

Putting the Past In Perspective

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on...”**Phil. 3: 12, 13**

The fourth step toward reaching higher altitudes in our lives is “Putting the past in perspective.” Have you noticed that the past has a persistent way of tripping you up? **WHAT ABOUT OUR PAST CAN LIMIT OUR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESENT?** Paul had much in his past that could have tripped him up. First, he had sinned, in big ways! In Acts 8:1, we learn that Paul gave approval to the killing of a leading Christian named Stephen. In fact, Paul oversaw a major effort on the part of the Jewish religious leaders to imprison and kill Christians. Murder is no small sin. And murdering God’s people is a blot that easily could have haunted him for a lifetime. Second, Paul had significant failures in his lifetime. Besides the failure of being on the wrong side of the fence earlier in his life, which resulted in the imprisonment and killing of Christians, Paul experienced failure in a number of ways. He rejected John Mark as a companion, but later admitted his wrong and brought John Mark back onto his leadership team. Paul experienced little success in the city of Athens. Later in his life, many of the people he had won to Christ, in what is now modern Turkey had distanced themselves from Paul and his leadership. Paul had some real disappointments that could have tripped him up. Finally, the greatest thing that could have hindered Paul from further growth and development in his life was his tremendous successes. He had accomplished and experienced so much, it would have been easy to become comfortable, satisfied and virtually “retire” from growth, development and progress in his life.

Praise God For: His example of boldness through Christ; **Thank God For:** Bold Christians; **Ask God’s Forgiveness For:** My embarrassment of Him; **Ask God To Help:** Christians in the minority; **Ask God To Supply Our Need For:** Creative ways to witness for Him.

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