Prologue

**Main Points**

1. No everyone processes information in the same way. It comes to each of us through a filter of present knowledge and our experiences, and sometimes our ability to “hear” is limited by what we don’t know and haven’t experienced.
2. The Holy Spirit is able to get through to people where we cannot. We can share good news with others and trust that He can get through to the heart when our efforts fall short.
3. So, while studying the content of this book, trust God to get through your own filters and teach you what you need to know. You might not yet be able to agree with everything written in this book, but please consider what is shared and then take from it what you find helpful.

**Discuss**

* Have you ever noticed a communication filter when trying to communicate or seen in yourself the inability to understand someone because of your own filter?
* How have you tried to overcome this aspect of communication?

Introduction

**Main Points**

1. Life is full of challenges. Most of them can be faced by simply doing what is needed for success.
2. It’s OK to research, ask for help, and try different approaches when facing difficulties. Sometimes, we find the help we need.
3. However, sometimes, we face situations (many of them involving people or circumstances beyond our personal control) that don’t seem to respond to our diligent efforts or new formulas. The author calls these situations “the overwhelming” because after all of our hard work, nothing we do seems to help.
4. Sometimes our overwhelming situations become public knowledge or are obvious to others. On top of feeling discouraged about it, we can become embarrassed or feel shame.
5. These types of situations can leave us feeling lonely, defeated, and hopeless.
6. The author states her purpose for writing this book this way: “My objective in writing this is to set you on a path better than that of endlessly trying—one that can help you to overcome the overwhelming simply by believing in Him.”

**Discuss**

* Can you relate to the author when she says that there are some situations which don’t seem to respond to our own diligent efforts?
* When you face what seem like impossible situations, do you tend to blame yourself or do you inclined to blame other things or other people? Do you have a tendency to blame God when things seem overwhelming?
* What might she mean when she says, “This book is meant to build you up, not to burden you down with yet another ‘spiritual discipline’ or formula for success.”
* What might it mean to “overcoming the overwhelming by grace through faith”?
* The author chose as her key verse for the entire book 1 John 5:4-5 (pg. xxiv). What might this verse tell us about her point of view in writing this book?

Day 1 From Frustration to Faith

**Main Points**

1. It is not uncommon for us to become exhausted and want to give up when situations become overwhelming.

*“Forlorn and confused, crying about situations which were completely over my head and seemingly out of my control, I’ve been tempted to throw in the towel and admit defeat—weary of the fight.”*

1. When dealing with difficult situations, we want to share with others, but sometimes get tired of not really being heard.

*“I concluded that it just was not worth the risk of exposing the most painful area of my life to anyone if it meant once again being misunderstood.”*

1. Most advice-givers mean well, but unsolicited advice can send unintended messages to the person who is struggling.
	1. You don’t know you have a problem (even though it might be obvious).

*“‘Informing’ someone with an obvious problem that he has a problem is ridiculous and offensive.”*

* 1. You are willfully ignorant.

*“It implies that they are merely meandering through life with no direction whatsoever—that they are so clueless that it hasn’t even dawned on them to educate themselves.”*

* 1. You aren’t trying hard enough and lack self-control.

*“He has tried but has experienced very few results. So, when someone offers up their words of wisdom, he listens, but often feels lectured instead of helped.*

* 1. I don’t approve of you.

*“He might interpret advice as a message the he is not good enough to be loved unconditionally—he must be fixed first.”*

1. The title of the book is OVERCOMING the overwhelming because the author believes that we don’t have to accept these situations, and that there is an answer.

*“Although I have many times felt inundated by long-term struggles, amazing victories are mine where I’d only known despair.”*

1. God is the only One who knows everything about our situations which makes Him the perfect person to understand and to help us. When we ask him for wisdom, He will give it to us.

*“The answer was not to be found in a new formula or renewed doses of diligence, but in His grace—His grace would be enough.”*

**Discuss**

* How is it that a person could begin to feel alone when facing a long-term difficulty?
* From the perspective of an “advice-giver”, what might we do to improve the way we “help” people?
* Have you ever experienced God giving you grace in a situation you thought you’d never conquer? Share, if you’d like.
* When you face these times in life, do you prefer to deal with it privately or ask for help? With either means being and acceptable way to cope, why do you prefer to do one or the other?