

Dear Friend,

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I don't suppose there is anyone who can make a credible argument that today we are not in desperate need of a spiritual awakening! We all know it. Now you ask, "But exactly how does this begin in and through my life?"

This week, I was speaking with a young person who wants to live wholeheartedly for God. However, he is experiencing the common struggle of finding the way forward. Here's what I told him.

The Scripture tells us, *"If anyone is in Christ, he IS a new creation; old things HAVE passed away; behold, all things HAVE become new"* (1 Corinthians 5:17, capital letters mine). It's like unplugging a fan. Though the blade may turn for a moment, its power source (like our old lives without Christ) is now gone. We are no longer bound by what empowered us in the past.

Now, the hand of God moves the plug of our lives to a new source of supply, and we are plugged in to the power of Christ in us. Our part? Simple. Move toward where the hand of God is leading. Desire those things that He wants for our lives. As Peter the apostle once did, step out into what you formerly couldn't do and believe that God's power will keep you. Start walking by faith (see Matthew 14:28).

With you on the water,
Pastor Carter Conlon

What is Written on Your Heart?

Carter Conlon

Are you tired of being where you are? Perhaps you know what kind of life you should be living—an honest employee, a loyal spouse, a generous friend—yet you cannot find the strength to get there, and it is leaving you weary. If this is what you have been feeling lately, I believe you will find hope in the book of Jeremiah.

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31–34).

I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR MINDS AND WRITE IT ON THEIR HEARTS.

What an incredible passage! God was making a new covenant with His people. In this case, He was referring to Israel, but it has an application to you and me as His Church.

When God brought His people out of captivity, He gave them laws to obey. He wrote the first part of that law—the Ten Commandments—on tablets of stone. They were visible, but they were outside of human ability. God essentially said, "I want you to be honest, I want you to have no other gods before Me. I do not want you to commit adultery. I do not want you to kill. I do not want you to hate but to be a forgiving people. I do not want you to covet your neighbor's goods. I want you to be truthful. I will be God to you, but this is the kind of people I want you to be in the earth."

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul spoke about these requirements God had for His people as well as the inability of us

to perform them in our own strength. He said, *“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do”* (Romans 7:14–15). Have you ever lived there? Before I came to Christ, I cannot tell you the number of times I made promises at midnight on New Year’s Eve. I promised myself I was going to change this and change that. Just like Paul said, I knew what to do. But I could not perform it, and it was so discouraging. We are all made in the image of God and have an innate understanding of what kind of people we ought to be.

“If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (Romans 7:16–18). In other words, I want to do right—perhaps just like you today. You do not want to do what you are doing. You are tired of the depression, the drugs, the pornography, your own speech. You are tired of this constant war inside against the ways of God.

THE LAW OF GOD BECOMES PART OF OUR CHARACTER.

Paul says, *“But how to perform what is good, I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”* Paul continues, *“Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God, according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”* Then he concludes by saying, *“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”* (Romans 7:18–24).

“I’m just so fed up with wanting to do good but not finding the ability to do it. How is this going to happen in my life?” But he concludes, *“I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* (Romans 7:25).

Erasing the Former Things

Remember the promise that God made through Jeremiah: “There is a day coming when the law will no longer be outside of you, for I will write it on the tablet of your heart” (see Jeremiah 31:33). Incredible! When we come to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence inside our earthen body. I picture Him coming with an eraser and erasing the former things that were on our heart: vengeance, grievances, old habits we cannot break, the yearning for things that promised comfort but did not deliver. He starts erasing these things and instead starts writing the law of God on our hearts.

The law of God becomes part of our character. We are no longer trying to obey God out of the sheer force of human will, which only leads to frustration. Rather, we begin to have an innate desire to do things that we never considered before. In other words, we are no longer fighting against our nature to do right; it has become our nature to do these things.

Let me give you an example. I started drinking beer and whiskey when I was 13. Not a very good thing to do, but that is what I did on a regular basis. So, at the age of 24, even as a new believer in Christ who was excited about God and His Word, I was still drinking. I saw a problem with drunkenness, but not with drinking. I had never heard a sermon on this topic; nobody had ever spoken to me. But remember the scripture said, “Nobody will have to teach you anymore. You will know God for yourself” (see Jeremiah 31:34).

