

THE BARTIMAEUN TRANSFORMATION

10 STEPS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER



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From the beginning, God had plans to prosper Bartimaeus. God had a greater plan than for him to sit forever, blind and begging in the dirt by the side of the road, and He has a greater plan for you than to continue in a place of distress and unfulfillment.

To engage God's greater purpose, to experience the blessings and benefits of His plan to prosper you, give you hope, and a future - to initiate the process of transformation and start your transition to abundant living, we need only hear the Gospel, and call on Jesus' name. That's it. That's the beginning of all that it takes to change your life forever.

Because you're reading these words, your process of hearing the Gospel has already begun. We've already shared some of the good news about Christ. Hearing the Gospel is not far away or difficult for you; it's already a part of who you are. What's important is that you now know *how* you should hear the Word - not simply with your physical ear, but with your spiritual ear as well. Received, not simply in the matrix of your auditory canals, but in the depths of your soul.

It's important to receive the unadulterated Word of God in the core of your spiritual being. The Word of God is a powerful seed that, when planted within, gives rise to new understandings. When you hear the Gospel in the way it's meant to be heard, it's a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. It will show you a new and more excellent way. It will burn like fire and stir up the blessed gifts within you. When you receive the Word in the way that Blind Bartimaeus did, you will not be able to just sit there and stew in your prior condition. The opportunity for change will naturally *compel* you to take the next transformational step. It will cause you to yearn for Living Word and lead you to call on Jesus' name.

But we must call Him *specifically* by His name, which is Jesus. We must address Him in accordance with His divine designation, which is to say as Lord, Savior, Messiah, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Son of David, Lion of Judah, not just *any* Jesus, but *the* Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth, whose name is the only one given by which we can be saved.

We must come before Him with a spirit of humility, recognizing His power and prerogative to have mercy and compassion on whomsoever He will. Yet we stand in confidence on our faith in the promise of His Word to save everyone who calls on His name. Knowing that when we humble ourselves, He will not only lift us out of our troubles, but also lift us into our destiny. According to Jeremiah 29:11, His plan is to prosper us, give us hope and a future.

Like Bartimaeus, we must have the openness of heart to finally hear the Word and, in that moment of Christ's passing by, have the presence of mind to call on Jesus' name...

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

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So if it's that simple, then why don't we do it? If it only takes two simple steps to get things started... then why do so many of us remain stuck in misery and separated from divine destiny? The answer comes in parts, and leads to the third step in the process of transformation.

The first reason why we don't hear the gospel and call on Jesus' name is pride. Pride is a little five letter word with eternally damning consequences. Remember the scripture from Proverbs that we highlighted in the course of our discussion on humility:

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

- *Proverbs 16:18*

Indeed, pride precipitated the costliest fall in the history of creation. Consider the testimony of Christ found in *Luke 10:18*:

“...I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

What exactly was Jesus referring to in this passage? How do we come to *understand* the type of pride that caused Satan's fall from heaven? When you think about it, there's probably nobody on earth more likely to be filled with the evil pride demonstrated by the spirit of Satan than a proverbial “King” of men.

Jesus, the man, was a scholar and master of Judaic Law. Even as a child He confounded the paltry wisdom and flat understandings of the Sanhedrin; who were the traditional keepers, transcribers, and interpreters of the Law. The academic knowledge of the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes was never a match for the Spirit-inspired insights of the greatest Teacher who ever lived. But He knew Mosaic Law, the history of the Israelites, and the words of the prophets.

When Jesus spoke the words, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,”* He linked spiritual insight to words spoken in the Law by two great prophets. These words reveal the nature and history of Satan, and they were spoken to two kings who were filled with the devil's pride.

The great prophet Isaiah spoke thus to the king of Babylon:

¹² *How you have fallen from heaven,
morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!*

¹³ *You said in your heart,
“I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne*

above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.
¹⁴ *I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;*
I will make myself like the Most High.”

