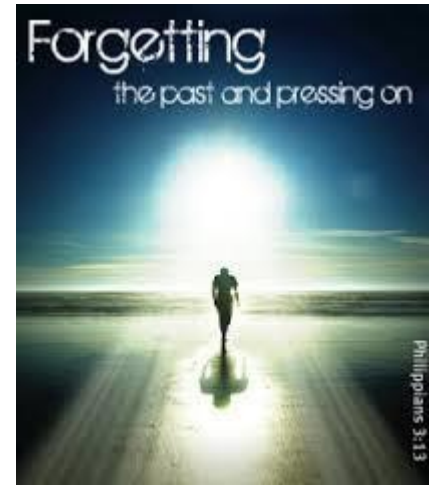


PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND



In this teaching I will be sharing on the importance of not allowing our past failures and even successes to stop us from fully embracing the future that God has planned for our life

I will begin by looking at the words of the Apostle Paul who was initially persecuting Christians before he became a great apostle of the faith



“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)**

In this passage of Scripture we see a number of things:

- That in this life we will never attain perfection. If we were always waiting to be perfect before being used by God we would never do anything for Him
- **That we need to always keep pressing on and moving forward in life. Life will always have its setbacks**
- That we must refuse to live in the past and not keep dwelling on our past failures, and
- **That we need to be focused on pursuing the future that God has planned for our life knowing that we have an eternal hope in Christ**



- **LETTING GO OF THE PAST IS A KEY TO EMBRACING ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR FUTURE**



- We must refuse to live our life with regrets
- We all at times have made wrong choices in life.

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 can only learn from our past mistakes
- We cannot change what has happened 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



- We must not let our past disappointments stop us from embracing the future that God has planned for our life

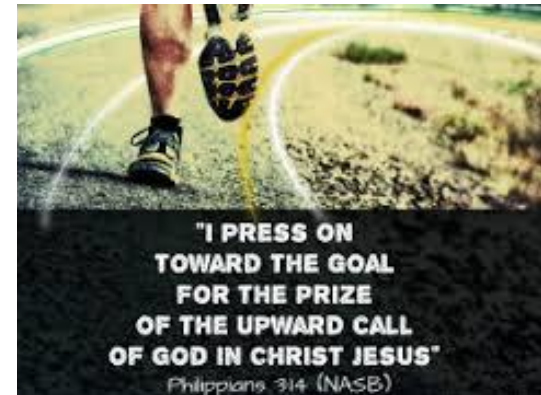


- Our past does not have to determine our future.

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)

- CONTINUALLY LETTING GO OF OUR PAST HURTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS IS ALSO A KEY TO BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IN OUR LIFE



- None of us are perfect. We all at times will let others down in life.



- We must always be quick to forgive others and to start each day on a fresh footing.

This is why Jesus emphasised the importance of ALWAYS forgiving others

We see this in the gospel of Matthew,

“Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:21-22)



70 x 7

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

- **God is ABLE to resurrect broken dreams and to bring restoration to people's lives.**

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)

- **He is always the God of the second and the third and the fourth chances**



- Continually dwelling on our past disappointments will cause us to miss God given opportunities that God has planned for our life NOW
- We must refuse to maintain a victim mentality. We all at times will get hurt in life and *disappoint others*
- **God has a wonderful future for our life**
- We can never embrace the new beginnings that God has planned for our life if we continually hang on to the past and to the old ways of doing things – God has much in store for our future



So practically how can we let the past go completely so that we can fully embrace the future that God has planned for our life

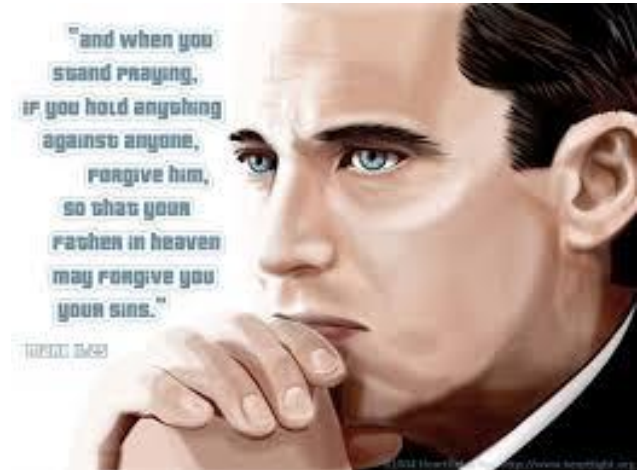


1) We must refuse to rehearse the hurts from the past. We need to let it go and stop telling people about all of our past disappointments

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“ ... but one thing I do, *forgetting* those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” (Philippians 3:13)

