

Dear Friend,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and with a heart full of hope for the future. Frankly, at 62, I have never been so optimistic and happy about the future as I am now. Although I foresee difficulty in the future of this and other nations, I also see a great turning to Christ in the not-too-distant future.

We did see this in part after the attacks of September 11, 2001. People in New York City crammed the house of God, looking for help, security and hope. Thankfully, the Lord had spoken to us in advance and we were ready to receive them.

For the true Christ follower, our value system is deeply intertwined with His. The passion of Jesus' heart was undoubtedly for the souls of all people, including you and me. He could have come at a time of social peace and prosperity, yet He chose a moment in history marked by violence, loss of freedom, and uncertainty. Keep in mind that this "time of His appearing" was His choice. Maybe it was because in such times people are more sincere in their search for the kind of truth that brings inner peace and stability. This is where you and I now come into the picture. We have a moment before us where we can learn to "be still, and know that He is God."

We are the beacon on the hill for this generation of darkness. We are the living testimonies of grace and keeping power that will point the lost to Christ in countless numbers! Oh, God, let it be that my friend reading this letter will find that testimony of glory!

In Jesus' Name,  
Pastor Carter Conlon

## BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

by Carter Conlon

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with its swelling. There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord, who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:1-11).*

"Be still and know that I am God" is an incredible verse about which many songs have been written and countless sermons have been preached. But what exactly does it mean to be still? Does it mean that we simply do not do anything? In the original text, "be still" means to admit defeat; to let

down your hands. It means to give up trying to figure everything out on your own, letting go of all striving and attempts at being godly in your own strength.

***What exactly does it mean to be still? Does it mean that we simply do not do anything?***

Contrary to this instruction, there is a lot of noise today in the house of God. I have found over the years that this is typically an effort to compensate for the lack of God's working in the midst of a people.

We even see this in the Scriptures with the prophets of Baal in Elijah's day: "So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, 'O Baal, hear us!' But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made...They cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid

attention” (1 Kings 18:26–29). Yes, these gatherings may be exciting with all the jumping, clapping, dancing and shouting. However, it is because of a need to stir up everything possible in the sensory realm in order to create an illusion that God is actually there doing something.

***You would have found true strength by letting go of all human effort and putting your confidence in the work that only I can do.***

Consider the words of Psalm 74 in the context of much of the Church’s testimony over the past few decades: *“Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations. The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary. Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place; they set up their banners for signs. They seem like men who lift up axes among the thick trees. But now they break down its carved work, all at once, with axes and hammers. They have set fire to Your sanctuary; they have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground”* (Psalm 74:3–7). There is a carving going on inside the temple. Everyone is coming in with all their noise—their fleshly ideas and human effort—and they are breaking down what was designed by God.

In reality, the deepest work of God is that which takes place in the hidden inner man of the heart. It is not something that makes a lot of noise. The Lord Himself expressed this truth as He called to His own people through the prophet Isaiah: *“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest*

*you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength”* (Isaiah 30:15). In other words, “You would have found true strength by letting go of all human effort and putting your confidence in the work that only I can do.” That is the real essence of Christian growth. Remember, the Christian life is a supernatural life. None of us can make ourselves holy—we can only yield our lives to the One who does this sanctifying work within us.

The Lord went on to say through Isaiah, *“...but you would have none of it. You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ Therefore you will flee! You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’ Therefore your pursuers will be swift!”* (Isaiah 30:15–16, NIV). In other words, “You insisted, ‘No, we will continue to try to do this in our own strength! We will strategize it; we will develop an agenda that will accomplish all we desire. We will make things happen on our own in this society and even in the house of God!’”

*“A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill.’ Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion”* (Isaiah 30:17–18, NIV).

And so God says, “I will let you run your own course if you choose to do so. I will let you run so hard, so fast, and so far, until you have exhausted all your strength—until there is nowhere to go but where I am. And when you finally get there, you will find Me waiting for you. I will be merciful to you in that place.” Don’t you just love the graciousness of our God?

**■ A SILENT WORK**

Perhaps you are now wondering: How exactly am I supposed to be still when all around me is noise

and flurry—even that which claims to represent God? How do I let down my hands and give up trying to figure everything out when that is all I have ever done?

First of all, it will be helpful to see a biblical example of what it actually looks like to “be still.” Consider the first temple that God designed and built on the earth for Himself. Nobody had to figure anything out—God specified the whole design in detail and gave it to David by the Spirit, which he then passed on to his son, Solomon.

***God’s skilled work is going on inside our temple all the time. He knows how to take the barren places of our lives and create something beautiful.***

The Bible’s description of the construction of Solomon’s temple gives us a phenomenal illustration: *“And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built”* (1 Kings 6:7). All the hammering and chiseling took place in the mountain, and then the stones were brought over so that the temple could be built in peace!

Now Solomon’s temple, in all its glory, was a foreshadowing of what would eventually become God’s new temple: you and me! We are the temple of the Holy Spirit; we are the dwelling place of God. The moment we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior,



the Holy Spirit took up residence inside our physical bodies. As the Apostle Paul said, Christ in us is the hope of glory (see Colossians 1:27).

