

# Letting Go and Pressing On

## Philippians 3:10-16

<sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, <sup>11</sup> so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

<sup>12</sup> I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. <sup>13</sup> No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I **FOCUS ON THIS ONE THING: Forgetting the past and looking forward** (straining forward - ESV, reaching forth - KJV, reaching forward - NASB, straining towards - NIV) to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> **I press on to reach the end of the race** and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

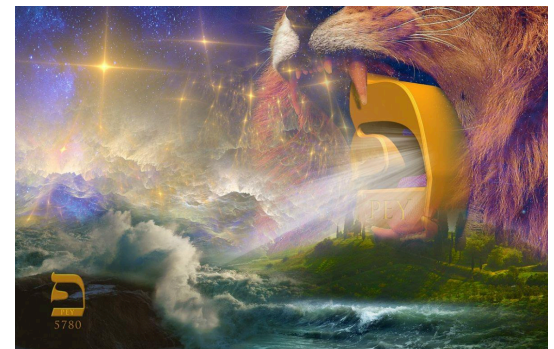
<sup>15</sup> Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. <sup>16</sup> But we must hold on to the progress we have already made. (Phil. 3:10-16 NLT-SE)

The Passion Translation: “**I forget all of the past as I fasten my heart to the future instead.**” The implication is that we can fasten our hearts to the past or to the future...it's our choice! “We must hold on to the progress we have already made.” — In TPT: “following one path with one passion.”

## - 2020: A YEAR OF VISION WITH A VOICE

### • Hebrew year 5780

- The Hebrew language is a richly intricate system of symbols and hidden mysteries. Jews have long believed the Hebrew language to be the hidden language of Heaven. Unlike the Phoenician alphabets we know today, Hebrew symbols contain within them pictures that symbolize the movements of the heavens and earth below and help to give clues to the divine workings of creation.
- This last decade 5770-5779 (from 2010 to 2019) has been all about “**seeing**.” The Hebrew letter “Ayin” is a picture symbol of an eye and characterized modernly in the number 70.
- This coming decade (5780-5789) is about “**speaking**.” “Pey” is the Hebrew letter for the number 80, a picture symbol of a mouth.
- “God is looking for those who will open their mouths and proclaim His Word with true conviction.” ~ Patricia King
- “We are approaching a new year, a new decade, and a new era in history. 5780 begins the Hebraic decade of Pey! Pey is linked with **calling back what the winds have scattered in other seasons**. It is also linked with a declaration of our mouth for **freedom**.” ~ Chuck Pierce



### • Sons of Issachar

- *From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men **understood the signs of the times** and **knew the best course for Israel to take**.* (1 Chr. 12:32 NLT-SE)

- The tribes were in a tremendous conflict and transition. The government was changing. They were moving from the government of the house of Saul to the government of the house of David. David was of Judah. Issachar could give great insight on how to make this shift.
- When God is ending one season and beginning another, or taking us through transition, He has to end or bring to death some old situations. This is why the tribe of Issachar could understand time. **They knew how certain structures had to end so that the new season that God had would begin.**
- The sons of Issachar understood chronological time, but they also understood spiritual and political time. The sons of Issachar could discern what God was doing and when He was doing it. They knew when one move of God was ending and another one was beginning. They could discern when a leader was falling and another leader was rising.

## - HOLDING ON & LETTING GO

- There are some things which are worth holding on to...our **principles, values, destiny and identity in Christ** (Matt 6:24, 2 Cor 5:17). Other things have been promised to us by God and we should never even consider separating ourselves from them...faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13). **Letting go of the past is sometimes necessary so that God can open the door to your future.** (1 Cor 16:9)
- There is plenty that we would be wise to let go of...**traditions, hurts, disappointments, and failures** can all stand in the way of us getting where the Holy Spirit is leading us (Rom 8:18). Sometimes the things we are holding on to will actually harm us in ways we don't even understand and God is protecting us. God sees what you don't see and He sees what we refuse to see. It hurts to let go, but sometimes it hurts more to hold on! (Ps 139:1-24)
- One of the hardest things for anyone to do in this life is to LET GO. **We love to feel like we're in control**; that if we just work really, really hard, we'll get a handle on whatever it is we're struggling with. Rarely is that much help apart from the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 2:10-14)
  - *Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.* (Prov. 16:3 NLT-SE)
  - <sup>13</sup> *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.* <sup>14</sup> *He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.* (John 16:13-14 NLT-SE)

