

# Owning Our Pasts

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Scripture Reading: I Timothy 1:14-16

Introduction: When it comes to remembering the past, we prefer to have selective memory sometimes

- We remember the good and forget the bad
  
- In fact...
  - We don't like to be reminded of events or situations that revealed our human frailties or weaknesses
  - We don't want to remember the moments that were "out of control moments" in our lives
  - We don't like recalling the times that proved to us that life can and will change in the blink of an eye.
  
- The past gives us all problems when we allow it to
  - When we want to live our lives in the past
    - We have problems
  - When we want to hate the past
    - We have problems
  - When we let the past control our present
    - Guess what, we have problems
  - When we allow the past to destroy our future
    - We have problems
  
- In many people lives...
  - The past has greater potential to CREATE problems
  - Than it has to PROVIDE blessings
  
- So here's the question this morning:

- WHAT SHOULD EACH OF US DO ABOUT AND WITH OUR PAST?
- It's simple when you hear the solution:
  - OWN IT—THAT'S RIGHT OWN YOUR PAST!

➤ But here's the thing:

- YOU have the power to reduce the past and how much or how many problems it creates in your life
- You do that by owning it!

## **I. WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF DENIAL**

- A. The most common way to deal with our past in today's society is to deny it
  
- B. There are many ways to practice denial, but two are commonly used
  
- C. The 1<sup>st</sup> is to declare that the past never happened.
  
- D. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is to declare that the past is responsible for everything bad in your life.

## **II. Let's be real and put some things into perspective for a minute**

- A. There are some people that have been so blessed that they've not had many bad experiences in life
  
- B. And there are some whose past have been one horrible event after another
  
- C. But for the most of us in this room this morning

1. Our lives have been a mixed bag of good and bad experiences

D. So what do we do with these bad and horrible events of our past?

1. Some people live in denial

- i. Their bad experience actually did happen, but in their minds the event never occurred
- ii. Though they struggle in their lives because of this event or events that were never resolved
- iii. in their minds, it never happened so they don't deal with them
- iv. They lie there dormant and causing problems in the now

2. Some people refuse to accept any responsibility for their present life because of what happened in their past.

- a. They live in the "victim mentality" state of mind
- b. Because they were victimized, they think and act like a victim
- c. In their minds, they must be who they are because of happened to them in their past
- d. They accept no responsibility to change themselves

E. Some people own their past

- a. Their past is their past
- b. It serves no purpose to deny their past
- c. So they accept it
- d. It's their past
- e. And so it's their experience to grow from
- f. They step up and accept responsibility for their present
- g. They realize they are free to make choices
- h. They can grow spiritually
- i. And they realize that both the present and the future can change for the better

F. Church, God want you to own your past

- a. God knows the 1<sup>st</sup> step in being freed from our past is owning it
- b. God know that for repentance to fully occur in our hearts and minds
- c. WE MUST OWN OUR PAST

### III. MANY ARE IMPRESSED WITH THE EXAMPLE OF LIFE CHANGE AND PAST OWNING OF PAUL

- A. Prior to his conversion, Paul was an aggressive and especially hostile man toward followers of Christ.
  - a. He played a role in the murder of Stephen in **Acts 7:58 and Acts 8:1**
  - b. He directed a house to house search for those of the Way in Jerusalem intent on shutting down and destroying the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church
  - c. He drug men and women off to prison because they were followers of Christ
  - d. And when he had the opportunity he voted for their execution, all because they were followers of Christ
  
- B. After his conversion, Paul was a self-sacrificing man, non-violent man
  - a. He used his mind and words to teach, encourage, and persuade people to follow Jesus
  
- C. This change occurred for two reasons
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup>: The who thought Jesus was an impostor became the man who placed total faith and total confidence in Jesus as the Messiah
    - i. **Galatians 2:20**, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Paul owned his past.
    - i. In the Roman courtroom in **Acts 26: 9-11**, "*Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup> And I punished them often in every*

*synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”*

- ii. Understand this church...
  - 1. Paul never denied his past
  - 2. He never said it didn't happen
  - 3. He accepted full responsibility for what he's done
- c. Because he knew he was forgiven, because he knew where his strength was, and because he trusted in God.
  - i. He never, ever retained his guilt
  - ii. He retained the memory of his past
  - iii. But he never let it direct his life
  - iv. He let God direct his life and his thoughts

#### **IV. SIX REASONS YOU SHOULD OWN YOUR PAST**

##### **A. 1<sup>st</sup>: You are to be transformed**

- a. **Romans 12:1-2**, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
- b. God's objective in you and me is to bring into existence a person and a life that has not existed before
- c. I doubt change can occur unless I own who and what I was before I entered Christ

##### **B. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Owning my past will not permit me to enter denial or reject responsibility for my life**

##### **C. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Owning my past is essential in the process of repentance**

- a. Repentance requires recognition of evil and the decision to redirect my life
- b. I can't redirect until I recognize the evil in my life

- D. **4<sup>th</sup>**: Owning your past enables you to value your forgiveness and your salvation
  - a. If I don't recognize that I need forgiveness, I cannot properly value or appreciate my forgiveness
  - b. If I never felt lost, I cannot value my salvation
  
- E. **5<sup>th</sup>**: Owning my past provides me with a powerful motivation for commitment
  - a. When I value God's forgiveness, commitment becomes the heartbeat of my salvation
  - b. I'm not committed because I have to be
    - i. I'm committed because I want to be
    - ii. I come to realize that it's impossible to express my appreciation for the grace and mercy that saves me and sustains me
  
- F. **6<sup>th</sup>**: Owning my past results in living and growing in love for God that literally consumes my life.
  - a. That love is the basis of my service to God everyday of my life
  - b. I serve God...
    - i. Willingly
    - ii. Freely
    - iii. And completely
    - iv. All because I love Him so much

**V. PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT OWNING OUR PAST CANNOT CHANGE GODS OPINION OF US.**

- A. God sees us in the clear and full knowledge of who we are and what we are
  - a. His view is not limited, obscured, or distorted
  - b. God knows everything we feel, we think, and we do
  - c. He knows all our emotions, our attitudes, and our motives
  - d. Owning our past creates no problems for God
    - i. When we own our past
    - ii. We are only admitting what God has always known

B. Owning our past cannot separate us from God, but denying our past can drive a wedge between us and God

- a. The two most common reasons for denying our past are:
  - i. Fear**
  - ii. Selfishness**
- b. That kind of fear is never a blessing
- c. That kind of fear is never a source of a spiritual blessing
- d. Selfishness makes us our own god.
  - i. When we're selfish, we are competing with God
  - ii. We see God's teachings, His principles, His values as robbing us
- e. In that mode of selfishness:
  - i. Loving God seems like losing
  - ii. Loving our fellow man means we lose
  - iii. Generosity, kindness, mercy, commitment, service
    - 1. All mean that we lose if we are selfish
    - 2. Fear and selfishness are denial's twin children

C. When we work hard to deny our past, we only resurrect it

- a. By denying it, we empower it
- b. We give it control by bringing it to the present

Do you own your past?

Or does your past own you?

Everyday of your life, give your past, present and yourself to God.

INVITATION