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As a scientist I am very thankful that God set up the physical systems on earth with great order. I have relied on that order to develop successful experiments. A *successful* experiment gives a predictable result and can be performed by different people at different times in different locations and will always yield the same answer.

However, during the development of an experiment, unexpected results often occur, triggering for scientists a phase of looking into the past in order to understand how to move forward. Scientists look to answer questions such as, “How did this happen?” and “What should have been done differently?” Forward movement waits until the answers are found.

But what about the unexpected, sudden challenges that come up in life—things like someone falling asleep, physical injury, or weather that causes property damage? As a new believer I recognized I was using a scientific approach to deal with what had happened. I saw that I was waiting to move forward until I had examined the past. So I went to God’s Word to see what God has to say about dealing with the past.

Philippians 3:13,14:

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

God’s will is for us to reach forth—to move forward! We forget the past as we reach forth unto those things which are before and press toward the mark, the finish line, for the prize of His high calling.

Before I understood the rightly divided Word, reacting to unexpected challenges by analyzing the past had been my habit because of my scientific training. As I began to

learn more of the truth of God’s Word, I clearly realized that my “scientific approach” of looking to the past to understand how to proceed was hindering me from moving forward to claim my deliverance. As I learned to forget what was now behind me and reach forth to what was before me in response to unexpected challenges, I was able to move forward toward victory.

By analyzing the past, I was confusing facts with truth. What is a fact and what is truth? A fact, by definition, is a piece of information about circumstances that exist or events that have occurred. Facts are observed in the physical realm. A fact doesn’t exist until it happens and can be observed, so it is—by its very nature—defined by the past.

Truth, according to the Bible, is God’s Word.

Psalms 119:160:

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

John 17:17:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

God’s Word has been true from the beginning and endures forever—past, present, and future. Truth originates from God, Who is Spirit (John 4:24), so truth is spiritual, not physical. Because truth endures forever, it never changes. Therefore, truth needs no repeated observation and confirmation; it is simply believed. Facts and truth are different.

In forgetting the past and focusing on truth—God’s Word—we turn our thoughts away from the physical realm and toward the spiritual realm, away from the past and toward the deliverance to come.

Colossians 3:2:

Set your affection [thoughts] on things above, not on things on the earth.

Believing God’s Word puts our thoughts on things above. Believing truth helps move us forward. Believing puts God’s power to work effectually, bringing His promised results into reality.

1 Thessalonians 2:13:

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Now whenever I recognize that I am analyzing the past, I quickly shift my thoughts to believing the truth of God's Word instead. Not only do I take this action in my own life, but I seek to help others. When I see people reacting to sudden challenges by continuing to focus on what happened and why (the past), I gently try to help them shift their focus toward the future—their deliverance. This can be done by sharing truths from God's Word that they can claim and helping them build a believing image of victory that is free from the past. Another way to help would be to follow up with them later, which can help them keep their vision elevated and their actions moving forward. Together we look forward to rejoicing over their deliverance!

In a manner of speaking, God's Word truly is the ultimate successful experiment in every situation because His Word always works when we believe it. When sudden, unexpected challenges come up in life, we don't have to analyze the past before we move forward. We can press toward the mark right away by focusing on the truth of God's Word and not on things of the earth (facts). We can move forward by forgetting the past and reaching forward toward the true deliverance promised in God's Word. And we can help others do the same by helping them shift their focus to the Word we share.

Let's keep moving forward even in unexpected challenges and be witnesses to the truth of God and His Word!

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