

Forget the Past

by David Servant

This sermon focuses on the fourth biblical principle to make the next year the best year of your life, emphasizing the importance of forgetting the past to move forward. It highlights the need to let go of pre-Christian and Christian past mistakes, traumas, and hindrances that hold us back from experiencing God's best. The message encourages self-reflection, reprogramming negative thoughts, and taking steps of faith to press on towards the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Duration: 16:26

Scripture: Philippians 3:12, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Proverbs 4:18, Psalm 103:12

Topics: "Letting Go of the Past", "Pressing Forward in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

The fourth biblical principle that you can apply so that next year is the best year of your entire life. Hi, welcome to today's Little Lesson and thank you so very much for joining me once again. These are special editions of Little Lessons, 12 to be exact, and this will be the fourth in a series of 12 as we explore solid biblical truths, significant biblical truths, that if we will apply them, it can make a dramatic difference in our lives.

And we're looking towards the very next year. As I'm filming this, it's December of 2023, so we're looking to 2024 to be the best year of our lives by applying principles in the Word of God. And although I am 65, I believe that next year is going to be the best year of my life and I've got good reason.

We've already covered this in our three previous lessons last week, but our primary scripture is Proverbs 4:18. I hope you have it memorized and I hope you keep it memorized. The path of the righteous is like the light of the dawn.

It shines brighter and brighter until the full day. That's the promise that God has for everyone who's on the path of the righteous. To be on the path of the righteous, you have to be righteous.

And we've talked about that. That all starts by repenting of your rebellion, submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ because you believe in him, and that's getting on the path of the righteous. Now you're following Jesus.

You become a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ, and he leads us, as David said in Psalm 33, in the paths of righteousness. He's put his Holy Spirit in all who are born again to lead and to guide them in the paths of righteousness. Okay, so last week we covered three biblical principles.

The first two are perhaps the two most important. The first one was do right always. That's what it means to be righteous, to always do the right thing.

And number two was to love God supremely. And those two are certainly connected, interrelated. You can't separate those two.

God is a jealous God. We read he doesn't want us to have any idols, nothing that captures our heart more than him. Now, a lot of things we're allowed to love, we're commanded.

Husbands, love your wives, and we're commanded, of course, to love our children. And naturally, we love our friends and our family and so forth, and nothing wrong, everything right with that, certainly. But we have to love God supremely more than any of the rest of them, and that's contained in scripture.

So we covered all that. And then the third one was remember Jesus often. And I suggested last Friday, when we published that on YouTube, that you remember Jesus every time you have a meal.

So if you're eating three meals a day, at least you'll remember him three times. Remember his death, his sacrificial death for your sins, and the fact that he has come to indwell you now, okay? And as you meditate upon that before you eat, and as you meditate upon that while you eat, that Christ is in you, the hope of glory by his Holy Spirit to guide you and to lead you in the paths of righteousness, it's going to make you appreciate him more, make you more conscious of his presence in you, of what he's done for you. Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me.

And I suggested that perhaps he meant more than just do this once a year during your annual church communion service or once a month. So if you missed any of those little lessons from last week, please stop and watch them. So today we want to get into something new.

And the rest of these, the remaining nine that we have to share are not necessarily in any order of importance, okay? They're all important. They're all biblical. They're all foundational.

But I don't want you to think that, well, as we get closer to the end, they become less important, okay? And so here's number four. If you're going to have your best year of your life, here's a biblical principle you can apply. It's going to lend itself to that end.

Are you ready? Forget the past. Wow. And that's got universal application because we all have things in our past, our pre-Christian past.

Of course, we're all ashamed of how we lived our lives when we were rebels without a cause and going in our own stubborn ways or walking in darkness. Of course, we all have that kind of a past and all of it is dark. So that's part of the past that we, of course, won't want to put behind us and forget because God has relegated that to the sea of forgetfulness, to borrow a biblical phrase, okay? And he's cast our sins away

from him as far as the east is from the west.

I love that expression in scripture. How far is the east from the west? Well, it's a long way, okay? And so that's how God's relating to our past. Well, who are we to relate to our past any other way than the way that God relates to it, forgetting those things which are behind us? And we'll read a scripture from the Apostle Paul in one of those lines.

So forgetting the pre-Christian past, because that has no bearing because you're a new creation now, but also forgetting anything in our Christian past that might hinder us in the future. And we all have that too, don't we? Well, maybe you've only been a Christian one day, but folks like me have been a Christian almost five decades. And so I can look back at those 50 years and I have my share of regrets.

As a Christian, you're always sincere because you purified your heart to do the right thing. Although I shouldn't say that, I should call for that. As a Christian, your motives can still be mixed up and clouded with wrong motives and so forth.

And we do have these conflicts we have to work out. The spirit does war against the flesh, sure. So we have that.

But as I look back at the last five decades, almost five decades since I've been a believer, I have my share of blunders, stumblings, errors, times when I thought I was right, where I later realized I was wrong, regrets, you know, downright stupid stupidity. And I could elaborate on all these things for you and give you example after example, you know, to make my case to persuade you. But I'm just going to ask you to take my word for it and also to spare me from having to embarrass myself too much.

Oh my goodness, you are looking at a person who has proven that he is a flawed, imperfect individual during the time that I have been a follower of Christ. Although the trend, you know, it's gradually been up, praise the Lord. And so there are so many things in my life that so easily and have at times hindered me from moving forward.

