



DARIN SARGENT

BATTLE

*Defeating the Lions*

THE

*That Oppose Your Destiny*

BEAST



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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

*The true battleground lies within, where our inner struggles are most significant.*

*We often focus heavily on external conflicts, but the heart often poses the greatest challenges.*

Life passes so swiftly that we often don't realize it until it's too late. I'm standing on the other side of the age of fifty as I write these words. My thoughts take me back to 1987 in the town of Kimberly, Idaho. The memory of that moment is etched in my mind as vividly as if it were only yesterday. I'm standing in line consumed by a mixture of anticipation and nervousness as I eagerly await the granting of my high school diploma. My heart surges with aspirations. I envision a future filled with possibilities. I gaze into the vast expanse of the unknown, standing in my belief that within its realm resides untold promises and limitless potential waiting eagerly for me.

Now let me transport you forward to 1991, another pivotal moment. I'm standing in line waiting to be called forward to receive another diploma, the tangible evidence of four enlightening yet demanding years of Bible college. In that significant moment, my dreams shimmer brightly before

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me, brimming with the potential of everything I believe will come to pass. However, as the years roll by, reality unfolds in unexpected ways, and life introduces a series of challenges that test my resolve on this journey of discovery.

Challenges have been my constant companion since my earliest childhood days. Born with what some might label a handicap or a disability, I have encountered numerous physical obstacles that many people believed I could not conquer. However, as daunting as these physical challenges were, they faded in comparison to the battles waged in the depths of my heart, within the hidden arena of darkness no one could see. These internal struggles, fears, doubts, and insecurities were the things that truly tested the strength of my spirit and my faith. Here in that unseen domain I confronted my deepest fears and fought with every ounce of courage I could muster.

Embarking on the journey to significance requires diving into the uncharted depths of challenges often unseen by others. The prophet Jeremiah boldly declared:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:9–10)

In exploring our innermost selves we must battle the beast that lurks within and recognize our capacity for deceit and wickedness. Only through a deep self-understanding coupled with the divine guidance of the Lord can we conquer these challenges and grow and bear fruit. These inner victories become the crucial foundation for becoming the individual God desires us to be.

During our childhood years, life usually does not present overwhelming obstacles. Talk to children about what

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they want to be when they grow up, and you'll witness their enthusiasm as they dream of becoming astronauts, firefighters, doctors, trapeze artists (this was my future dream job, but I don't believe I thought it all the way through), or a myriad of other careers. For children, the realm of possibilities knows no bounds.

As we get older and progress through college or embark on a career path, we may hold faithfully to the expectations that our dreams will come to fruition just as we envisioned them and in the amount of time we planned. We think our impact on the lives of others will soon be recognized. Unfortunately, unforeseen struggles arise as we strive to move forward. We encounter unexpected turns in life's road—obstacles and adversaries we were never warned about in school or at home. The resistance catches us off guard, threatening to detour our advancement or bring it to a screeching halt.

However inconvenient it may be or how much we push against it, the truth remains: *It is through the struggle that life acquires profound meaning.* During the demanding journey, we discover invaluable lessons, which can be understood only when we embrace the challenges that confront us. When we adopt a posture of resilient reliance upon God, we are empowered to conquer obstacles and become the people He envisions us to be.

If you're reading these words and thinking, *I've never encountered significant challenges in my life*, consider yourself fortunate. However, for those with whom these words deeply resonate, let me offer a truth: promises are forged within the crucible of pressure. Hidden aspects within the depths of our being require attention, and unless we address them we may reach the end of life's journey filled with regret. God's ultimate desire for all of us is to achieve maturity, nurture

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our faith, and extend our impact on this world, but this will require the challenge of rigorous self-examination.

