

# Getting Past Our Past

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Does your past haunt you? If you are a Christian, God has forgiven your sinful past, and He wants you to forgive yourself. Getting past our past can be a real challenge, but by God's grace we can put our past behind us and move forward with the Lord. The entire 103rd psalm assures us of God's great care for His people and His mercy and forgiveness. Here are a few outstanding points:

**For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him** (v. 11). How high are the heavens above the earth? We measure the distance to certain stars in light years, a distance so great our minds cannot comprehend it – and even then, there is always something out there that is even further away. Likewise, God's mercy toward us is so great it cannot be measured!

**As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us** (v. 12). How far is the east from the west? Again, the answer is infinity. When God forgives our sins, those sins are gone far, far away – we are not held accountable for them anymore.

**As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him** (v. 13). Those of us blessed with godly fathers picture this more easily than those whose fathers were harsh or abusive. Godly fathers recognize that their children are not perfect, but they love them and help them anyway. Even when the children get into a mess of their own making, godly fathers pity them and help them overcome it. God does that with us in a manner that surpasses even the best fleshly father. That thought continues in the next verse . . .

**For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust** (v. 14). God understands that we are frail and fallible. That is not an excuse for sin, but it is comforting to know that God is aware of our weakness and loves us anyway.

I hope these thoughts will encourage you to open your Bible and read the entire 103rd psalm. Read it slowly, and think about God's love and mercy toward you – then do as the first and last lines of the psalm say – **Bless the Lord, O my soul!**

x    x    x    x    x    x    x

## The Bible and Jesus

Several years ago a denominational preacher hurled his Bible across the church building before the eyes of his startled congregation. He then shouted, "If the study of this book is going to hide the real Jesus from me, there goes my Bible!"

I wondered what this man could possibly have known of Jesus apart from the Bible. Did he have a more trustworthy source than the Bible itself? Could he have looked into his own heart and seen a better Savior revealed there than is seen on the pages of the New Testament?

We cannot help but pity such an exhibition and pity any preacher who would stoop to such cheap theatrics.

We can know nothing of the real Jesus outside of what the Bible says about Him. We have no further revelation today (Jude 3). There is not a solitary thing a man needs in religion that he cannot find in the Bible. It is, indeed, all-sufficient (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

--Bobby Key (Miami, OK) via *Old Paths* (adapted)

## FELLOWSHIP

"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

A Science Fiction series that started in the 1950's has as its premise that man cannot stand physical contact with another person. They communicate only by video, and even that is beginning to be uncomfortable.

Our culture may be headed that way. Our culture has evolved so we are not like the Walton's with several generations living under the same roof. Physical families have moved apart, going all over the world to build their own lives. We have instant entertainment; TV, and the internet. We also have instant communication. A young couple on a date sat across the aisle from me in a restaurant. The whole time I was there neither one said one word to the other. Each was talking to someone else on the phone.

I have heard brethren sigh over these verses and wonder why that no longer is a part of the church. Perhaps it is because the world has won out. After all, we work harder and are more tired than our first-century brethren. We need our "my space," man caves, hobby rooms, and family time. We also have our cliques that we spend time with. Others, like me, are blessed to have their children nearby and spend time with them.

What impact would it have on your neighbors if every night brethren were at your home sharing a meal, praising God, and studying His word? Are we fulfilling I John 4:21, "*And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.*" Are we really doing that by living our separate lives?

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)