

## **BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH**

*Better Days Are Before You!*

### **Philippians 3:13, NLT**

*13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be,\* but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.\**

Convincing yourself to let go of the past may seem like a difficult thing to do, but once you witness the benefits firsthand, you'll see that it is much easier to let go of something that has outlived its time than to hold on to it. People tend to cling to the past because they believe their best days are preserved within the memories of what used to be. This isn't true. God didn't design life to be that way. Jesus Christ is our hope! 2 Thessalonians 2:16,17 says "16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, 17 comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say." This verse assures us that God loves us. Through Christ He has given us an eternal comfort and a wonderful hope. He didn't give us the gift of his magnificent son so that we would look ahead in doom and gloom. No! Through Christ, God will comfort and strengthen us in every good thing we do and say. Do you know what this means? It means that every time you speak a life-giving Word from heaven, every time you speak of his goodness or do good in the savior's name, you are comforted and strengthened. How much more confidence do we need that we have a bright future ahead?

God has given you the power and authority to make your life better and brighter, but if you're use to being stagnant, if you have grown accustomed to operating only within your comfort zone, then the muscles of your faith might be a little flabby. It's easier to stay within our comfort zones and continue to lean on the familiar. It doesn't require much effort to just stay put, particularly when we think of how scary it can be to trust in our own resources. You may have even developed a habit of talking your way out of testing your wings. You might say to yourself, "I'm too tired", or "It's not going to make a difference if I try..." Let me assure you from personal experience, nothing ever gets better with that kind of attitude, instead it keeps you away from the race that God has put before you.

Anything that lacks truth is not worth holding on to. In John 14:6, Jesus Christ declared that he is the way, the truth, and the life! We are not running a race with no finish line in sight. We are not running a race without direction. Jesus Christ has blazed the trail. He's shown us the way

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to victory by teaching us how to love, obey, and trust God. This is the way to win. This assures us that what lies ahead is infinitely better than what is in our past. There's victory in Christ...that is the truth that we ought to be trusting in.

Nothing should separate you from your destiny or from the promises of God; not past hurts, pains, or heartaches. These types of feelings can only perpetuate bitterness and strife in your life. It would be a tragedy to let this happen. If this rings true for you, then It may just be the right time for a little renovation. If you're use to behaving or thinking negatively, and you're finding it difficult to let go of things, here's a remedy: begin to love God more than you cling to the past. Loving God and His people is a full-time occupation, so get busy doing more for Him. The change may be subtle at first, but it will begin to swell to such a degree that you can no longer remember the pain or memories you used to hold on to.

I know a woman who had a strained relationship with a member of her family, and she wasn't proud of it. She wanted a closer relationship with the person, but because of the hurt that was done to her she couldn't bring herself to forgive the person. I asked her, what would be easier, to hold on to the pain and miss out on having a loving relationship with her family or release the pain and give it completely over to God so that He can heal her wounds. She said *"I can't let go of it, because if I do then it leaves me open to be hurt again."*

When someone has done you wrong, sometimes you want to make them feel the same pain you are feeling, but that can only lead to more pain for you. Please remember that the good things you seek can never come from being separated from God, and that is exactly what clinging to the past will do...it will separate you from the wonderful things He has in store for your future. Holding on to something so tight doesn't give you room to grow, and it will certainly blind you from seeing brighter opportunities to love and be loved.

*Romans 8:38, NLT*

*38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away.*

How about that! Romans 8:38 is some powerful medicine. Absolutely nothing can wear God's love thin. It will stretch way beyond anything that you and I can see. This is why we can get excited about the future, because we know who holds tomorrow! There isn't anything too difficult that the love of God can't overcome it. You have God's love on the inside of you. You can operate by His power and strength, you can have confidence that as you take one small step, He will help you take another. The challenge lies within your own willingness to let go and trust Him to the fullest.

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We need to adjust our thoughts to embrace all the goodness and love that is ours, and most importantly, we need to trust in the one who made it all possible for us; our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

God wants his children to have all the riches of this earth, so don't think about the stuff and people you can't change. Instead, change your focus. Set it upon how you can be better, live better, and love better than the day before. As Philippians 3:13 says so beautifully, we should forget those things that are behind and press forward to those things which are ahead. Why do you think it says to leave it all in the past? Because victory is before you not behind you! As long as you are moving in the right direction—trusting God along the way—your future will always look bright.

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