- *Isaiah 14:12-14*

This passage reveals the essential nature of Satan, and a part of how he came fell from heaven. First we should understand that Satan, like all other creatures, was created by God. He was the “morning star”...”son of the dawn”; created by God as an angel with a special purpose. But he was cast down to earth because, with the free will that God gave him, he chose to say in his heart, “*I will raise my throne above the stars of God...I will make myself like the Most High.*”

This is the highest demonstration of evil pride - to deny the sovereignty of God, and submit the authority of oneself in His place. Notice that this affront to God did not have to be overtly stated from the mouth of Satan, but simply held as true in his heart. “*You said in your heart...*” The evil pride, and things he said in his heart against God, were enough to bring him and his divine purpose down to the grave at the depths of the pit. Again, hear the words of Christ:

“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

That God created Satan as an angel is further attested in the book of *Job* 1:6:

“One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.” Later on, after a brief conversation between the Lord and Satan about Job, verse 12 says: “*...Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.*”

By what authority and condition would Satan be accorded the privilege of presenting himself with the angels before the divine presence of God? It was because Satan himself had been created and entreated with the faculties and admittances of an angel. In terms of his basic functional ability, Satan was an angel. But not just any angel, he was a special and powerful angel, highly ordained, uniquely appointed, and divinely anointed to fulfill a godly purpose - yet he fell. Proof that no matter how gifted and talented God has made you to be, evil pride can cause you to fall.

The prophet Ezekiel provides further insight into Satan's tragic fall from grace in his prophetic warning to the King of Tyre. It's not hard to see the part that pride plays in consuming the heart of a man with the spirit of the devil. Ezekiel had this to say to the King of Tyre in chapter 28 verses 2 & 5-8:

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²“... *‘In the pride of your heart
you say, “I am a god;
I sit on the throne of a god
in the heart of the seas.”*”

⁵*By your great skill in trading
you have increased your wealth,
and because of your wealth
your heart has grown proud.*

The king deceived himself into thinking as a god because he was consumed with an evil pride in material possessions. Pride in his wealth to caused him to be “full of himself”, and he began to think of himself as greater than he should. But the prophecy goes on to say that such prideful thoughts are not without consequences.

⁶ “*‘Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:
“Because you think you are wise,
as wise as a god,
⁷I am going to bring foreigners against you,
the most ruthless of nations;
they will draw their swords against your beauty and
wisdom
and pierce your shining splendor.*”

⁸*They will bring you down to the pit,
and you will die a violent death
in the heart of the seas.*

A violent death down in the pit is what awaits a man who harbors thoughts which usurp the sovereign authority of God in his life. This follows the common storyline of the creation that comes to think itself greater than the creator...the supercomputer that begins to “think” and, in its *artificial* intelligence, attempts to take over the world. We’ve all seen that story before, and we all know how it has to end. The supercomputer has to be blown up; the wayward creation must be

destroyed. Even when the the supercomputer's takeover is motivated by noble intentions - like the desire to save incorrigible man from himself - the lawless creation must be destroyed.

And so it is with us, as creations we revolt against our Creator, and even though we know how the story is going to end, we play "supercomputer" with God - sometimes with noble intentions. But prideful desire to do things our way leads to difficulty and deems that we be destroyed. Only by humble submission to the Creator's plan do we become the living sacrifices we were created to be, fit for the Master's use, and worthy of salvation. We cannot continue to play "supercomputer on autopilot" with God, and expect to escape destruction.

Yet this is the lie that the devil wants us to believe. Christ described the devil as "*a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44). In the same verse Christ said that when the devil lies "*he speaks his native language.*" Some say the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world that he didn't exist. But I respectfully disagree; the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world that God doesn't exist. His greatest achievement is tied to his greatest lie, and the root of that lie is false pride - the same false pride that caused his own tragic demise.

Ezekiel vividly portrays the story (continuing in chapter 28):

¹² "... *You were the seal of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

¹³ *You were in Eden,*

the garden of God;

every precious stone adorned you:

carnelian, chrysolite and emerald,

topaz, onyx and jasper,

lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.

Your settings and mountings were made of gold;

on the day you were created they were prepared.

¹⁴ *You were anointed as a guardian cherub,*

for so I ordained you.

You were on the holy mount of God;

you walked among the fiery stones.

¹⁵ *You were blameless in your ways*

*from the day you were created
till wickedness was found in you.*

¹⁶ *Through your widespread trade
you were filled with violence,
and you sinned.*

*So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.*

¹⁷ *Your heart became proud
on account of your beauty,
and you corrupted your wisdom
because of your splendor.*

So I threw you to the earth;

The words of Christ resound in our hearts:

“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

The scriptures reiterate that it was the spirit of pride which caused the devil to be expelled from heaven, but we’re not saying that all pride is evil. We’re talking about the type of pride that gives rise to an egotistical self-concept and an exaggerated sense of self importance. This what infected Satan, an overextended pride in his own accoutrements and position.

