

2. We need Deliberate Activity. We must not only develop a divine amnesia in terms of forgetting the past; but also engage in a deliberate activity in the present. As Paul said, *"One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead."* In order to deal with the past effectively, we must **actively** live in the present. One of the keys to living in the present is the need for replacing the pessimism of the past - with optimism. Most pessimism is unhealthy. It creates a cycle of despair. Many times, we become locked into pessimistic ways of thinking and we end up bound mentally by these thought patterns.

Past failures may suggest to us that we will never succeed. After all, we have tried and failed. But often that is not the reality of the situation. We can be optimists when we come to understand that God has a plan for our lives. We can begin to look to the future with hope. An eager anticipation of the possibilities of life can replace the negative thought patterns which have bound us.

Paul said he was reaching forward to what lies ahead. The picture we have here is someone stretching forward, like a runner in a race, seeking to win, not merely to finish. If we would win over the past, we must also be **willing** to aggressively stretch forward.

3. We Need A Determined Attitude. We must also take *'willingness'* one-step further. As we stretch forward, we must possess the quality of a determined attitude. The Apostle Paul continued, "One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Here is a man who is not content with being willing. He is not simply reaching forward

to what lies ahead; he is giving his all to the endeavour.

He is determined in his attitude that nothing will deter him. We must have this determined attitude as well if we would succeed in conquering the demons of the past. We must counter-attack by employing a strategy like Paul's, of forgetting the past and focusing on the future.

What are some keys to dealing with the past? Here are **four things** you can do to help conquer your demons of the past.

1. Recognise the past for what it is: it is the past. It is over, done, gone, finished, history! You can't alter anything that happened back then, whether back then was, years ago or yesterday.

2. Recognise and resist the Satanic strategy of reminding you of the past. If you let him, the evil one is able to influence your thinking. His strategy is to discourage and defeat you (Ephesians 6:10-19). Say no to evil memories!

3. Recognise what you can do about the past. While you can't change the past, you can change the way you respond to the memories of the past. Focus on the good things and happy times and deliberately try to forget the bad times.

4. Actively focus on the present and future. Whatever your age or circumstances, every day is a new day. Take decisive steps to create meaningful and enjoyable activities. Ask God to help you make every day count in producing great memories that are more important than the past and will replace bad memories.

If you would like to talk about things that bother you, then please contact PMA.

DEALING WITH THE DEMONS OF THE PAST



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Dealing with the Demons of the Past Philippians 3:13-14

To some the whole purpose of life is geared for this world. It is centred around their job, income, home, and personal status. For most of us, searching for reasons for living will initially mean dealing with the demons of the past.

The apostle Paul introduced the idea of dealing with the past. *"...This ONE thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:13-14).

Wouldn't it be wonderful if, by some miracle, we could begin life again, knowing what we know now? Things would be different, wouldn't they?

Someone said, "It's unfortunate life can't be lived in reverse." If that were the case, you could use some of that mature knowledge to avoid making the mistakes which you ultimately regret later.

But, that's not the way life is lived. In fact, we gain practical knowledge from the mistakes we make. And we have all made our share of mistakes. Some have made the wrong career choice and wish they could go back to school to be retrained, but now they must support a family. Some have made a bad business deal and now they are ruined. How they wish they could go back. A girl finds herself in trouble and her heart is broken. How she wishes she could go back and start over, but it's too late. A failed marriage disrupts family life and deeply wounds everyone involved. If only we could begin again.

These kinds of events occur every day and no one is exempt from them. Think of the things in your life that you would like a chance to change.

We refer to these events as "the past." Obviously, you can't turn back the hands of time. What's done is done. The mistakes we've made are there and we can do nothing to change them.

Our past can keep us in mental bondage. Sometimes our memory can serve to haunt us. Along with our good memories, there are memories of failure. Our past may cause us to label ourselves failures, or as being unable to break the bad patterns of the past.

Many people live today plagued by their past. In the most extreme cases people sit in mental hospitals constantly reliving the tragic events of yesterday. They are trapped by the things that have been and they can't seem to see beyond them.

But there is hope. The good news of the Gospel is that in many ways it is possible to begin again.

So how do we deal with these experiences of the past that plague us in the present?

Psychologists tell us that people deal with events of the past in different ways.

Some people RELIVE the past. They spend hours recounting the events of the past in great detail in their minds over and over again. All of the negative emotions which they felt then, they feel again. And they beat themselves up over events that are gone forever. They are daily tormented by memories of yesterday's sins, mistakes or failures.

Some people SURRENDER to the past. They decide that they will never rise above the past and resign themselves to be what the past has made them. After all, the lot has been cast, the die is set, and they are a product of

their past.

Others DEFY the past and refuse to be dominated by it. They recognise that while the past is an unchangeable part of their history, they can do something about themselves and how they deal with the memories of the past.

1. We need Divine Amnesia. Paul, the Apostle, tells us that the way to deal with the past is to forget it. He says, *"One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind..."* We must develop what David Hoke calls **"divine amnesia."** Obviously, we cannot remove the past from our minds. God created our minds to be incredibly powerful. Even though we might not remember something consciously, sub-consciously it is always there. Every act, word, event, situation and circumstance is embedded forever in our minds.

When Paul speaks about forgetting the past, he means that we must forget it in that we **no longer allow it to control our lives.** Otherwise, we will always be on a leash. We will try to move forward in life, only to be snatched back time and again. You may be saying, "Well, it's easier said than done," and you're right. But, by God's grace it can be done. Christ can liberate us from the past.

The reason Christ came to this earth was to take the punishment for our sins so that we might be forgiven. Christ can forgive our past. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ can release us from the power and guilt of sin. There is nothing in our past too great for God to handle. There is no sin too big for God to forgive. Christ can enable us to release the past and move on to what can be in the present. He can enable us to avoid living in the "what has been" and live, instead, in the "what can be."