

# *Living Peacefully with the Past*

## *[Part 1]*

### **Discussion**

1. Most of you have completed at least one semester of college. Looking back, what are some things that you wish you had done differently?
2. How do people usually respond to failure?

### ***I hate goodbyes...***

But, we have reached the end of our discussion on God's will. It's been quite a ride. We've told you who to marry and what job to take. This week we will look at how we can accept our failures and live peacefully with the past.

### **1. Realize it's ok to fail**

[Many people] cannot accept *God's* forgiveness, and they cannot forgive themselves. They feel so much regret that they are constantly reviewing their foolish mistakes, playing the tape in their memory until their mistakes dominate their lives. They hate themselves for what they have done, and they cannot let the past go. (*The Will of God as a Way of Life*, Sittser, 2004 p.121)

There is nothing we can do to change our past. Regret, bitterness, revenge – none of these can alter what has already happened. ... they will only ruin us... we must learn to move on, regardless of the severity of pain in the past. Still, we do have one power within our grasp – we can trust God to redeem the past... if we let him. He will redeem it by using even our worst choices and experiences to accomplish something good... We must be willing to admit our failures, take responsibility for what we have done, and then accept forgiveness. We must be willing to let the past stand as it is, giving up all rights to change it, deny it, or obsess about it. In short, we must surrender the past to God. (Sittser, 2004 p.119-122)

### **2. The reason it's OK to fail is because of Christ**

Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1Pet. 1:18-19

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. Gal. 3:10-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which

you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.  
2 Cor. 1:3-7

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 2 Cor 7:10

We never do know how things will work out, but we know that God will work them out. He will work them out for our redemption... Sometimes we will choose to put God first; sometimes we will choose not to. Still, somehow God will work things out for our good, both because that is his nature and because that is his will for our lives. (Sittser, 2004 p. 236)

### **Discussion Questions**

- Do you react to failure with godly grief or worldly grief?
- If God forgives our sins, what do you need to do/accept/confess to receive comfort for the failures and sins you have committed?
- How will you share the comfort God has shown you with others?