A popular idiom portrays the term “ego” as an acronym for “edging God out.” Although not the standard dictionary definition, it does quite well at capturing the essence of what the ego tends to do. Ego is the division of the psyche representing the self, and it is the reason why false pride can be so dangerous. Ego *feeds* on pride and, if left unchecked, it engorges itself and drives egomaniacal exploits of the creation against the creator. In magnified state, ego attempts to edge God *all* of the way out. It says “There is no God,” or even worse still “I am God.” Inflated ego personifies the concept of self-glorification, and serves no other purpose than to separate us from God when it acts to deny God’s existence, purpose, or authority in our lives.

Ego rails against every inclination to submit in humility, instead, it seeks to establish its own throne. This idea is at the heart of Satanic rebellion. The book

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of Revelation, a prophetic writing of the Apostle John, details the devil's continuing desire to rail against the throne of Jesus Christ:

⁴ Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who "will rule all the nations with an iron scepter." And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

⁷ Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

¹⁷ Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

- Revelation 12:4- 5, 7- 9, 17

After reading that, can you hear the words of Christ just one more time?

"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Can you close your eyes and visualize the greatest fall in the history of creation? Can you see Satan in the splendor of his creation - the morning star, son of the dawn, the guardian cherub adorned with precious stones and settings and mountings of pure gold, a model of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, walking among the fiery stones in the holy mount of God?

Yet because of what he said in his heart, because he allowed his heart to be consumed with false pride and ego, he acted against the throne of Christ and was hurled down to earth, cast down from heaven, falling like lightning, eternally separated from God. We know how his story ends. He's a creation too. He's doomed to failure and destruction, yet continues to wage a mindless war against God's people. The father of lies wages a war of lies and deception to this day.

The war is raging, but we must understand, as the Apostle Paul explained in his second letter to the church at Corinth, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

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- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

The weapons of our warfare are spiritual; they have divine power to demolish Satan's strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension (which is just another word for lie) that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. Satan is the father of these arguments and lies, but we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

It's common in carnal warfare, to take enemy soldiers captive. In spiritual warfare, the battlefield is our hearts and minds. Our spiritual enemy sends prideful and rebellious thoughts whose goals are to set us against the knowledge and will of God.

Our job is to take captive the evil and rebellious thoughts sent by the devil, and make them obedient to Christ so that the transformation into abundant life and fulfillment of divine purpose might be complete.

As the war rages on, there's you, hopefully fighting for your divine transformation by the power of Christ, and then there is the devil, fighting to achieve your destruction and eternal demise. Misery loves company. Satan fell, like lightning, from heaven and from his divine purpose, and he wants man to do the same thing. He wants you doomed to destruction too. What many people *don't* realize is that in order to be counted with the devil and his minions, you don't have to purposely accept Satan; all you have to do is knowingly reject God.

In knowingly rejecting the sovereignty of God in your life, you engage in communion with the very thought that ordained Satan as "that ancient serpent called the devil... who leads the whole world astray...hurled down to earth and his angels with him." Therefore, by communing with this thought, just as one of Satan's angels, you commit yourself to the same destructive fate.

The Apostle Paul shed light on the subject when, in his second letter to the church at Thessalonica, he wrote "*the man doomed to destruction...will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God's, or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*"

- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

This is the net effect of failing to accept God; it is an implicit rejection. It is setting yourself up in God's temple and proclaiming yourself to be God. It is the function of false pride. It is ego edging God out. It is the devious trick of the devil's spiritual warfare, a subversive tactic that condemns many men to present and eternal damnation; and separates them from earthly and everlasting glorification. It is a major reason why so many people don't hear the Word and call on Jesus' name.

By the grace of God, I trust that you know better. You know that this is war, and the devil is playing for keeps. You know what's at stake. To lose in this war not only represents a barrier to transformation, it also represents a

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springboard to damnation and eternal separation from God. This battle is for eternal life and death.

