CHAPTER 01

THE CHARGE

A field manual for the daily fight.
Not a slogan. A posture.

BE SOBER. STAY VIGILANT. BREAK EVERY CHAIN.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

1 PETER 5:8 / KJV

CHAPTER 01 / THE FIRST LIE

The first lie is always the same lie.

The first lie is always the same lie: that you have time. That the door can stay open a little longer. That the lion is somewhere else tonight.

You have heard the verse so many times it can sound like decoration. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. We print it on heavyweight cotton because we need it somewhere louder than a church bulletin. But the verse is not a slogan. It is a field report.

Peter is not writing to people who have everything under control. He is writing to people who have been scattered, frightened, and tired. He does not tell them to pretend the lion is a metaphor. He tells them to stay awake.

> *The opposite of vigilance is not rebellion. It is drift.*

This is not a book about willpower.

Willpower is a finite resource. It runs out in the afternoon, after the meeting that should have ended an hour earlier, when the house is empty and the old escape route is still saved in your phone. If your plan depends on feeling strong at that exact moment, you do not have a plan. You have a hope.

The charge is a different posture. It assumes the lion is real, the hour is late, and your strength is not the point. It builds a rhythm of small decisions that happen before the moment of temptation, not during it. It puts people and practices between you and the door.

This chapter is not the whole curriculum. It is the first honest look at the door. Before you build a routine, you need to know where the hinges are, who left it unlocked, and what you tell yourself right before you walk through it.

Read slowly. Keep a pen close. Answer the questions even if the answers are ugly. Especially if the answers are ugly.

FIELD WORK / 01

The door

1. Name the hour when you are most vulnerable. Not the general season. The hour on the clock.
2. Name the place. The room, the street, the app, the contact.
3. Name the sentence you say right before you go back. Write it exactly as you hear it.

Do not rush past the third prompt. The sentence is the hinge. It sounds reasonable every time. That is what makes it dangerous.

The lion does not kick the door down.

He waits for the door to be left open. He waits for the night you decide you are too tired to check the lock. He waits for the argument you did not finish, the message you should not have read, the drink you told yourself you were only holding for someone else. The small compromise is not small. It is the door moving.

Vigilance is not paranoia. Paranoia sees a lion behind every bush and eventually stops leaving the house. Vigilance sees the one lion that matters and keeps the door shut without making a religion out of fear. It is steady. It is ordinary. It is a lock checked at the same time every night.

The men and women who stay sober are not the ones who never feel the pull. They are the ones who built a life where the pull has less room to work. They changed the hour. They changed the place. They changed the sentence. They asked for help before they needed it, not after.

> *You do not need a heroic morning. You need one honest checkpoint.*

FIELD WORK / 02

The watch

1. What is one door you can actually close this week? Not forever. This week.
2. Who knows the truth about your worst hour? If no one does, who could?
3. What will you do at the checkpoint when the answer is not impressive?

The daily rhythm

The curriculum is built around three checkpoints. They are not magic. They are a way of refusing to let the day happen to you without your consent.

Morning: one page, one verse, one honest sentence about the day ahead. No phone until the charge is set. Midday: a two-minute inventory. What am I avoiding? Who do I need to call? What is the next right thing? Evening: name what held and what slipped. Thank God for one thing. Close the day without carrying it into tomorrow.

You will miss a checkpoint. The point is not a streak. The point is the return. A rhythm that cannot survive a missed day is not a rhythm; it is a performance. We are not building a performance. We are building a life that can hold the truth.

FIELD WORK / 03

The return

1. Which checkpoint is hardest for you, and why?
2. What is the smallest version of that checkpoint you would still do on a bad day?
3. Write the first line you will say when you come back after missing it.

The next right thing

Sobriety is not built in a single dramatic decision. It is built in increments so small they can feel insulting. Drink the water. Make the call. Leave the room. Tell the truth one sentence earlier. Go to bed before the argument starts. These are not impressive acts. They are the acts that keep you alive.

The charge is not to become a person who never struggles. The charge is to become a person who knows where the door is, who keeps the watch, and who comes back quickly when he drifts. That is the work. It is daily. It is unglamorous. It is yours.

Whom resist stedfast in the faith. Not alone. Not in your own strength. Not with a slogan. In the faith, with the people God has put around you, one honest hour at a time.

> *Be sober. Stay vigilant. Break every chain.*

This is Chapter One of the Sober & Alert field manual. The full book and four-volume curriculum are being prepared for the founding Kickstarter campaign. If this chapter did its job, you already know the next right thing. Do it before you close this file.

The founding 1,000

Chapter One is free. The full curriculum is built with the founding backers. Join the list at soberalert.com/kickstarter.