One morning after working the night shift, I was on my way home and stopped at a restaurant that served the best bacon, eggs, ham and home fries in the entire country, as far as I am concerned. I ordered my regular breakfast and a beer. Then I took out my Bible. So I had bacon, eggs, my Bible and beer all on the table at the same time. I was reading and was just so excited about the Word of God. I had a sip of beer and a little bit of eggs and a little bit of fries—and I did not see a problem with any of this.

But then I started reading the passage in Luke where the angel came to Zachariah and Elizabeth and said, “You are going to have a son and this son is going to be the forerunner to Christ.” Of course, we know that he was speaking of John the Baptist. And the scripture says, “He will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He is going to turn many people away from iniquity

and turn them towards living for God.” And then the scripture said, “And wine will not touch his lips” (see Luke 1:15). I read that this man would turn many to Christ, and one of the qualifications was that wine would never touch his lips. I remember thinking, “God, I want to be used of You, and I do not want anything in my life that is going to hinder that purpose.”

ARE YOU WILLING TO LET GOD ERASE THE OLD THINGS?

The promise was that God would start to write this law in your heart and then the Holy Spirit would teach you. The Bible says in Psalm 37:4: *“Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.”* I see that two ways. There are godly desires that God will grant you, but He will also give you the desires—new desires—as you delight yourself in Him. That is what happened to me that morning. I delighted myself in God, and He gave me a new desire. Up until that point, I never had the desire to stop drinking. But that morning, God erased the old things that were written on my heart, and He was writing something new. Nobody said, “Do not drink.” But when I read that passage of scripture, I reached out, put my hand on the glass of beer, and pushed it across the table.

That was 42 years ago and I have never touched alcohol since; in fact, I have had no desire to touch it at any time. And God has used my lips to bring people unto Himself. You see, if you are still under the law, you are reading on these tablets of stone, “Thou shall not drink” and then you spend your whole life fighting not to do something, yet the desire is still there to do it. But God says, “No, I am going to do it a different way. I am going to give you a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit, a new life, a new hope, a new future, new giftings. All I am asking of you is that you delight yourself in Me, and I will give you new desires for your heart. And then I will fulfill them!”

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

And so I ask you today: What is written on your heart? Are you willing to let God erase the old things?

I believe it is time for many of you who are reading this to stop trying to serve God in your own strength and let Him do what He wants to do. Stop trying to justify wrong and calling it right. Let God put a new law in your heart. Just as I pushed that beer away from me for the rest of my life, there are things in your life that you can push away as well. You can push bitterness, depression, self-condemnation away. Remember, when the Holy Spirit comes into your life, He will not only give you the desire but the power to walk in newness of life. This whole kingdom is animated by the power of God from within you, not trying to serve God who is without.

So, what does He require on your part? Ask for it! Come to Him and say, “I want to live for You, Lord. I want my life to count. I do not want to live my whole life just seeing how close I can get to the fire without being burned. I want to have the power to be given for the sake of others so I can make a difference in this generation. So write Your law on my heart and empower me to walk in Your ways—that You may be glorified on the earth!”

Carter Conlon
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I'm a Filmmaker—Yohan's Story

In early 2020, Yohan George was accepted to Summit and awarded the TSC Premium Scholarship. Living in Telangana, India, Yohan knew that visas to the US were not easy to obtain during the pandemic.

During his visa interview, the officer asked why he wanted to go to Bible school. Yohan gave his well-studied answer about learning about Christianity and the Bible. "I'm sorry," the visa officer replied, "I can't offer you a visa. Your reason is not strong enough, and with everything going on in America right now you can't go."

As Yohan began putting away his documents he began praying, "Lord, your will be done." Suddenly the visa officer ran back into the room. "Give me your documents," he said. "I've never done this before, but this is my last day working here. Tell me again why you want to go."

Yohan says he forgot every answer he had memorized and started yelling emphatically and waving his hands. "I'm a filmmaker; Jesus is the foundation of my heart. I want him to be the foundation of my art. I want to use film to tell people about Jesus." He showed the officer film pieces he had worked on. The officer began to smile. "This is good stuff. I'm going to approve your visa." Yohan is now entering his second year at Summit and spent the summer sharpening his film skills with Summit's creative team!

Thanks to your support, Summit is able to continue providing scholarships to students like Yohan who are passionate about using their craft to share the message of Christ.



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

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

Senior Pastor
Tim Dilena

Church Online
Sunday 10 AM & On Demand

Worldwide Prayer Meeting
Tuesday 7 PM

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