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

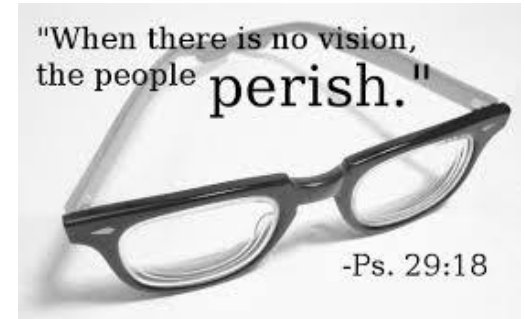
**3) We need to seek God for His plan for our life
(We need a God given vision for our future to
focus on – God has a unique plan
for EVERY believer’s life)**

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)**

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)



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 tarry, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.”
(Habakkuk 2:2-3)



4) We must not spend too much time in isolation (We all need fellowship with other people, especially other caring believers) - If the enemy can isolate us he is more able to get us to dwell again on our past failures and disappointments in life



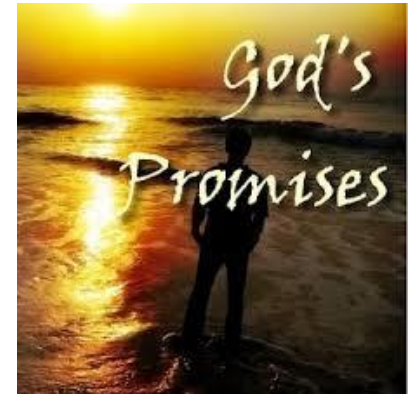
For this reason the Devil will continually try and offend and sidetrack believers to prevent them from fellowshiping with other Christians

The Apostle Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”
(1 Peter 5:8-9)



It is when people become isolated and start dwelling on their past failures, that the enemy is more easily able to whisper thoughts of hopelessness and despair into their minds and the lie that they have no future. *God has a good plan for every person's life.* We need to always *value and appreciate* our friends, our family and church family

5) We need to build our future based on what God says about us in His Word. The bible is full of God's promises that make it clear that *with Him* we have a wonderful hope and future.



This is why the LORD said to Joshua before he was about to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

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)



WE NEED TO BUILD OUR FUTURE BASED ON GOD'S PROMISES IN HIS WORD AND NOT BASED ON:



- Our past experiences and upbringing
- What others have spoken over our life, or
- Based on our education level or age

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” **(Romans 12:2)** and

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”
(Romans 10:17)



Continually meditating on the Word of God will help to build up our faith to believe that “For with God nothing will be possible” (Luke 1:37) – With our faith built up we will always plan for and look to the future with a sense of hope and optimism

6) We need to learn to fully entrust our future into God's hands – Jesus needs to be Lord of all of our life. When He is, we will see God **EMPOWER** us to do all that He has planned for our life and future



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)**

“I can do *all things through Christ* who strengthens me.” **(Philippians 4:13)**

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)



7) We need to *refuse to entertain the negative words that have been spoken over our life* in the past, but rather choose to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit who will reveal to us things to come – WHAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR FUTURE

Jesus Himself said,



“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”
(John 16:13)

8) Sometimes we need to break ties with wrong friends so that we can **MOVE ON** to fully embrace all that God has planned for our life in the future. Some friends have the potential to keep dragging us back to our old ways of living and bad habits

In the book of Proverbs we read,

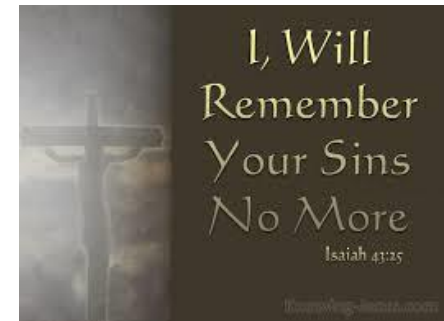
“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.”

(Proverbs 12:26)

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” **(Proverbs 13:20)**



9) We need to simply resolve to do the right thing by God and others from today on, irrespective of our past failures. We must refuse to live our lives with continual shame and guilt. If we simply accept who we are in Christ and remain committed to living for Him, we will finish our life well and be an encouragement to many in the future



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) As believers Jesus has saved and forgiven us for a future full of purpose and meaning

10) Being planted in a loving local church fellowship - Being part of a loving church family gives us a support network and helps us to *receive encouragement* to move on when we have experienced setbacks in life, and to be *encouraged to step out into the new things* that God has planned for our life – WE ALL NEED ONE ANOTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST



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)**

AND



11) We need to be people of faith who are prepared to step out into the new things that God has planned for our life. Human nature likes to become settled and comfortable. What God has planned for our FUTURE will always involve stepping out of our comfort zone and having to take steps of faith

But as we step out by faith to do what God has called us to do, we will see the miracles and open doors of opportunity and His faithfulness ALWAYS.

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)



So may I encourage you today to:

- Let go of all of your past disappointments in life
- To forgive all those who have let you down in the past and to forgive yourself if need be
- To make a decisive decision today, to let the past go so that you can fully embrace the future that God has planned for your life, and
- To fully entrust your future to the Lord with an expectation that the best is yet to come. God knows what you have need of in every area of your life. **We all have to choose to let the past go.**

