**DEALING WITH REGRETS: PART 2**

Sunday School Lesson 6

*FORMER THINGS*

1 John 1:9

3/13/2022

**Introduction:** Let’s quickly review what we have covered thus far in our lesson series on *Former Things.* We started the series by looking at the dynamics of the past. We observed that the past is both unchangeable but a necessary component of the present. After that, we examined the power of the past. It should not have power over our minds or our present decisions. We then spent the next two lessons considering the deception of nostalgia. We discovered that nostalgia is an easy feeling to have as we live in a sinful world and while we deal with trials or trouble. It’s also easy because it ignores the pain of the past and overinflates our past successes. Other dangers of nostalgia are the discontentment that is most often the cause of it and the justification that it provides us for our current failures. Last week, we began to explore how we are to deal with our regrets. In the first lesson on the topic of regrets, we noted three important truths. Firstly, every person will have some regrets because we are all sinners. Secondly, every regret becomes more intensified by its unpleasant outcomes. Thirdly, every regret is the result of a change in thinking or perspective. This means that the regret may not always be an issue with our past. Sometimes, it may point to a change in thinking that is negatively affecting our mindset in the present. Let’s see what else we can learn about our regrets.

1. **SOME REGRETS MAY BE CAUSED BY DISAGREEABLE DECISIONS OF OTHER PEOPLE.**
2. **Notice that regret may be over a decision someone else made that we are left to deal with (Genesis 6:5-7; Exodus 32:6-14; 1 Samuel 15:10-11; 2 Samuel 24:15-16; Psalm 106:40-45).** Regret may not just be over decisions that we have made personally. We may also experience regret over past events which we had no personal control over. In some cases, this might be considered resentment instead of regret, but the thought is still the same. There is pain over past events that had an impact on our lives. The Bible speaks of God’s relationship with man. It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth! The Bible gives us several examples of where the Lord had to deal with regret over the decisions that people made. He watched as His chosen nation continually made choices that did nothing but further alienate them from their God and from the blessings that He wanted to bestow upon them. Jesus looked on Jerusalem with regret over what could have been for them. While these regrets may not be as strong in our minds as our own personal decision-making regrets, they can still cause us great pain and frustration as we live in our present circumstances.
3. **Notice that no person lives in a world where everything goes how they want it to (Proverbs 16:2; 21:2; Acts 5:29; 1 Corinthians 3:19).** There is no man on this earth who can claim that everything goes the way that he wants it to. The righteous must deal with the unrighteous. The prudent must deal with the simple. The wise must deal with the foolish. The rich must deal with the poor. The diligent must deal with the sluggard. The Godly must deal with the ungodly. The follower of Christ must deal with the followers of Satan. It would be wonderful if everyone was on the same page and following perfectly after God, but that’s not the reality of this sinful world. As a result, all of us are left to deal with regrets over the decisions that others make. None of us get to live in a world where everything goes perfectly according to what we want or think. Of course, our definition of perfect does not matter anyways. The Lord is the Creator, and His will in the only will that ultimately matters. At times, we struggle to understand and accept this truth. In a later lesson, we will look more closely at this and see what happens when we allow the regrets from the decisions of others to rule in our minds.
4. **REGRETS OF WRONGDOING MUST FIRST BE CONFESSED IN ORDER TO BE DEALT WITH.**

