Letting Yourself off the Hook

All of us have regrets: missed opportunities, mistakes, failures, or harm to others. Some of the regrets are very painful and some less painful. It is important to assess your past by realistically looking at it and honestly admitting the things you have done or not done that you now regret; yet the purpose isn’t to beat yourself up, but to let yourself off the hook by gaining understanding, taking responsibility, and changing how you live today.

It is always easier to look back at your past in hindsight with the awareness that you have today and see what would have been better choices. You are older and wiser now and have information and abilities you didn’t have back then. At the time, you were limited by your circumstances, abilities, experience, age, and the incomplete knowledge and awareness you had.

God doesn’t want your past to weigh you down with guilt, shame, low self-esteem, low self-worth, or hopelessness. He wants you to let it go and move on. Shame over the past can contribute to poor choices in the future. Addicts find themselves locked in a shame cycle where the self-loathing they feel over acting out actually leads them to act out again and again and again.

Shame tells you that you are bad and unworthy of redemption. Guilt tells you that you did something bad, and it compels you to repent and seek forgiveness. God’s forgiveness gives you a clean slate to start over. No mistake, no sin, and no missed opportunity is bigger than God’s ability to turn it around for your good and His glory. Making mistakes is not the same as being a mistake. God works everything for his purpose, even the things you do wrong.
Relationship Prayer

God,

Help me let go of the things that keep me chained to my past. Help me see my life as a clean slate daily.

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Relationship Challenge

❖ Take one of your regrets and analyze it in context of the things that were going on at the time, and then offer yourself grace and let it go.

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Scripture Meditation

Isaiah 1:18

“‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.’”

God wants us to figure out our past and then let it go so we can move forward.

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If you have any questions you would like to ask Karla, please feel free to email her. Portions of your email and Karla’s response to you may be used anonymously in future materials. By emailing her, you are giving your implied permission.

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