

FOR LOVERS ONLY - LOVE IS NOT CRAZY VI

False assumption VI. “Leave the past behind.”

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ... ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:7-9,13-14

- I. Forget the past?
 - A. Things we would say are “in our past” yet unresolved are, according to the Bible, part of our eternal present.
 - B. What present feelings about certain events in your past are affecting you today?
 - C. What can happen if we expose the things in our soul--the pain, the patterns, the fears--to the light of God’s grace, truth, and forgiveness?

- D. Unless we look at the past, we cannot truly forgive ourselves or other people. To know whom to forgive, we must know what happened to us, name the sin, and recognize who is guilty.
- E. Exposing the deeds of darkness / The Bible calls us to deal with our past. We are to bring into the light whatever is in darkness, and confession is the process by which we bring the darkness of sin to light. (Ephesians 5:11,13)
- ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ... ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible--and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.*
- F. Besides allowing old wounds to be healed, our openness to the past is the way through grief. We can begin the process of letting go of things that we were once attached to, so that we can be open to the present and what God has in store for us now. (II Corinthians 6:11-13)
- ¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. ¹² We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. ¹³ As a fair exchange--I speak as to my children--open wide your hearts also.*
- G. Which of the following things, if any, are you tied to:
- * A person who is dead;
 - * A person whose love you can't have;
 - * The approval of someone who will never give it;
 - * A fantasy impossible to realize;

* Or something else.

Where are you in the three-step process of grieving? In first realizing what you've lost, then feeling the resulting anger and sadness, and finally letting go?

II. The nature of your past.

A. You cannot change your past, but you must change your internal connections to it by...

* ...forgiving those who hurt you.

* ...releasing your demands that they somehow make it up to you.

* ...letting go of lost dreams and people.

* ...taking your living hurts from the past to those who can heal them

* ...bringing to light patterns we have learned from our parents and other adults, disagreeing with those patterns, and repenting of them.

* ...confessing our sin, apologizing to those we have hurt, and making amends.

None of these processes can change the past, but they redeem the past.

B. Bring your history to your redeemer, God. Bring your history to him and to his people, and allow his light and grace to transform it.

III. Multi-generational sins.

A. We are to turn away from patterns we learned in our families of origin. (II Chronicles 30:7-8)

⁷ Do not be like your parents and your fellow Israelites, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their ancestors, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see. ⁸ Do not be stiff-necked, as your ancestors were; submit to the LORD. Come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

- B. Nehemiah tells us that the Israelites “stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers.” (Nehemiah 9:2)

² Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors.

- C. When we refuse to bring parental issues to the light, we will repeat them. If you don't pass it back, you'll hand it on. Recover or repeat. (Ezekiel 18:20-22) God is always willing to forgive those who acknowledge their sin and repent. The chain of generational sin can be broken.

²⁰ “The person who sins will die. A son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will a father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself. ²¹ “But if the wicked person turns from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall certainly live; he shall not die. ²² “All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live.

D. The Bible nowhere teaches that we are to leave our past behind us and “just” move forward. We cannot change the past but we can redeem the past by understanding it, and bringing it to God and his people.