



Links Players

Dwell on the future

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14, NASB)

Here is a tip on how not to play good golf: Dwell on the past. Do not think this only involves the occasional or frequent player; it also makes a huge difference with the professional golfer.

The professional has many more opportunities to bemoan missed shots or a poor performance. I know it is relative, but they also struggle with forgetting past mistakes.

We all need to learn this lesson in real life and dwell on the future promises of an Almighty God.

Years ago, I volunteered in a prison ministry. I loved it. I witnessed new life and new beginnings. These men had many backgrounds and a variety of stains from the past, but they all had one common theme: "...forgetting what lies behind and pressing forward to what lies ahead..." with Jesus now as their guide.

It works every time. "How can God forgive me? I have committed terrible sins." Our God is a God of forgiveness and second chances. He has done that with everyone who has come to Him for forgiveness. I've seen it happen. More importantly, I have experienced it in my life.

How about the great ambassadors in the faith who have failed? Moses had blood on his hands. Abraham lied and deceived. Esther kept silent about her faith. Peter denied. Paul persecuted Christians and participated in the execution of Christians.

My beloved mentor and pastor from years ago had an affair. My good friend in a Links Players fellowship betrayed another. I fail in some way every day.

So, what should we do? Brennan Manning tells the story in *The Ragamuffin Gospel* of a wonderful Catholic nun with this great sign on her desk to remind her daily about forgetting the past. The sign read: "Today, I will not should on myself." I should have that sign on my desk.

C. S. Lewis says, "Seek God, and you will find Him, and with Him everything else." If we get this one right and live forgiven, we will press on to the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. That is what He intended for all of us, sinners. That is why He went to the Cross to give us an inheritance out of this world.

Max Lucado sums it well in his book *God Never Gives Up on You*: “A young woman once approached me after hearing a sermon on forgiveness. She had battled much rejection in her young life. On this day, she felt something different. She said, ‘I’ve made a discovery. I’m not an exception to acceptance.’”

Neither are you. For heaven’s sake, accept your acceptance. No more self-accusation. No more self-condemnation. Make grace your permanent address. God has made a covenant to love you with an everlasting love. He does what He says, and He never gives up on you.

Oswald Chambers says, “It’s not that you got God, but God’s got you.” So, my response is be gotten. Be forgiven. Be alive for what the future holds. The future is always ahead. You will have the goal accomplished when you celebrate with other sinners like Moses, Abraham, Esther, Peter, Paul, my pastor, my friend, and myself.

Prayer – God, you never said it would be easy, but You did say it would be worth it. And all your grateful children said, “Amen.”

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Randy Wolff

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