

## **God's Road to Victory**

n/a

### **Ready:**

"...today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

-Deuteronomy 20:3-4

### **Set**

When I set out to be the first person with Multiple Sclerosis to compete in National Physique Committee bodybuilding contests, I knew that I was going into battle. In my case the "enemy" was the disease I was diagnosed with in 2006 at the age of 47. My competitions would start when I was 50 years old, which is usually a time in life to begin relaxing and looking back on your accomplishments. For me, my 50th birthday was the beginning of my road to victory.

For those of you who have read my previous Impact Plays, you know my story. I'm a former bodybuilder who, at 47 and in great health, was diagnosed with MS, the devastating disease that attacks the nervous system. But I decided that I was going to believe the report of the Lord when the doctors told me it was time to give up training and resign myself to the "fact" that MS and its debilitating side effects would worsen over time and possibly leave me wheelchair-bound.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) says, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

On August 22, 2009 at the age of 50 I stood on stage with more than 150 healthy athletes and competed in the Florida State Bodybuilding Championships. It was a day I will never forget. The admiration I received from the competitors was amazing as they hugged me, shook my hands and even kissed me, telling me I was an inspiration to them. But the victory was yet to come. When I came out to pose with a packed crowd looking on, I felt God's anointing on my life. Before I stepped out, the emcee told the crowd my story. The music for my routine started, and I walked out on stage. Having MS made it a bit difficult to hold a pose or keep my balance throughout the routine.

First Corinthians 16:13: "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong."

As the spotlights blinded me, I could not see the crowd below, but I could hear the cheers and applause from the spectators as I went through my posing routine. My wife, Kendra, who was there giving me her undying support, told me that they gave me a standing ovation. When all

the competitors in my class were finished and I stood backstage, I could hear the emcee saying my name. Deke Warner, the contest promoter, ushered me back on stage as the emcee announced that I was the winner of the Most Inspirational Bodybuilder trophy. Again the crowd stood and cheered as I accepted the trophy and walked off.

The road to victory is not one void of trials. I cannot say that training to compete in bodybuilding with MS is easy. But then again, what victory is won without the battle? I had several injuries including a completely torn pectoralis muscle during the year and a half I devoted to this first contest. MS has left me with the lack of feeling throughout my extremities as one of the devastating symptoms. I could not feel the muscle tearing as I went to lift 400 lbs. for the fourth rep on the bench press. It was too late when I realized I had torn the muscle. That injury was a setback that I certainly did not anticipate on the victory road. In fact, I had to postpone competing from June to August due to the injuries I sustained pushing my body to extreme limits. But no matter what I endured, I proclaimed victory in the name of Jesus and looked to Him for my strength, not to my own abilities.

Numbers 14:17: “Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared.”

As I write this devotional, recovering from the torn pec repair surgery, I praise God for His tremendous love for me and the truth in His Word. I see the grace and miracle of God every day when I look into the eyes of my wife, the most godly woman I've ever met. I pray for the strength to move forward in the testimony God has given me to show the world that, with Him, there is no defeat. I heal with the peace that Christ has given me and the vision to look past this time of rest and see His future for my life. It is a future of standing for Him over and over again with a faith beyond understanding to unbelievers and a faith acknowledged by my brothers and sisters in Christ. I will continue fighting the battle so that the road to victory will again be mine.

Today, be encouraged that you too are on the road to victory if you are in Christ. He knows the plans He has for you, and no matter what obstacles come, He will see you through each and every one. Stay focused on Him and you will fulfill His blessed plan for your life—one that will bring Him glory and bring you abundant blessings. God's road to victory...Nothing short of amazing!

## **Go**

1. Do you see yourself as someone who is on the road to victory?
2. Are you willing to “let go and let God” so that you can be victorious?
3. Do you believe that you have what it takes to be a vessel of Christ's love and truth to the world despite the battles you face?

## **Workout**

2 Samuel 22:35-37

Psalm 18:35

Psalm 44:3

## **Overtime**

Former youth pastor, David Lyons was a healthy bodybuilder and health club owner in his 20s and 30s. In 2006, at the age of 47, David was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. He became the first person with MS to compete in a NPC bodybuilding contest and be awarded the Most

Inspirational bodybuilder trophy. To find out more about David and his challenge to battle MS visit [www.thembodybuildingchallenge.com](http://www.thembodybuildingchallenge.com).



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