

What to Do When You're Caught Between Your Past and Your Promise

For years, I dreamed about what the Lord has blessed me to do today: leading a ministry of my own that reaches people through media, writing and speaking. Like most dreams, the promise of it all looked, sounded and almost tasted and smelled a certain way. But it never included how it would feel along the way.

The First Step Toward the Promise

I remember the day I made perhaps one of the most significant steps toward the vision. I had to tell my employer I would soon go my separate way. Though it was a friendly departure, announcements like that are never easy. But I did it. Yes, I did it, afraid and uncertain of the future. But I did it.

The Pain Sets In

After I had taken that step of obedience, I figured surely God would reward me with opportunities and showers of blessings. I was wrong. Sure, I had certain favor all along, but there were no drive-through breakthroughs. Many days were lonely, as I spent most of them penned up in my little apartment, writing or pounding away at various projects. For a good while, I could count on two hands the total "likes" on what I thought were my social media gems. Speaking engagements didn't flood in. And the pay cut I took to do it all lasted much longer than I had planned.

At times, I felt I was sold a bill of goods. I murmured to God and to friends that maybe I should go back to where I was. Sure, those days were far from perfect, but at least I was a part of something established, had people to work with every

day and more money.

My Sobering Revelation

Then a friend interrupted my rants with some matter-of-fact wisdom. “You’re painting pictures of Egypt,” he said. I immediately knew what he meant. For years, God’s people cried out for freedom from their slavery to the Egyptians. And eventually, in miraculous ways, God freed them with the promise of milk and honey in a land they could call their own. Still, their path to get there was long and painful. And eventually, they longed for what they had back in Egypt. At least in Egypt, “we sat by the pots of meat [and] we ate bread to the full,” they moaned (Exod. 16:3c).

It was sobering to realize I was guilty of thinking the same. There I was, on the way to a dream, and suddenly I wanted to go back to the past—only because it was comfortable.

How to Keep Moving Forward

So here’s what I learned, which I believe will be a word of victory for you, too. Whenever you step out toward a promise, the past is almost certain to beckon you back. It’ll whisper reminders of the good times and incite fear of the unknown. Ignore that voice. Give it no attention.

Today, God says to you, “Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old. See, I will do a new thing ... I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert” (Is. 43:18–19). Yes, as you move ahead, expect God to clear a path for you and to provide even from places that look barren. And when the road gets long and winding, and things don’t go as planned (because they won’t), keep a mind of faith to remember what God has ahead for you is far better than what he wants you to leave behind. {eo}

Kyle Winkler *equips people to live in victory. His mobile app, Shut Up, Devil!, is the #1 spiritual warfare app; and his*

recent scripture confessions album, Experience Freedom, has helped thousands identify with the truths of God's Word. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Get daily encouragement from Kyle on Facebook and Twitter.