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I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God ... is calling us.

–Philippians 3:13-14

God is the God of new beginnings. In Scripture we find the word “beginning” mentioned more than 100 times. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, is known as the “book of beginnings.” And the first verse of that book reads, “In the beginning.” Think God is trying to tell us something?

Unfortunately, most humans are unskilled at the art of navigating new beginnings. We get stuck in the past or frozen in the present. However, it’s a fact that things in our lives change, and nothing on earth remains the same.

Therefore, we must become accomplished at dealing with seasons when God inaugurates change in our lives. Walking with God is always progressive.

New beginnings stretch us. They move us out of our comfort zones—away from the familiar and into the unknown. Most of us don’t enjoy the process, but it’s a necessary part of the Christian experience.

Beginnings always necessitate closings. You must let go of the old to embrace the new. So life becomes a succession of closings and beginnings.

Closure is an important practice for those who want to experience new beginnings. The word “closure” means “to bring to an end, to resolve an issue and move beyond it.” Often it involves mental and spiritual anguish. At times, it’s a determined act of faith and faith alone.

That's because many of us are stuck in the past—mired down by what “coulda” or “shoulda” happened.

Maybe you still remember the stinging words of a close friend. Perhaps you're angry at a close relative. Consequently, you never seem to move to a new beginning.

What's the answer? The closure that comes from forgiveness.

It's not always easy to extend forgiveness to those who have hurt you, but forgiveness is not optional. It is the key to the door of new beginnings.

If there is someone you need to forgive, release that person now. Let go of any negative emotions and see what God releases into your life.

Many new experiences await you this year. Revelation 21:5 says, “And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’”

We serve the God of new beginnings, and He wants to write a new chapter in your life. This could be your year to shine.

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