

Dear Friend,

Second Corinthians 5:17 gives us incredible insight into what happened to us the day we received Christ into our lives by faith: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

In Christ, we are literally raised from the dead and by the power of God we begin the journey into what He has created us to be! With the promise of a new mind, a new heart and a new future, we are brought into the power of the endless life of God, Who now resides within us. This truth alone should send us to our knees in awe and wonder.

We have become part of a divine plan through which God Himself demonstrates His willingness to forgive and empower all who call out to Him! Considering the epidemic of confusion and desperation now gripping our society, it is more urgent than ever that you and I lay hold of the fullness of the testimony which He has destined us to be. The lives of countless numbers of people and possibly even the future of our nation now depend on it.

Yours, because of Him,

Pastor Carter Conlon

LEAVING MY REGRETS AND MY SUCCESSES

by Carter Conlon

"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:7–11).

We are not called to simply bring the knowledge of God to our generation, we are called to be a visible expression of who God is.

It is evident from the writings of the Apostle Paul that he had a preeminent desire in his life: to know Jesus and be found in Him. In other words, he wanted to be fully yielded to the living Christ whom he was now aware had taken up residence inside his earthly body. He wrote in the book of Acts, *"In Him we live and move*

and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Paul was aware of something that we need to rediscover today: We are not called of God to simply bring the knowledge of God to our generation, we are called to be a visible expression of who God is by allowing Him to demonstrate His power, wisdom, grace and love through us.

■ LEAVING OUR REGRETS BEHIND

Paul then goes on to make a statement which should encourage us whenever we feel mediocre compared to those we read about in the Bible: *"Not that I have already attained or am already perfected"* (Philippians 3:12). He was essentially saying, "I am not everything that I should be." Paul was not, and neither are we! He continued, *"But I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:12–14). In other words, "God has a plan for my life, and I am moving forward to fulfill that which Christ has determined to do through me. Therefore, I must forget those things that are behind and reach forward to those that are ahead."

One of the hardest things for us to leave behind is our regret. We tend to carry it with us through life—those constant thoughts of, “If only I had done this; if only I had not done that; if only I had been this; if only I had known; if only I had been there; if only I had not been so selfish.”

However, if anyone had a lot of reasons to live in regret, it was Paul. He says in the book of First Corinthians, “*For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*” (1 Corinthians 15:9). In the book of Acts, he said this, “*This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities*” (Acts 26:10–11).

***I want you to give
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carry the shame***

Imagine Paul visiting different churches, looking upon the faces of men, women, and children who would be just like the ones he had formerly hauled out of their homes. Would he be reminded of the mothers and fathers pleading for mercy, the children crying? At that time, Paul was merciless, torturing Christians until they reached the point of blaspheming

the name of God. When the beloved disciple Stephen—a young man who was full of faith and was serving tables—enraged the religious crowd, Paul was the man who held the coats of those who stoned him. Surely Paul easily could have been plagued by the memories of what he had done. Yet he made the deliberate choice to forget those things that were behind.

***If God has cleansed
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any longer to hang
your head.***

There was a time in my life when I would go to my knees and weep almost every day. I would weep for the things I had done, the things I had not done, the deficiencies in my life. I would think about what I wished I had known as a young Christian, the places I should have gone but did not. I wrote it all down, and I would go in to my office and cry every day until one day, the Lord spoke to me and said, “Carter, if you succeed in what I have called you to do, you are not to touch the glory. You are to give it all to Me. But that is not the only thing you are to give to Me. I want you to give Me your sorrow, your failures, your struggles. You are not to touch the glory, and neither are you to carry the shame. Both of those things belong to Me. I took it all on the cross, and you are not to carry the sorrow of it in your heart any longer.” It was true. Once I allowed Him to do so, God took the sorrow away. Yes, I still have the memory of what I have done, but I do not carry the sorrow of it anymore.

The Lord once spoke to the Apostle Peter words that you and I must remember today: “*What God has cleansed you must not call common*”

(Acts 10:15). If God has cleansed you, you have no right any longer to hang your head. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. Your sins, your mistakes, and your failures are all cast as far away from you as the east is from the west (see Psalm 103:12). As a matter of fact, God says, “Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more” (see Hebrews 10:17). That means that one day when you get to the throne of God and want to give Him a list of all your failures in life, the Lord will look at you and say, “Well, I will have to take your word for it because I do not seem to remember any of it! When My blood touched your life, it blotted out all your transgressions.”