But despite the high stakes, for the believer, there is no cause to worry. The instructions of God's Word hold the key to victory. The Apostle Paul, at the conclusion of his letter to the church at Ephesus, left us with what I call “**The Believer's Battle Plan.**” It is a foolproof course of action that guarantees victory in the war against Satan and, as with any good plan of war, it involves both preparation and execution:

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

- Ephesians 6:10-18

Every time I read “The Believers Battle Plan,” it astounds me. The wisdom it conveys within the imagery it portrays is proof positive that the words are divinely inspired. The passage warrants a full length discourse, much like the one we are currently engaged in. We haven't the opportunity for such lengthy discussion here. But this passage provides you with an opportunity to engage in something integral to the process of personal transformation. This is a moment for you to exercise your *faith* in God's Word. I'm not speaking in the abstract here, I mean literally.

“The Believer’s Battle Plan,” as the name suggests, is designed to function for believers. When Paul wrote it, he was not addressing heretics; he was addressing members of the church. As a member of the church, you understand the context of spiritual warfare within which we live our lives. You understand that we cannot afford to lose in this spiritual warfare because winning is paramount to gaining salvation, transformation, and abundant life. Twice now, I

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have alluded to the fact that the war rages on. I reiterate the point yet again, and can trust that you realize that I am not repeating myself for repetition's sake.

Whether you know it or not spiritual warfare is being waged against you right now as you read this book. You are being targeted by the devil simply for the fact that you are presently engaged in the first step of transformation, which is hearing God's Word. The devil does not like it, so when you do it, you can best believe that his wrath is going to come against you. He is going to start throwing fiery darts toward you to attack your thoughts.

But you have "The Believer's Battle Plan," and through it the victory is already won. Go back once more to the passage. Close your eyes, clear your thoughts, inhale and exhale deeply. Open not only your physical eyes, but also your spiritual ones. Read the passage again, receive it, hear it in your heart the way that Bartimaeus did. Believe it for your victory at this very moment. Do it now.

And so it is. Amen and Amen.

There is a reason why I'm talking so much about spiritual warfare, when this book is about the process of transformation per the metaphor of a blind man's healing. A fundamental understanding of spiritual warfare provides the contextual foundation required to witness, on a deeper level, what happens next in the story of Blind Bartimaeus.

If you don't "get" the concept of spiritual warfare, and the way it's rooted in false pride, then you won't clearly see what occurs in the next verse, and you won't really know how the poor blind beggar overcame what came against him. You wouldn't know how to overcome what's going to come against you while pursuing transformation either. Without this understanding, despite hearing the word and calling on Jesus' name, you'll be easily defeated.

The devil will use other people to pit you against the toughest enemy you'll ever face in life. Get up and take a look in the mirror. We have met the enemy, and he is us. And because he is us, he knows all of our weaknesses and fears. We can hide our insecurities from the rest of the world, but we cannot hide them from ourselves. The devil knows this, and he is a master at using it. But again, the battle is already won...as long as we follow "The Believers Battle Plan." Let's consider what happens next, with a mind toward seeing the devil's spiritual confrontation...and witnessing "The Believers Battle Plan" in action. Let's look at verse 48 in the story of Bartimaeus:

"Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

Using your spiritual eye, do you see what's happening? Do you see the attack of the devil and how that attack was thwarted by the instructions of "The Believers Battle Plan?" If so, great, you are probably a bit ahead of the curve in

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the development of your spiritual perspectives. If not, that's okay too. We're going to break it all down right now. Let's take it in pieces.

“Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet.”

This was clearly the attack of the devil. Here you have a poor blind man who's heard some good news about how he might be delivered from his desperate condition, and who's chosen to take the step of calling out for change. And what does he get? Strong criticism, a sharp rebuke from a group of people nearby who are otherwise mere spectators to the situation.

Why would they do that? How would these “Many” who rebuked him be adversely affected by deliverance of Bartimaeus? They wouldn't. What did they stand to lose by what he stood to gain? Nothing. And yet the Bible clearly states that many rebuked him and told him to be quiet. These people had no valid earthly reason to reprimand this poor blind man, but I'll give you one guess at who had a spiritual one.

You have to realize the magnitude of what Blind Bartimaeus had just done. He had launched himself into transformation mode by believing and receiving God's Word. He had planted *divine* truth, *directly* refuting the devil's lie, in his heart. And not only that, because the Word of God is like fire shut up in the bones, because the Word of God is an evocative call to action, Blind Bartimaeus had *no intention* of keeping this truth to himself.