## - FORGETTING THE PAST

- **Why do we hold on to the past?** Why do we cling to things that are no longer relevant in our lives? Why is it so difficult to let go of experiences that have caused us pain and suffering? Many of us get stuck in the past because of our need for **certainty**. Certainty is one of the six basic human needs and is fundamentally about survival. We all need to feel certain that we can avoid pain and, ideally, find some comfort in our lives.
- Learning to let go of the past also means stepping into the unknown future. It means **having the courage to let go of what is familiar** – even if it's negative – and being vulnerable enough to embrace and learn from what's ahead.
- “Saint Ignatius of Loyola said that **sin** is an unwillingness to trust that what God wants is our deepest happiness. Until we are convinced of this, we will seek to control our own lives. But knowing that God sees all the moments and concerns of our lives, is committed to working all things together for our good, and cares about us deeply gives us the confidence to let go. When we trust God, we are not surrendering to chaotic forces or blind chance. **We are surrendering to love.** And that act of surrender allows us to be caught in an embrace that will never let us go.” ~ Jon Tyson, *The Burden is Light*

• **Here is some things the Bible says about letting go of the past:**

- “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then **looks back** is **not fit** for the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62 NLT-SE)
- So, ask yourself, “Who then IS fit for the Kingdom of God?” In truth, the “rules” of the Kingdom differ greatly from the rules of our culture. God’s kingdom operates on a foundation of sacrificial love and our culture tends to gravitate towards individual achievement.
  - **He who dies with the most toys wins...**a phrase coined by millionaire Malcom Forbes, runs in direct opposition to the words of Jesus in Matt 16:26, “*What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?*”
  - **Heaven helps those who help themselves...**The self-help industry (\$10 billion/year) in the US is thriving! The phrase, “Heaven helps those who help themselves,” originates from the ancient Greek author **Aesop** in 1646 and is also the first line in **Samuel Smiles**’s book entitled, *Self-Help* in 1859. The phrase appears nowhere in the bible. In fact, the view through the bible’s lens is, “God helps those who position themselves to depend upon him!” (Rom 5:8)
  - Our cultural values **tolerance**, unless you choose to be intolerant...that’s just not tolerated!
  - The cultural has a high value for **freedom of speech**, until you say something they don’t like...then you get shut down!
  - You get the drift. Those who are “fit” for the kingdom are those whose **values, principles** and **choices** align with (fit) the Kingdom.
- Apparently, part of being fit for the kingdom means you are not supposed to look back. Why? Likely, it has a lot to do with **looking back hindering you** from getting to the goal that’s in front of you.
- <sup>18</sup> “**Forget** the former things; do not **dwell** on the past. <sup>19</sup> See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Is. 43:18–19 NIV)
- **What does it mean to dwell on the past?** To give undue focus to the **past**, at the expense of looking forward the **future** and enjoying the **present**!
- “When we dwell on the past, we tend to want to live there. When we dream of the future, we want to go there. Our dreams are where God paints a picture of a life waiting to be created.” ~ Erwin McManus
- <sup>9</sup> If we **confess our sins** to him, he is faithful and just to **forgive** us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. <sup>10</sup> If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. (1 John 1:9–10 NLT-SE)
- **Our sins are always connected to the past.** The most direct and effectual way to let go of the past is to simply **forgive**. But it’s still a choice we have to make. It’s a very important choice with severe ramifications. Yikes!
  - <sup>14</sup> “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you **refuse** to forgive others, your Father **will not forgive your sins**. (Matt. 6:14–15 NLT-SE)
- Look **straight ahead**, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. (Prov. 4:25 NLT-SE)
- This is mostly about being **present, aware** and **discerning**. Distractions can pull our eyes away from what they are supposed to be fixed on.

