

Dear Friend,

One of the great ironies of the Bible is found in the first chapter of the book of Exodus. At this time, God's own people had forgotten their status and heritage. Their enemies, though, knew exactly who they were: *"Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them"* (Exodus 1:9–10).

Thus began a type of warfare that had the unique purpose of keeping God's people blind to the power that had been promised to them. They became the object of oppressive regulation and increased mockery. However, when they began to cry out to God, they were miraculously brought back into their true spiritual standing.

Oh, how history does repeat itself! As the Israelites once did, it's time for you and me to prepare for an incredible journey. God is about to reveal our inheritance in Christ to us again. We may have to leave the familiar, but we will find again an incredible place of power and worship. *"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned"* (Hebrews 11:29).

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

THE SECRET WAR OF EVERY SAINT by Carter Conlon

Years ago, as Pastor David Wilkerson and I were walking down the street, we noticed two people sprawled out along the side of a building. One of them shouted at Brother Dave, "We're going to get you! We're not finished yet!" Although the man did not know who Brother Dave was, the demonic spirit in him recognized him as we passed by. I actually felt a little upset that no demonic spirit ever spoke to me like that. However, that changed when I was walking to church one day. A man who was obviously full of the devil started following me down the street, cursing all the way! It gladdened my heart that the devil finally knew who I was!

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If you are going to be a true follower of Christ in this hour, you will need to fight. You will contend with all kinds of voices around you—and you will fight in your mind. This is the secret war that every saint must engage in, with no exceptions to the rule. At times it may not be as intense as others, but it never ends. We see in the Scriptures that even King David experienced this battle of the mind.

"Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah" (Psalm 3:1–8).

David wrote this psalm during a season of struggling with a sense of past failure and present weakness. He had made a terrible mistake in his life—committing adultery with a woman named Bathsheba and then orchestrating her husband's death. Consequently, rebellion had arisen in his home, and he soon found himself fleeing from his own son. As David was leaving for Jerusalem, there was even a man up on the hillside casting stones at him and cursing his name (see 2 Samuel 11; 15:13–14; 16:5–8). How difficult it must have been at that time for David to fully embrace the fact that he was still on the victory side—that God was proud of him and that the lineage of Christ would still flow through him.

We all can look back on our lives and see things we wish we had done better. Our failures and weaknesses can often instill in us a sense that we are far from where we should be. I thought my character was going to change more rapidly than it did. I never thought I would respond the way I have been responding to people in my workplace. I started out with such promise, but I have made so many mistakes.

The apostle Paul said it this way as he described a specific season in his journey: *“For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears”* (2 Corinthians 7:5). In other words, voices of mocking and cursing had been raised against Paul, producing fear within his heart. Suddenly he had to contend with a whole new level of voices—both from within and without—all attempting to take away his faith and courage.

■ WHAT HAPPENED TO GOD'S PROMISES?

We see elsewhere in the Scriptures that another psalmist encountered a similar battle. Notice how he cried out regarding his own infirmity: *“Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favourable no more?”* (Psalm 77:7). The psalmist mistakenly assumed that he had been cast off and the favor of God was no longer upon him. Yet, in reality, God's favor was just as strong as it had been when he was living on the mountaintop. This reminds us that we must be careful when we find ourselves in the valley—when we experience moments of such deep despair that our own hearts begin to overtake the voice of God.

“Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forevermore?” (Psalm 77:8). In other words, can I trust the promises of God? What happened to His promise that He would give me a new heart, a new

mind and a new spirit; that the wounding of the past would no longer continue to burden me? What happened to His promise that my household would be saved if I trust and believe in the Lord Jesus?

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“Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?” (Psalm 77:9). Is God busy? Did I do something wrong? Maybe God finally looked down on me and concluded, “I have wasted so much time with this person. I am not going to waste any more effort trying to infuse life and gifts when they refuse to be used.”

This is the secret war of every saint! It is those moments when we grow weary of the journey—tired of seemingly always walking uphill, worn down by the voices from within and without constantly condemning our progress, feeling somehow forsaken by the Lord. Have you ever wished that you could just stay asleep because at least you have peace there? You dread having to wake up and face everything all over again. After all, it is not easy to live in a household where you are the only believer. It is hard to get up and go to school where your beliefs are mocked as narrow, bigoted, uninformed and uneducated. It is difficult to go to a job day after day where your integrity and work ethic are despised. It is hard to live in a society that calls the good that you embrace, evil, and the evil that you hate, good.

Eventually you begin to share the sentiments that David described in our opening psalm: *“Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God”* (Psalm 3:2). In other words, nothing will make a difference at this point. The downward spiral is irreversible, so I might as well give up the fight.

That is exactly what the devil wants—for you to give up! Stop believing for your home. Forget about that dream that God once planted in your heart. Give up on your marriage and simply walk out. Give up on the rebellious society around you. Simply shut yourself away. Be satisfied with being called a disciple of Jesus Christ; don't believe that your life can actually make a difference.

■ A VOICE LIKE NO OTHER

So how are we supposed to make it through this constant battle of the mind—the barrage of lies that never seems to end?

