



## Dealing with the Past and Relationships

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### Presuppositions to Dealing with the Past

1. What has happened to you in the past is not the cause of your bondage to the past. You could not control what happened to you. (Ecclesiastes 7:13-14; 9:1, Job 1:1-2:10)
2. Your present attitudes, words, actions, and desires towards the past are the source of your problems with the past. (Numbers 11:1-6)
3. What you desire from the past situation shapes your perspective and your responses in the present to the past. (Numbers 11:1-6)
4. Since memory is fallible, we tend to distort key elements of past situations. (Numbers 11:1-6, Exodus 5:1-23)
5. Learning your patterns of thought, words, actions, desires, and expectations before, during, and after the past experience will help you to deal with the past properly. (Psalm 73)
6. God will allow or cause temporary pain in order to conform us to the image of Christ. (1 Peter 1:6-9, 5:10, James 1:1-4, Hebrews 12:5-11, Romans 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 4:1-18)
7. The goal of life is not to release you from the pain of your past but for you to develop spiritual maturity through the pain of your past. (Genesis 50:15-20)
8. We are a product of our choices, not our past experiences. Therefore experiences are influential not determinative. It is your choices that have led you to your bondage, not your past. (Galatians 6:7-8)
9. The past is from God and it exists for His glory. (Isaiah 46:9-10)

## Process to Dealing with the Past

**I. We must identify what we received that we did not want in the past that we still think about with revenge, bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, or worry in the present. (Ruth 1:1-21, 2 Samuel 13:1-29)**

(Naomi "*pleasant*" wanted to change her name to Mara "*bitterness*." Naomi was bitter because of losing her husband and two children in past experiences in Moab while she was presently in the city of Bethlehem. She received what she did not want from the past and held a bitter attitude in the present.)

(Amnon raped Tamar, his half-sister. Tamar's brother, Absalom, held the hatred against Amnon for two years, waited and killed Amnon.)

- A. Did we receive rejection or rebuke in the past that we still think about with revenge, bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, or worry in the present?
- B. Did we receive physical pain or disrespect in the past that we still think about with revenge, bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, or worry in the present?
- C. Did we receive financial loss in the past that we still think about with revenge, bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, or worry in the present?
- D. Did we experience the death of a loved one in the past that we still think about with revenge, bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, or worry in the present?
- E. Did we experience abandonment from a loved one in the past that we still think about with revenge, bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, or worry in the present?

**II. We must identify what we lost or did not receive in the past that we are still treasuring in our hearts in selfish, self-centered ways in the present. (Esther 3:1-11, James 3:13-16, 4:1-3)**

(Haman's preoccupation with receiving homage from Mordecai that he did not receive from the past led him to a pursuit of revenge against Mordecai from that point on.)

- A. Are we preoccupied with acceptance or affirmation we lost or did not receive in the past to the point of trying to use God and people to gain it in the present or seeking revenge on others for the past?
- B. Are we preoccupied with comfort we lost or did not receive in the past to the point of trying to use God and people to gain it in the present or seeking revenge on others for the past?

- C. Are we preoccupied with **security** we lost or did not receive in the past to the point of trying to use God and people to gain it in the present or seeking revenge on others for the past?
- D. Are we preoccupied with **companionship** we lost or did not receive in the past to the point of trying to use God and people to gain it in the present or seeking revenge on others for the past?
- E. Are we preoccupied with **stability** we lost or did not receive in the past to the point of trying to use God and people to gain it in the present or seeking revenge on others for the past?

**III. We must confess and repent of the sinful choices we made in the past that have led to the sinful choices and the condition of our lives in the present. (2 Samuel 12:1-15, Galatians 6:7-8, Proverbs 28:13)**

(David confessed his sins to Nathan and before God, yet though he was forgiven, he would suffer negative consequences for a long time.)

- A. We must confess and turn away from sinful **belief systems** about God, people, and circumstances that have governed our lives in the past and now in the present.
- B. We must confess and turn away from the sinful ways of **communicating** to and about God, people, and circumstances that have governed our lives in the past and now in the present.
- C. We must confess and turn away from the sinful ways of **living** before God and in our circumstances that have governed our lives in the past and now in the present.
- D. We must confess and turn away from the sinful ways of **relating** to God and to others that have governed our lives in the past and now in the present.

**IV. We must interpret our past and live in the present according to the Will of God. (Genesis 50:15-20, 1 Peter 4:1-11, 1 Peter 1:13-16)**

(When Joseph had an opportunity to kill or put his brothers in jail as a result of putting him in the pit, he forgave them and told them that what they meant for evil God had meant for good. He interpreted his situation according to God's will instead of his past pain and lived according to God's will.)

- A. We must not ask “***why*** did God let those things happen to us;” we must instead ask “how is God using those things that happen to us to bring about the greatest benefit to us and to others and the greatest glory to Himself?”
- B. We must identify those times in the past where God gave us what we did not ***deserve*** in blessing while choosing not to give us what we did deserve in punishment.
- C. We must make present day ***choices*** according to the will of God instead of making present day choices according to the pain of the past.
- D. We must ***develop*** in our new life in Christ in the present instead of pursuing the old pleasures from the past.

### **Dealing with the Past**

***In dealing with the past, we must move beyond the pain and hurt of the experience to address what we desire and who or what we worship, because this is what is shaping our response to the past. Therefore, we must take time to identify patterns of thoughts, words, actions, desires, and expectations towards God, people, and circumstances that could be hindering us from moving on from the past. Use these questions as an avenue to examine yourself and ask God for wisdom into the answer to these questions. Journal your answers in a notebook or diary.***

1. What has happen to you?
2. What was your reaction in thought, words, and deeds to God, people in this situations?
3. What did you expect that you did not get from God, people, circumstances?
4. What did you get that did not expect from God, people, and circumstances?
5. What was your view of God before the situation occurred?
6. What was your view of God while the situation was occurring?
7. What was your view of God after the situation occurred?
8. What do you want from God, people, and circumstances in the present so that you can get through the past situation?
9. What feelings about God, people, and circumstances arise when you think about the past situation?
10. Have you considered what God was doing when He allowed this situation to happen to you?
11. How was or is He using the situation from the past to make you more like Christ in the present?
12. What have you learned about your patterns of sin from your past situation?
13. What have you learned about the patterns of God’s grace from your past situation?
14. What have you learned about God’s character from your past situation?
15. What have you learned about your character from your past situation?

16. What do you need to change in thoughts, words, actions, expectations in order to grow from the past situation?
17. What do you need to change in thoughts, words, actions, expectations in order to draw near to God?
18. Who controls, my thoughts, words, actions, expectations?
19. Who is responsible for changing my thoughts, words, actions, expectations?
20. Is there ever a right time to sin against God in thoughts, words, actions?
21. Has God given me the power to obey Him in all circumstances?
22. Has God given me everything I need for life and godliness?
23. Can I truly do all things through Christ?