

If Only... Living Life With No Regrets (print edition).

Copyright © 2019 by Stephen J. Robinson. All rights reserved.

Created and published under license to Church of the King, Incorporated d.b.a. COTK Publishing. Printed and manufactured in the United States of America.

Church of the King® is a registered service mark owned by Church of the King, Incorporated. COTK PublishingSM is a service mark owned by Church of the King, Incorporated. Any use of any of the service marks of Church of the King, Incorporated without the prior written approval of Church of the King, Incorporated is prohibited.

Any copying, duplication, reproduction, republication, transmission, broadcasting, public display, distribution, dissemination, or storage in any retrieval system of this devotional, in whole or in part, by any means, method, or medium, is strictly prohibited apart from the prior, written consent of COTK Publishing, except as next provided.

A natural person who has purchased and personally used this devotional according to its intended purposes is permitted to electronically copy, store, and/or display it in, on, or through a mobile device, tablet, computer, or laptop owned by the person who has purchased this devotional, and/or a social media, electronic, and/or e-mail account controlled by the person who has purchased this devotional, provided that all of the following conditions are continually met: (a) such activities are conducted solely for purposes of the spiritual growth or Biblical knowledge of the person who purchased this devotional or a reasonable number of personal friends and family members; (b) without limitation to the foregoing, such activities are not conducted for any purpose that is commercial or for monetary gain, or disparaging or contrary to the best interests of the author or publisher (according to the reasonable discretion of the author or publisher); (c) any portions of this devotional that other persons are permitted to view electronically are only portions also containing the personal notes, observations, and reflections of the person who purchased this devotional, and not solely the original content of this devotional alone; (d) such activities do not circumvent any third-party's obligation or need to purchase this devotional for their own personal use of this devotional; and (e) such activities do not involve any kind of modification to or misrepresentation of the original content or wording of this devotional as it was originally published and distributed. This limited license may be revoked or modified at any time according to the sole discretion of the author or publisher.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-64219-007-6. Print edition.

Submit reprint and other licensing requests to COTK Publishing, P.O. Box 2306, Mandeville, Louisiana, 70470, or to licensing@churchoftheking.com.

Session One

Living With No Regrets

Let's face it. We've all done things we regret in life.

If left unchecked, regret can have some truly damaging effects on our minds and our bodies. Research shows when the pain of regret turns into a repetitive pattern of fruitless, self-focused condemnation, it triggers depression and causes serious mental health problems. Regret can also result in chronic stress that negatively affects the body's hormones and immune system. Getting stuck in regret hinders a person's ability to recover from difficult life events and extends their negative

emotional impact for weeks, months, years, or even a lifetime.

Understanding God is perfect and we are not, helps us overcome the tormenting condemnation of regret. While we can't turn back the clock for a do-over, and we may not be able to solve every problem we encounter, we can move past our regrets and walk in the victory God has intended for each of us.

Over the next six weeks, we will learn how God's grace turns our regrets into opportunities and move us forward in God's plan and purpose for our lives.

God can use
every struggle
and every joy
to strengthen
us and draw us to
Himself.

CHECKING IN

No matter what we have experienced in life, God sees it all. He knows our past. He understands our regrets. He is moved with compassion by our heartaches, and He wants to redeem them all for our good and His purposes. Through His amazing grace, God can use every struggle and every joy to strengthen us and draw us to Himself.

God also wants to bring us together with other people who help lift us up in times of trouble. When we hear the stories of others who faced the same challenges, we realize we are not alone. When we share our victories with others who might be facing difficulties, we give them the opportunity to see God's power at work in our lives.

God wants to use us to encourage each other to discover a life of freedom from regret and the abundant life He has given us through His grace.

Get started with these questions:

- Share a little about yourself and what brought you to this small group?
- What do you hope to get out of this study?

Memorize this verse:

...But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13–14



Up Next

Watch The Lesson

Use the next page for notes to write your thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember from the teaching. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the lesson, then discuss among your group. Remember to try to share the responsibilities of leading the discussion each week.

**...But one thing
I do, forgetting
those things which
are behind and
reaching forward to
those things which
are ahead, I press
toward the goal
for the prize of the
upward call of God
in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 3:13–14

WATCH THE LESSON

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13–14

- What if your failures are merely learning opportunities on the road of life?
- Regret: A sense of loss and disappointment related to past decisions and actions.

1. Forget the _____ .

...But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind...

Philippians 3:13a

- Your past doesn't have to define you. Yesterday's choices don't have to set the course for your tomorrows.
- *Forget* means to neglect, to no longer care for, or to overlook intentionally.

2. Reach _____ .

...reaching forward to those things which are ahead...

Philippians 3:13b

Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left...

Proverbs 4:25–27a

- You can't move forward if you're always looking in the rearview mirror.
- Learn from your mistakes and make adjustments. Tomorrow is a new day.

