

Preparation For The Journey

Letting Go Of The Past

What would happen if you attempted to drive your car down the interstate, all the while your eyes were fixed upon the rear view mirror, looking back at what was behind you? It wouldn't be long before you crashed into something or someone, causing serious injury or death to yourself and/or someone else. Life is no different. **If we continually keep our focus on the things of the past, both good and bad, we are destined to have an accident on the way to our future.** In fact, if we keep looking back, we will never get our lives headed in the direction of our future. However, as many of you know, letting go of the past is not always an easy thing to do. We allow the disappointments of what could have, should have, or did happen to captivate our thoughts and dreams, to the point where we can no longer even prepare for our future, let alone move into it. On the other hand, we can allow past victories and accomplishments to keep us bound to the past, afraid to even try to move on for fear of not living up to the "Glory Days". It's like a certain sitcom where the main actor constantly lives in his past, recounting his high school days when he was a football star. Looking back with longing or regret can be a cancer to the promise of your tomorrows, not to mention your today.

Why should we let go of the past? Two specific reasons are offered. One, as already mentioned, to move forward you can't look back. And two, letting go of the past enables you to be fit for the Kingdom.

There are **four practical steps you can take that will help you let go of the past.** The first step is to **accept your present place or position in life.** As a businessman I know would always say, "It is what it is". You need to accept it, and then change it or move on. The next step is one that we talked about earlier in another study, and that is to **understand God's desire to give you a bright and joyful future.** No matter what the past gave you, good or bad, God has a plan for your future which will move you closer to being the person that He desires you to be. Remember, your past doesn't equal your future. The third step is to **look expectantly toward the future.** If God is in it, then it's got to be good and is something to be looked forward to. And finally, as you let go of the past, **be strong and courageous as you face your future.** These four steps will help you to let go of the past and move into your God given future with confidence and assurance.

Please understand that when I talk about letting go of the past, I'm not saying that you shouldn't learn from it or even deal with issues that may be hindering you. What I *am* saying is that you can't live in the past or allow it to dictate your life in a way that keeps you from accomplishing the things that God has designed for you.

With that said, let's move into our study as we prepare to unlock the chains that have had us bound to our past, and experience the fresh breeze of hope that only freedom from the past can give.

Reasons for Letting Go Of The Past

1. To move Forward you can't look Back

“Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal, but there is one thing I always do. **Forgetting** the past and straining toward what is ahead, I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize for which God called me through Christ to the life above.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NCV)

Phil. 3:13 - **Forgetting** - Greek word, ep-ee-lan-than'-om-ahee

To lose out of mind - Imply, to neglect

Gen. 41:51 - **Forget** - Hebrew word, naw-shaw [(be) forgetful]

Prime root, forget - Fig., to neglect causant - to remit, remove, deprive, exact

2. Letting go of the past enables you to be Fit for the kingdom.

Another man said, “I will follow you Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to my family.” Jesus said, “Anyone who begins to plow a field but keeps looking back is of no use in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:61-62 (NCV)

Four Keys to Letting Go

1. Accept your present place or position in life.

Joshua had to accept his place as leader of the Israeli people, even though Moses was the greatest prophet ever to arise in Israel. Moses was a tough act to follow.

(Read Deuteronomy 34:9 thru Joshua 1:2)

God's grace is sufficient! Frustration of current circumstances can cause us regret which always causes us to look back.

2. Understand God's desire to give you a future.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

3. Look Expectantly toward the future.

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.”

1Corinthians 9:24 (NIV)

4. Be Strong and Courageous

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9 (NKJ)