A life of impact often unfolds in the face of resistance, and this very resistance shapes the path ahead. At nineteen years of age, I penned a statement that has guided me through life:

*You will never make an impact unless you are committed to the collision.*

In other words, the most significant *collision* we will encounter is with ourselves. I have lived by a simple principle: “I can only fix what I’m willing to face.” Doubts, fears, and insecurities manifest as strong opponents seeking to deter us from reaching our full potential. But it is precisely when we confront these internal adversaries head-on that we can grow, evolve, mature, and thrive. Fighting these inner battles develops strength and resilience. Facing inner opposition helps us understand the depths of our capabilities and the power of God at work in those secret underground bunkers.

The decision to confront these challenges in your life is entirely up to you. No one else can make that choice for you. You have the option to merely exist or to truly live. If you’re content with life unfolding by chance, you’re simply coasting through existence. If you’re satisfied with never realizing your full potential, you’re opting to wander through life without truly embracing it.

My purpose behind writing this book is to encourage you to closely examine the forces that rear their ugly heads as you journey through life. Throughout this writing, I will refer to these forces as lions that lie in wait, ready to pounce at various seasons in your life. With this perspective, we adopt a proactive approach in our determination to make a significant difference in our own lives as well as the lives of others. We will acknowledge the presence of the lions that

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have remained concealed beneath the surface, awaiting the opportune moment to emerge and potentially undermine our progress.

At the time of this writing I am immersed in contemplation, reflecting on the multifaceted aspects of our family's personal journey. With two of our three children now married and my wife and I celebrating three decades of shared love and commitment, the speed at which time passes becomes increasingly evident. Have we encountered challenges? Has our journey often been marked by heartache and struggle? Have we faced insurmountable odds and questioned why things happened the way they did? The answer is a resounding *yes* on all accounts.

Undertaking this project compels me to look back over the years and ask myself, *Where has the time gone? How did we get here so quickly?* Have I faced and conquered every lion, or are there more beasts still lying in wait to destroy me or my family? It feels as if five decades of living have amounted to a mere drop in the proverbial bucket of life's experiences—and there are many more experiences ahead.

Time, as the adage goes, waits for no one. It marches to the beat of its own drum, unencumbered by considerations of personal identity, family background, or occupational pursuits. Its sole purpose is to forge ahead. Regardless of one's age or experience level, life keeps flowing like a mighty river, where, regardless of the obstacles, its irresistible current moves forward with unstoppable force. It continuously exerts pressure upon the objects in its path, determined to either dislodge the barriers or rise to such heights that it triumphantly overwhelms the obstacles.

Growing up in Idaho, my family and I had the opportunity to raft down some of the most breathtakingly beautiful rivers in the wilderness areas of the "Gem State." Together

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with my dad and brothers, we tackled the Payette River, the Salmon River, and several others that are famous for their challenging whitewater rapids. We often encountered a colossal boulder in the heart of a swiftly flowing river. At first it appeared as if the current would dislodge it, but we quickly discovered that the water would either flow over the boulder or seek an alternative path around it, pulling our raft along with it. This became a meaningful metaphor for life and the challenges we encounter.

If permitted, life has the potential to overpower and overwhelm. Its unforeseeable challenges can inflict pain and heartache, betray your trust, and provoke frustrations that resonate deep within your soul. The latter stages of many people's lives are marked with regret as they reflect on accomplishments left unattained, potential left untapped, and numerous lives left untouched by their influence. It becomes evident they could have achieved so much more if they had cultivated a mindset driven by their God-given purpose. Instead, they allowed their purpose to be crushed and buried under the pressures of life. They never experienced the transformation that God had intended.

We used to live near a zoo in Southern California called the Safari Park. Our kids loved going inside the amazing butterfly exhibit to watch as butterflies landed on their arms, heads, shoulders, legs, and shoes. Each butterfly was unique and beautiful.

Butterflies don't start out as beautiful, winged creatures that flit effortlessly through the air. Rather, they begin as caterpillars—slow and sluglike and usually overlooked unless they happen to invade your personal space. But at some point a transformation known as metamorphosis begins. This incredible demonstration of God's creative genius changes the wormy, voracious creature into a graceful, often colorful



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adult butterfly or moth. This life cycle has become a symbol of change and growth, and the beauty that can arise from it. The same can happen in each of our lives if we choose to allow God's power to work in us and conquer the forces that want to keep us defeated.