And so, when I consider how all the hammering for Solomon's temple took place in the mountain, I cannot help but draw a parallel to Calvary—when the hammer came down on the nails that were driven straight into the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. All the hammering and work was done at Calvary, and from there came wonderful stones that would build the new foundation for our lives. Remember, the Bible says that if you are in Christ, you become a new creation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). The old foundation slowly and quietly slides out and is replaced by a new foundation that is built on the cornerstone of Christ.

It is clear that there is no need for noise inside the temple in order for God to work. Old things are carried out, and sometimes we do not even realize what happened until they are already long gone. I have had moments in my life when I looked back and said, "Wow, what happened to that old habit of mine? That has been part of my life since I was a child!" Yet suddenly I realized that it had left months ago. It was not something that I had necessarily prayed about. Somehow that old stone just slid out and a brand-new one came in its place. I had been placed on a new foundation!

## ***There is a marked difference between well-intentioned people and Spirit-led people.***

### ■ SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

*"So he built the temple and finished it, and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar"*

(1 Kings 6:9). This speaks to me of the cross. In other words, inside this temple, the cross covers all of our flaws and failings. We cannot be condemned, for we have a righteousness given to us from God. As genuine believers in Christ, we are each growing in grace and knowledge.

*"The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone to be seen"* (1 Kings 6:18). Skilled craftsmen came in to work on the inside of the temple, just as God's skilled work is going on inside our temple all the time. He knows how to take the barren places of our lives and create something beautiful—carving flowers of patience, love, truth and humility. We may not necessarily see or hear the work God is doing, but rest assured, it is continual. The Scriptures tell us that as we simply behold the graciousness of our Lord, we are changed from image to image and glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 3:18). Things supernaturally begin to happen inside of us, and before we know it, a flower garden emerges where there was once barrenness.

The description continues: *"And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the Lord there"* (1 Kings 6:19). This means that Christ wants to come and reside in the center of His temple. That is when the Lord truly becomes everything to us, and there is nothing left but His will intermingled with ours!

### ■ WELL-INTENTIONED VERSUS SPIRIT-LED

Later in the book of First Kings, we see that the queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon and see his temple. Now the queen of Sheba had a kingdom as well—she had

her own servants, craftsmen, cupbearers and treasury. But when she saw Solomon's temple and heard his wisdom, the Bible says that there was *"no more spirit in her"* (1 Kings 10:5). She had seen what God could do in comparison to the best efforts of man.

## ***Soon people will not be allowed to pray at public events. But there is one thing this society cannot do: they cannot take the testimony of the living God from His temple!***

You see, there is a marked difference between well-intentioned people and Spirit-led people. You and I are called to be a testimony in our generation of what only God can do. The early Church began that way with one hundred and twenty people bursting out of an Upper Room into the marketplace. A crowd of three thousand people turned to Christ that day, realizing that all their prior religion could not produce what they were witnessing in these disciples. This was something divine—something only God could do!

That is what our lives ought to be. We are now the only Bible that this generation is going to read. Soon there will no longer be any Bibles in hotel rooms; people will not be allowed to pray at public events. But there is one thing that this society cannot do: they cannot take the testimony of the living God from His temple!

### ■ A REASON FOR THE HOPE

Just as we saw in our opening Psalm, I believe we are entering a season

in this world when mountains will shake, seas will roar, societies will be troubled, and difficulty will be on every side (see Psalm 46:3,6). That is why Scripture instructs us to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

***We do not have to promise God anything. Rather, we are to live by His promises and become partakers of the divine life of God in Christ!***

The nations will rage; there will be fear on every side. But for the people of God, there will be a quiet confidence in their hearts. Yes, they will have to go through the same storms as everyone else. Yet, if they have chosen to truly let God be the Lord of their lives, fearful people will soon be coming to them, saying, “Tell me the reason why you have such hope in your speech; why there is such light in your eyes and such kindness in your voice!”

It is our testimony that will offer hope to the people around us in the days ahead. However, in order to have that testimony, we must learn to be still and know that He is God. It is time now to let down our hands and surrender our attempts to try to change

our own lives or chart our own course. Instead, we are to give Him all of our struggles and trials—past, present, and future. The Lord desires to come in and dwell at the center of His temple. And so we must allow Him to bring in His master craftsman, the Holy Spirit, to do a glorious work within us so that His name might be honored.

Remember that when Solomon’s temple was complete, the glory of God came so powerfully that nobody could stand in His presence (see 1 Kings 8:10–11). All arguments failed and all human effort died, for a holy God had come into His temple. What a beautiful reminder that we do not have to promise God anything. Rather, we are to live by His promises and become, as the Apostle Peter said, partakers of the divine life of God in Christ! Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon  
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### CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

### 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

### Live Webcast:

All our Sunday and Tuesday services can be watched live and replayed for seven days on our website.

[tscnyc.org](http://tscnyc.org)

This newsletter is an edited version of “BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD,” a sermon given on **February 7, 2016** in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at [tscnyc.org](http://tscnyc.org). You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the New King James Version.