

this life, Jesus promised him – “*This day you will be with me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:39-43). **This one story should assure us that it’s never too late to change your eternal destiny. In some cases, someone may run out of time to see changes in this present world, but they will reap God’s blessings in eternity, which is the most important harvest of all.**

Painful Story from My Life

I remember when my own 19-year-old son tragically died in 2004. *Can anything be worse for a parent than seeing one of their children die an untimely death?* A part of me wanted to give up. The devil doesn’t play fair and tormented me day and night with thoughts of despair. Satan hurled all types of “fiery darts” through my head (Eph 6:10-18). All kind of thoughts kept attacking me night and day for many months. Every parent knows that there are thousands of little sacrifices they make on a daily basis to raise children. “*What had it all been for? Was it all in vain? All the diapers, all the homework, all the packed lunches, all the ball games, and hopes for the future. Was it all dust in the wind?*” **That’s what Satan wanted me to believe. But, by God’s grace, I eventually concluded correctly – THAT NOTHING WE COMMIT TO CHRIST IS EVER LOST!** I made a firm decision to rejoice in the 19-years that we had with, Ryan, instead of spending the rest of my life grieving. I became thankful for the influence that we had on his life for Christ. We had the joy of seeing Ryan accept Christ and start walking with him. **I DETERMINED THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO ALLOW SATAN TO STEAL THESE TRUTHS FROM ME!** Ryan (like any teenager, and in fact, all of us) -- was not perfect by any means, but that does not negate God’s salvation. I rightly concluded that no bad decision or sin in my son’s life could undo a salvation that was based on faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that we are saved by faith and not by our own works – “*For we are saved by faith and not by works.*” Additionally, I began rejoicing in the knowledge that I will once again be with my son for eternity in heaven. For me, heaven is more real than this earth. What we see now on this earth is **not** God’s perfect will -- accidents, untimely deaths, hatred, wars, genocide, sickness, child abuse, and every other evil thing. Mankind’s wrong choices have corrupted the earth, but thank God a new world is coming where we will rule and reign with Christ (Rev 21-22).

Dear friend, you have a choice to make, regardless of what has happened in your life. You

can choose to lay down and live on the negative side of life, or get-up and live on the positive side of life. Don't give up on God’s mission for your life!

Finding Your Way Home

Each one of these keys could be a whole lesson by themselves. Not every key may apply to your specific situation, but use the ones that do:

1. Stop playing the blame game.

Take responsibility for your part and stop focusing on what someone else did to you.

2. Repentance & forgiveness.

Show humility, acknowledge your part, and ask God for His forgiveness.

3. Make amends where possible.

Be willing to ask others to forgive you. But be prepared -- some will accept you and some may not. Do your best.

4. Overcome guilt and self-loathing.

Stop beating yourself up! Rest in God’s forgiveness. Romans 8:1 tells us that there is now no condemnation.

5. Release the past.

Stop rehearsing the past over and over. Release it and write a new chapter with God’s grace.

6. Abiding in Christ -- Your New #1 Priority!

John 15 tells us that we must “abide” in the vine if we want to bear fruit. Make Abiding in Christ your new #1 priority!

7. Restoration may “look different.”

When God restores, it will not be exactly the same as before. It will be revised and with more power! Jesus looked different and had new powers after his resurrection.

8. Find God’s new assignments.

As you learn to abide in Christ, God will reveal His plans and purposes or revised plans. Some may be new.

9. Move forward in faith & dependence.

Walk it out! Depend on His grace and His strength each day, instead of your own.

10. Keep planting “good seed.”

Remember, we said this is not a “quick fix” scheme. Keep planting good seed even if you do not see immediate results. In time, your good harvest will come!

Dear friend, God can turn it around for you! My prayer is that this message of restoration will encourage and propel you forward. ■ Jason Peebles

Key Memory Verse:

“I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten . . . and you shall eat in plenty and be satisfied.”
Joel 2:25-26

Prayer for Victory!