By learning to embrace life's pressures and transcend the constraints of unforeseen challenges or self-imposed limitations, we can embark on a journey to overcome the obstacles that seek to stifle our influence.

Then, when we reach the end of our lives, we will hear the resounding words of affirmation: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

To effectively navigate this journey, our lives must be intentionally lived out and consistently examined so we can become the individuals God intended for us to be. If we choose not to examine ourselves—refuse to pull back the veil of our flawed perspective—we will become the conquered

instead of the conqueror. It ultimately comes down to this: the cost of nurturing and living a life of influence and impact is far less costly than facing regrets at the end of one's journey.

As you embark on this transformative journey of self-revelation, you may unearth hidden chambers where lions are lying in wait—the things you have concealed, suppressed, and buried so deep within that you may have forgotten their existence until they emerge, uninvited, during life's most inopportune moments, and inflict seemingly irreparable damage.



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I write as a fellow traveler who hasn't wholly triumphed over every lion, but I've lived long enough to recognize the vast depths beneath the surface. I understand the necessity of consistently diving deep into that realm to confront and slay the lions that lurk there. If left undefeated, those lions have the potential to hinder my progress or inflict harm upon those dear to me who may be walking a similar path.

Life is all about making a difference. If you want your life to positively impact those you are called to lead and serve, you must confront those hidden challenges that lurk beneath the surface of your being. There is no alternative route to true effectiveness. Don't fall prey to the temptations to opt for the easier path, settle for what's convenient, or yield to the pressure that genuine transformation demands. You must stand firm against the enemies that will emerge, attempting to persuade you that the effort is not worthwhile.

As we embark on this transformative journey, we will dive deep into the lives of two remarkable Old Testament individuals whose stories provide invaluable lessons: David and Benaiah. These two men, united by their experiences, offer a complete narrative of what it means to emerge triumphant out of the depths of adversity. By closely examining their lives, we will gain the insight and inspiration needed to overcome obstacles in our path.

We will also examine characters who have yet to realize the importance of tackling these dangerous creatures that dwell in pits and whose intention is to hinder and destroy lives and legacies. We will discuss prominent individuals in history and Scripture who allowed these lurking lions to remain hidden, only to emerge and wreak havoc on the destinies of those who seemed to have so much potential. These individuals illustrate the behaviors to steer clear of as

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we navigate through our transformative journey and grow into the individuals we were intended to be.

I submit that there is no loftier purpose in life than the one that beckons us to conquer ourselves. Thus, the goal of this journey is to align ourselves with God's calling and to recognize that our transformation and victory can be achieved only by courageously confronting the lions that lie hidden within. Our adversary knows that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we are not just conquerors but more than conquerors. So the adversary fights against us, pressing on all sides to prevent us from descending into the realm of inner darkness to overcome the lions that oppose our destiny.

In our exploration and self-discovery we might come face-to-face with hideous beasts of fear or unforgiveness or mediocrity or deception. These lions, as well as many others we will discuss, symbolize both familiar and unfamiliar obstacles that await an opportune moment to hinder our potential and undermine our destiny. We will scrutinize and conquer these beasts, paving the way to fulfill our divine purpose, guide our families toward eternal fulfillment, embrace our true selves as ordained by God, and leave a lasting impact on future generations.

So join me as we begin to battle beasts.

### **Study Questions**

1. How does the author's personal reflection on life's progression and the impact of unforeseen challenges resonate with your own experiences and perspectives on life's journey?
2. The text mentions the importance of embracing challenges and confronting the hidden battles within us. Can you share an example from your

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life where facing internal challenges led to personal growth or transformation?

3. The text refers to the metaphor of hidden lions or obstacles lurking beneath the surface. How can we proactively identify and address these internal obstacles in our own lives to fulfill our potential?