

Released From Your Past

**God wants you to remember.
Satan wants you to forget.**

**By
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Understanding what it means to “forget those things which are behind.”

When Paul the Apostle wrote in Philippians 3:13, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,” what does it actually mean?

That echoing phrase, “forgetting those things which are behind,” has probably haunted more Christians who carry shame, guilt and anxiety over their sins and mistakes of the past than anything I know. Because of a serious misunderstanding of what the Bible is actually saying, people become hostages of their past and live in spiritual and emotional bondage.

Declarative memory can be described as “knowing that” while procedural memory is “knowing how.” Declarative memory is directly accessible to consciousness. It deals with facts and data. It can be episodic – events, time and semantic – general knowledge and linguistic. The ability to recall events, ideas and feelings from one’s past is one of the distinguishing characteristics of

humans. All events in a person's life are encoded in memory somewhat in the same way a tape recording keeps sounds indefinitely.

Is it possible for a person to "forget what is behind?" The troublesome voice we most often hear says, "You gotta forgive and forget! If you have not forgotten, then you have not forgiven." People have been so beaten up with statements like this from their Job-like friends and from the pulpit that they carry deep feelings of guilt because they really do remember.

Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind

What does it really mean?

All of us have issues in our past we either deal with or bury. Whatever those issues may be – abuse, insults, losses, abandonment, shame, guilt, hurts, wounds, immorality, divorce, abortion, thefts, fraud, failure, unforgiveness, infidelity, or whatever - whether you have identified, processed and resolved them or not, they are still in our memory bank. You are going to remember.

To "forget" does not mean to "not remember." It does mean, however, that when you do remember, what you remember is no longer an issue. Because you have identified the problem and God has enabled you to "clear" the issue, you have gotten over it and past it. When you do remember what happened in the past that caused you pain, it no longer causes you pain. Even though you still remember the event, it is no longer an issue!

God wants you to remember. Satan wants you to forget. Not processing bad experiences of the past keeps them alive. This causes us to remain emotionally and spiritually unhealthy. When you see the past as only a memory carried through time, then you find wholeness. Two cautions: obsessive remembering of the past and anxious anticipation of the future are both unhealthy and unproductive.

Remembering Brings Conviction

In Matthew 26, Jesus warned His disciples that they would be offended because of Him and that they would stumble and fall away. Peter vowed that though everyone would deny Him, he would not. Jesus answered Peter, "Solemnly I declare to you, this very night before a single rooster crows, you will deny and disown Me."

The rest of the chapter tells of Jesus' betrayal, arrest and trial. In verses 69-75 we have the record of Peter's thrice denial of the Lord. After his third denial, the rooster crowed and Peter heard it. Verse 75 says, "*And Peter remembered* the words of Jesus. And he went out and wept bitterly." Remembering brings conviction.

Remembering Brings Repentance

The angel told the church at Ephesus, “**Remember** therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent.**” (Rev. 2:5) The angel told the church at Sardis, “**Remember** therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and **repent.**” (Rev. 3:3)

Remembering Helps Cure Confusion

In Luke 24:4, when the women went to the burial place of Jesus and found the tomb empty, the Bible says they were “perplexed.” Verse 5 also says they were “afraid.” Confusion and fear stemming from deeply felt unfulfilled expectations. They expected to find the body of Jesus, but He was not there.

An angel announced to them, “He is not here, but is risen: **remember** how He spoke unto you when He was in Galilee.” Verse 8 says, “And they **remembered** His words.” When they remembered they hurried back to the other disciples and reported the whole incident to them. Remembering cured their confusion and fear.

When You Do This, Remember Me

Jesus established the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper to help us remember His death, resurrection and second coming. Inscribed on communion tables of almost every church are the words from 1 Corinthians 11:24-25, “In **remembrance** of Me.” The Lord’s supper was established to help us remember.

To Establish You In Present Truth

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you in **remembrance** of these things, though you may know them, and to be established in the present truth to stir you up by putting you in **remembrance.**” (2 Peter 1:12-13) What happened in the past is not now true in the present. What happened in the past, however, may well be the root of your present pain. Present truth is priceless in the development of mental, emotional and spiritual health.

God wants you to remember. However, He does not want you to be plagued with unresolved anger, grief, shame and guilt over failures, losses, wrong choices, sin or bad decisions of the past. Do not be afraid of your past. You have probably heard the ominous expression, “Watch out! Your past has a way of catching up with you.” The worst thing about the past catching up with you is the pain from unresolved issues. Your present insecurity and fear caused by abandonment, the root of anger caused by infidelity, the guilt over past sin, the low self-worth caused by childhood invalidation, the shame caused by rape, family secrets and more, need to be remembered, identified, processed and released to Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32) Deal with your past in the light of the truth. Locate a Christian counselor and ask him/her to help you work through the issues of your past. Maybe your past has caught up with you. What Jesus said is still true today: “If the Son therefore shall make your free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

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