3. _____ on!

I press toward the goal for the prize...

Philippians 3:14a

- God designed you with a purpose only you can fulfill.
- If your dreams have been shattered, press on and dream again!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you have learned from the weekend message and the small group study. Then think about practical steps you can take to live out what you've learned.

Read Philippians 3:13-14

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Why do you think most people have difficulty getting over challenges and hurts in their life?
- When we give our regrets to God, we are then free to move forward in life. What prevents us from giving our regrets to God?
- In Philippians 3:13-14 we read that we should forget the things which are behind us and reach forward to the things which are ahead. How can we benefit by forgetting the past and focusing on our future?

Read Proverbs 4:25–27

Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.

- Would you say you tend to nurse, curse, or rehearse your regrets? How has your past style of processing regret impacted your life today?
- There are many areas of our lives that work together to fulfill God’s plan, such as our relationships, finances, health, career, and serving others. What is the **One Thing** you want direction from God on during this study? Why is this so important to you?

MY ONE THING

What one thing will I focus on from the things I have learned, or what one thing do I need God to speak to me about this week?

I COMMIT TO...

- Completing this study**
- Attending church each weekend of this series**
- Find a trusted, spiritual friend**
- Open up and introduce myself to people**
- _____
- _____

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests and praise reports. Write your personal prayer requests and make notes of how you can pray for each other.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

God designed you
with a purpose
only you can
fulfill.

DIVING DEEPER

Take some time between now and the next meeting to dig into God's Word.

As we learned in this week's lesson, we don't have to let the past define us. We can learn from the past. But we don't have to live there. Let's commit to not let regret hold us back from walking in freedom as we reflect on these scripture verses. What do they teach you about how God views us and our past mistakes?

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Psalm 103:12

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I hope in Him!"

Lamentations 3:22-24

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Hebrews 8:12

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1–2

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Questions

- God tells us He will remember our sins no more. How does this truth change the way you think and feel about your past?
- In John 16:8, Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin, but Romans 8:1 tells us that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. What do you think that means? What is the difference between the conviction of the Holy Spirit and condemnation?
- How do these scriptures encourage you to release your past failures? What steps can you take to move past your regrets?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

You will need two items—a pen and this guide—to hear from God through these daily devotions!

What is God saying to you?

Open to your reading for the day. Take your time reading both the scriptures and devotional. Write out what you are hearing from the Bible under the first question, *What is God saying to you?*

What does it mean to you?

What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture and devotional? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Write this out under the second question, *What does it mean to you?*

What action steps do you need to take?

Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Write how this truth applies to you today in the third question, *What action steps do you need to take?*

Bring it to God in prayer.

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture or even a prayer for a great insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out in the space titled, *Bring it to God in prayer.*

Day 1

Scripture

But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

Proverbs 4:18

Reflect

The pain of regret is something we all experience at some point in our lives, regardless of our age. It is almost unavoidable. Feelings of regret over one momentary thing we did, said, or *didn't* do can follow us for years. If nurtured, these feelings can become rooted deep in our souls. Regret is a powerful and sometimes painful emotion. Can anything good come from regret? *Well, that depends.*

Research shows that feelings of regret can help us avoid future mistakes. If properly processed, we can gain valuable insight and understanding how to become better while making peace with our past. Instead of nursing, cursing, and rehearsing our regrets, we can reverse these painful emotions by turning to God.

Once you give your regrets to God, the encouraging thing is they often become springboards propelling you forward in life and purpose. Instead of sulking in self-defeat and second-guessing, give your regrets to God and let Him heal your emotions and heart. This critical step sets the wheels in motion for you to ultimately fulfill your purpose.

See yourself today the way God sees you, as a daughter or son with a forgiven past and wonderful future. Your regrets can actually move you toward your unique life purpose which *“shines brighter unto the perfect day.”*

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 2

Scripture

"I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders... and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished."

Acts 22:4-5

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

Ephesians 1:7

Reflect

Before his famous conversion in Acts 9, Saul (later called Paul the Apostle) passionately defended the orthodoxy of the Jewish faith from the "plague" of Christianity. No one was more averse to the Christian faith than Saul. He literally murdered people simply because they were Christians...until the day he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

After one encounter with the Living Christ, a switch flipped in Saul's life. From that day forward, Saul, now Paul, became the most zealous promoter of the Christian faith ever recorded in history. He preached from house to house, town to town, and across the known world. Paul devoted his every waking moment to building the Church of Jesus Christ.

