

*Turn It Around
Through Faith*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

As Christians, we are often tempted to shrink back from the difficulties, trials, and troubles that come into our lives. No doubt, these can seem like giants coming against us with heavy swords meant to take us down. But though pain, apparent defeat, and discouragement may come, God's will is perfect. He always causes us to triumph.

The swords directed at our lives can be turned around. By faith in Christ's resurrection power, life can come forth from death. Defeat can be reversed and become the springboard to great success. Failure is never final with God the Father.

As you read this booklet, allow the Holy Spirit to bring in the reality of the Resurrection as you receive something eternal in a moment of time. Redeem the time with God's eternal value system. See that what Satan meant for evil can become the very thing we use to reveal our vic-

tory in Christ.

Chapter One

FACING THE GIANTS

“And David said to Saul, Let no man’s heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

“And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

“And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

“And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

“Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

“David said moreover, The LORD that deliv-

ered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee" (1 Samuel 17:32-37).

"And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

"This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

"And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD 's, and he will give you into our hands.

"And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to

meet the Philistine.

“And David put his hand in the bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

“So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

“Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled” (1 Samuel 17:44-51).

A giant named Goliath—nine-feet-six-inches tall, representing the Philistines, and wearing heavy armor—challenged Israel to a fight. Whichever nation won would be served by the other.

Saul, the king of Israel at this time, was tall, strong, and handsome. Yet he and all of his fellow soldiers and citizens were very afraid. As the soldiers were going into battle, Jesse’s youngest son, David, was bringing food to his older brothers who were in Israel’s army. But

when the lad (about eighteen years old), saw the soldiers running scared at Goliath's threats, David asked, "Why are you filled with fear?"

They said, "Because the Philistine is strong."

"I would love to take him on!" David said.

"But you are just a child," Saul told him "and he has been a fighter from his youth."

David answered, "When I was keeping my father's sheep, a lion and a bear came, and they took a lamb from the flock. But I went after them, grabbed hold of their beards, and I slew both of them.

"If God can deliver me from the paw of the lion and the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. Just as God gave me victory over them, God will give me victory over this Philistine."

So Saul, trembling, said to David, "Go for it."

Be Bold in the Name of the Lord

David charged at the giant, saying, "I do not come to you with a spear or a sword, but in the name of the LORD: for the battle is the LORD's" (see 1 Samuel 17:47).

Some people always worry about what they should do and they leave the Lord out of their consideration. Are you faced with a spear or a

sword? Those can represent many natural weapons. What we must realize is that the battle is the Lord's.

David took a little slingshot and five smooth stones. The slingshot speaks of faith; the number five speaks of grace; and the smooth stone he used represents the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus Christ. He used the slingshot, and the stone ended up in the forehead of the giant. David ran toward the giant, who was now on the ground, jumped on him, took his sword, and used it to cut off his head. And the Philistines? They ran.

Overcoming the Sword

Later, in 1 Samuel 21:8, when David was fleeing from Saul, David came to Ahimelech, the priest, and asked, "Do you have a spear or a sword?"

"Underneath the ephod is the sword of Goliath that you took," Ahimelech told him.

David said, "Give it to me, for there is none like it" (1 Samuel 21:9).

In a lifetime, many swords come against us. There is a sword of terminal cancer; the sword of a broken home; the sword of knowing your child was molested, the sword of heartache, of losing someone very close to you. There is the

sword of being in a wheelchair all your life, the sword of blindness, and the sword of not being able to hear. Also, there is a sword of failure because of sin overwhelming us at a certain time in our lives.

Then we read in 2 Corinthians 4:15, "All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."

The Lord is saying, "Take the sword that comes against you—whatever it is—and use it for My glory."

Paul was called to suffer for the sake of the Gentiles (see Acts 9:15-16). It was a terrible sword. He was stoned; he was driven out of cities; he was hated by many. Yet, he took the sword of suffering that was against him and said, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and be made conformable unto His death" (see Philippians 3:10).

Paul's attitude was "I am destined to suffer for the sake of the lost people in the world, and I am going to take this sword of suffering and use it." When Paul was bound, when he was going to Jerusalem, and when he was in prison, Jesus Christ was manifested in every place.

Chapter Two

USE THE SWORD FOR GOD'S GLORY

God wants the sword that comes against you, to be used for His glory. A pastor came down with diabetes. He then started a ministry to diabetics. Now he and his wife minister to over eighty diabetic people. You see, he took the sword of diabetes and said, "I am going to use this sword as a ministry for Jesus Christ."

Micah failed, and his enemies were rejoicing over him (Micah 7:8). But he said, "When I fall, I shall arise." Don't rejoice over my failure and my sin. "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." I will get up with the Lord."

Micah took the sword of falling into sin and used it as a sword to show God's grace, God's love, and God's mercy, helping others to know that the Lord is a Lord of forgiveness, a Lord of mercy, a Lord of grace, and a Lord of compassion.

A wonderful lady in our church has been in a wheelchair for many years. She was standing on a corner one day when a careless driver lost control of his car, hit this lady, and caused her to be paralyzed. She recently wrote me a letter, thanking me for preaching about being called to suffer. She believes that her calling is to show us Christ from a wheelchair. She went on to be valedictorian of her college class of two thousand students, and she is still continuing her education.

The most beautiful thing about her life is the way she learned to use the sword.

Triumph over Pain and Heartache

Don't misunderstand. The sword hurts. The sword is painful. But once you deal with it, you take that sword, just as David did, and you use it against the enemies in your life.

A couple in New England was very careless about having godly convictions in their home. The father would scarcely come to church. All of this affected his daughter. By age sixteen, she had developed a serious drug habit. Shame, heartache, and trouble made it so that not a single thing could satisfy her. Eventually, she took her life by taking an overdose of pills.

