

## Looking Backward, Living Forward

Have you ever noticed the futility and frustration of living life in the past? Rehearsing regrets and rehashing the negative emotions of past are a sure path to self-pity and an quick trip down a very sorrow-filled memory lane.

God often reminds us to evaluate our personal past, but never to live there. In Revelation 2:5, Jesus shares with us the wisest ways to move forward from a sin-sick past:

***“Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.”*** (ESV)

Did you notice God’s three step plan for moving forward from yesterday?

One: Remember where you were before things went south (“from where you have fallen.”) In other words, focus on life when you were closer to Jesus.

Two: “repent.” Simple word – challenging task. Literally, “to turn around and head the other direction!” That direction, of course, is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus (that precious picture from I Peter 2:21).

Three: “Do the works you did at first.” Works, of course, don’t save us, but good works done in the name of Jesus accomplish His will on earth and guard your hearts and minds from the evil one. Yes, really. Jesus taught us through Paul’s pen in Philippians 4:7, ***“...the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

He goes on to write, ***“The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you,”*** in verse 9.

In Philippians 3:12-14 we see Paul’s sweet secret to a peaceful, hopeful heart:

***I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 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.***

This time of year as you look back at 2017 and forward to 2018, remember the good things, forget a few bad things, but most of all do the deeds you did at first and press on to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He’s there at the finish line cheering you onward, ever closer to Him.

-Ray Wallace