

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Do you struggle with bitterness, unforgiveness, offense or unresolved anger? What do you do to deal with them?

2. What past experiences keep you from maximizing your life? How do you intend to deal with it?

PRAYER

Pray for emotional healing from past hurts, pains, failures and disappointments. Pray for grace to move forward despite all these setbacks.

ZERO RECALL **Letting Go of the Past**

WARM-UP

1. If you could change one thing in your past, what would it be?

2. If someone made a movie of your life, would it be a drama, comedy, romance, action, or science fiction? Why?

3. If you could live your life three times over, what will be the other two lives? Describe it.

WORD

Playgrounds are littered with these steel structures. It helps children exercise and improve their dexterity and mobility. The unique feature of monkey bars is, in order for you to move forward, you have to grab hold of the bar in front of you then let go of the bar behind you. If you do not let go of the bar behind you then you cannot move on even if you have one hand grabbing a bar in front of you.

People are often hindered in life not because they fail to grab hold of the future but because they cannot let go of the past. They got stuck in the past – past hurts, past mistakes, past failures.

1. Let go of emotional wounds.

Genesis 41:50-52 says,

Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On. Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

Joseph learned to forget the bitter memories of his past – when he was sold to be a slave by his brothers, when he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and when he was imprisoned for so many years in Egypt.

In Isaiah 43:18-19, the LORD says,

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

We must let go of bitterness.

Hebrews 12:15 (NLT) says,

Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

Let us not let bitterness take root in our hearts by burying pain. Rather, forgive those who have hurt you. This is for your sake, not theirs. Forgive to be free. Otherwise, you would be building walls that will prevent God's blessing.

2. Let God redeem your past.

One roadblock to living your life to the max is being stuck on the events, failures and shortcomings of the past. Believe that God can use even these experiences and turn it for the good.

Romans 8:28 says

And God works all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to His purpose.

Maybe something bad happened to you when you were younger – you were mistreated or you had a traumatic experience. The Lord can remove the bitter memories of the past. We have to refuse to dwell on yesterday's disappointments because God can make all things new.

Isaiah 43:25 (NLT) says

I - yes, I alone – will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again.

In Philippians 3:13-14 the apostle Paul wrote,

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.