This tragedy turned her father around. In tears he said, "I compromised convictions when the issue of church came up. We would always disagree about something concerning the church. Then I had to see my daughter—a suicide victim—in that coffin."

This couple dedicated themselves to the church and made a tremendous decision for Christ. The man said that was probably when he was truly saved, even though he had known God nominally for many years.

Being wealthy, they bought a ranch, added a large home, and started a ministry to young people. They would bring in troubled teenagers and minister to them with delicious meals and beautiful horses to ride and enjoy. The daughter's death was a terrible sword, but they took it and let God turn it into helping hundreds of children, paying their way to Bible camps and Christian schools. They took that sword that was so painful and used it for the rest of their lives. That ministry is still at work today.

God Uses It for Good

You have all heard of Joni Eareckson Tada, who was paralyzed from the neck down in a swimming accident. Yet, she has learned to paint

pictures by holding a brush between her teeth. She has written books and speaks to groups around the world, especially ministering Christ to people affected by disabilities and their families. She took her terrible sword and is helping to win thousands to Jesus Christ with her ministry to the disabled.

If you should call our church, a precious woman with multiple sclerosis will answer cheerfully. There is not a day that goes by that I don't hear her thanking God. She took the sword of MS, and she uses it every day to glorify Jesus Christ.

What I am saying is this: Don't let the sword get you. You take the sword. Take it up and glorify Him.

Joseph was sold into Egypt by his brothers. They were terribly unkind and nearly killed him. But when he finally saw them again years later, he said, "Do not be angry. Do not be grieved with yourselves because you sold me, for the LORD sent me before you that He might save many people alive" (see Genesis 45:5).

Joseph said to his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good so that it would come to pass that many lives would be saved out of the famine" (see Genesis 50:20). He took

his sword and used it for God's glory.

Chapter Three

LIFE THAT CONQUERS OUT OF DEATH

A man recently died of cancer. His wife and his friend were so amazingly faithful to God through it all, ministering to him and caring for him far beyond the call of duty. The doctors involved said that they would never forget them for as long as they live.

After he died, his wife's old "friends" came along and tried to get her to go out and party with them. She made a declaration that she was following Jesus Christ just as she had all along. She wasn't going to forget her beautiful marriage, and she determined that she would use the sword of her husband's death to glorify God.

Another man had cancer in his right eye and needed to have it removed. He started wearing a patch and began writing songs for kids. He became Patch the Pirate, and through his ministry hundreds of young people were saved and ded-

icated their lives to Christ. With his humor, his singing, and his convictions, everywhere he went, large crowds came to see him.

A woman had a fifteen-month old child who was in tremendous pain. She thought it was an ear problem and took the child to the doctor. The child died right there in the doctor's office, and the woman was heartbroken. Eventually, she was healed, but it did take time. It always takes time. The pain of losing a child hurts greatly. But she looked to Jesus and started a ministry to those who had lost young children. She has traveled great distances to comfort people suffering this kind of loss. Through it all, she has led many to Jesus Christ and blessed them greatly. This mom took the sword of the death of her fifteen-month-old child and used it for God's glory.

Avoid Self-Pity

When an unexpected tragedy hits, it is important that a person does not withdraw into his emotions and start pitying himself. After David's victory, King Saul lamented, "Where is everyone? They all want David, and no one feels sorry for me."

Do you sometimes feel as if no one feels

sorry for you? Well, many Christians do identify with your needs and pains. I believe that any good friend will feel sorry and desire to comfort and give love. But people who live with only an attitude of self-pity live in the effects of their troubles. Why not take up that sword and just use it? Take the sword that was aimed to destroy you and use it against the enemy. That is exactly what David did.

The apostle Peter failed and denied Jesus Christ three times. Even after the resurrection of Christ, he could not seem to come back to Him. Finally, after the hurt and the guilt was over, he received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and was used with the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Samaritans. He took the very sword of his failure and used it to declare the power, the love, the mercy, and the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

Always take the sword and use it to turn things around for God's glory.

Seeing God's Plan

A famous evangelist was losing his sight. When he stayed at my home, he shared with me just how much it hurt when he was told, "You are going blind." After receiving this bad news,

he would get with his wife and three children every morning to see the sunrise. Every evening, he wanted to see the sunset. Every day he would gaze at his family, trying to memorize their faces. He went to faith healers and to doctors, but his eyes never improved. He prayed and believed God, but the healing didn't happen. He became blind.

In a faith reversal, however, this man took up the sword of blindness. After the pain and the hurt left, he understood his calling, and he established an amazing ministry that is still active today. He became a leader in developing ministries to the blind so that millions of the blind could read the Bible in braille text. He used the sword of blindness to break down the walls of many who did not know Christ and could not see.

Whatever the sword that comes against you, remember that as believers, we have a cause (1 Samuel 17:29). The battle is the Lord's, and we are to go forward in the face of the enemy, proclaiming our victory in the name of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

This booklet includes many testimonies of people who have faced giants in their lives. In order to turn their situations around for God's glory, each one needed to set his heart on God, in the face of heartaches and trials (1 Samuel 16:7).

Maybe you have a sword of affliction coming against you today. Consider how to make something good out of it. Use it for God's glory. Make a ministry out of it. Do it for God's glory. Sickness, emotions, financial trouble—whatever it is, take it up and use it for God's glory.

You can overcome anything that is standing against you in your life. Please let yourself be filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with love, and filled with faith, no matter what you are facing.

Let God strengthen you and enable you to obey the truth without reservation, without equivocation, and without hesitation. Let these

words set you free in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.