

3 Steps to Letting Go of Worry and Regret for Good

Our family went on vacation to the South Carolina beach one year. I had the bright idea of borrowing someone's RV for the trip. What a big mistake. We went to this well-known restaurant down on the marsh, and I parked it in the sand parking lot the best I could.

When we finished dinner, we found the RV stuck in the muck and mire of the marsh. I walked down a dirt road and found a guy with a tractor in his front yard. (What are the odds of that?) He graciously came and pulled us out so we could be on our way. I can tell you, it has been hotels ever since for our vacations.

As a **pastor** and **counselor**, I spend a lot of time helping people get “unstuck” so they can get on with their lives. We all struggle with keeping our focus on the present so we can live a full life today.

Some of us are stuck in **the past**. We regret the past, grieve over the past, cherish the past and even try to resolve the past. But we can't live in the past. The past is past. That's a great discovery everyone needs to make. We can't fix something that no longer exists.

Others of us are **worried** about the future. We plan so much for the future that we fail to live today. We try to anticipate everything that will happen so we can get ready for it. We make lists of the pros and cons of this or that decision but don't make any decisions. We discuss hypothetical situations but shy away from taking risks. Some people are always getting ready for something great but fail to get anything done today.

Here are a few things I have discovered about getting **unstuck**

that might help you. Think of me as the guy with the tractor who has come along to pull you out of the marsh so you can get on with your vacation.

First, learn from your past without living in it. The past is like watching an old movie on Encore or watching a PBS special of a great musical group whose **glory days** are over. It's a great few minutes of entertainment, but it's not current. Stay current in your thinking, your education, your goals and even your fashion. Live fully this day as a gift from God.

Second, plan for the future but expect the unexpected. Planning for the future doesn't mean we can control it. Life is an adventure. Face your life as the early explorers who arrived at an undiscovered land. Every day, they went out to see the new world. They met the surprises, challenges and dangers of every day with courage. Most discoveries would have never been made if they had tried to figure everything out in advance.

There is no way to plan for everything that may happen to you in your life. If you trust God, He will give you what you need for every challenge you face. You don't have to know what will happen tomorrow if you know **God** is with you.

Finally, focus your energies on living today. Make sure you do something you enjoy every day. Make sure you spend time with the people who are the most important to you. It may just be a quick phone call, text message or email.

Touch base with your heavenly Father every day. Don't get so "caught up" that you forget to "look up." Make sure you get an important task done on your to-do list, and don't try to get it all done at once.

A wealthy person told me we will never be financially secure until we appreciate the value of one dollar. If we don't appreciate the value of one dollar, we will waste money and never be able to save it. I would say the same is true of

life. We will never live a full life or a life of purpose until we understand the value of one single day. People who can waste one day stuck in grief or anger or just plain laziness will never live a life of purpose and **passion**.

This is what the psalmist meant when he wrote, “**This is the day that the LORD has made**; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24, ESV). This is the day—not yesterday or tomorrow, but today. So get unstuck, and get on with the business of living.

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