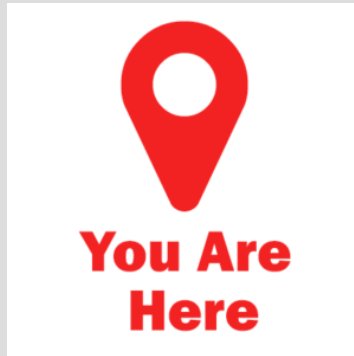


# FORGETTING WHAT LIES BEHIND

**Philippians 3:12-16** I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, **but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,** 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

- **Windshield or Rear-View Mirror? Where is your focus?**

- Have you ever noticed how much bigger your windshield is compared to your rearview mirror?
- Why? Where you're going is more important than where you've been.



- **What is behind us is clear!**

- Success, Failure, hurts, wounds, etc..
- Ross (this time right now, this event, this meeting, this service) will never be exactly the same again!
- **There are no do overs in life!**

- **Rear-view mirrors**

- **Past Success**

- Or if he looks backward to contemplate what he has done-the space that he has run over-the difficulties which he has surmounted-and his own rapidity in the race, he will be likely to become self-complacent and self-satisfied. He will trust his past endeavors, and feel that the prize is now secure, and will relax his future efforts. Let us then look onward. (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

- **Past Failures** – What we have done, we have done!

- Backward, we see everything to dishearten and to humble. Our own unfaithfulness; our coldness, deadness, and dullness; the little zeal and ardor which we have, all are fitted to humble and discourage. He is the most cheerful Christian who looks onward, and who keeps heaven always in view; he who is accustomed much to dwell on the past, though he may be a true Christian, will be likely to be melancholy and dispirited, to be a recluse rather than a warm-hearted and active friend of the Saviour. (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

- **1. Acknowledge, Admit our Failure (sin)**
  - repent - to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life
- **2. Ban the B's**
  - We **bury** or hide our sin! Out of sight out of mind
  - We **blame** anyone and everyone for why we failed.
  - We **busy** our self with activity.
  - We **brood**, constantly replaying our failures until they become our focus or deep-rooted fears.
- **3. Choose to believe Jesus**
  - 1 John 1:8-10 If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. 9 But *if we confess our sins to him*, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. NLT

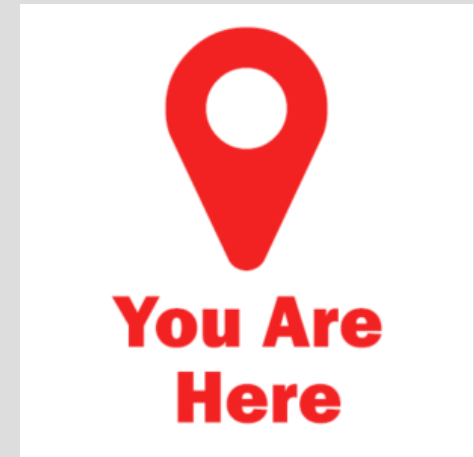
- The danger of spending too much time looking in the rearview mirror is we can crash or miss what's right in front of us.
- Yes, we can and should learn from past mistakes (or victories)
- Yes, we can take a quick look to make sure what's in our past doesn't creep up on us (our future)...but don't park there.



- Unto those things which are before] Before the racer there was a crown or garland to be bestowed by the judges of the games. ***Before the Christian there is a crown of glory, the eternal reward of heaven. There is the favor of God, victory over sin and death, the society of the redeemed and of angelic beings, and the assurance of perfect and eternal freedom from all evil. These are enough to animate the soul, and to urge it on with ever-increasing vigor in the Christian race.*** (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

- **Past Injustice, Abuse, Hurts, etc... Forgetting what lies behind?**
  - BiOY - So much suffering in the world is the result of other people's sin – both at a global and community level, and also at an individual one.
  - Do you have a day or dates that cannot be erased from your life; an event or series of events that still play through your mind like there still happening right now?
    - What you have done you have done!!!
    - What others have done they have done!!!
    - What has happened has happened!!!
    - There are no do overs in life – you can't turn time backwards
  - There are probably some maybe even many that as soon as the subject is brought up the thoughts immediately start to come, the clip begins to play, the feelings start to well up inside.....

- **You can choose what you do or don't do!**



- Are you looking forward through the windshield or are you intentionally (I can't or won't let go) constantly looking in the rearview mirror?
- Maybe not realize even though you think you are looking through the windshield, how much you still are still living in the rearview mirror.