- Another way to look at it is that we are being encouraged to **“turn” our attention to what’s ahead**. In order to that, it typically requires that we turn away from something else.
- <sup>16</sup> *We have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now!* <sup>17</sup> *This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. **The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*** (2 Cor. 5:16–17 NLT-SE)
- Being “born again” means that **we allow the old man to die**. Sounds painful and sometimes it really is. If our identity, comfort and livelihood is wrapped up in the person who is dying, the side effects of death can be traumatic to endure. **Once the old man dies, there’s nothing standing in the way of new life beginning.**
- **Sin is not a problem for you?** <sup>8</sup> *If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.* <sup>9</sup> *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.* <sup>10</sup> ***If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.*** (1 John 1:8–10 NLT-SE)
- **What are we actually “forgetting?”**
  - **Past hurts** - Emotional pain, betrayal, manipulation, meanness, traumatic events...
    - There’s an Arab proverb that states that you should **write the bad things that happen to you in the sand**, so that they can be easily erased from your memory. However, most of us engrave the bad things that happen to us in marble; therefore, our painful memories remain immortalized in our minds. Past hurts can be “sticky.” If you want to be free of the past, lose interest in these sticky thoughts.
    - “One of the most **courageous** decision you’ll ever make is to finally let go of what is hurting your heart and soul.” ~ Brigitte Nicole
  - **Past disappointments** - Unmet expectations, regret over poor choices, unhealed wounds, comparison...
    - We’re not just talking about being disappointed with others. Many of us have suffered great **disappointment with ourselves** and the choices we’ve made in life. We need to be willing to forgive ourselves. (1 John 1:9)
    - Others have disappointment that is **focused on God** for not protecting them, healing them, or advancing them. Feelings of disappointment when it comes to God almost always stems back to a lack of trust in him.
  - **Past unhealthy habits** - Gossip, blaming others, self-destructive tendencies, pornography, overindulgence, lying...
    - Habits often take some time to get free from. In the meantime, many believers struggle with habits that they feel disqualify them from a life of faith and trust in God. For many, these are not just habits, but addictions. It’s hard not to dwell on fixing the problem, which tends to only make it more difficult to be set free.
    - The 1960s pop psychology book *Psycho-Cybernetics*. This book says it takes a minimum of **21 days for an old mental image to dissolve and a new one to gel**.
    - A study of 96 people published in *The European Journal of Social Psychology* found it took on average **66 days to form a habit**, such as eating fruit at lunch or running for 15 minutes a day. But in the study, the actual number of days ranged from 18 to 254 days - indicating that it can take a very short or a very long time!
    - “Habitual following of a desire leads to strengthening the power of that desire over us. In the realm of the will there is something like **the power of inertia** in the physical realm. It is easier to do what you have done than what you have not, and especially than what goes contrary to what you have done. You tend to keep on doing

what you have done; and the more so, the more you have done it. **That is spiritual inertia.**" Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*

- **Past offenses** - Unforgiveness...

- "What I envy most about you Christians is your **forgiveness**; I have nobody to forgive me." ~ atheist leader, Marghanita Laski, before her death in 1988.
- "**This (forgiveness) is what we as Christians bring to the table.** This is our secret weapon. We have been forgiven of our sins and we forgive others. We are a religion of grace. Unforgiveness is inappropriate for people who have been loved and forgiven by God." ~ Jon Tyson

- The "**spirit of offense**" is an end-time, apocalyptic spirit. It's that serious. Don't believe it?

- <sup>10</sup> And many will **turn away from me** and **betray and hate each other.** <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Matt. 24:10–13 NLT-SE)
- Then I heard **a loud voice shouting across the heavens**, "It has come at last— salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth— **the one who accuses them before our God day and night.** (Rev. 12:10 NLT-SE)