And so it is time to lay down that sorrow. If you are going to find the fullness of what God has destined for your life, you have to walk away from your regrets. Many women who have had abortions carry a deep inner sorrow when they become believers in Christ. They wonder what that life would have been like; what it would have been like to have that child with them at church. Men also need to learn to walk away from what happened because of what they did or did not do. Remember, Jesus died to take all of it from us. He died to give us a new mind and a new heart; He died to take away our sorrow.

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past, but the past is
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my identity.***

Now I am not saying that we should just pretend none of it ever happened or that we should never talk about it. What I am saying is that it loses its power to destroy us. It loses its power to imprison us behind walls of regret. Instead, it gives us an understanding of what really happened on the cross.

Jesus took our captivity captive and brought us into a place where we can testify about the goodness of God, leading others out of their personal struggles and into the light of Christ.

■ LEAVING OUR SUCCESSES

The second thing that we must learn to leave behind is our success. Paul said, “*Concerning the righteousness which was in the law, blameless*” (Philippians 3:6). There were very few, if any, people in his generation who could make that claim. He was a man driven by success; he sat at the feet of some of the best scholars of his time. He was a leader among the Pharisees; he had accolades, he had diplomas, he had degrees, he had position, he had power. Nevertheless, he concluded, “I count all of it as rubbish. Thank God for the past, but the past is not going to become my identity. My identity is in Christ. I do not want to know anything but Him; I do not want any power but His” (see Philippians 3:7–9).

Many believers today find their whole identity in their success outside of Christ—in their diplomas, their occupation, what they used to be. When they meet with people, all they talk about is themselves and what they have accomplished. It is because their identity is not yet fully in Christ. Sometimes it takes as much grace to walk away from success as it does from sorrow.

Of course, this does not mean we must now go and burn all our diplomas, it just means that they are not our identity anymore. Thank God for them, but our identity is Christ and Him alone. The strength, grace, direction, compassion, and

power we have is all Christ in us, the hope of glory.

■ PRESS ON

Once we learn to leave behind our regrets and successes, we can “*press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:14). The call of God is higher than anything offered in this world. Paul described it this way: “That I may know Him, that I may know the power of His resurrection, that I may know the fellowship of His sufferings, that I may be made conformable even to death if necessary. That I might win Him and be won of Him for the purpose for which He laid hold of me!” (see Philippians 3:10–11).

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In other words, “I want to be able to yield up my will, my comforts, and even my life so that I can know the power of God. I want to experience the full measure of His resurrection life in my own life. If it leads me to suffering, let it lead me there, so long as I am conformed to the One who went to a cross for me. I do not want to be cut short on this journey, for I recognize that Jesus died for me and left me here to live for others. The very life of Christ lived inside of me—accompanied by His power, vision, and giftings—is to flow through my life for the sake of others!”

I hope that this walk Paul described is your desire today. Yes, it might be a difficult path, often accompanied with a measure of sorrow, but there is truly no better way to live. By the grace and power of God within us, let us leave behind our regrets and successes and reach forward to this incredible calling that is ours in Christ. Let us allow the Lord to lead us the full distance for the sake of others who still need to know Him!

Carter Conlon
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SUMMIT
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MINISTRY



UPDATE FROM OUR BIBLE SCHOOL

LIVING FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

WELCOME CLASS OF 2020!

It seems hard to believe, but the class of 2020 is arriving this month. It has been a busy summer—we have had more applicants than ever before! This incoming class has been carefully prayed over and we can't wait to see what God has in store for them.

It is amazing to see where the Lord has taken Summit the last two decades. We are starting to see more “legacy” students come through

our doors—children and family members of alumni who are excited about beginning their own journey at Summit. What an incredible honor to walk alongside each of them.

Pray with us as we welcome the newest group of Summit Lions! As the staff and faculty prepare for arrival day and orientation, we want God's presence to be with us every step. During many of our staff meetings we have been repeating the idea that Summit trains and God transforms. We are all looking forward to a truly transformative school year!



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 10AM | 1PM | 3PM | 6PM

Tuesday 7PM | Worldwide Prayer Meeting

Friday 7:30PM | The Gate
2nd & 4th Fridays (ages 18-29)

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

tsc.nyc



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