I'm over it!

Yet you are always talking about it.

Your actions say otherwise

Others can clearly see by the way you are responding that it makes them wonder?

- In Ephesians 4:32, the apostle Paul writes, “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”
- When someone commits a terrible offense (really any offense) against you—no matter whether the hurt came by way of words or deeds—forgiveness can be terribly difficult.
- As C.S. Lewis wrote: ‘Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.’
- Forgiveness is not easy. The cross reminds us how costly and painful it is. Forgiveness does not mean approving of what the other person did, nor excusing it, nor denying it, nor pretending that you are not hurt. Rather, you are aware of what the other person has done and yet you are called to forgive.
- Maybe you think it depends on who and what they did. They should have known better they were \_\_\_\_\_ . You still have a choice!



- **Understanding Forgiveness and Unforgiveness:**
  - Forgiveness –
    - to cease to feel resentment against.
    - to give up resentment of or claim to retaliation or compensation
    - to grant relief from payment of
  - **Forgiveness is the willingness to give up** your resentment toward someone who has wronged you, regardless of how serious or painful that wrong might have been. In other words, you renounce any desire to get even.
    - We can identify three elements to forgiveness:
      - to give up resentment about the wrong;
      - to give up resentment toward the wrongdoer;
      - and to give up plans for retaliation.
    - Forgiveness is more than just saying some words; it must come from the heart.
    - It is not always just a one time act!

- **Unforgiveness is the unwillingness to give up my right**
  - Unwilling or unable to forgive
  - Having or making no allowance for error or weakness
- Unforgiveness, is a deliberate mindset to resent the wrong and the wrongdoer, and to seek revenge.
- The unforgiving heart clings to the past, refusing to extend to others what our heavenly Father has extended to us.
  - At the very heart of unforgiveness is -- pride
  - At the very heart of pride is -- I (me), I have a right
  - Unforgiveness creates a debt, “they owe me”
- **Worshiping our woundedness!**

- **Consequences of Unforgiveness**

- The refusal to forgive is an act of pride and rebellion—deliberate disobedience to the Word of God.
  - When He taught His disciples to pray, Jesus added, “If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (**Matthew 6:15**).
- Unforgiveness affects are prayer life!
  - It affects how we pray!
  - It affects God hearing us!
- **Unforgiveness or a root of bitterness will keep you from being the person God wants you to be, and prevent you from carrying out His will for your life. It often affects you in ways you are not aware of!**

- **Matthew 18:21-35** Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" 22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"
- 23 "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. 24 In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. 25 He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.
- 26 "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' 27 Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.
- 28 "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.
- 29 "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. 30 But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.
- 31 "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. 32 Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' 34 Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.
- 35 "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

- In the parable we can see the destructive nature of unforgiveness. The first servant's unwillingness to forgive a comparatively minor debt (around three-and-a-half month's wages compared to around 160,000 years' wages for an average person) destroys his relationship with the other servants, and leads to the second servant being cast into prison. So often unforgiveness destroys relationships between people, and results in them lashing out against those they think have sinned against them. We see the results of this in marriage breakdowns, broken relationships, or in conflicts between different communities.
- Because others don't enjoy being around bitter people, our relationships are poisoned.
- When we are loaded down with stress, anxiety, and resentment, physical illness may result.
- We do not earn our forgiveness; Jesus achieved that for you on the cross. But your willingness to forgive is evidence that you know God's forgiveness. Forgiven people forgive. All of us have been forgiven so much by God that we must keep on forgiving the comparatively small offences committed against us.

# Bitter or Better?



Think about Joseph?  
How about Job?  
What about Jesus?  
Now what about you and me?



- When Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were worried that Joseph would take revenge for all the wrongs they had done to him (v.15). But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God *intended it for good* to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them' (vv.19–21).

- R.T. Kendall writes, ‘For Joseph, vindication on the spot might have done something for him in that moment; but it wouldn’t have done anything for the kingdom of God. When we are mistreated in any way, we must realize that our suffering has profound and vast implications for the greater kingdom of God. There are unseen reasons for continued suffering. Who knows what God will do with your life if you take mistreatment with dignity?’
- See God’s hand in everything that happens to you – good and bad. See it all with the eyes of faith. Understand it all as part of God’s plan to bring good out of evil (just as he did through Jesus’ death on the cross).
- The promise of the New Testament is that God will use everything that happens to you for good. As you face trials, temptation, struggles and difficulty, the New Testament assures you that ‘in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose’ (Romans 8:28).