

LETTING GO OF THE PAST

(A key to embracing God's future for our life)



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I do**, *forgetting* those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 3:12-14)**

- We serve a God of the future



- When we come to Christ we have a future full of purpose and meaning
- God's plan for our life is far greater than ours
- The bible is full of Scriptures that reveal that God has so much planned for our life When we come to Christ

In the book of Jeremiah we read,

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”
(Jeremiah 29:11-13)



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
(Ephesians 2:10)

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”
(Ephesians 3:20)



King David wrote,

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And **forget not all His benefits**; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, **who redeems your life from destruction**, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

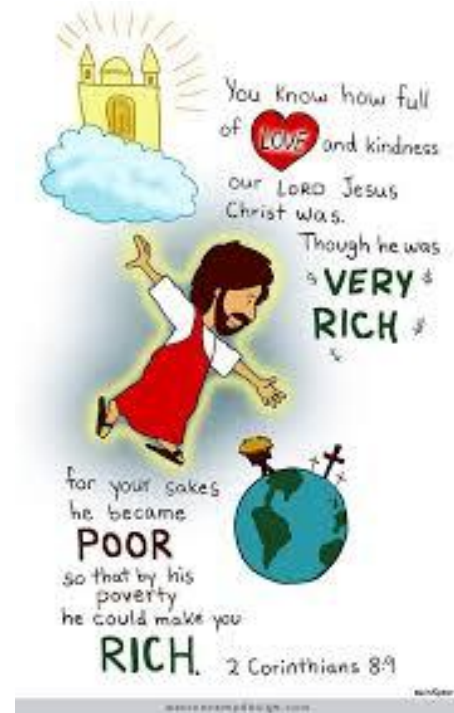
(Psalm 103:2-5)



The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

(2 Corinthians 8:9)



Jesus Himself said,

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**



- The bible makes it clear that God has much planned for our life



- But as believers we are in a continual spiritual warfare where the enemy will try and prevent us from appropriating all that God has planned for our life
- One of the Devil's greatest strategies to prevent Christians from enjoying the future that God has planned for their lives is to get them to dwell on their past failures and disappointments

- The enemy will continually try and condemn us for our past mistakes and try and make us feel unworthy to serve the Lord



- Carrying shame and guilt relating to past mistakes will always prevent us from fully enjoying what God has planned for our future
- But when we come to Christ we become a new creation in Christ, we become part of God's family and God's forgives and forgets all of our past mistakes

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)**



In the book of Isaiah we read,

“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.” (Isaiah 43:25)

We have a God who forgives and forgets all of our past sins when we confess our sins and commit our lives to Christ



- The enemy will continually try and get us to focus on our past lost opportunities and the years that we have wasted to discourage us
- But God is able to redeem the time
- Nothing is ever wasted with God.
- God will even use our past failures and disappointments in life and use them for His glory as we help many others to avoid the same mistakes that we made



- Focusing continually on our past failures will cause fear to arise in our hearts and minds
- Fear will then cause us to be apprehensive about moving on into the new things that God has planned for our life



- Fear is a strategy that the Devil will use to stop us from embracing God given opportunities that come our way in life - FEAR WILL PREVENT US FROM REALISING OUR FULL POTENTIAL IN CHRIST
- We must take our focus off our past failures and focus on the promises of God which we as believers can appropriate in our life NOW and in the future

The Apostle Paul wrote,

**“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”
(2 Corinthians 1:20)**



Our past:

- i. Mistakes, failures and wrong choices
- ii. Setbacks and disappointments
- iii. Rejection by others
- iv. Family background, and
- v. Educational Levels



Do not have to define our future.

When we come to Christ, God has a unique plan for our lives that is full of great purpose and meaning

We see this with those in King David's mighty army and how they started out in life defeated before becoming mighty men in David's army

“David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred with him.” **(1 Samuel 22:1-2)**



Through David's Godly influence these men had a complete turn around in their lives and became mighty men of valour. We see their amazing exploits in 2 Samuel 23:8-39 and in Chapters 11 and 12 of 1 Chronicles. Some of these exploits are seen in the following short passages of Scripture:

“These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth^[a] the Tachmonite, chief among the captains.^[b] He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.”

(2 Samuel 23:8)



“And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo,^[c] the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.”

(2 Samuel 23:9-10)



“And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.” **(2 Samuel 23:11-12)**



SO HOW DO WE LET GO OF OUR PAST DISAPPOINTMENTS AND FAILURES AND EVEN SUCCESSES TO FULLY EMBRACE THE FUTURE THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE - God has so much planned for our future



1) We must simply refuse to dwell on the past

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

- Letting go of the past needs to be a daily choice because we will consistently experience injustices and disappointments in life because we are in a very real continual spiritual war

- **We need to continually reach forward to those things which are ahead**



- We can only learn from our past mistakes. No amount of reflecting on our past mistakes and disappointments can change the past

- **We need to simply choose to move forward into what God has planned for our life**



- We must even refuse to look back at the good things that we have done in the past for God and rest on our laurels
- With many people now still in need of salvation, God has new and bigger things planned for our lives in 2017
- EVERY ONE of us can make a great difference in our world for eternity this year if we can move forward to fully embrace all that God has planned for our lives this year



2) We must purposely choose to forgive all those who have hurt us in the past AND forgive ourselves - This needs to be an ongoing choice.

