

Getting Past Your Past | A New Plan | Study Guide - *Philippians 3:8, 10-14*

A past; we all have one and often there are things there that we aren't proud of. Unfortunately, we tend to get hung up on the mistakes of the past and are not able to see that God wants more for us. It's time to leave the past in the past and focus on the future God has planned for us.

Your Worst isn't A Problem for God. God still loves each of us despite what we have or have not done. Through the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, we have been offered forgiveness for the mistakes of our past. All we have to do is accept that forgiveness and move forward in faith.

Jeremiah 31:34 (NLT) "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

You're not What you've Done but Who and What God Says! By allowing past or current struggles to define us, we cannot grow spiritually. Instead, we must step away from that false identity and accept our new identity in Christ. We are not the sum of our past sin, but we are followers of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT) This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Is there Something Better? Where do we go From Here? As discussed in this series, if we have made a mistake, honestly apologize and do what we can to make it right. After that, what's done is done and we have to move forward. God wants us to make the most of those difficult times by encouraging others who struggle with similar things.

Find Your Purpose

God Has a Plan. Each of us arrived in this world with special gifts given to us by God. We need to become aware of the talents entrusted to us (especially those that are spiritual) and use them faithfully as our Father intended.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the **good things he planned** for us long ago.

What are you Here to Do? What's your **story**? What **opportunities** have you been given? What are your spiritual **Gifts**? Whatever resources we have been given, we must use them to help others.

Romans 12:6 (NLT) In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well...

My Purpose. Each of us is responsible for our **piece**, not everyone's expectation. It is easy to get so bogged down serving others that we don't stop to consider our own purpose. We need to take time to examine our gifts, our resources, and our divine purpose. Then we must pursue that purpose with PASSION.

Find Your Focus

We live in the "Land of Opportunity" which makes the process of finding a focus all the more daunting. Prayerfully identify your focus and then make a plan. The hardest part of starting a journey is taking that first step.

Philippians 3:12-14 (NLT) 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.

Prepare! Take stock of your current position and resources. How can these factors best be used in your plan?

Persist! God created us to make it through hard things. He gave us the Holy Spirit and words of Jesus to sustain us and guide us when life gets tough. The idea is to persevere through the challenges; don't give up on the pursuit of your divine plan. Don't quit just because it's hard. FAILURE is critical to real Success.

Philippians 2:15 (NLT) so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.

Find Your People

Surround yourself with people who will support your mission. The people around us have much to offer; look past imperfections and find value in those around you. Bloom where you're planted.

Philippians 4:1 (NLT) Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, **dear friends**, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

We Need Support. We were not meant to live solitary lives. Even Jesus surrounded himself with people who encouraged him. We need people in our lives who will support us and hold us accountable when needed.

We Need to Support. Just as we need support, we also need to support others. Use your wisdom to support, encourage and serve others.

We must be intently focused upon God's future for us. We must let go of the burdens of our past so that we will be ready to move at God's command. Prayerfully pursue your divine future.

2 Timothy 4:6-8a (NLT) As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸ And now the prize awaits me...

Talk About It...

- *In what ways are the personal failures of your past still impacting you today? Why is it so difficult for us to forgive ourselves even after God has forgiven us of all our sins?*
- *Read **Ephesians 2:10**. Have you discovered God's purpose for your life? If so, please share. If not, how might you find it?*
- *Discuss the statement, "I am responsible for my piece, not everyone's expectation."*
- *Read **Philippians 3:12-14**. How could you increase your focus on God's plan for your life? What are some ways you could prepare? How will you persist? How important is persistence?*
- *Discuss **Philippians 4:1**. Discuss Paul's feelings for the believers in Phillipi. Who could help you in pursuing God's Plan? Why do relationships with others seem so hard?*
- *What do you think about Paul's "last words" recorded in **2 Timothy 4:6-8**? How is this scripture challenging? Encouraging?*