



A Discussion of the Book

Putting Your Past in Its Place by Stephen Viars

Series Outline:

Week #1 – Dealing Correctly with Your Past	3/11/20
Week #2 – The Past Can Hinder the Present	3/25/20
Week #3 – The Past Can Help the Present	4/1/20
Week #4 – Innocent Past, Good Response	4/8/20
Week #5 – Innocent Past, Poor Response	4/15/20
Week #6 – Guilty Past, Good Response	4/22/20
Week #7 – Guilty Past, Poor Response	4/29/20

In week 1, we established the fact that there are two extremes when considering our past: believing that the past is EVERYTHING, and believing that the past is NOTHING. We also considered the question of whether or not Christians are supposed to think about their past (doesn't Phil 3:13 teach us to forget our past?). But, after looking at examples of Paul, Naomi, Zaccheus, and Onesimus – we concluded that the ultimate goal when considering our past is that we **think biblically about it**.

Chapter 2

1. **Your Past Can Potentially Hinder Your Growth in at Least 6 Ways**

- **Unanswered Questions.** Have you bundled up all your questions about a past event(s) and taken them to God? “Posing questions to God in the right way can actually be an act of reverence and worship because it demonstrates that you want to use the trial of your faith to grow in your understanding of Him.” (p. 33). Habakkuk 1:2-4 demonstrates that we do not have to stuff our questions inside, but instead believe that God cares enough to listen.
- **Unaddressed Hurts.** Do you have a misguided belief that it is somehow wrong to feel hurts ...that it is our duty to just “toughen up and move on”? Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa 53:3). David demonstrates a “spiritual candor” in Psalm 42:3-5 in which he courageously admits what is going on inside his soul and examines it.
- **Unsolved Problems.** Time that elapses on unsolved problems has a unique way of growing the issue disproportionately to its original event (Eph 4:26-27). Use the anger that God has given you to solve the matter as best as you can. One of the most hindering or destructive results of unsolved problems of the past is bitterness. Consider Hebrews 12:14-15.

- **Unwise Choices.** Exposing your life to certain choices and behaviors (even how you have behaved towards past circumstances/people) begins a cycle of habits that can be difficult to break. One of the best lessons we can learn about avoiding the consequences of unwise choices is, “if you don’t want to reap it, don’t sow it” (Galatians 6:7).
- **Unconfessed Sin.** Often, we don’t want to think about the past because it reminds us of our shortcomings and failures. So, we become creative in devising ways/excuses to avoid confessing our wrongs to God and others. Consider the examples of Adam (blamed his wife, Gen 3:12) and Eve (blamed the serpent, Gen 3:13). The biblical way here is to confess and forsake transgressions, and find compassion from the Lord and others (Prov 28:13).
- **Unlearned Lessons.** When we do not learn the lessons that God wants us to learn, we end up repeating the same mistakes over and over. Bad choices that are not recognized and corrected become part of who we are (Prov 26:11). The result is that dangerous ruts are created in the road of our hearts.

2. Where Does this Leave Us?

- Is our past a hindrance that WILL BE?
- Or, is our past a hindrance that COULD BE?
- Christ is the light of the world and stands ready to help us

For Personal Reflection –

- Which of the 6 potential hindrances pose the greatest issue for you?
- Have you spoken with God about your past hurts and posed the legitimate questions of your heart?
- Do you have unsolved problems with people in your life?
- Are there lessons you should have learned in the past but haven’t? Have these unlearned lessons resulted in habits that plague you even today?
- Pray over 1 Peter 5:7