

Published based on [Why You Must Not Go Back](#)

Why You Must Not Go Back



Last week I posted some thoughts about why you must go back.

There are times when we must deal with our past issues because our past issues are still having a current effect on our lives. We do need to go back emotionally when we need to grieve our sins, our mistakes, our losses. We need to go back and experience the fullness of moments we have ignored, avoided, or pushed to the back of our consciousness.

But at other times, it is unfruitful and even unhealthy to go back.

There are two ways that we can choose to live in the past. One is by idealizing the past, and the other is by allowing the past to freeze us in our pain. Let's look at these two ways and see if we find ourselves in either unhealthy pattern.

The Perfect Past

"If things could just be like they used to be!"

How often I have heard this expression of a deep longing in someone's heart! Things have changed and we just want to go back to the way things used to be.

We long to turn back the hands of time. We wish we could wave a magic wand over our lives and restore things to the way they used to be. Although it is legitimate to grieve when we have experienced loss and it is right to be thankful for a wonderful event or season, may I suggest that the answer is not in going back?

I believe that with God, there is always an element of "the best is yet to come".

Scripture speaks of how we are changed from "glory to glory". No matter how glorious the past might have been for some of you, there is always another level of glory possible with God.

Living in "the perfect past" prevents us from seeing what God is doing or longs to do in our imperfect present. Truthfully, we learn and grow more in the difficult, imperfect seasons. We lean more fully into the strength of God. We depend more on His salvation, His grace. We humans like to be self-sufficient as opposed to leaning on God.

Lot's wife (Gen. 19) disobeyed God and looked back on what God was asking her to leave. The children of Israel found themselves idealizing the days when they were in Egyptian bondage and longing to go back. Many in the days of the early church wanted to keep looking back to the days of the Law. And we find that the familiar and known can keep us from the purposes of God in the present day and the unknown future.

If you find yourself holding on to your perfect or idealized past, God is whispering to you that there is more for you today, there is more for your future, there is more, more, more, if you will release your hold on the past and open your hands and your heart to today and the future.

The Imperfect Past

Another challenge for us is the temptation to refuse to leave the past because we are stuck in patterns of unforgiveness, unhealedness, and frankly, we feel unwilling or unable to release the past. The past is our focus.

It's not easy to forgive. The very definition of the word indicates that we have been wronged. It's not easy to find healing for our hearts at times. But somehow we must find our hunger for healing and our faith in the God of our future to be a greater drive than our need to hold unforgiveness. We can't do both well. We can't hold our wounds, our offenses, our "rights" to our pain with both hands, and reach forward to our future at the same time.

Again, my last post outlined when and why we must spend time, effort, and energy looking at our past, but there comes a time when we must release our imperfect past and move forward with God's grace.

The Gift of Today

God is present in the now to meet your needs. He is present to change your heart. He is present to give you grace. Scripture tells us that He is a very PRESENT help. God's mercies are new every morning. Every new day is a gift of hope and possibility. We are challenged in the Word to hear God's voice TODAY.

The very essence of hope tells us that the best is yet to come. If you have lost that hope, know that even now as I am writing, I am praying for you that your hope be restored. Don't stay stuck in the past. The beautiful gift of today is yours. If you need help, please reach out to a trusted friend, counselor, or spiritual leader.

The answer is never in your past, although certainly there is much to learn from our past, the answer is in today in the very present God who is in this moment with us all. So whether you find yourself longing for that seemingly perfect past or stuck like glue to your imperfect past, God is present in the now to do more than you could ever hope for.

Ephesians 3: 20 tells us that God is able to do "far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." He wants to meet you in your today and take you into your tomorrow with hope and healing.

Can you open your hands and your heart to receive the gift of today?

You can also find this article published on [Why You Must Not Go Back](#), and on the tag pages [Ephesians 3:20](#), [healing](#), [living in the present](#), [today](#).