

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

OVERCOMING
THE GREATEST THREATS

**DANGERS
MEN FACE**

TO LIVING LIFE
WELL

JERRY WHITE

A must-read book for every man who wants to remain spiritually faithful and finish well. Jerry masterfully outlines key principles for navigating life dangers. Rooted in biblical truths, he presents wisdom discovered through a lifetime of walking closely with the Lord.

MARVIN CAMPBELL, US president of The Navigators

This is a survival playbook every man should have on hand. Like a trusted coach, Jerry exposes the often-unspoken perils capable of sidelining us during any season of our lives. His tactical advice—based on biblical truths and years of experience and illustrated by powerful personal stories—will give you steps you can take now to live a life of impact for God’s Kingdom. Every one of us is vulnerable. But every one of us is also capable of yielding to the Holy Spirit and discovering the power of a life lived to its fullest.

EDGAR SANDOVAL SR, CEO and president of World Vision US

Jerry White gets into the minds of men. He writes like a friend. He understands like a brother.

LEITH ANDERSON, pastor; member of The Navigators board of directors; president emeritus of the National Association of Evangelicals

Grounded in Scripture and in decades of ministry experience, Jerry provides practical wisdom and a guide map for men who want to start and finish well with Jesus. He outlines the destinations for spiritual flourishing as well as the stop signs and detours we encounter along the way. In a culture where men grapple with identity, fear, and temptation perhaps more than any previous generation, this book is crucial for our discipleship.

TOM LIN, president and CEO of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

Several things touch me about Jerry White’s *Dangers Men Face*. First, he shares authentically from his own journey! No arrogant pontificating here—just a brother walking alongside us all. Jerry also takes a deep, comprehensive dive into so many areas of struggle

specific to a man's life and masterfully connects specific biblical texts to each theme. Finally, and most importantly, sprinkled throughout is a compelling invitation to allow our healing and obedience to flow from our intimate love relationship with Jesus. Thanks, Jerry, for caring about us as brothers and pouring out your heart and years of wisdom on our behalf!

J. KEVIN BUTCHER, executive director of Rooted Ministries and author of *Choose and Choose Again* and *Free*

Jerry has blazed a path for men who want to live with purpose and fewer regrets. Honest, intimate, and filled with godly wisdom, this book is Jerry's legacy.

VINH CHUNG, MD, Fulbright Scholar and author of *Where the Wind Leads*

I know of no one better qualified to speak on crucial men's issues than Jerry White. His years of experience working with men regarding issues they face is invaluable! The ability to change society hinges on influencing men's worldview and spiritual awareness. These affect a man's ability to sustain relationships in the marketplace and, most importantly, in the home. Jerry writes with the smell of battle smoke due to his personal experiences. *Dangers Men Face* is an excellent resource for men, individually or in small-group discussions. Get it, use it, and see God work in the lives of men.

LAUREN LIBBY, international president/CEO of TWR International

Jerry is a spiritual leader who has lived life to the full. When he speaks on loss, danger, and sin, he writes as one who has been there and experienced the pain and joy of life. These aren't empty platitudes but the real wisdom of a man who has lived what he's teaching.

KEN HARRISON, CEO of Promise Keepers

In this twenty-fifth-anniversary edition, Jerry White brings us the fullness of who he is to help us think through and navigate life as

men. The dangers we face in life have not changed much through the ages, but with each passing generation, they take on new dimensions. This anniversary edition is filled with new stories, godly wisdom, and instructive Scripture for navigating the dangers that confront us. This is a book all men should read, regardless of your age or whether you have read the first edition.

DG ELMORE, chairman of The Navigators Board

Jerry has been a mentor and friend for all my adult life. His vulnerability and wisdom have shown me how to navigate the balance between the exhilaration of an active life and its inherent dangers. If you are an honest man, you know already that unexpected and unseen dangers can lead to disaster for the unprepared. *Dangers Men Face* will prepare you for the obvious and the hidden dangers ahead. By all means, embrace the excitement of this life you've been given; but please join the company of the wise by using this book to open your eyes and prepare you for what lies ahead.

CHRIS CANLIS, owner of Canlis restaurant

Every pilot knows that it is dangerous to fly through a thunderstorm, or in icing conditions, or to attempt to land in dense fog. They are not born knowing these dangers. The dangers must be taught to them lest they learn through death-defying experience. The same holds true for the dangers men face in their daily flight through life, and Jerry White, in his straightforward and compelling writing style, has authored the primer that, if taken to heart, can help one avoid the many death-defying spiritual experiences we men face.

GENERAL KEVIN CHILTON, USAF, retired, astronaut

A powerful book that provides relevant and meaningful antidotes to navigate successfully through “five critical areas of danger that *every man* will face”—loss, sin, freezing, confusion, and withdrawal. In addition to helping readers spot and avoid unwise decisions that could

maim or destroy a marriage or reputation, the book equips readers to finish life well in the “fourth quarter” by providing the ingredients to renew both the inner and outer man.

