

Dear Friend,

I want you to seriously consider what I say today in this letter. You are continuously being bombarded with headline after headline relating stories of chaos and the virtual unraveling of our present-day society. Then there is the fear of disease, the loneliness of isolation, as well as the uncertainty of a job and adequate provision in the days just ahead. Added to this, we all have our own "stuff" to deal with. I can understand why you may feel overwhelmed today.

Perhaps you feel like the psalmist who once said: *"Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?"* (Psalm 77:7–9). The psalmist goes on to admit, *"This is my anguish"* (77:10). In other words, *"This is my faulty view of His faithfulness and eternal plan."*

The truth is that Jesus is still in charge of everything, and all things are allowed so that His perfect will might be accomplished. Your place in His plan is not happenstance—all things you see taking place in your life are happening for a reason. Though we don't always understand, it always works for our good. Jesus says that you are in His Father's hand and no one can take you out of that secure place. All will be well.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

## ALL THINGS by Carter Conlon

*"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28). That means that everything God allows into our lives has a divine purpose. God puts it there for a reason because He is conforming us to the image of His Son. He is leading us on a pathway that will bring His name to glory through our lives.

*All the things  
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Keep in mind that the apostle Paul wrote these words as a man who had been shipwrecked, stoned, and betrayed. He had been in perils among brothers and perils among those who hated him. When you look at his life, it is very hard for anybody alive today to say, "Well, my life has had a more difficult trajectory than Paul's." And yet, after all the things he suffered, he was able to write that all things work together for good. In other words, "Everything that God allowed into my life had a divine purpose—whether I understood it or not. God was doing something in me. He was bringing me to a specific place. He was teaching me specific

truths that I might not have learned otherwise."

Quite often, we spend our days trying to get out of "all things." This is what our prayer life is all about. "God, get me out of this, and I will love You. Deliver me from this, and I will serve You." Many times our focus is about getting out of the very things that God is allowing in order to form His character and His purposes in our lives. So instead of praying, "God, get me out," we should pray, "Lord, what are You teaching me? What is it that You are producing in my character that could not come any other way?"

### ■ IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY?

Romans 8:28 has been the verse that has kept me all the years of my Christian life—through flood, fire, trial, difficulty, hardship, blessing. All the things that God has allowed have been for divine reasons. Sometimes I understood them and sometimes I did not until the worst of it was over in my life.

When I came to New York in 1994, we moved into a house in New Jersey. We had no idea that the house we moved into was infested with toxic mold. By the time it was discovered in 2001, the mold was so thick

that those who inspected the house condemned and quarantined it on the spot. The whole attic was so filled with toxic black mold that no visible wood was left. It scarred my bronchial tubes, which is why I still cough a lot today.

***I did not know that God had another plan—and that in faithfulness, He had afflicted me in order to work out that plan in my life.***

At the time, we were also fighting against a terrible onslaught in New York City. I stood with Pastor David Wilkerson, fighting to have the church go forward. I gave my all, but I kept getting sicker and sicker, to the point where I could hardly breathe. The headaches were extremely bad, and my energy level was almost at zero. I could sleep for eight hours, get up in the morning, and feel like I had not slept at all. I could barely stay awake and could hardly breathe. One day, I was walking down Eighth Avenue in New York City, and I was to the point where I could see black flecks floating in front of my eyes. Also, I was always on the verge of passing out. Suddenly, in frustration, I said out loud on the street, “Oh, God, is this really necessary?”

I was so surprised to hear God’s reply: “It is. It is very necessary in your life.” And suddenly, out of nowhere, verses from Psalm 119 came into my mind. The psalmist says, “*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word*” (verse 67). And “*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes*” (verse 71). And “*I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me*” (verse 75).

God had allowed these things for a divine purpose!

God could have kept us from moving into that house, but here is what He said to me on Eighth Avenue that night: “You have a very strong will. I am going to teach you how to be dependent on Me.” He did. I needed Christ every moment of every hour of every day because my own strength was gone. The Lord began to teach me how to hear His voice. He taught me that if He was not leading, I ought not to go there. I could not accept just any invitation to go anywhere and speak because if it was not the Holy Spirit leading me, it could take a week or two to recover physically when I got back. However, when the Spirit was leading, I would come back stronger than when I went out.

I was learning to be governed by the voice of God rather than by good ideas. At that time, I had no idea that I would be the next Senior Pastor of Times Square Church. I was only there to help this man of God for as long as he needed me. I did not know that God had another plan—and that in faithfulness, He had afflicted me in order to work out that plan in my life.

***I had made a choice to declare God to be faithful in the midst of my affliction.***

#### ■ BORN OUT OF AFFLICTION

I remember, during the worst part of this affliction, I had an oxygen tank on wheels that I had to pull around the apartment with me. Every morning, I had to wear a mask and breathe pure oxygen for 15 minutes to clear out the phlegm in my chest and help alleviate the massive headaches I woke up with. I had to do this before I could even read my Bible. There were mornings when despair just wanted to eat at my

heart. I wondered, “Oh, God, are You ever going to heal me? Could any good ever come from this?”

Some mornings I was so down that I would take my pen and just start writing poems, many of which eventually became songs. You see, I had made a choice to declare God to be faithful in the midst of my affliction. David Wilkerson insisted the songs be put on a CD, which is titled “Quiet Times,” and most of the songs were written during this time of affliction. It sold more than 40,000 copies in its first run, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for missions all around the world.