Let's take a moment to consider the story of Lazarus. After he was raised from the dead, he was sitting at the table with Jesus (see John 12:1–2). Not only did people come to see Jesus, they also came to see Lazarus, the one who had experienced this incredible miracle. The Pharisees even began plotting how to put this man to death, for because of him many believed in Jesus.

I can just picture Lazarus sitting at the table as people came up to him, asking, “How did it happen? How were you brought out of a hopeless place? How did you get this divine life infused within you?”

He might reply, “I was so sick, so down; things were looking so bad. Jesus had visited me before, and I was certain He was going to come help me in my time of need. But as I thought

began to fade in my soul, I started to hear voices talking about the hopelessness of the situation—how moment by moment things were only getting worse. And for some unknown reason, Jesus did not show up.”

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Does that sound familiar? Perhaps you started out believing that your children or your coworkers were going to come to God. Yet, even though you continue praying, Jesus does not seem to be doing anything, and the situation only grows worse as time goes by.

Lazarus would say, “Finally I heard voices telling me that the end had come. I was left with only one last cry within my heart—a cry for mercy before I fell asleep—Jesus, don’t forget me!” That is exactly where many people find themselves right now. Before they fall asleep, their cry comes out almost as a whisper, “Oh, God, please help me. I don’t know how I am going to go on.”

Of course, the testimony of Lazarus didn’t end there. As people gathered around the table, Lazarus would continue, “When all seemed to be over, suddenly I heard a voice—a voice like no other. It had the ability to call me out of hopelessness, to give life where there was no life. It was a voice so powerful that it drowned out the voices of all the wailers, all the weepers, all the prognosticators, all who gathered around saying, ‘Too bad. Not even God can do anything now.’ This voice simply called my name; it was the glory and

the lifter of my head. It called me to come out from where I was into another place that He had predestined for my life.”

Something came to life within Lazarus when God called to him. Suddenly Lazarus lifted his head and wanted to get up again. He had slept long enough! Lazarus heard a voice saying, “I will never leave you; I will never forsake you. A nursing mother may be able to forget her child, but I cannot forget you. I have engraved you on the palms of My hands. No weapon formed against you will prosper and every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you shall condemn. I give you the power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

It was just as David said: *“I laid me down and slept; I awakened; for the Lord sustained me”* (Psalm 3:5). In the original text, it says, “I abruptly awakened.” And when it says, “sustained me,” it means “gripped me; laid hold of me.” In other words, “God laid hold of me, lifted me up and gave me courage not only to arise but to go farther than I had ever gone before.”

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God did it for David, He did it for Lazarus, and He will do it for you in the midst of your battle! He is faithful. That is why David was able to conclude, *“I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have*

set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly” (Psalm 3:6–7). God called you to be more than a conqueror, to be a song of praise to His name in the earth. He called you to testify of what He alone is able to do through those who are surrendered to Him. God has opened a door before you, and despite the littleness of your strength, ten thousand people cannot close that door!

■ DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEART

The Bible clearly warns us, “Today, if you can hear His voice, do not harden your heart as they did in the days of provocation” (see Hebrews 3:7–8). In other words, do not ask as Israel once did in her unbelief, “Can God furnish a table in this wilderness?” (see Psalm 78:19). Do not begin to question the Lord’s integrity or His commitment to you, even though you find yourself constantly battling in your mind. God told you that He would raise you up to be a testimony. He told you that He has allowed certain things in your life—some things you understand and some things you don’t—but that all things work together for good because you love Him and are called according to His purpose.

And now the Lord is calling you to get up. He is calling you to lift your head and sing that song He has put within your heart. He is calling you to come back to faith again and believe that you are not going under, you are going over. You are the Bride of Christ, and God stakes His reputation on keeping you and establishing a testimony of victory inside of you.

Therefore, settle it in your heart today: “He is my glory and the lifter of my head. Even though I might be depressed when I go to bed at

night, He is the One who will lift my head in the morning. He is the One who will give me strength to go through another day. If God has planted a dream inside of my heart, it will become a reality, for He has set before me an open door that no man can close. No matter how many voices rise up against what God has spoken to me, I will not harden my heart in unbelief!"

So do not lose heart in the midst of the secret war you are fighting. Refuse to listen to the lies. Rather, hear God's voice calling you.

David did eventually come back to Jerusalem and finish his course. God gave David the pattern of the New Testament temple, which he passed on to his son, Solomon. The Bible tells us that the glory of God filled that temple! This serves as a reminder that despite what you may see or feel right now, it is not over, and not a single voice in this world can rightfully tell you that it is over. Only one voice is truth; only one voice speaks promises that never fail!

So do not lose heart in the midst of the secret war you are fighting. Refuse to listen to the lies. Don't give up on your family; don't give up on the people in your workplace. Rather, hear God's voice calling you today. Like Lazarus, all that remains on your part is to simply

get up and move toward the hope that God is speaking to you. You will find Him to be faithful to supply all that you need—strength to get through the day, courage to stand in the marketplace, faith to believe for your family. Life and victory will be yours, for the glory of His name!

Carter Conlon
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CARTER CONLON

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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

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