

Study Guide  
2024 – My Year to Grow Past My Past  
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What historic or noteworthy moments happened in your life in 2023?  
Are there any moments of 2023 in which you could have a “do-over” on?

Whether wonderful or unfortunate, we are unable to change the events happened in 2023.

Do you find that moments that you would like to forget the most often surface more than the good moments?

What painful moments from your past try and captivate your thoughts and make you return to a place of hurt and/or fear?

Philippians 3:13-15 (TLB) – <sup>13</sup> No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us. <sup>15</sup> I hope all of you who are mature Christians will see eye-to-eye with me on these things...”

Are you like Paul; do you need to focus on forgetting the past?

In these verses, Paul informs us that “forgetting his past” was not something he flippantly accomplished. It takes lots of energy, focus, and effort to forget our past and enjoy what God has for our future.

Paul was originally named Saul, and he had an extremely complicated past. Saul was a brilliant man with a high motor of ambition.

Read Philippians 3:4-6 and Acts 9:1.

Saul was so full of anger and hatred toward this man named Jesus that he threatened and murdered Christians and anyone who believed in Jesus. He was an instigator of mob cruelty toward Christians, all the while thinking he was pleasing God.

Read Acts 7:58-60 in The Message translation.

At the end of this passage, what does it say that Saul was doing?

Later, Saul had a God encounter in which he gives his life to Christ, and his name is changed to Paul. You can change your name, but you cannot change your past. Just as Satan continually tempts us with condemnation concerning our past; Paul was likewise tempted to be condemned about his past.

How does the enemy try and condemn you regarding your past?

After Paul accepted Christ, he was rejected, neglected, tortured, and forgotten by people that were once were his friends. Satan has a way of tormenting us for not only what we have done, but also for the things that have been done to us.

Is there anything that has been done to you that you feel Satan continuously tries to remind you of?

God tells us that our lack of knowledge and lack of understanding gives Satan an open door to prohibit and hinder our lives. We need to remember these truths from God's Word to forget and put the past behind us:

- 1.) God does not continually remind you of your past. It is not God replaying those scenes and words in your memory to try and make you do penance for your wrong.
  - Read Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Psalm 103:8-10, and Psalm 103.12.
  - Which one of these verses do you need to remind yourself of the most?
  
- 2.) Satan is the reminder of our shame and pain.
  - Read Revelations 12:10-11.
  - Who do these verses tell us is our accuser?
  - When you feel condemnation, judgement, or accusation, how can you remind yourself that this is from Satan and not God?
  
- 3.) Every day we must take memories, scenes, and replays of shame and pain captive. We have the authority in Jesus' name to control our thought life.
  - Taking control of our thought life is a daily discipline, not a one-time event.
  - Satan operates in the arena of thought. If he can influence our thought life, he can bring influence to bear on the quality of our life.
  - Discuss ways in which you can protect your thoughts.
  
- 4.) Every day we must remind ourselves of these truths:
  - 1.) Dwelling on my past causes me to miss out on my present.
  - 2.) Dwelling on my past makes it impossible to adequately prepare for my future.
  - If God has removed our past from us, then He is no longer concerned about our past. He is concerned about our present and future. If we remain stuck in our past, we are not in step with God.
  - We must give ourselves permission to move forward.
  - When was the last time you looked forward to something?
  - When was the last time you asked God to bless you for the days ahead?

What was the most impactful thing you learned from this message?

How can you take this message and apply it to your life?