

PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND



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)**

- Continually reflecting on our past failures and disappointments will sabotage our God given future



- **We can only learn from our past mistakes**
- **We cannot change what has happened to us in the past no matter how much we would like to**
- **Reflecting on our past failures will only discourage us and steal our joy and peace**

I will now briefly look at 5 keys that can help us to let go of our past failures and disappointments, so that we can fully embrace what God has planned for our future

1) **WE MUST CHOOSE TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND**

- We must REFUSE to dwell on our past failures

- **We must refuse to have pity parties**

- We must stop justifying our present circumstances by blaming our past injustices

- **WE MUST SIMPLY GET UP AND CHOOSE TO MAKE OUR LIVES COUNT FROM NOW ON**

- **We must refuse to live with regrets**



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)



We must not even allow our past successes to stop us from moving forward to embrace the new things that God has planned for our life

2) KNOW THAT GOD HAS A GREAT FUTURE FOR US IRRESPECTIVE OF OUR PAST FAILURES (God is always the God of second and third and fourth chances)

- Others may give up on us, but God will never give up on us
- **We need to just simply surrender our lives and future to the Lord**
- As we do, God will then begin to bring restoration to every area of our life and to unfold His plan for our life
- **Every one of us can make a great difference in this world as we live for the cause of Christ**



OUR PAST DOES NOT HAVE TO DEFINE OUR FUTURE



King David wrote,

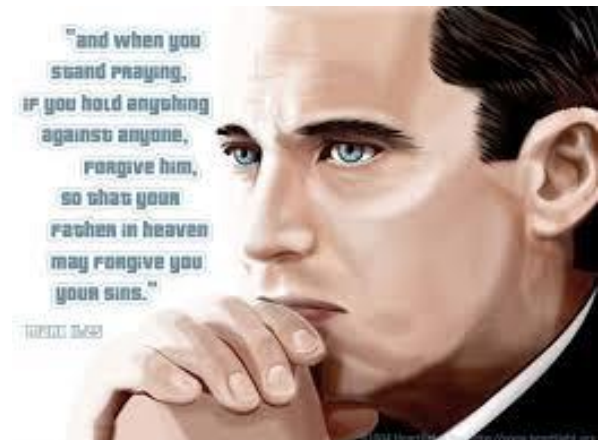
“Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:2-5)

God is able to restore broken lives when people give their life to Jesus and walk with Him.

3) We need to forgive all those who have hurt us in the past and forgive ourselves

To be FREE to move on in life to embrace the future that God has planned for our life, we need to FIRST FORGIVE

- OTHERS who have hurt us, and
- OURSELVES



FORGIVING OTHERS:

- Is a choice
- Is liberating (it helps us to be truly free indeed)
- Leads to reconciliation in relationships, and
- Brings healing to our lives



- Without forgiving others we cannot move on to fully embrace all that God has planned for our future

This is why Jesus continually emphasised the importance of loving and forgiving others

Jesus Himself 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)



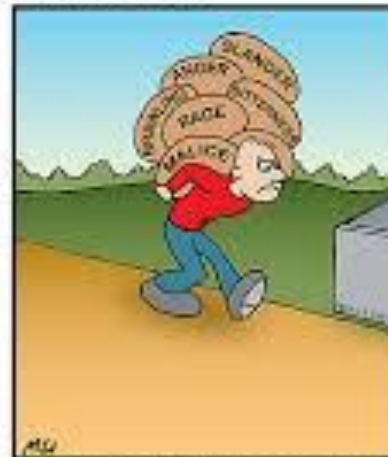
Unforgiveness will affect both our relationship with God and our relationships with others. We must simply choose to forgive others and ourselves

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32)



DUMPSTER



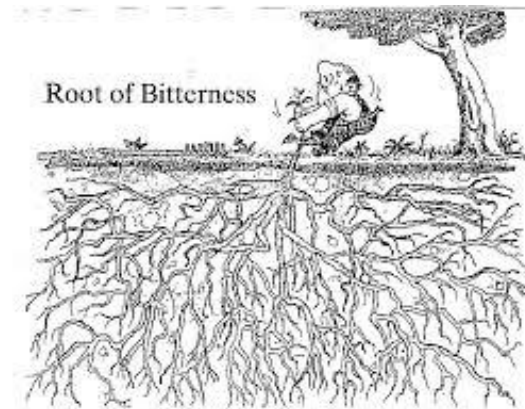
A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

— EPHESIANS 4:31-32 NIV

Unforgiveness will destroy our relationships with others and prevent us from developing healthy relationships in the future



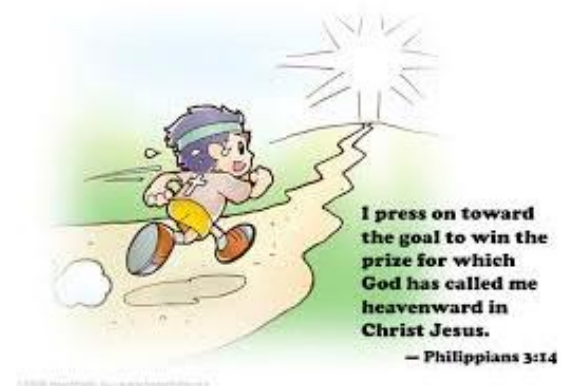
In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” (Hebrews 12:14-15)

We must simply choose to forgive others and ourselves if we are to move on and fully embrace all that God has planned for our life

4) WE NEED TO HAVE A CLEAR GOD GIVEN VISION FOR OUR LIFE AND FUTURE

- God has a unique plan for every believer's life
- We need to simply seek to know and to follow God's will and plan for our life
- **This is why the Apostle Paul wrote, "... but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." (Philippians 3:12)**



Having a clear God given vision for our future will stop us from looking back at our past failures and disappointments, especially during the challenging seasons of our life



The LORD said to the prophet Habakkuk,

“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; **Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.**”

(Habakkuk 2:2-3) AND



5) We need to simply entrust our future to the LORD and allow Him to guide and direct our steps in life in the future

- We may have mismanaged our life in the past
- **We may have made a lot of poor choices in the past**
- But if we fully entrust our future to the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our steps in life, we can be assured that we will have a future full of great purpose and meaning



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“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)



- God has so much is store for our future
 - **His ways are higher than our ways**
- We must simply let the past go and allow the LORD to guide and direct our every step in life, so that He is truly Lord of all of our life – God knows what is best for us and what we need in life

I will now conclude with a Scripture that clearly outlines how we should live our life from this day on, so that we can fully embrace all that God has planned for our life from this day on



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)**