

## Phil 3: 1-14 How to Forget The Past!

The Apostle Paul like many of us was searching for what God had planned for him or laid out for him in his life. He knew and said, "I have not arrived yet!"

But he did say, "This one thing I do" One thing I know, There is one thing that God has shown me over and over again. There is one thing, one truth to get through our thick skulls! And that is that WE ARE TO FORGET THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND US!

### Some things that you better not forget:

- a. Which side of the street you are suppose to drive on.
- b. Laws when driving a car; that red means stop and green means go.
- c. Your wife's birthday! / Anniversary!
- d. Paying your bills on time or your taxes. (reposes)
- e. That you are married, that you made vows to the one you are with.
- f. That we have duties and responsibilities that are expected of us.

### There are some things that we ought to forget.

#### 1. The Past: Carpe Diem "the good old days"

They are gone! They are history, never to be repeated again. ( The Walton's, Leave it to Beaver, Those were classics, Jewels from days gone by.

Our children laugh and get a kick out of it when we tell them about, "when we were kids..."

a. *2 Cor 12:6-9 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

The Apostle Paul wanted to forget that thorn in his flesh that had been bothering and haunting him. I don't know what exactly it was. It could have been the false prophets and Pharisees of his day that kept hounding him to death. It could have been the problem of poor eyesight that he had to deal with. He wrote: *Gal 6:11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.* (When in fact the Book of Galatians was one of the shortest he had ever written), and also accompanied by the physician Luke for much of his travels. It most probably was a problem with his past that he had to deal with and was constantly reminded of.

*Acts 26:9-11 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.*

*Acts 22:4-5 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.*

A devil, the messenger of Satan, the accuser of the brethren, caused him fits! So much so that he wrote to young Timothy saying; *1 Tim 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

He was telling Timothy, "There was and is no one worse than I am!" He was the chief persecutor of the early church. He was Saul of Tarsus, the terror of Tarsus! (Acts 7:58; 8:1)

Even after Saul was saved, hardly a soul would trust him or even want to be near him or befriend him. *Acts 9:26-27 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but*

*they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

People have a hard time forgetting their past (failures, childhood, marital problems, disagreements, defeated lives) because they rehearse them and live them over and over again and are constantly reminded of them.

## **2. Forget your failures:** “If at first you don’t succeed try, try again.”

(Ex.) He was a man in his twenties. During those years he drifted. When he turned thirty-one he thought, “I’ve got to get myself going and do something.” He formed a partnership and went into business. In one and a half years he lost everything and went bankrupt. Then he decided that since he was broke anyway, he should go into politics. In his first election, he lost badly. Two years later, when he was thirty-four, he decided to go back into business. He went bankrupt again. A year later he thought things were getting better, and he fell in love with a beautiful women. She died. So the next year, at age thirty-six, he had a nervous breakdown and was confined to his bed for months.

He finally shook that off, and two years later he decided to run for another local election. He lost. He went into another business, and he made a little bit of money. Then at forty-three, he ran for Congress. He lost. At forty-six, he ran for Congress again. He lost again. At forty-eight he ran for the Senate. He lost that election as well.

When he was fifty-five years of age, he tried for the nomination of his party for Vice-President, and was defeated badly. At age fifty-eight, he ran for the Senate again. Once again he lost. Finally, at sixty years of age, Abraham Lincoln was elected to his first office – President of the United States.

He wouldn’t quit! He was a fighter, a man of courage, a winner! He overcame countless private fears, his failures in life and endless public rejections to obtain the highest job in the country.

*Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

*1 Thess 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

There is a need to build a history of successes in our lives. Start with some good habits:

1. Making a commitment to reading your Bible through this year.
2. Be in church for every service.

*Heb 10:22-25 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering... And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

3. Setting aside at least one evening a week for family time, to draw closer.
4. Peter had to forget his denial of the Lord. He denied him three times! Maybe you have too. Has anyone ever accused you of being one of those “born-again, Bible thumper, or Jesus freak?” ...What is your record for denying our Lord?
5. David had to forget his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and go on to be King of Israel.

## **3. Forget your hurts:** When and where you have been offended.

Don’t let others get the best of you and control your emotions, your attitude and your life.

Joseph was an excellent example of this. Would you be offended if your brothers sold you into slavery hoping to rid you from their lives forever?

*Gen 50:16-21 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to*

*bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.*

Forgive, Forget, and Go On! Don't live this new year with old wounds! Reconcile now, while you have the opportunity.

*Ps 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

*Isa 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*

Be bigger than your offenders. *Matt 5:44-45 Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:*

#### **4. Forget your past sins.** They are forgiven, and under the blood.

Don't give them a forwarding address. How often individuals who get in trouble with the law and after serving their time, go right back to the same "friends" and sins again.

Don't let sins get a foothold in your life as Lot's wife did. The scriptures admonish us to, *Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.* She had left home, ungodly family and friends. She was on her way to deliverance and freedom but stopped to take one last long look at the sin and turned into a pillar of salt.

Why forget? Because God has!

*Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

*Heb 10:16-17 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

*1 John 1:7-9 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

What a great, mighty, marvelous, and merciful God we serve!

#### **5. Forget past achievements.**

Don't worship at the shrine of self-importance.

"I used to..." Be a Sunday school teacher; soul-winner; deacon; tithe; read my Bible; pray an half hour a day; go to church every service; be right with God.

His grace is sufficient for thee. Don't think that you have arrived, because we haven't arrived until we walk through those pearly gates and see Him face to face!

So, what are you doing today? What will you do for the Lord this year?

Make some real new years resolutions, some life changing decisions and take some steps of faith that will encourage you and others to advance His kingdom on this earth.

*2 Cor 8:9-10 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.*

*1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

**Remember our text:**

*Phil 3:13-14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*