

Getting Past Your Past

We've all experienced times in our life when we've been tempted to give up. Maybe you tried something once and it didn't work out the way you expected it to. It's easy to get discouraged, but God doesn't want us to get stuck in a moment in our lives when things didn't work out the way we planned. He wants us to keep going so we can fulfill His purpose and truly enjoy our lives.

John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)." God has a great life planned for us, but too often we allow the enemy to steal our joy by focusing on our past. I believe in order to live the wonderful lives that God planned for us, we need to leave our past behind and press forward. We need to get *unstuck*.

The devil would love for us to believe that, "I've made too many mistakes," "There's no way to overcome the mess I have in my life," "I'm too old," or "It's just too late." But the truth is whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever you've been through: It is *never* too late to begin again.

I had a lousy start in my own life. My father sexually and verbally abused me for many years, and it caused me a lot of pain and sadness. But God not only restored what was stolen from me, He made my new life in Him better than I ever could have imagined. It has been a long journey, but I can honestly say that now I love my life and I'm determined to have a great finish.

God's Word is filled with examples of people who were given a fresh start. A woman known only as "Rahab the harlot" was rescued and given a noble name in the bloodline of Christ. Ashamed because he gave in to fear and denied that he knew

Jesus, Peter was forgiven and inspired to preach at Pentecost. Paul was caught in a trap of dead religion, persecuting the early Christians. However God transformed him and called him to write much of the New Testament.

God loves **new beginnings**! And He has a **fresh start** for you too if you'll spend time in God's Word and let the Holy Spirit guide you.

Life in Christ is a fresh start. The truth is, the greatest new beginning any of us can have is becoming a new creature in Christ. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!" (AMP).

It's important to understand that **growing in Christ** is a process that takes time. We learn how to **walk by faith** little by little, one step at a time. It's like this: When a baby is learning how to walk, they fall down many times. But they always get back up and try again. And that's really what God is asking us to do. No matter how many times we fall down in life, if we continue to get back up, eventually we're going to get to the place where we need to be. God will lead and guide us into the best life we can possibly have, but first we need to let go of our past mistakes.

The Bible says in Hebrews 8:12, "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (NIV). God chooses to not only forgive all of our sins, but also to forget them! We need to stop remembering what God has forgotten. You're no surprise to Him. There's not a thing about me or you or anybody else that He doesn't know. Yet when we turn to Him, He still opens His arms and invites us into a relationship with Him.

Our history is not our destiny, but it is very important

because it can teach us what worked and didn't work in our lives. And as we walk through life, we learn how to hear God's voice speaking to our hearts and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. We need to learn how to yield to the Holy Spirit because He's smarter than us and always has our very best interest at heart (see Jeremiah 29:11).

You never have to get stuck in a moment or season of your life where things didn't work out as you thought. Romans 5:5 says, "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (NET). If you will refuse to give up and hang on to your hope in Christ, you can enjoy the life God has planned for you. **God loves you** and He will never give up on you!

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