

## “Reviving Defeated Christians”

*Ezekiel 37:1-14*

### Introduction

Life is full of battles, wars in both the physical and spiritual worlds. Even being a follower of Jesus, you may eventually come to experience what feels like nothing but loss or spiritual defeat. In the book of Ezekiel, the people of God found themselves captives of Babylon because of their rebellion against God. The prophet Ezekiel received a sign from the Lord amid their struggle. There among the rubble and bones of his people, Ezekiel is asked a question by the Lord and given a task: “Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ I answered, ‘Lord God, You Yourself know.’ Again He said to me, ‘Prophesy over these bones and say to them, ‘You dry bones, hear the word of the Lord’” (Ezek 37:3-4).

The people of Israel had experienced spiritual defeat and were in both a natural and metaphorical valley of dry bones. They were living as captives because of their rebellion against the Lord. Their army was hopeless, helpless and weak. What got them there? For Israel and for us, spiritual defeat is the result of distance from the Lord. As their rebellion took them further and further from God, they eventually became dry bones in a valley of defeat. Like the people of Israel, our idolatry can lead us into spiritual deserts, full of hopelessness, weakness, disconnection and spiritual ineffectiveness. When we become captives of the enemy, we cannot fight against the enemy.

Even though their own sin and waywardness brought them into this valley, the Lord was not finished with them. Spiritual defeat was an opportunity to experience the promises of God. Ezekiel knew there was nothing that human hands could do to turn the situation around, so he appealed to the only One who could do something about the situation. It was through this dependence upon the will of God, the grace of God and the faithful commitment of God that hope would begin to burst forth for the people of God.

To overcome the spiritual defeat—to bring the dry bones of a rebellious and captive nation to life—God’s instructions were clear: hear My Word. Through the prophetic Word of God, life was restored to Israel, and it is also how it is restored to us in our own spiritual defeat. The combination of the Word of God and the work of the Spirit revives the dry bones back to life. Victory comes after the most desperate of situations reveal to us who God is.

The Lord wants to speak over your spiritual bones: “Behold, I am going to make breath enter you so that you may come to life. And I will attach tendons to you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you so that you may come to life; and you will know that I am the Lord” (Ezek 37:5b-6).

The Lord is willing and able to bring to life all who died because He loves you. He wants to use the power of your spiritual resurrection to impact the culture for His glory. Through prioritizing God, His Word and His Spirit, we can find triumph after spiritual defeat and be a part of His mighty army, joining Him in changing this generation. Let victory be yours today.

### Getting Started

1. In what ways have you seen spiritual defeat for the people of God in our generation?
2. What are some specific idolatries and rebellious choices that have led to dry bones in American churches? How has that made the Church an ineffective army?

### Let’s Get Personal

1. When have you experienced spiritual defeat? What led up to that point?
  2. Why is learning to lean on God’s promises so important in those desert valleys?
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3. How has God used His Word and His Spirit to bring victory in your life? In what ways do you need to experience victory, and how can you lean on His Word to do so?
4. Where does God want to revive dry bones in your life so that you can impact the culture for His glory? How has He already brought life where there was once death?

#### Take the Next Step

1. Thinking of where you are spiritually, what idolatries tend to lead you into spiritual defeat? Either having been in spiritual defeat and experienced victory or being in a place of defeat currently, what is God asking you to do next? Do you need to share the victories you have experienced for His glory? Do you need to spend time in His Word and with His Spirit so that He can bring what is dead to life? Do you need to confess and repent of specific disobedience and sinful choices? Take the time to make that next step.
2. How can you celebrate the spiritual victories in your life? How can you bring God glory through spiritual victories?
3. In what ways do you need to pray right now when it comes to your current spiritual defeat? Spend some time in prayer for those things.
4. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following verses: Jeremiah 29:14; Ezekiel 36:22-32; 2 Corinthians 3:15-18; John 6:63; 7:37-39; 16:13

#### Renew Your Mind

*“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. He had me pass among them all around, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and behold, they were very dry.”*

*Ezekiel 37:1-2*

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