And that's of course, I'm sure that's true for you too. When you have made a blunder in the past, you become scared they're going to make the same blunder in the future. And you've had a negative experience in the past, you become fearful that you're going to have that same negative experience in the future.

And these kinds of things hold us back. And so let me read to you what I promised to read to you. This is Paul's word.

This is the inspired word of God. I love the word of God. As you know, Philippians 3.12, Paul is talking about, you know, having attained the ultimate perfection.

And he says, not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect. Okay. So it's acknowledging I haven't reached it yet, but I press on.

See, there's something that I must do. I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid a hold of by Christ. So Christ laid hold of Paul and Christ laid hold of me and you for a purpose.

And that was to perfect us, to make us holy, that we would share in his holiness and that he would live through us. That was his goal. It wasn't just to forgive us of our sins and put a stamp of legal

righteousness on us.

And now I can't see your sin. No, no, no, no, no, no. God is dedicated to our spiritual growth.

He wants us to become more and more and more like Jesus, more obedient, more conformed to his image. And so we were laid hold of by Christ Jesus for that purpose. But it's not all God.

We have a part to play in this. Yeah, Jesus lays hold of us, but Paul said, so that I may lay a hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ. So we need to keep that balanced partnership in this spiritual journey.

Thank God for God, but thank God that we also have a part that we can play. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet. But one thing I do, now listen to this one thing.

Here's the key scripture for today. Forgetting what lies behind, and that's a key. If we're going to press ahead, press on to lay hold of for that which Christ laid hold of us, we have to forget what lies behind.

And he said, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward. See, I have a part to play. Reaching forward to what? What lies ahead.

And what does lie ahead? Well, we're all going to stand before Jesus one day. I press on toward the goal for the prize, the ultimate reward of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. I love the language there.

It's an upward call. Not only are we going to be going up one day to meet him in the air if we're alive when he comes, or when we die, you're going to ascend upward. We all believe that, but it's an upward call.

It's a calling that's always calling us upward to a higher level of obedience and righteousness and holiness and fruitfulness and service and all those good things. We have to do something. Okay, so forgetting what lies behind, that's a key.

So take a look, do an inventory, and I can't do this for you, do an inventory of anything and everything that could be holding you back because of what happened in the past. And I know that there could be traumatic things that have happened in the past that hold us back. There's actually a science of the brain that scientists have discovered, something called neuroplasticity, where because of experiences and so forth and things that we allow and things that we do and things that we are victims of, our brain actually, this is putting it in very simplistic terms, physically becomes rewired and neural pathways are created because of experiences and those neural pathways then affect our whole thinking process as we look towards the future.

The only way to rewire your brain is to practice and facing head-on the truth and reprogramming. So if you've experienced some kind of a trauma, let's say that you've been through a horrible, horrible divorce, and nobody hates divorce like the people that have been through it, believe me. And I have not been, but I certainly have known plenty of folks that have been through that trauma.

And there are many other traumas that people experience that can actually create neural pathways in your brain that set you up for negative thoughts about the future. So that's why some people get divorced, say, I'll never get married again. Well, cry it all out.

I mean, half the world is the other opposite sex, so there might be somebody out there that you can be compatible with. All right. But you have to take those little steps of faith and, you know, force yourself, as it

were, we'll be talking about those, that very thing in a little lesson.

Okay. To reprogram your brain to then rewire it and create more new neural pathways. So neural pathways.

And so whatever trauma that you have experienced or whatever negative thing in the past that you can say, oh, my goodness, it's affecting my future. You have to determine. See, we brought that message out loud and clear, haven't we? In this scripture we just read, you have a part to play.

And it's not just praying, it's you press on. Paul used that. It's you laying hold up.

It's you reaching forward to what lies ahead. It's you pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ. You getting this? Okay.

That's what you have to do to make next year your best year yet. And you think about Paul's past. Oh, my goodness.

Think of the shame that he had about his past. And we persecuted the church and so forth. And we're standing there holding the coats of the people that were stoning Stephen as he was martyred.

Okay. But God is in the redemption business and he can turn it around. And if you can't see that in the Bible, you haven't read the Bible too close.

God takes the unlikely things. God takes that which is weak and so forth and shows his strength through it. Okay.

Paul even said, I think it was the second Corinthians where he said, I'm going to boast of my weaknesses because I learned that God said, my power is perfected in weakness. So if you look at all those negative things as God's in the redemption business, he can turn that negative thing into something positive in my life. And he's done that so many times.

Historically, he can do it for you next year, but you gotta have faith. And if you have faith, you're going to act like it. Okay.

So forget the past. Anything in the past that hinders the future of you, you're going to have to do the analysis yourself. Okay.

All right. We're kind of out of time for today's lesson. Thank you so much for joining me.

Hey, within the email that you received, and I'll keep you updated on this, this is the time of our matching gift challenge. And oh my goodness, we've been so blessed because some folks have pledged \$375,000 to the Ministries of Heaven's Family. If we can raise \$375,000 before midnight, December 31st.

So please take a look at that information and please help us if you can in this, our biggest fundraiser of the year for the Ministries of Heaven's Family that reach out all over the world, caring for the least of these and expanding the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Okay. Until next time, may the Lord keep blessing you.

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