

PRISONERS OF THE PAST

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The mind of man was not designed to be a prison, but for many people, their minds have become their own prison. You cannot live above your thought life. Your thoughts determine how you live. Enthusiasm is a product of positive thoughts about life. Depression and bitterness are reflections of the conditions of the mind of man. When a man's thoughts are centered negatively on the hurtful past, there is the likelihood that his mind will become a prison. The thoughts of your mind limit you. It binds, oppresses, torments, beclouds your vision, cuts you off from good things and good people, makes you bitter and damages your health. It is important that you count the cost of allowing the evil past to dominate your mind before you do so.

Just as the Lord uses the past of each man to teach him lessons, motivate and mature him, the devil uses the past to torment and hinder man. An understanding of this will help you to be careful how you handle the evil past. Many people today have not been able to recover from the failure of the past. They are yet to forgive themselves for a crime that God has forgotten about. Many today have not been able to recover from the fact that they lost their business, job, marriage or property several years after it happened. They are still mourning. They withdraw from all that will help them rise up in hope. They won't go to church where they will hear words of encouragement and faith and rise from the pit to the top again. For them, it is over; they can never make it again. That is what they have convinced themselves to believe. They have given up hope when they have a lot of things to accomplish in life according to the programme of God for their lives. They choose to believe the lie of the devil, rather than wake up from their sleep and depression and look at the sunny side of life.

Bitter people are prisoners of the past. Depressed people are prisoners of the past. Those who feel rejected are prisoners of the past. Those who never stop talking about losses they suffered are prisoners of the past. Those who cannot get to forgive themselves for the mistakes they made that cost them, are prisoners of the past. Anyone who has lost his or her fighting zeal is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who has thrown in the towel and is not willing to dream dreams again because of past failure is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who refuses to forgive the one who offended him and is terribly bitter in heart is a prisoner of the past. Anybody who has become negative about life in thoughts and words is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who has become weakened and discouraged in his pursuit because of an experience is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who has lost his enthusiasm for life, work, marriage, family life is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who has lost joy and interest in marriage and wonders why people marry at all is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who has become bored with life and is considering suicide or turns to alcohol is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who is haunted by the past is a prisoner of the past. Anyone who can no longer trust people and does not believe anybody's integrity is a prisoner of the past.

You may fit into any of the above description. I just want you to know that there is hope for you. It is not over until you say it is over. No one can say it is

over for you. God has not given up on you, so you must not give up on God. Don't give up on yourself. If no one believes in you, I want you to know that God believes in you. I do too. I believe in you because I know that God made all men to be winners especially those born of the Spirit of Christ. You must know that you have not come to the end of your world. There is hope for you.

Eccl 9:4

4 Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

NIV

God's word says there is hope for you, therefore have hope in God he will not fail you. There is hope for every man who dares to believe in God's ability to save and lift up. He is a specialist in helping people who are down. His compassion is great towards all he has made. He knows you by name and cares for you a lot. He cares so much that he sacrificed his Son for you to be saved, healed and established.

Ps 145:14

14 The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

NIV

There is nothing that has happened to you that is not common to man. Someone somewhere has suffered what you have suffered or suffering now. Let go, and let God.

1 Cor 10:13

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

NIV

Trust God to see you through this ugly situation. All it takes is to have faith in God your Maker and Saviour. Call upon in him now for he will not disappoint you.

Stop hurting

Most pain that we feel are the result of the thoughts that we think as a result of what we suffered or are suffering. Every pain is a direct product of the meditations of the mind of man. When there is no thought, there will be no pain. Pain exists because of the multitudes of thoughts that run through our minds. Therefore, a man can reduce the hurt he feels or eliminate it completely by changing the thoughts he is thinking in his mind irrespective of the loss he has suffered or is passing through.