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice for my life and commit my life to Him. Forgive me for the times I’ve done things my own way. I choose to go your way now. Help me regain the Victory and see things turned around. Thank you for your great love! In Jesus Name – Amen”

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by Jason Peebles

One aspect of the Bible that even skeptics must acknowledge is that it’s a book filled with stories of imperfect people. These stories reveal the sins, weaknesses, and mistakes of some of the key players in the Bible. I appreciate the Bible’s honesty because these stories give us hope when we face our own struggles and issues.

The good news is that you don’t have to be a perfect person for God to lead you, guide you, and work in your life! He simply requires faith and a humble heart that is willing to repent and go God’s way. Dear friend, in this world there’s no such thing a perfect person! Walking with God is all about learning to “yield” to His influence instead of “striving” and working hard in our own efforts to be good.

No One is Perfect

Here are some examples of imperfect people that God used in a mighty way. Let’s start from the beginning in the book of Genesis. The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s commands (Gen 3). They were living in a wonderful Paradise until they fell into sin and took the whole human race with them. Yet the story reveals God’s heart when it tells us that He immediately put a plan for restoration into motion (Gen 3:15). In a sense, all of us have fallen from “Paradise.” Yet, God loves us and wants to restore each one of us. **Never forget this simple but profound truth – God’s heart is ALWAYS for restoration! It may not always happen, because God requires our cooperation – but restoration is always His desire.**

There are many other examples in the Bible. Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul all made

mistakes and wrong choices. It would be wonderful if we never made mistakes or had to battle against temptation, but life is not like that. This is why we all need a Savior. This is the very reason that Jesus Christ came and paid the price for our sins! **God Himself paid the price for your restoration.**

Did you know that no other religion in the world offers a sacrifice for sin? I've traveled all over the world in my missionary journeys, and I can tell you that all religions, except Christianity, require their followers to work hard to try and "earn" God's favor. You are expected to follow a list of rules and regulations, but there is no real "payment" for sin (the only exception would be Judaism, when they offered sacrifices, but those sacrifices were not a permanent solution [they had to be repeated over and over] and only foreshadowed the coming sacrifice of the Messiah). If you obey the rules, then "maybe" you will go to heaven. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and all religions take this approach. **But the problem with a works-based approach is that no one can keep the rules perfectly!** We all fall short. Thus, there is this dilemma where God wants restoration, but our sins stand in the way. **The only real solution was that a permanent payment for our sins had to be made.** Romans 3:23 says that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." No one is perfect -- not me, not you, no one! **Yet the good news is that God Himself provided a Savior. The promised Messiah (Isa 53) has come! Romans 6:23 says, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly."**

God Can Turn It Around!

There are many aspects to this area of overcoming sins, mistakes, and wrong choices. **But the central theme is that God always desires restoration!** This includes both non-Christians and Christians alike. Too often the Church-world tends to show more mercy to non-Christians than it does to its own when they fall into sin. Perhaps it's because we expect better from those who already know the Lord. But the truth is, God's children also have problems. We will not be exempt until we receive our resurrected bodies (1 Cor 15:50-58).

Sins, mistakes, and wrong choices can occur at any stage of life and come in all sizes and shapes, so to speak. They can be intentional or unintentional. They may remain secrets that only we know about, or they may become public knowledge. Sometimes, wrong choices seem to have negligible consequences, while at other times, one wrong choice can change the

entire course of a person's life. **Regardless of the situation, God's grace can turn it around! You may have many bad chapters in your life, but you can write the final chapters with God's grace.**