Imagine how you would feel if you were the father of *lies* and a broken little blind man started shouting out *the truth* at the top of his lungs. Verse 47 said *“he began to shout.”* And look at what he was shouting. *“Jesus,”* the only name by which we can be saved from the devil's tricks; the name of the child that the Dragon had tried to devour; the name of the Lord who sat on the throne; the Prince of Peace that the devil got kicked out of heaven over. Blind Bartimaeus was shouting out *that* name.

Then Blind Bartimaeus said *“Son of David,”* specifically acknowledging the everlasting throne and the rightful authority of Jesus Christ to sit upon it. And finally Blind Bartimaeus said, *“have mercy on me!”* Heal me! Save me! Transform me! Right here and right now! In front of all these people! I believe in you Lord! Do it for me Lord! Let me be your witness! Demonstrate openly what the divine power of God can do!

You have to understand that this poor little blind beggar was literally calling for the manifestation of the same power that had defeated Satan and his minions, and cast them down to the earth...and he was calling for this power at the top of his lungs! Now, you have to understand how angry this made the devil, and thus, why he came so forcefully at Bartimaeus.

Think about it. This is war. I didn't call it that, the Bible does. The war, which began in heaven, was continuing in the day of Bartimaeus just as it

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continues today. Who do you think, on a battlefield, is going to draw the most fire? Is it the guy who's hiding behind the bushes, cowered down low, seemingly oblivious to what's going on, and never firing a shot? Do you think that *he's* the one that the enemy will worry about and launch a massive counterattack against? I think not.

Or is it the guy who's boldly standing at the top of a hill, shouting at the top of his lungs, emboldening others, not full of fear but full of the faith, not oblivious to, but fully conscious of the war, the battle, the enemy, and all of his tricks. Laying down waves of hot lead from the barrels of a 50 caliber machine gun, cutting down everything in his path. If you were the enemy, which fighter would you make it a priority to take out?

Exactly. The devil is evil, but he's not stupid. Which is why, as long as Blind Bartimaeus was willing to stay blind, as long as he was willing to stay down in the dirt, hurting and begging, and less than who he was divinely supposed to be...as long as he was willing to continue in accepting a lie, nobody had a problem with him. But as soon as he reached out for something more, as soon as he heard something good and called out for his transformation, all hell broke loose against him.

Don't think that things will be any different for you. As long as you continue to be hurt, broken, and incomplete in your spirit, as long as you are willing to stay down and continue to fail in fulfilling the divine destiny that's yours for the taking, you can rest assured that the devil doesn't care, he's not the least bit worried about you, and there will be people around you who aren't the least bit worried about your condition. It will truly be no bother to them at all.

But as soon as you choose to accept God's truth about you, and reject the devil's lies; as soon as you decide to reach out for something more than you've already got, or become something more than you already are; as soon as you begin to pursue abundant life in Christ by engaging the process of divine transformation, you can rest assured that you are going to the top of the list of people the devil is concerned about. You can rest assured that all hell is going to break loose against you, and you might as well expect that somebody who's right there close beside you is going to be bothered. Really bothered. *Proverbs 18:21* says:

"The tongue has the power of life and death,..."

When you take the steps of faith and speak life over yourself, the devil is going to get into somebody right around you and try to speak death. When you get the gumption to say "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*," the devil is going to get inside somebody near you and say, "Shut up and be quiet!" Don't doubt it, because it's going to happen.

And since we know that it's going to happen, then we ought to be prepared for it. When you hear the Word, and call on Jesus's name for your transformation,

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and that old predictable devil gets into the people around you, and starts launching a fiendish attack against the life-changing thoughts that you're acting upon, you've got to do *exactly* what Blind Bartimaeus did in response. It's time to learn the third step in the transformation process. Watch this.

The devil is going to speak death. "Shut up and be quiet." Satan is going to try and get into your mind and remind you of everything that you've ever done wrong. He's going to try and convince you that you're so unworthy that you can't be redeemed. He's going to try and make you think that you're so soiled by sin that there's no way for the blood of Christ to wash you clean.