Depression is a state of the mind that seizes a man's emotions and oppresses his body. It is so bad that it affects everything about his life – his relationships, marriage, work, enthusiasm, dreams and health. When a man hurts

or suffers loss he feels so bad inside, and this bad mental situation is what pushes him into depression and bitterness. Every depressed person will attribute his depression to his bad experience or problem. The truth is that each sufferer is the cause of his own state. Problems come to man every now and then. It is the way we handle problems that create the depression – a man's attitude (thoughts) creates the depression. I am not denying the fact that you have gone or going through a tough time, but someone has gone through what you are going through right now and did not go into depression. Have you wondered about how many people who lost their jobs, houses, marriage, access to their children, money, business, got duped, suffered the loss of a loved one, who were not taken care of by their parents and family, felt cheated, wounded and abandoned, and yet did not go into despair, but took it as their fate and decided to make most of the situation. In the process, they turned their lives around and became achievers and successful in life. What stops you from being like them? Your thoughts of cause!

You have the right to grieve over your situation. You have the right to keep mourning your losses all your life. You have the right to cut yourself off from the public including the people you once loved and the ones that love you. You have the right to keep yourself from being close in relationship because of your bad experience in previous relationships. Your life is yours to decide what to do with it. But you must understand that you are the one who will continue to hurt inside as you seclude yourself from others and the things you ought to be doing. You must first count the cost before you decide to continue in your bad mental attitude and remain in the prison you have created for yourself.

Losses are painful, this I know. Divorce has serious consequences on those involved including the children – It is painful and stays in the memory for life. The same goes for all other misfortunes. Management of the injury is what I am about. If you are not mentally mature in handling this experiences that you hate and wish never happened, you will be in deeper trouble. Your mind is the battle ground where the pain comes from. What you think and how you think generates and deepens the pain and makes it severe.

The loss of a highly paid job or business seems to leave the victims badly damaged than any other. It is like coming down to the bottom of the ladder or valley. Pride and ego is what kills such people more. They find it very difficult to accept that life is not the same any more, and settle down to adjust and move on with life. The fact that they won't be able to go to certain places they used to have access to and live the luxurious way they used to hurts them badly. When they think about it, they go into despair, and sometimes, into a rage. Some become violent men, some become withdrawn, while some become heavy drinkers and waste their life, experience, knowledge and talent away. If pride is not conquered, it will be difficult to manage a fall as this kind. One lesson comes to mind when such a fall happens: "No condition is permanent". This holds a great lesson for all. Treat and talk to people well because you don't know tomorrow.

Stop hurting yourself by your negative and depressing thoughts. I have shown you so far that your thoughts are what cause you more pain than the actual evil experience you had. Deal with all the bad thoughts. Get them out of

your mind. Make up your mind to overcome the situation and bounce back to action and make life meaningful. If life is not what you want it to be, make it what you want it to be through your positive and creative thoughts. Make life say yes to you no matter what happens. Refuse to be shattered and put down by adverse circumstances. Prove tough and not weak to the problems of life.

Be positive

Prisoners of the past never see a future, they see a dead end. They hate with passion because of their suffering. They are bitter people who never want to forgive and never say anything good about those who they attribute their suffering to. Prisoners of the past are negative people who have stopped believing in themselves because of what they suffered. Some don't even believe in God or in anyone helping them to come out of their crisis. Negativism is their consolation and comfort. Such condition of mind and heart is pitiable and requires urgent reconditioning.

It takes a positive mindset to come out of any crisis. A positive mind is a mind filled with faith and enthusiasm that no matter what happens, things will always be well. The positive mind is the winning mindset. It is the mindset that does not accept defeat, and does not throw in the towel no matter the battering one receives. Be strong inwardly. Be mentally strong to handle the tough times that come your way. Be prepared to face challenges for they will surely come in various forms and sizes. Fill your mind with the word of God for it makes a man strong enough to face life's troubles. Get close to God in prayer and meditation on the word of God. Be always positive. Believe the best can and will come out of every adverse situation. Trust the Lord Jesus all the way through the crisis.

Rom 8:28

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

NIV

1 Thess 5:16-18

16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

NIV

Have hope in God. Believe in a new tomorrow. After every night season, there will always be day light. At the end of every dark tunnel, there is always light. Believe and look ahead with hope. You will still celebrate the actualization of your original dreams. Don't give up for God has not given up on you. God can still clean up the mess and beautify your life again.