

How Changing Your Past Can Change Your Future

A wise mentor once told me, “You can never step into the same river twice.” Life happens. You can’t recreate exactly the same good moments, or go back and undo your bad decisions. But since then I’ve learned there’s a way you *can* change your past—not the facts, but their meaning and their impact on you. And changing your past can change your future.

We all come into this world with baggage. We have genetic predispositions to our own brand of brokenness. The environment we grew up in was broken in unique ways, some more than others. We each added to our own brand of brokenness by the choices we made and actions we took, sometimes in response to what happened to us. What a mess.

We humans deal with all that baggage in ingenious ways. Some ignore, deny, and try to forget the past. Some limp along, glossing over the past, somehow existing but never fully living. Some exert almost superhuman effort to prove the naysayers wrong about their past. Some spend hours, months, years in the counselor’s office or on the psychoanalyst’s couch exploring, remembering, reframing, relearning.

Please hear me; none of that is wrong. Mental defense mechanisms are God-given. We must intentionally exert strong effort in learning to do things in a new way. Getting trauma-informed care from professionals is wise. I often recommend some of these steps to people who are struggling, and I’ve done them myself.

And yet for many, especially for believers who hunger for the fully alive kind of life Jesus promises, those mechanisms seem somehow lacking. Could there be another piece Jesus offers that we have not fully embraced?

Going There with Jesus

Jesus changes everything. Everything! Even your past, in the sense that who you are as a human being because of your past becomes different. (OK, that sounds good. But hang in there with me.)

But Jesus can only change your past if He is there with you. He cannot change where He is not present. Remember, God exists outside of time. In Him there is no yesterday or tomorrow, only today. From our human perspective, He can be just as present in our past as in our future.

You can invite Jesus into your past. You can invite Him to go with you to those places where you are stuck, where you need healing, where you need freedom. You can invite Him into the memories, the habits, the background, the genetics, the family junk, the bad decisions and all the other pieces of your own brand of brokenness.

And when Jesus is there in your past, it changes. He changes it. He changes *you*.

This is not some mystical experience; it's God recreating you, rewiring you, redoing the impact of your past on your present and your future. You can "go there" with Jesus, and that changes everything.

How I 'Went There' With Jesus

I first learned this as God was bringing me out of my dysfunction and the four horrendous years I experienced as a troubled young woman. Perhaps the first time was in a prayer service at church. During prayer, I saw all the pieces of me as broken, wounded children piled in a heap in front of me. Jesus reached out His arms, and as He brought His arms together, He gathered all the broken pieces of me into Himself. I became whole, no longer in pieces but one human being.

That single experience didn't complete my healing, but it was pivotal in moving me out of my mess. I still had learning and growing to do, but I was no longer fractured and in pieces.

More recently, I "went there" with Jesus after my husband passed away. A few months after Al's death, I went to the same location where we had taken an anniversary trip a few years before. I stayed in the same hotel, walked on the same beach. I intentionally took Jesus with me. I "went there" with Him. I stayed there for hours, walking, journaling, remembering, crying, inviting Jesus to be in all that grief with me.

And I stayed there until I got to the gratitude—not for my husband's death, but for his life. Jesus reworked that place in my heart to where I could honestly *feel* gratitude for who God had allowed my husband to be to me, and for who I had become as a result of our marriage and the love we shared. My grief was not over, but it had been redone by Jesus.

How You Can 'Go There' With Jesus

Where do you need to "go there" with Jesus? What parts of your past still hold you? Where might you sense you are undone and need more? That's where to take Jesus.

You can do that either alone or with others. You can do that by physically going to a place that brings you there mentally, or going there in your memory. One woman I talked with said, "I can walk down the street where I was date-raped years ago and take Jesus with me." Another friend "went there" as a pastor prayed over him about the spiritual loss he felt after his father's death.

I've tried to give you enough examples that you will see how you can "go there" with Jesus in your own journey. Whatever part of your soul needs help, go there with Jesus. Intentionally invite His presence into that very place. Ask Him, out loud, to go there with you. Give Him some time; don't rush away. Stick around a while.

When you take Jesus into your past with you, He will change it. The facts of the date rape, loved one's death, dysfunctional childhood or anything else will still be the facts, but what those facts do and mean to you will be changed. That's the creative power God has over even your past.

So give Him that chance. Dare to take Him with you into that place.

And that's how changing your past can change your future forever.

Your Turn: *Where do you need to "go there" with Jesus? How are you going to do that? Leave a comment below.* {eo}

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This article originally appeared at .