

4 Ways to Find Freedom From Past Mistakes

Recently I've been updating my book, *Life Interrupted: The Scoop on Being a Young Mom*. It released in 2004, and I know it's helped a lot of young moms ... but things have changed. With shows like *Teen Mom* and *16 and Pregnant*, teen pregnancy is more talked about. Other things have changed too. I've been mentoring teen moms for 13 years, and I have new insights. I've also changed. God has brought healing in my own life. I've found freedom from some of my past mistakes.

In the current version of *Life Interrupted*, I share a little about mistakes such as abortion, teen pregnancy and trying to overcome the bonds I had with old boyfriends due to sexual intimacy. The newer version goes deeper. I share more, mostly because I've found more healing. Going back to the past mentally to allow God to work emotionally and spiritually is never easy, but it's important. Luke 4:18 says:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free" (NLT).

Jesus wants to release captives. He wants the blind to see and the oppressed to be set free. That's what He came for. If you're carrying around burdens, it's time to drop them. If you feel as if your past mistakes are weighing you down, it's time to find freedom. How?

1. Let yourself mourn. Our past mistakes hurt us in so many ways. Keeping a brave face is hard. Let yourself mourn what was lost—your innocence, your youth, your healthy relationships.

2. Go to Jesus with your pain. We try to hold everything in because we think Jesus will condemn us. Instead, He wants to comfort us. He mourns all you've lost too. If we look at Jesus

in the Bible, those He spent the most time with were those the rest of society looked down upon. Nothing you've done shocks Him. He's waiting with open arms.

3. Take your past mistakes into the light. "I will say to the prisoners, 'Come out in freedom,' and to those in darkness, 'Come into the light.' They will be my sheep, grazing in green pastures and on hills that were previously bare" (Is. 49:9).

What does this mean? For me, this meant confessing my sins to someone who cared. I first confessed my abortion to a group of women at a post-abortion Bible study, and I could feel the weight lifted from my shoulders. Numerous times throughout the years I've also confessed to my husband and close friends. Past sin is still sin, but it doesn't have the same power over you when put into the light.

4. Invite Jesus into the situation. Years ago I was struggling—really struggling—after being approached by an old boyfriend online. I loved my husband and was in a happy marriage, and I was shocked by how much I was drawn to my old boyfriend. Hearing from him stirred up a thousand memories and longings I'd stuffed deep inside.

A few days before my boyfriend had contacted me, I'd prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life" (Ps. 139:23-24).

Within days God indeed showed me what was deep inside—what offended Him. There was so much inside I needed to deal with, but I didn't know how.

It was a daily battle to "take every thought captive for Christ" and not to let my mind take me back to my "first love" and that time during high school. I struggled for a few months until I gathered with friends and they prayed for me. That night, as I lay in bed, I went back there again, only this time I took Jesus. I walked through that relationship, and I saw Jesus standing there. He was weeping, mostly because I was

trying to find love in all the wrong places—love He longed to give me.

The next morning I woke up with that burden lifted. I no longer saw that time with my old boyfriend as romantic, but I saw it as something that broke Jesus' heart. Inviting Jesus into our past memories allows us to understand how He felt during that time. And He not only brought tears, but also healing to my soul.

It's never easy to relive past mistakes, but Jesus came to bring healing and wholeness. He wants to give you freedom and peace. This month don't let those burdens hold you back. Take them to the One who can do something about that. Take them to Jesus. He came to bring freedom in ways you never imagined. Trust me on that.

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