GREG STEPHENS, attorney and author of *Created for Greatness*

When Jerry started revising *Dangers Men Face*, I asked him to include a new chapter about one’s identity in the fourth quarter of life (after age sixty). Most of our activity in life focuses on the first three quarters. But what’s the role of identity in a Christian’s fourth-quarter game plan? Being a follower of Jesus doesn’t shield us from the challenges awaiting us in the fourth quarter. Are we relying on our résumé virtues of the first three quarters to carry us through the fourth? Or are we strengthening the character virtues that are emphasized at our eulogy? Jerry addresses these critical questions and many more, including: Does a Christian’s game plan change in the fourth quarter—and is it more offensive or defensive? How do unexpected challenges and our changing physical abilities in the fourth quarter affect our identity and our game plan? This revised edition is a must-read, shedding new light on how we think about identity in the fourth quarter.

DR. TERRY PIERCE, captain, USN, retired; former director of the Center of Innovation at the United States Air Force Academy; author of *Without Warning: The Saga of Gettysburg*; former speechwriter for the Chief of Naval Operations

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The Team:

David Zimmerman, Publisher; Thomas Womack, Developmental Editor; Karissa Silvers, Copy Editor; Olivia Eldredge, Operations Manager; Ron C. Kaufmann, Designer

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About This Revised Edition

*Everything changes but change itself.
Everything flows and nothing remains the same.
You cannot step twice into the same river,
for other waters and yet others go flowing ever on.*

HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS
(FIFTH-CENTURY GREEK PHILOSOPHER)

WHAT HAS CHANGED since the initial writing of this book?

Very little, and yet so much.

My friends and counselors affirm that the essential dangers remain the same. However, our culture has steadily changed. “For the worse,” the cynic would say. While those in their twenties and thirties would simply say, “This is normal”—having little sense that it has degraded or improved.

Even if I were to evaluate our culture, my assessment would be only the perception of an American in a Western culture. Every country and culture undergo change and transformation over the decades. Some decline and are even destroyed; others are rebuilt. In the midst of all this, the dangers I describe in this book still permeate the lives of men of every decade, modified only by technological and communication changes of enormous magnitude. Our virtual society allows for few secrets. We know and see more—yet our passions, feelings, desires, and fears remain much the same.

The origins of this book were my puzzling over the mysterious responses and reactions of men in our international Navigator context. I still have a crumpled piece of paper on which I wrote notes about some of these dangers. I wrestled with the struggles I saw in many of my friends. I soon realized they were the same dangers I faced. I was not immune. I wasn't the wise analyst shrewdly looking at the foibles of others. No, I could see the problem, and it was me.

There's no finger-pointing. As men, we're in this together.

DANGERS MEN FACE

The birth of this book was complicated even more by the sudden and untimely death of my son. This drained my emotional strength to such an extent that my energy and motivation for writing were often squeezed out by my work demands as the international president of The Navigators, as well as by the incessant changes taking place in my own life and that of my family.

I turned to friends to clarify my thinking. The men in our covenant group—Doug Hignell, Chris Canlis, and Stan Newell—kept me accountable in the many areas mentioned in this writing.

My wife, Mary, continued to encourage and edit even as she worked on her book *Harsh Grief, Gentle Hope*. Mary has been my collaborator and friend through years of marriage, suffering, and leadership. Although I address men, Mary sees similar patterns for women.

For this updated and revised edition, many men made significant suggestions. My grandson Jerad Birch helped with the perspective of his generation. Excellent suggestions for this revision also came from Captain (USN, Retired) Terry Pierce, General (USAF, Retired) Kevin Chilton, Colonel (USAF, Retired) Lee Hall, and attorney Greg Stephens, as well as others.

Through the years, as I've taught this material, many other people have offered important insights and ideas. And I've added here a significant chapter on life's "fourth quarter."

The illustrations are real, though some are composites and altered for privacy. I've used actual names of people only with their permission.

The ideas and principles here are not theoretical. They are real, having been forged in the crucible of my own life and the lives of many friends, and molded by Scripture.

The accompanying Bible study and discussion guide will help you delve more personally into a better understanding of what you discover here and will help you apply the ideas and principles to your own life.

Navigate these dangers with me.

Ferry White
Colorado Springs

APRIL 2022

DANGEROUS JOURNEY, EXCITING JOURNEY

NO MAN SETS OUT EARLY in his life to destroy himself. He doesn't plan to foster failure after failure. He doesn't get married intending to make himself and his wife miserable. He doesn't plan to be a poor father. He doesn't coldly calculate how he'll become an alcoholic and ruin his liver by age forty.

But the journey is filled with danger. And finishing well is a tremendous challenge.

