm still finding out it only works when you work it.

Like myself, it's difficult for most men to communicate and express their feelings and be in touch with their emotions. Take a few seconds to try and be peaceful, that's what I try to do. It's hard, I struggle every day, I forget I need to do breathing exercises, I count to ten, take a minute, stop, check myself, or just go lay down. Honestly, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Regardless, it's always worth trying.

Pitfall 5

Jealousy

“For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore, he will not spare in the day of vengeance” says Proverbs 6:34. When a person operates in jealousy, they lose the opportunity to celebrate, congratulate, or acknowledge an accomplishment of someone else who deserves it: for doing an excellent job. That's called being a “Hater.” There's a saying, "Don't Hate, Congratulate." In the book of Ephesians 6:8 (NLT) it basically says: remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.” Jealousy is an ugly character trait that will not let you encourage others. Jealousy has been responsible for countless crimes committed.

In a fit of “jealous” rage, they say such and such happened. It makes people think crazy, suspicious, unrealistic, exaggerated thoughts. Many times, it's due to our own insecurities. And believe it or not, it's also part of fear.

If you recognize or have been told that you deal with jealousy, now is a good time to start being honest with yourself and work on doing better before it's too late.

Pitfall 6

Discouragement

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” Proverbs 13:12
(KJV)

Everyone has to deal with discouragement at some point in their life. The problem is when you become overwhelmed with discouragement. When you allow it to overtake you, your outlook can become extremely dark. You lose hope.

You can't always tell when people are discouraged, but you can always tell when someone is encouraged or hopeful. You can hear it or see it in how they talk and how they live. When you see someone with low self-esteem, who's been verbally abused or is dealing with continual discouragement, they need encouragement immediately.

When it's you, that's feeling discouraged, try to speak life, light, love, or uplifting things about your situations. Positive thinking might not get you everything, but it will get you more than negative thinking.

Pitfall 7

Selfishness

I, I, I, Me, Me, Me.

Why do we put ourselves above and in front of others? We're born selfish. We have to be taught when we're young how to share our toys, food, and then as we age into adulthood, we have to learn how to share ourselves. By the time we get married, we should have already learned how to put someone before us. The problem is, we don't all learn that. Most of us miss it, every day. We put our jobs, friends, drinking, sports, money, ambitions, drugs, gambling, street life, really any and everything, before the things that really matter. If anyone calls us out on this or tells us we're being selfish, then we shut them out, either immediately or slowly. We don't want to hear that. We want to do what we want to do. But here's the deal on this; those people who are close enough to really see us, know us and know what they're talking about. We can't see it because we're in it. It's a blind spot for us. If I had listened every time my wife, or someone in my circle told me the truth instead of rejecting it, I'd never have fallen into my prison pit.

I was being selfish, not wanting to deal with pain. Like most men, I'm honestly still challenged about my selfishness by making excuses and not being present when I should be.

I'm an only child, a survivor by nature.

I always shared and gave, but unfortunately, I was taken advantage of too. I still can't see my selfishness at times, even though I have someone around who speaks the truth in love to me.

I'll give anyone the shirt off my back, I'll buy you something to eat if you're hungry, but when I want to do things my way... yep, I'm still working on it. We learn the first law of preservation is self-preservation. Maybe in certain situations we should re-think that, especially when it comes to the people we love and those who love us. Maybe it's better to give of ourselves than to hold back. Maybe that's why God says in John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

So just like being selfish is natural, being unselfish needs to be learned. No matter what age.

When I was in Bible college, I had this epiphany...

Self spelled backwards adding a "H" in front of the "S" spells Flesh.

The flesh always wants what it wants. Today, I encourage you to learn to take the steps toward being unselfish, those who love you will appreciate you for it. Equally important is you'll be better for making the effort as well.

Pitfall 8

Bad Habits

We all have a few bad habits. The deal is to work on the bad habits and try to help keep and create more of the good habits. Acknowledging and appreciating our good habits will definitely help us as we work towards fulfilling our God-given purpose and destiny.

They say it takes 21 days to break bad habits and 21 days to develop good habits that will benefit us. Let's make a list. Making a good habit and a bad habit list will allow us to see some of the things we may need to focus on to be better people, for ourselves and for those who love us. Take some time to fill out the list of Good habits and Bad habits. Make sure you're keeping it real with yourself as you write, but don't be down on yourself, just be real with yourself.

Now here's where it really matters: your Good habits list has to be at least twice as long as your Bad habits list. If it's not, that's your current project to work on. After taking a good hard look at the list, work on eliminating as many bad habits as possible over time.

There's an old saying that goes, "First we make our habits, then our habits make us."

If you're struggling with multiple bad habits that you know are not serving you in a good way, unhealthy mentally, physically, financially, or emotionally, if possible, talk to a professional or someone you really trust and can confide in.

I personally side with small steps lead to great victories. How do you get rid of bad habits? The answer to that is: one bad habit at a time. The same is true for the saying of "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer is one bite at a time.

BAD HABITS <hr/>	GOOD HABITS <hr/>
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Pitfall 9

Regret

Everyone struggles with having done something we wish we could take back or have another chance to do over and make better choices. That's regret, it's impossible to go through life without it. The things we've said to others that we can never take back, something we did that can't be undone.

Sadly, we can never take back or change things once they've been done. I've never met anyone living a "Regret-free" life, but I have met people who are intentional about their decisions. My mother was like that. When she made up her mind to give up drugs, that was it for her, she never looked back. She regretted the years she had been using drugs, but she refused to live in regret, it was like she started her whole life over.

That's really what regret is, looking back. She told me she wanted to move out of her neighborhood, I immediately flew back to Chicago, rented a moving truck, and moved her into a high rise for seniors in downtown Chicago. It was the first time in over thirty years I had seen my mom sober and drug free. She was so happy. I was so happy and proud of her. Her whole life changed when she made up her mind and never looked back. No more regret, she started truly living her best life. My wife asked her one day what happened, what made her stop using drugs after all those years. She told her she got tired of living that kind of life, she told her that she got down on her knees and asked God to take it away, take away the taste and the desire for heroin. She had tried and failed many times before, but this time was different. This time was it; she had made her mind up to quit.

She started traveling with my wife and I, along with my mother-in-law, it would be the four of us doing so much together for the first time in our lives, doing all kinds of things she'd never done before, and it was really beautiful to see her living like that. To set the record straight I'd like to state, that real men do cry. I can't count how many times I've cried as I wrote this book and especially times when I think of my brave, beautiful mother. Never be afraid or feel that only the weak shed tears. Truthfully after I was released from prison it took almost two years for me to cry. No matter what was said to me, about me, whatever comments, or rejection I faced; I felt nothing. I believe that was because I had insulated myself, buried my emotions as a way to protect myself from those around me but also from seriously letting my walls down and falling apart amongst the other inmates. I was grieving internally from my actions and the devastation I caused my wife and countless others.

I had actually been grieving for decades from the trauma and abuse I had encountered decades earlier. Since then, and before my release, I started my healing journey through ministry, counseling, and intentional therapy. I'm still enrolled voluntarily in therapy for a healthier mental and emotional existence. I think it's honestly a lifetime process and commitment, but that's another story.

Back to my mom, after getting clean, she lived a full life like I was saying before, she started living a Christian, drug free, sober life, one she dedicated to Jesus Christ her Lord and Savior, until the day she passed away. She was there when I took my first breath and I was there holding her hand when she took her last breath. I pray she's resting in peace and power.

She taught us the importance of our decisions and actions, she taught us how regret was a pit and that whatever we do will create an outcome; this is called "Cause and Effect."