But because of Paul's misguided past, he knew the searing pain of regret. From this place of deep regret, Paul penned the words in Philippians 3:13,14, *"Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

Paul's words still encourage us today. Regardless of our past, we must choose to lay aside our regrets and focus intently on Christ. Through Him our sins are forgiven and by the cross we are made new. Focus your attention on Christ today, for He is calling you upward and forward into *"the riches of His grace."*

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 3

Scripture

But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:60–62

But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”

Mark 16:6-7

Reflect

“What was I thinking?” ... “Why did I do that?” ... “I can’t believe I said that!” ... “Why didn’t I stand up and say something?”

We all say and deal with these common expressions of regret at some point in our lives. Peter denied Jesus three times while warming himself by the courtyard fire out of fear of retaliation and retribution. In the same manner, some of us, out of anger and the heat of the moment, say or do something we later regret. These nagging voices of regret and condemnation can haunt us for years. They beat like drums in our minds and grow louder and stronger the longer left unresolved.

Although Peter was no stranger to mistakes, regrets, and regular personal rebukes from Jesus, his life proves a powerful picture of someone God uses in spite of themselves. Peter took his eyes off Jesus and sank into the sea. He tried to talk Jesus out of going to the cross to pay for our sins—but denying the Lord *publicly to His face*? No one ever imagined Peter blowing it at that level! He was in Jesus’ inner circle, one of the “top three,” but when the pressures of life came, Peter failed *BIG TIME!*

Maybe, like Peter, you are ashamed of something you’ve done. You crumbled under pressure and made a bad choice. You let your family down. Maybe, you’re currently caught in a web of sin. No matter which voice of regret yells in your ear threatening your demise, *it is a lie!* Even after your biggest failures, Jesus still calls you to Himself. He calls you “*to come...and I will give you rest.*” (Matthew 11:28) Jesus invites you today to receive His never-ending love and forgiveness to drown out the voices of regret.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 4

Scripture

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28

Reflect

Have you ever felt the pain of regret from a failure that wasn't your fault? The unfortunate choices of others affected you. You got caught in the crossfire. The circumstances were completely out of your control. Perhaps, you even got the blame.

Maybe today you're hurting because a business failed, a relationship crumbled, your child rebelled, or your boss's nephew got the promotion you rightfully deserved. If you're honest, you would say, "Wow, that really hurts!"

No matter how hard it is to get over it or how disheartened you may be, you cannot let the past define your future. It is important to come to a place where you release the past. If not, our enemy, the devil, loves to deceive us into wallowing in self-pity, feeling sorry for ourselves, and walking around with a chip on our shoulders. After a time, we grow weary and end up blaming God. "Why did God let this happen to me?" But God is not your problem.

Here's a suggestion: don't focus on the *whys* in life, focus on the *Who*. Instead of wondering *why* things went wrong, change your perspective by putting your focus on *Who* and know God still has a good plan for *you*.

The essence of Romans 8:28 simply stated is, nothing happens *TO* me, it only happens *FOR* me because of God's unconditional love. Put your trust in God and allow Him to redeem your past and turn the place of your pain into the platform for your purpose!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 5

Scripture

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:10

“For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”

Jeremiah 29:11–12

Reflect

God designed you with unique gifts, callings, and purposes only you can fulfill. Inside you He placed dreams and desires He wants to bring to pass. If your vision for the future seems blurry and unclear, lift your head and look up to God, He dearly loves you. Plus, the church is full of people waiting to love you, too! Don't let the enemy convince you that you failed too big, or it's too late to change your life or your legacy. In Christ, failure is never final—He has the final word.

The Scripture says in Proverbs 24:16 that *“though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.”* What an encouraging promise! But, make sure to do your part—get back up!

When faced with disappointment, one thing that helps us get back up on our feet is remembering that much of our future is determined by our response to failure. Rather than regrets becoming hitching posts you tie yourself to, turn them into signposts pointing you to a good *“future and a hope”* God prepared beforehand. Your future is waiting for you!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 6

Scripture

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

James 5:16

Reflect

God didn't put us on this planet to do life alone. John Donne famously penned the line, "No man is an island." That's so true! We were not designed to be an island to ourselves. We need a spiritual family, expressed through our local church, to come around us and help us move on when we fail. Solomon warns us of the dangers of becoming bitter and isolated when we nurse our regrets. "...*But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.*" (Ecclesiastes 4:10)

James encourages us that when we confess our sins *to one another* and pray for each other, we will be healed. That's great news! There is something powerful in confessing our faults to another person, particularly someone we've hurt. When we humble ourselves and do this, it brings healing in us and in our relationships. Also, admission of the wrong helps us not make the same mistake and be more conscientious in the future.

Confessing our faults to God AND one another, allow us to walk in health, wholeness, and freedom from the bitterness of regret. The first step is to ask for God's forgiveness. The next step is to confess your faults with the person you hurt. By doing this, the walls of pride and isolation are broken. Reconciliation and restoration lie ahead, for "*the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man (or woman) avails much.*" Press in to prayer and confession. Wholeness is in your future!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.