One particular morning, I sat down and wrote a poem which later became a song called, “If You’ve Lost Your Heaven’s Song.” The first verse says: “If you’ve lost your heaven’s song, it’s so hard to carry on when tomorrow looks as sad as yesterday. Just remember Jesus came, and He keeps singing just the same if you will listen, when you go to Him and pray.” And the chorus goes: “When Jesus came to live in you, He carried heaven’s sweetest tune with words, ‘I love you. And forever I will stay.’ When days are cold and darkness strong, things might seem lost, but not for long. His song within you cannot ever pass away. His song within you cannot ever pass away.”

I received the most beautiful letter a couple of years after the CD was initially produced. A pastor’s wife wrote to tell me that one day her husband came home and said, “I want out of this marriage. I want to live a new life. And as far as I’m concerned, our marriage is finished.” She was devastated. She rented a hotel room and then went to the pharmacy to get the prescription pills she needed to commit suicide. Then she got in her car, intending to return to the hotel and take her life.

A copy of “Quiet Times” was in the CD player, and “If You’ve Lost Your Heaven’s Song” was playing when she turned the car on. She started listening to the song and later wrote to me that she drove for three days. I assume she would stay in the hotel at night, but in the daytime, she would just drive around. She wrote, “I put your CD on repeat and listened to this same song over and over again. It brought me back to the faith of my childhood—when I first received Christ, when I walked with God. I remembered how faithful God has been to me and how He won’t forsake me in my affliction. And after three days of driving around, knowing that my marriage was finished, I just decided to go home and live.”

***Make a choice  
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When she got back home, she went into her house and found her husband, sick at heart, sick in his spirit. He said to her, “Oh, honey, I’m so sorry. I don’t know what came over me. I don’t know what I was thinking. I made such a mistake, and I’ve been such a fool. I love you. I believe that God is going to work out our marriage.”

To prevent a woman from committing suicide, God had to allow affliction in another man’s life in a city far away, sit him in his office with an oxygen mask on his face, put a pen in his hand, and inspire him write the words

to a song. I know all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose!

**■ REALIZE THERE IS A PURPOSE**

Perhaps today you are depressed in your mind, or you do not know how you are going to pay your rent and feed your kids. You do not know how you will ever be sane again. I want to remind you that God will be faithful to you. However, you must make a choice now either to believe that all things are working together for God’s good purpose in your life, or they are not. It cannot be just some things. It has to be all things—the things that you like and the things you don’t like; the things you understand and the things you don’t understand; the things you would love to come your way and the things that you wish would be gone—all of these things are working together for a divine purpose that God has ordained for your life.

***Do not just pray  
to get out of where  
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Pray to learn the  
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to be learned.***

This valley of the shadow of death will last only for a season. Part of the victory is finally coming to the realization, “Lord, You put me on this job for a reason. You put me in this marriage for a reason. You gave me these children for a reason. I live in this apartment for a reason. And if I have an affliction in my physical body, there has to be a reason for it that maybe I do not yet fully understand.”

Yes, there is a purpose. Paul learned to believe this. As a matter of fact, he got to the point where he was able to write in his epistles, “*When I am weak, then I am strong*” (2 Corinthians 12:10). He believed that even though he was confined to a jail cell at the end of his life, “All things work together for good, even if all I can do is write some letters to some of my friends.” He did not know he was writing to hundreds of millions of people over thousands of years—that his letters to his friends were going to be the doctrinal basis for much of our practice of faith in Christ.

So I encourage you—do not just pray to get out of where you are right now. Pray to learn the lesson that needs to be learned. Pray that when you do come out on the other side of the valley of the shadow of death, you will be able to say, “I have learned in whatever state I am to be content. I have learned that nothing can separate me from the love of God, which is mine in Christ Jesus. I have learned that God has a purpose beyond my understanding. I have learned to trust Him that somehow, some good is going to come out of it—so much more than I can ever think or imagine!”

Carter Conlon  
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## SUMMIT SESSIONS

If you have ever wondered what students learn at our Bible school, we have great news for you! This past month, Summit released a series of full-length class, chapel and roundtable discussions to give you a glimpse into what is taught at Summit.

**Pastor William Carrol:**

**Systematic Theology Class**

Explore the doctrines of our faith and the importance of salvation in this class taught by Pastor William Carrol. God loved us so much that He committed himself to us in a sacrificial and covenantal love. He did this by sending His Son to atone for our sin so we can experience the benefits and blessings of Salvation.

**Pastor David Ham:**

**Summit Revival Services 2020**

God works on behalf of those who wait for him. This amazing teaching from Pastor David Ham explains how God is calling us to prioritize studying the Word and waiting on Him so he can refocus

our attention and replenish us with the power of His Spirit.

**Pastors Carter Conlon, Teresa Conlon and Nick Cassidy: Summit Roundtable Discussion**

Is there a difference between “my truth” and “the truth”? Listen in on a conversation between Pastor Carter Conlon, Pastor Teresa Conlon and Pastor Nick Cassidy as they discuss the love of Christ and the concept of “my truth.”

**Pastor Carter Conlon:**

**Summit Ministry and Career Conference 2020**

Listen to this exhortation from Pastor Carter Conlon in which he talks about surrendering your life for the purposes of God. He reminds students that when you are in the center of God’s calling, He will give you His grace and His peace even in the midst of life’s storms.

Watch the sessions on [summitpa.org](http://summitpa.org)

**CARTER CONLON**

Carter Conlon is General Overseer of Times Square Church, Inc. He joined the pastoral staff as associate pastor in 1994 and was senior pastor from 2001 to 2020.

**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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