There is another aspect to this idea of overcoming sins, mistakes, and wrong choices that I want to touch on. **In addition to our own mistakes, there are times when we are forced to work through the effects of other people's wrong choices, at no fault of our own.** This may seem unfair, but it happens all the time. Children make choices that create havoc in the lives of their parents, and vice versa. Business associates make mistakes that can affect the entire company. In every one of our lives, there will definitely be times that we have to deal with the "spill-over" effects from the sins and bad choices of other people. Even then, we must trust the Lord to turn things around. This certainly highlights the importance for all of us to consider how our decisions will affect the lives of those around us. A good habit is to regularly ask yourself -- "*How will this end-up affecting my family, my children, my spouse, and my friends?*" **I think most people would love to have several do-overs in life. But even when mistakes are made, God will help you recover if you will turn to Him. You can turn any situation around if you will follow this divine formula: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).**

In the midst of all the Bible stories about imperfect people, there is awesome news that is repeated over and over. The good news is that whenever an individual or nation turns back to God in humility, repentance, and faith, God will always help them regain the victory! God can likewise turn it around for you and your situation.

Actions & Consequences

One of the inescapable spiritual laws in life is that for every action there are always corresponding consequences. It's similar to the law of physics that says, "*For every action there's an opposite and equal reaction.*" In the Bible, it's called the law of "sowing and reaping" (Gal 6:7-10). The world puts it this way -- "What goes around comes around." **This spiritual law can be your best friend or your worst enemy, depending on what you do with it.** It's a great day in a person's life when they finally realize that they must

take responsibility for their own actions and consequences. You will never succeed in life if you keep blaming others for your problems. Even if they were at fault, take responsibility for your part and your attitude now. Determine to resist bitterness and move forward in faith. We all tend to be like Adam who said to God (paraphrasing) -- "The woman you gave me is to blame (Gen 3:12)!" **Thus, the sooner you learn to stop blaming others and start cooperating with the principle of sowing & reaping, the better off your life will be.**



This spiritual law of sowing and reaping (actions and consequences) cannot be broken any more than the laws of physics can be broken. You may seem to "get-away" with something for a while, but eventually pay-day is coming. And it's not just a law for individuals -- it is true for nations too. All the tyrants and dictators of history thought they were exceptions to this eternal law, but in the end their empires crumbled and they passed from scene. Their "bad seed" eventually produced a "bad harvest" for all the people who were under their influence. **But the GOOD NEWS is that you can learn to use "sowing and reaping" to your advantage! Dear friend, let this truth sink in! This same law will be your ticket to restoration and reversing the curse if you let it! You can learn to intentionally plant "good seeds" starting now, and thereby guarantee a blessed future harvest.**

Reversing the Curse

In light of this spiritual law of sowing and reaping, the big question is -- "How can you turn

things around when you find yourself on the wrong side of the equation?" How can you reverse the curse when bad things are set in motion, either through your own actions or the spill-over effect from others? *As indicated above, the primary answer is to start intentionally using God's law of sowing and reaping in the right way. Start planting good seeds and keep planting good seeds, and you will eventually walk into a good harvest. You'll eventually break free from the wrong side of the equation and get on the good side of the equation. This is precisely how to reverse the curse.*

Before we proceed, let me pause to say that this process is NOT a magic wand to make your problems go away overnight. Farmers know that it takes time for a crop to grow and mature into a harvest. The reality is that it probably took time for your problems to develop, and it's going to take some time to get things turned around. **But you can be confident that it WILL HAPPEN, if you will simply follow the principles in this Study Guide.** It may take less time than you think, because good seeds are more powerful than bad seeds. Remember, when you plant seeds, they don't just produce one more seed -- they grow and multiply to produce an exponential number of new seeds. This exponential effect tends to speed things up. Joel 2:25-27 tells us that God can shorten the time that the "locusts" would normally devour and restore us to abundance. **But you have to be committed to the process and keep doing things God's way. You can't wake-up every day expecting an overnight fix (Mark 4:26-29).**

Before we look at some powerful Bible keys, let me mention one more example. Consider also the thieves on the cross when Jesus was crucified. One thief was arrogant and cursed Jesus, while the other one expressed sorrow, repentance, and faith in Christ. Even though it was too late for him to see changes in