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1. **Notice that we must first confess our sins before the Lord (1 John 1:9a; Leviticus 5:5; Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; Daniel 9:20; Mark 1:5; Romans 14:11).** The first step in dealing with regret has to be our confession of transgressions against the Lord. We cannot justify our sins. We cannot hide our sins. If we are truly dealing with the regret of bad decisions, then we must be willing to confess those before the Lord. Obviously, we may have other types of regrets in this life that are not explicitly tied to a Biblical command, but the vast majority of our regrets as Christians will be tied to sin against the Lord. The acknowledgement must be there first. We will never be able to move forward without that acknowledgement. Hopefully, for most of us, a willingness to confess our sins before the Lord is not the issue when it comes to dealing with regrets. After all, we know that the Lord has already seen and knows very clearly all of our failures. For most of us, the issue is more likely to be our willingness to listen to that Holy Spirit conviction and allow that regret to take place that comes from conviction of sin.
2. **Notice that we are to confess our faults one to another and reconcile with those who have ought against us (James 5:16; Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17).** This may be the more challenging part of confessing our regrets. I believe it is often much easier to confess our faults before the Lord than it is to confess our faults to others. This says much about us and our pride. It seems rational to think that confessing before a righteous, omnipotent God would be the more frightening. Yet, the reasons for the struggle to confess before others is obvious. First, we may not want to deal with the potential repercussions that may accompany our confession. Second, we just do not like for others to see our flaws, failures, and shortcomings. God sees us as sinful man, but that friend or loved one might hold us in very high esteem. We do not want to disappoint them and potentially ruin that reputation. Third, we know the hurt that the confession may cause. Nonetheless, if we want to properly deal with our regrets, we must confess the trespasses that we have committed against another person.
3. **MANY REGRETS MUST BE CARRIED FOR A TIME IN ORDER TO BE DEALT WITH.**
4. **Notice that we are never commanded to forget our regrets or promised that the Lord will help us forget those regrets during this life (Deut. 9:7; James 1:28; Psalm 25:7; Revelation 21:4).** This lesson series has greatly opened my eyes to many of the cliché things that we often say about dealing with our past and its regrets. We speak of the Lord forgetting our sins, and we might have heard that we should just forget our regrets as well. Let’s ask a very serious question about this idea. If we could easily forget our regrets, would that not bring in to question whether we ever regretted the issue to begin with? Folks point to Paul forgetting those things which were behind him as evidence that we should be able to just forget our regrets. Yet, this same Paul brought up his past failures as a Pharisee as well. Additionally, he brought up the past of several of the churches. Perhaps, we are missing the mark a bit in our interpretation on this topic of forgetting. We will get to forget those things one day. Yet, in that day, we will have a glorified body that will never be tempted again to sin!
5. **Notice that our regrets are healthy companions of our renewed mind (Titus 3:1-5; Colossians 3:7-10; Ephesians 2:22-25; Romans 12:2-3; Hebrews 6:6).** Last week, we observed a key point that regret is caused by a change of mindset. When you are seeing things clearly spiritually, you will have regret over past decisions that were wrong and against the Word of God. If you notice the references given, you will see a common theme when it comes to the mention of the renewal that should take place in our life and mind.Most of these passages also mention the former state of the believer prior to his renewal. Why is this important? Was it to shame the church or cause them to be stuck in the past? Of course not! It is to magnify the grace and mercy of God. It also serves the purpose of reminding us of the things that we do not want to go back to. That regret is something that we have to carry, as it helps us to continue on the straight and narrow leading of the Lord and His Word. If we find ourselves no longer regretting sinful past decisions, it may speak to a negative change of mindset in the present.
6. **REGRETS MUST BE CONSIDERED FORGIVEN IN ORDER TO BETTER DEAL WITH THEM.**
7. **Notice that the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9b; 2:12; Colossians 2:13; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 4:7; Acts 26:18; Luke 7:48; Mark 2:10).** When it comes to our regrets over sin, we can have total confidence and peace that our sins are forgiven. If we confess them (as covered earlier in the lesson), He is faithful and just to forgive them. This is a tremendous assurance for us, and it is critical to our ability to deal with these regrets. If we had to live our lives knowing that God would never forgive us, imagine how difficult and painful that would be! Jesus Christ has the power to forgive us of our sins. We must simply ask and then claim that forgiveness. Again, the primary issue for Christians dealing with regrets is likely not confessing them to the Lord and finding that forgiveness. Instead, the issue for many may be that we forget that our sins are forgiveness, or we doubt the power or willingness of the Lord to forgive us. We must remember this forgiveness to properly deal with regrets.
8. **Notice that we ought to forgive one another, and our lack of forgiveness will make it more difficult for others to deal with regrets (2 Corinthians 2:7-11; Col. 3:13; Ephesians 4:32; Luke 17:3-4).** While the Lord is always faithful to forgive, others are not so willing. As Christians, we must understand how important it is to forgive others. They have to carry the regret of their wrong. Your forgiveness is not going to rid them of genuine regret, but it will absolutely help them to deal with it. Paul told the church in Corinth to forgive one who had wronged them lest that individual be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Selfishly, our flesh wants those who wrong us to hurt and suffer. This is not Biblical and certainly not Christ-like. If we are the offender, we must understand that we cannot control whether someone forgives us or not. What we can do is ask for forgiveness. From there, it is also important that we are willing to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness will help us to be better deal with our regrets.