Let me be more specific, because he's going to step in through them and try to use you against you. He's going to hold up a mirror and show you yourself. He's going to say something like, "You? Made whole? You old raggedy blind beggar sitting by the side of the road! How dare you! You ain't nothing but a drug addict, a thief, a liar, a prostitute, a murderer. You're a whore, an idiot, a high school dropout. You're a convict, a deadbeat dad. You ain't nothing now, and you ain't never gonna *be* nothing! You're a cheat, a fake, you act like you've got it all together when you're really falling apart inside. You pretend that you're such a good person, but what about those wicked thoughts? Huh? What about the time that you mentally undressed your brother's wife, or secretly lusted after your best friend's husband? The very nature of your flesh is sin!

How could you possibly ever change? You're still going to be the mother of an illegitimate crack baby. You're still going to be the drunken father who physically abused his own wife and children! How could you even possibly come back from that? How could you ever face yourself, and all of the wrong you've done, in the mirror? What gives a dusty blind beggar the audacity to hope that he could ever be anything more? What a display of unmitigated gall for you, in the midst of your filth and lowly estate, to call for an audience with a king? Have you even considered the rancid thoughts you were having just five minutes ago? Thoughts you can't hide from Him? How dare you even think about calling yourself a Christian? Who do you think you're fooling? Everybody knows about your past! Do you think they're just going to forget the money you stole, the people you've slept with, the folks you took advantage of?"

You get the picture. It's a pretty effective tactic too. That's why the devil uses it, he knows it works. What's most diabolical about this overtly stated or implied lie, however it may come to you, is that it almost always effectively employs some element of the truth. Like any good liar, Satan is expert at "truth weaving" in the presentation of his falsehood. Of course he is, he's the father of lies and it should be no surprise that he'd be good at it. But an old man once told me that a "partial truth is still a whole lie." So don't fall for it. You can't stand on the truth and fall for a lie at the same time.

The devil knows it and that's why he's going to get into the people around you to try and discourage you. Look again at the scripture.

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“Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet.”

What does rebuke mean? The first dictionary definition says, “to criticize sharply.” We can all understand how discouraging sharp criticism can be, but what may be more telling as to what was actually going on here is the dictionary’s second definition: “to turn back or keep down.”

You see, in the process of hearing the Word and calling on Jesus' name, Bartimaeus had repented, or “turned away” from sin. He had turned away from the lies about himself he'd accepted for so long and which kept him bound in that awful condition. He had turned away, and the point of the devil's rebuke through those people was to “turn him back.” Remember the scripture we shared from *James 4:10*:

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

When Bartimaeus said, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” he was humbling himself before the Lord and thus, as the devil well knew, had put himself on course to be lifted up. The point of the devil's rebuke was to “keep down.”

You must understand when the devil’s attack comes, that the point of his rebuke is to turn you back when you've already turned away, and to keep you down when you're already in line to be lifted up. When your rebuke comes, know that this is precisely what the devil is after...and don't give it to him.

“Well, that's easy to say” you might be thinking...and maybe you’re wondering...“What about the fact that so much of what the devil is saying about me really is true? I have done so much wrong in my life...I've made so many mistakes. What right do I have after all of that to be transformed in such an amazing way?”

This is why God's Word is so wonderful, it answers real questions like these so succinctly. Go back and read the very first scripture that appears in this book. If you’ve been lost, then you're the very person that He came to save. And everybody's been lost. Maybe the words that Paul wrote, in *Romans 5:6-8*, can spell it out even clearer for you.

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Did you get that? Christ died for the ungodly...at just the right time, when we were still powerless...while we were still sinners! Do you see it with your own eyes? Have you done wrong? Are you a sinner? Yes! Of course you are, we all

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are. But that's only a part of the truth. The rest of the story is that the sinner is precisely who Christ died to redeem!

The entire point and objective of salvation is you. The process of transformation was specifically designed with you in mind. It was not designed for the “good man” or the “perfect woman.” The only perfect man was Christ, and even He said, “*No one is good—except God alone.*” (*Luke 18:19*) The point is that your present or prior failings, though very real, do not exclude you from the opportunity to be transformed. On the contrary, your enslavement to sin makes you the targeted recipient of Christ's gift on the cross of love and liberation.

Don't accept the half-truth of the devil; embrace the whole truth of God. Don't stop, turn back or stay down. When the enemy attacks you through those people around you, continue in your process of transformation. Do exactly what that little determined blind man named Bartimaeus did:

Step 3: Ignore the haters!