- Not forgiving those who have hurt us in the past will prevent us from moving on in life and will impact our future relationships
- A key to not looking back at the past is to forgive all those who have hurt us in the past
- Forgiving those who have hurt us is a great key to emotional health and healing and to having HEALTHY relationships in the future



Jesus emphasised the importance of forgiving all people when he said,



“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”
(Mark 11:25-26)



3) We need to fully entrust our future to the Lord We need to allow the Lord to lead



- **Nothing is impossible for God** – For this reason we need to allow the Lord to lead in our life
- Most of our past mistakes have happened because we did things independently of God, especially before we came to Christ
- We need to allow Jesus to be truly Lord of our future. As we fully entrust our future to the Lord He is able to bring restoration to our lives

- We need to be prepared to do things God's way.
- God's ways are higher than our ways
- As we simply entrust our future to the Lord we can be assured that **all that God has planned for our life will come to pass**



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

King David wrote,

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself also in the Lord,** And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.”
(Psalm 37:3-5)



- **FULLY entrusting our future into God's hands helps us to move on from our past disappointments as we allow the Lord to guide and direct our steps in life**

We need to be prepared to get out of our comfort zone and to TAKE STEPS OF FAITH if we are to fully embrace the future that God has planned for our life

- But we can be assured that as we step out by faith to do what God calls us to do, He will never let us down



Trust God.

- We must refuse to allow our past failures to stop us from embracing the new things that God has planned for our life

In the book of Hebrews we read,

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
(Hebrews 11:1)**



FAITH is
confidence in what we
HOPE for and
assurance about what we do not
SEE
Hebrews 11

It is as we move out in faith to do what God calls us to do, that we can be assured that He will begin to move on our behalf and we will see the miracles in our life

**As we commit to trusting the LORD with our
FUTURE, we can be assured that God will
continually direct our paths in life**

In the book of Proverbs we read,

**“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean
not on your own understanding; In all your ways
acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your
paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)**



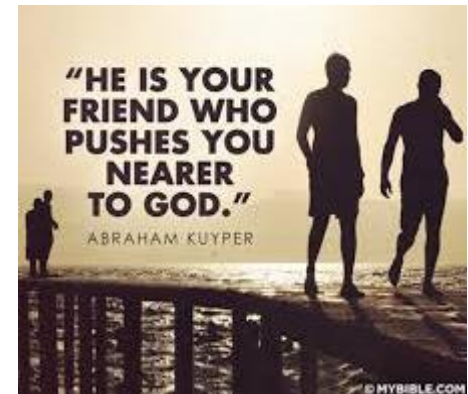
4) We need to let go of some past wrong friendships and associations that have the potential to drag us back to our old ways of living

- We need to have people of faith and character in our circle of friends
- We become like the company that we keep
- We need to allow God to connect us with the right people who will be part of God's unfolding plan for our life and future



- The enemy will continually try and connect us with people who will hold us back from becoming all that God has planned for your future

- Not everyone will be prepared to go where God wants to take us to. We need to have friends who will encourage us to become all that God has planned for our life



- Part of moving forward in life may involve breaking off some wrong associations that will cause you to keep falling back into wrong habits and prevent you from fully embracing the wonderful plan that God has for your life

The bible makes it clear that we must have right friends and associations in our life if we are to walk in victory as believers



The Psalmist wrote,

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” **(Psalm 1:1-3)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”

(1 Corinthians 15:33)



In the book of Proverbs we read,

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully,
For the way of the wicked leads them astray.”

(Proverbs 12:26)

“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a
furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and
set a snare for your soul.” **(Proverbs 22:24-25)**

5) We need to have a clear God given vision for our future - We need to continually know what God's unfolding will and plan for our life is

- Without a clear God given vision for our life we can begin to live undisciplined lives and be more prone to dwelling on our past failures and disappointments



In the book of Proverbs we read,

**“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.”
(Proverbs 29:18)**

- WE NEED TO CONTINUALLY JOURNAL WHAT GOD PUTS ON OUR HEART TO DO – This is a great key to continually knowing and following God’s plan for our life



- If we continually focus on what God has called us to do we will no longer have time to dwell on our past as we begin to see God opening up doors of opportunity that will give us great purpose and meaning in life

6) We must not withdraw from fellowship and spend too much time in isolation

- If we spend too much time in isolation the enemy is more able to get us to dwell on our past failures and cause us to become discouraged and depressed
- Even when we don't feel like meeting with others, it is crucial that we continually choose to connect with other believers
- Fellowship with other believers is a great key to remaining strong in our walk with the Lord, especially when we are going through struggles and challenges in life



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:23-25)**



7) KNOW THAT GOD HAS A GREAT PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE

The word of the LORD came to the Prophet Jeremiah when he was languishing in prison, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)

You may be in a pit of despair today OR uncertain about the future. Know that God has a great future for you and is able to turn things around in your life, IF you allow Him to take the reins of your life



- God knows how to work things out in our life
- No situation is ever impossible for God
- God knows your every need in life
- If we need wisdom in life we need to simply ask of God and He will give us the guidance that we need in life to succeed



In the book of James we read,

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)

SO MAY I ENCOURAGE YOU TODAY:

- Your past does not have to define your future
- Your current circumstances do not affect your God given future. God is able to do the impossible in your life, for with God nothing will be impossible
- If you can simply let go of the past and fully entrust your future to the Lord and **let Him lead**, you will see God opening up a future full of great purpose and meaning for you
- Know that God has a great plan for your future

