

Looking Forward

In Philippians 3:13, the Apostle Paul says that one thing  he really made an effort to do was to forget “what lies behind” (*The Amplified Bible*)—letting go of what already had passed. I believe Paul tried fixing earlier mistakes and discovered how complicated and impossible that was. There is only one thing we can do with the past—give it to God!

When we let God take our messes and turn them into miracles, the Father has the ability to use our mistakes for our good if we will only trust Him.

Isaiah 61:3 says He will give us “beauty instead of ashes,” but I find that many people want to hold on to their ashes, the cinders of the past, as reminders of their shortcomings and failures. As we begin a new year, I want to encourage you to make a quality decision to give up your ashes. Every day is a new day containing tremendous possibilities—new life, new hopes and new dreams.

Do you need a second chance? Ask God for a second chance or a third, fourth or fifth—whatever you need. God is full of mercy and long-suffering. His loving-kindness never fails or comes to an end. If we keep an account of all our shortcomings and failures, we will feel oppressed. Jesus came to lift burdens, but we must be willing to let them go and believe He is greater than our mistakes.

I don't believe God is nearly as hard to please as we often think He is. After all, we are no surprise to Him. He knew all about us before He ever invited us into relationship with Him. If you feel as though your life is complicated, then perhaps you are simply too hard on yourself. Give yourself a break. God sees your heart and is always willing to work with anyone who refuses to give up.

It is important to get our minds out of the past in order to

see God's good plan for today. The Bible is filled with stories about people who experienced new beginnings. Receiving Jesus as our Savior is the ultimate new beginning. We become new creatures with an opportunity to learn a new way of living.

Ephesians 4:23 says we Christians must be constantly renewed in our minds and attitudes. If you ever thought or displayed an attitude thinking it was too late for you to have a good life, good relationships, or hope for the future, then you need to renew your mind right away.

Choose to think according to God's Word and not how you feel. Nobody is a failure unless he chooses to stop trying. Life gets a lot sweeter and easier if we live with the attitude that says, "I will do my best today and trust God will do the rest. Tomorrow I will begin again, and I will never quit or give up."

You can simplify your life by learning to develop trust. Far too often, we don't allow ourselves to trust. We don't trust our spouses, we don't trust our kids, and if we're honest, many times we don't really trust God to do what He says He will do.

Perhaps you need to look up and around instead of behind you and down. Lift your eyes and see the amazing future that bursts with hope for you in God in 2009!

Don't spend your life mourning over what you have lost and what is already gone; take an inventory of what you have left and keep going. The person who trusts God knows that even if things don't go the way he hopes, God will have a better plan if he trusts Him (see Ps. 37:5).

Trusting God brings a supernatural rest into our souls, allowing us to live simply and freely, the way He wants us to live. Trust grows as we take steps of faith and experience God's faithfulness. Let go of what lies behind, and burst into

your new year with trust and confidence in God!

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and one of the world's leading practical Bible teachers. She has written more than 70 books, including the popular *Beauty for Ashes* and *Battlefield of the Mind*, and her most recent, *100 Ways to Simplify Your Life* (all FaithWords). She is also the founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. and the host of *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. To read past columns in Charisma by Joyce Meyer, [click here](#).