

Putting the Past into Perspective

(Hebrews 6:9-12)

Introduction: Sometimes the past (whether good or bad) can be a hindrance to us in living and working for the Lord – both as individuals and as a congregation. To avoid having our work hindered, we need to put the past into proper perspective.

I. Bad Things in the Past Can Hinder Us

- A) We may be unwilling to forgive _____ (2 Cor. 2:7).
- B) We may be unwilling to forgive _____ their mistakes (2 Cor. 2:6-8).
- C) We may suffer from a _____ complex and be unwilling to admit that the situation has changed for the better. Cf. Ac. 9:31.
- D) We may have become condescending or _____ toward others who “have not had it as rough” as we have.
- E) We may be unwilling to _____ of past battles.
- F) We may have been so enervated by struggling against problems in the past that we have little energy with which to face the future, even though the situation has changed for the better.
- G) We may become cynical and _____ in our basic mental orientation.

II. Good Things in the Past Can Hinder Us

- A) We may be _____ – resting on our laurels, hindered by pride and self-satisfaction (2 Peter 1:12,13).
- B) We may be _____ because of successes in the past (Josh. 7:1-5).
- C) We may be paralyzed by _____, hindered by “glory days” syndrome (Eccl. 7:10).
- D) We may be discouraged because the church seems to be going “downhill,” decreasing in membership and interest, etc. Cf. 1 Kgs. 19:13-18.
- E) We may _____ assume that what “worked” in the past will do so now.
- F) We may be _____ from successful work in the past and have a tendency to slacken our effort in the present. (Heb. 6:11,12; 10:35,36).

III. Life Doesn't Stand Still

- A) Life is full of _____ – we must be _____.
- B) We must, on the one hand, be able to _____ from bad experiences without letting them _____ us – and, on the other hand, be _____ for good experiences without letting them _____ us.
- C) Our future will only be what the Lord wants it to be if we maintain a right attitude.
- D) 1 Cor. 15:9-10

Conclusion: “Those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it” (Santayana). The critical difference that separates people of great character from people of little character is not that some have had it better than others, but that some have a better attitude than others toward life’s ups and downs. Let us determine that we will not allow the past to jeopardize our future, but rather make use of it such that it helps us toward worthy goals. May we “go on to perfection.” May we “forget” the things that are behind, and “reach forward” to the things that are ahead (Phil. 3:12-14).

My Notes: