



Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

Regrets

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 13

December 6, 2020

Bottom Line: Your past doesn't have to determine your future.

Icebreaker: What purchase did you make that you most deeply regretted? Or what is an opportunity you had that you didn't take, and you regret it?

Key Verse: *You have been bought and paid for by Christ, so you belong to him—be free now from all these earthly prides and fears.* 1 Corinthians 7:23 TLB

We all have a past that involves sin and other negative events. Too often we fret so much over our past that it is destructive to our lives. We even question God's ability to forgive, accept, and/or provide. But God assures us that we can overcome our past and experience contentment. Your past does not have to dominate your present and future. Because we instinctively know that there is some risk and cost to making peace with our past, we focus more on the cost than the rewards. The sure sign that we have an authentic relationship with God is that we believe more in the future than in the past. When we allow regret to capture our hearts, guilt destroys our confidence. We feel insecure. Guilt will damage our relationships with other people through overreactions, avoiding commitments, and even responding in ways we don't understand. Guilt will keep us stuck in the past. Just like worry cannot change the future, guilt cannot change the past. It just makes today miserable. But we can get on with life and grow regardless of our regrets—the procedure is simple. It just takes courage. So here we go: **Take a personal inventory.** Get alone with yourself and God and a pen and paper. Ask, "what are the things I consciously feel guilty about, and what are the things I unconsciously feel guilty about that are messing up my life?" Write them down, being dead honest. Do this regularly. **Accept responsibility for your faults.** Don't minimize and don't blame. If you want to stop defeating yourself, you have to accept responsibility. **Ask God for forgiveness.** Don't beg, bargain, or bribe. Just believe that God will forgive you. He will. It's His nature. **Admit your faults to another person.** God says (James 5:16) it is absolutely essential for healing. It is essential because all of our struggles are relational. We wear masks and hide, and the problem only gets bigger. When you share the truth with one appropriate, trustworthy person, freedom from deadly secrets happens. **Accept God's forgiveness, and forgive yourself.** He forgives instantly, freely, and completely. He wipes it all out, and I have freedom from the deadly secrets that keep me miserable and bound. I forgive myself as well. This is not a one-time event. It's a process I repeat regularly as I keep short accounts with God and people.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What was your most significant takeaway from this week's message?

Much of who you are, what you do, and how you feel is affected by your past. Whether it's relationships from your childhood or pressures from recent years, the events of the past can have a significant impact on your current behavior. How has that been true in your life at one point or even now?

The cost of "making peace with our past" can scare us and keep us where we are. What might some of the costs be that scare us?

The sure sign that we have an authentic relationship with God is that we believe more in the future than in the past. Agree or disagree? Reflect and discuss.

The past can be either a source of confidence or condemnation. What difference does it make when you settle this? Whom do you know who has?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

How do you see guilt and regret ruin relationships?

The biggest hold-up to healing for my hang-up is me. Why is it so hard to own? What happens when we do?

To confess is to say and mean "God, You are right, I am wrong." You agree with God. God is utterly reliable. He will forgive when you ask. How have you struggled with this?

You are as sick as your secrets. Revealing leads to healing. The more you hide, the bigger it gets. You must share with another person besides God. How can you find the right kind of person? How can you BE the right kind of person? Why is it important to actually write out your personal inventory? Why is it important to share with someone else?

Is it harder for you to accept God's forgiveness or your own? How do you keep short accounts?

NEXT STEPS

1. Assess your regrets by taking a personal inventory sometime this week.
2. Find a safe person with whom to share.
3. Make a regular commitment to revisit your personal inventory. Make a date for your next check-in.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Your past doesn't have to determine your future.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: 2 Corinthians 7:10

Tuesday: 2 Timothy 4:7

Wednesday: Philippians 3:13-15

Thursday: Psalm 6:9

Friday: Romans 8:28

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)