At the beginning, a man envisions a life of fulfillment and at least moderate success. Maybe he dreams of a lovely wife and family living in a comfortable home. Perhaps he plans to take his daughter to gymnastics and his son to Little League baseball. He imagines a stable job and financial success. He sees himself happily walking his daughter down the aisle at her wedding. He envisions playing with his grandchildren and spoiling them on birthdays and holidays.

Even though the expectations of many young people today may be different from the aspirations of previous generations, young people today still want to create a compelling future. They may delay marriage

DANGERS MEN FACE

and change jobs more freely and frequently. But they still search for special experiences and experiment to ultimately arrive at their careers and find fulfillment in life.

Few men write out these dreams. But they're there, as present as the sunrise, as compelling as a smile from a beautiful woman—especially the one he hopes will be his wife. Dreams are often unspoken, but they're always present in the recesses of his mind. Just as a young boy might fantasize about being a star pro football player or baseball player, so every man fantasizes about his future.

A boy's picture of his future gradually evolves as he grows up. He observes his father's foibles as well as his successes. Or he sees many fathers in the serial marriage scene. His idealistic picture develops a few cracks. He doesn't want to be like that. He sees role models in teachers, neighbors, coaches. Most young men have little discernment as to the quality of these role models. But something inside picks the best of them all and creates the dream—absent of trouble and full of happiness.

A friend recently sent me a picture taken when I was eleven. There I am, a blond, smiling, shy young boy who had no idea what was ahead. I remember even at that innocent age the fears had begun that life wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Yet my life was an empty page waiting for a story to be written.

As a young man embarks on the teen years and young adulthood, the cold reality of life begins to sober him. The idyllic road is not so smooth after all. There are bumps and potholes, detours and dead ends, hills and valleys. It's a road filled with dangers at every turn—some under our control, but many coming upon us like a sudden afternoon thunderstorm.

The word *danger* brings a variety of mental pictures, depending on a man's experience. Some men remember a near collision at an intersection while driving. One may remember escaping a terrible accident with only minor injuries, despite having totally wrecked his car. Others think of children playing too close to a precipice or near a busy street. Some recall a child not coming home from school on time, causing a frantic search and the fear of abduction. Some may recall terrifying incidents of abuse and mistreatment. Others fear having no money or job.

DANGEROUS JOURNEY, EXCITING JOURNEY

But with danger comes great opportunity. There is risk, but there is also much gain in navigating an exciting life. It's a challenge we should look forward to, not a journey we should walk in fear.

Each of the dangers mentioned above are real. Any one of them could happen. But the dangers we need to fear most are the ones we don't see until it's too late. It's like one occasion when I visited a country where the cars drive on the left side of the road. As a pedestrian, I instinctually wanted to look in the wrong direction for traffic. Once when I did this and was about to cross the street, I was suddenly restrained by a friend who knew I would make that mistake. He protected me from getting hit.

Danger is like a cancer that grows within us, unknown until it sinks roots of death into our bodies.

Danger is like the cholesterol clogging our arteries, building silently until we have a heart attack.

In the next handful of chapters, it's the unexpected and unseen dangers—those that are silent and subtle—that I'll address. They're spiritual and practical dangers that I believe every man faces almost daily—but they're so silent that they often slide by unnoticed. The effects of these dangers dull our spiritual lives, cripple our effectiveness and happiness, and generally turn us away from a vital walk with God. And as a natural corollary, they poison a man's relationships with his wife, children, and friends.

Even for a committed believer in Christ, these dangers are always present. It's not just casual believers or half-hearted believers who are at risk. Most of us believe that "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). But this truth is more sinister than it may appear, and I would expand and paraphrase the passage this way: "Satan sneaks about seeking whom he can entice and coax into the first delicious steps of seemingly harmless indiscretion."

In the upcoming short chapters, I will share from my experience—and from the Scriptures—some particular dangers that have the potential to destroy a man, just as cancer destroys the body. These dangers vary from subtle to blatant, avoidable to unavoidable, constant to intermittent. I've seen these primary dangers in my own life and in the lives

DANGERS MEN FACE

of others. A great danger for one man may be a minor one for another. We're all different and respond differently to circumstances and events. But to some extent, we face all these dangers at some point in our lives.

It would be totally unfair to simply throw up danger signs without telling you where to turn—instructions on how to either drive carefully through the danger zone or take a detour around it. With each danger we'll look at, I'll identify one or two key biblical concepts as antidotes or preventives. Profound, fundamental truths undergird much of what I share. These truths include God's grace, God's sovereignty, the nature of salvation, the person and work of Christ, the pervasiveness of sin, the nature of humanity, and the place of good works. These are important biblical concepts that rightfully warrant far more than I can write here. In this book, I often refer to the basic tenets of life in Christ, but I leave it to you to pursue them further, depending on where you are in your spiritual pilgrimage.

Even with dangers, you can experience a great adventure. We don't just curl up and hide, never taking a risk.

Walk with me now through these danger zones. Embark on a great adventure.