

Renew ...by letting go

Do you have things that you have trouble letting go? Some people are collectors. They collect things and they collect good and bad memories. They collect things that work and things that are broken. As a result, things seem to BUILD UP in their lives.

A while back we were going through the neighborhood and someone had their garage open. They had a three-car garage that was full from side to side and top to bottom with only one small walk-way, that was about 2 foot wide. Some stuff was in boxes, but most was stacked on top of the other. We thought they were probably moving in or out. A few months later we passed by again and their garage was still packed from top to bottom and side to side.

We all have some things in life that we don't want to let go.

There are some things we would be better without. Do you have things hidden away that you need to let go? Several people in the Bible experienced this. Some of them had trouble letting go of past behaviors, while others were constantly confronted with past failures.

We can be renewed by letting go.

The Book of Acts refers to a great renewal that took place in Samaria.

Believers were being scattered everywhere because of persecution. At the same time, Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. Multitudes of people heard the message, were saved, and witnessed great miracles and deliverance from unclean spirits. The whole city was filled with great joy as Samaria was being renewed. One of the new believers was a man named Simon.

Acts 8:13 NIV84 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

In the past, Simon practiced sorcery and claimed to be “*a man with great power from God.*” Simon had been considered to be great in Samaria because the people were astonished at his great sorceries. When Philip arrived, he was doing things Simon thought were impossible. He was witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit through miracles and signs done in Jesus’ name. As a result of what was happening, Peter and John were sent by the Apostles to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the believers to receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:18-19 NKJV And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Simon experienced a significant internal conflict and dilemma because of his past sorceries. He thought the power of God could be purchased.

Acts 8:20-21 NKJV But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.

Acts 8:22-23 NKJV Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

Simon believed the message Philip had preached and was baptized in water. He followed Philip and was amazed at the miracles and signs which were done by the power of the Holy Spirit. Although he was a believer and followed Philip, Simon had not let go of things that controlled his heart. Peter told him, "*Your heart is not right in God's sight.*" Then Peter said, "*For I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.*" (Acts 8:23 NLT)

Bitter jealousy and bondage to iniquity held Simon captive. Simon was in danger of losing what he had gained. Peter gave Simon the answer to his condition. He said, "*Repent of your wickedness, and pray to the LORD. Perhaps He will forgive your evil thoughts.*"

There was an answer for Simon's condition.

Paul spoke to Ephesian believers about letting go.

There were things in their lives they needed to let go. He told them to let go and throw off their old nature and former way of life. Then in Ephesians 4:25-31, he encouraged them to let go of specific things from their old way of living.

Ephesians 4:25 NLT So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.

Since we are members of the body of Christ, we should speak the truth.

Let go of lying and start speaking the truth.

Ephesians 4:26-27 NLT And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

Anger gives a foothold to the devil. A foothold is an opportunity for

greater evil to enter in. **Let go** of anger.

Ephesians 4:28 NLT If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

The person who steals is aligned with the devil. John 10:10, *The thief comes to steal, kill and to destroy.*

Ephesians 4:29 NLT Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Although they had been saved, their speech had not changed. Let go of unwholesome and corrupt words and replace them with words of encouragement.

Ephesians 4:30 NLT And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:31 NLT Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.

Paul was telling believers in the church in Ephesus to let go and be renewed in the Holy Spirit. It would be easier to accept if he was talking to people outside of the church. Although they had accepted the Gospel Message and believed unto salvation, they still had some things they needed to let go.

John 10:10 NKJV Jesus said, *"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

Jesus came to release us from the things that hold us and destroy our lives.

1 John 3:8 NIV The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

There is a burden and oppression of sin.

David spoke about the heaviness of his sins.

Psalms 38:4 NKJV For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

Everyone has known that burden of sin.

Sin is cruel.

- Solomon 8:6 says, "jealousy is cruel as the grave."
- Proverbs 14:30 says, "jealousy is like cancer in the bones."
- Proverbs 27:4 says, "wrath is cruel."
- Proverbs 10:12 says, "hatred stirs up strife."

- James 1:15, evil desires ...brings death.
- Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death.

Sin is like that.

All some see is the trouble and iniquity that burdens and weighs them down. They are burdened, oppressed and weighed down with many things and they have no relief. God has not left you in your hopeless condition.

Isaiah 55:7 NKJV Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

You can be renewed by letting go!

In the Old Testament, Joseph had been mistreated and hated by his family.

God gave him a dream that was ultimately going to lead to the salvation and life of his family. His brothers became jealous of him, were rude and cruel, and did not believe what he said. His brothers constantly mistreated him, planned on killing him, but ultimately sold him into slavery.

Joseph suffered many things in Egypt. He was made a slave, lied on, put in prison, deceived, and forgotten. Ultimately he was taken out of prison to meet Pharaoh.

After everything God showed him came to pass, Joseph's family came to Egypt.

When his brothers showed up, Joseph had let go of all of the things that had been done against him.

Genesis 50:19-20 NLT But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people."

Do you have some things you need to let go?

God wants to help you get free. Jesus came to release people who are captives to sin and mistreatment. He came to give liberty to the oppressed and to heal the brokenhearted. He came to open prison doors for those who are bound. There is power in the blood of Jesus Christ to set you free! God wants to renew you. Today is your day to let it go.