



## Will My Regrets Ever Leave Me Alone? (Part I)

**Acts 22:19:** (NASB) *And I said, Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in you.*



We all have regrets. We all have times, decisions or moments in our lives that if we could get a child's game "do-over" we would take it in a heartbeat and go back with clearer thinking, firmer courage, more patience, deeper conviction, a bridled tongue or solid self-control. But we cannot get a "do-over." We cannot change what we have already allowed to happen or what we have already said, done or thought. So, what do we do? How do we handle our regrets in a way that keeps them from playing again and again in our heads? This is a good question and just ahead we think we have a good answer!

**Merriam Webster Dictionary:**

regret (verb)

1. sorrow aroused by circumstances beyond one's control or power to repair
- 2a. an expression of distressing emotion (as sorrow)



We need regret! Regret is a vitally important part of our lives, and we should not seek to be rid of it. Having said that, let's clarify... Regret, while necessary, should not be a destination; rather, it should be a tool of motivation. How do we know this? The Apostle Paul shows us this. Paul, in his pre-Christian experience as Saul of Tarsus, did many things that caused him deep regret. We will review Saul's actions and thoughts that ended up causing regret, but then we will see how Paul learned to use this regret as a tool.

 **Live with it, Don't Regret Regret, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk**

- *So, if in fact if you want to live a life free of regret, there is an option open to you. It's called a lobotomy. But if you want to be fully functional, and fully human and fully humane, I think you need to learn to live not without regret, but with it. So, let's start out by defining some terms. What is regret?*

**Let's start with Paul before Agrippa explaining a small part of his end result - after his original shameful actions and his conversion:**

**Acts 26:19:** (NASB) *So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision...*

He was given a heavenly vision when he was on his way to persecute Christians. Here he gives a hint of his reaction to being shown how much he had to regret - he obeyed and lived his life according to that new enlightenment.



How do we deal with our regret? We will not get Jesus to appear to us on the road like he did to the Apostle Paul. Paul had regret but for him **the regret was a catalyst and not captivating; it was a tool and not a destination!** How did he get there? Over the course of this two-part series, we will suggest five principles to help REFOCUS the power of regret. Paul's explanation of his conversion to King Agrippa is our source to collect all five of the principles.

Regret is very powerful, so we want to focus it in a positive direction. As an example, water is very powerful and can cause flooding, but if it can be appropriately rechanneled, it can create energy.

# REFOCUS Regret PRINCIPLE #1

**Accept and  
embrace the  
pain of  
whatever it is  
you regret**

 **Defining regret, *Don't Regret Regret*, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk**

- Regret is the emotion we experience when we think that our present situation could be better or happier if we had done something different in the past. So in other words, regret requires two things. It requires, first of all, agency - we had to make a decision in the first place. And second of all, it requires imagination. We need to be able to imagine going back and making a different choice, and then we need to be able to kind of spool this imaginary record forward and imagine how things would be playing out in our present. And in fact, the more we have of either of these things -- the more agency and the more imagination with respect to a given regret, the more acute that regret will be.*

Acts 26:14: (NASB) *...and when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*

Here is the simple truth that he had to accept: As Saul, Paul was persecuting his own long-awaited Messiah!

**Saul had a heart for God. He wanted only to serve Him because he loved God above all else:**

Galatians 1:15-16: (NASB) *<sup>15</sup>But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup>to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles...*

Choosing to serve God came to light through several dark and sinful actions.



The "Conversion on the Way to Damascus" (year 1601) is a masterpiece by Caravaggio currently in Rome.

This artist strove to make Bible characters more meaningful by using dramatic effects of paintings emerging from a dark background with one point of breaking light.

How bad could Saul of Tarsus have been?  
Just how much did he have to regret?

 What we regret most in life, *Don't Regret Regret, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk*

- *But then finally it occurred to some researchers to step back and say, well okay, but overall what do we regret most in life? Here's what the answers turn out to look like: So, top six regrets - the things we regret most in life: Number one by far, education. 33 percent of all of our regrets pertain to decisions we made about education. We wish we'd gotten more of it. We wish we'd taken better advantage of the education that we did have. We wish we'd chosen to study a different topic. Others very high on our list of regrets include career, romance, parenting, various decisions and choices about our sense of self and how we spend our leisure time, or actually more specifically, how we fail to spend our leisure time. The remaining regrets pertain to these things: finance, family issues unrelated to romance or parenting, health, friends, spirituality and community.*

There are a lot of things to regret! We do not always do the best thing or make the best choices.





Paul freely speaks of the darkness of his own actions several times in Scripture. We will refer to three instances, each to a different group of people.

**1. To Christians:** Galatians 1:13-14: (NASB) *<sup>13</sup>For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; <sup>14</sup>and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.*

Paul freely admits to those of the Christian faith the darkness of his sin. He persecuted the church of God excessively with burning desire. With this information only, one might want to "go to bat" for Paul and say this does not sound *that* bad. But it was actually worse.

**The original account of Paul's actions regarding the stoning of Stephen:**

Acts 8:1,3: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death... <sup>3</sup>But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.*



"Stoning of St. Stephen."  
Part of the tapestry series  
"The Acts of the Apostles  
Peter and Paul".  
Woven before 1557  
by Jan van Tieghem  
(Brussels) and to other  
workshops after cartoons  
by Raphael (1514-1516).

Stephen received no trial (which was illegal under Jewish law), and although he was allowed to talk, Saul and his cohorts had no desire to really "hear" the accused. They applied the portion of the Law that required stoning take place only outside of the city, but their motivation was wrong. *Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. Saul was guilty of the satanic practice of taking a thread of truth and surrounding it with lies. ("Hey, we followed the law...we let him speak and we killed him outside the city walls!")*

**He is on his way to Damascus:**

Acts 9:1-2: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, <sup>2</sup>and asked for letters (to get the legal clout to murder) from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

He *breathed threats* to chain, humiliate and imprison those who were following after Jesus - where did the Law allow such behavior? He used the Law as a tool to feed his misguided passion.

How often have we gotten mad at something and blinded ourselves to anything except what we want to see in our anger? Afterwards, do we say, "What have I done/said/felt/damaged by my actions?"

Paul acted on his words - he helped others to persecute and then pursued his own crusade against Christianity. He was being encouraged to do so by Scribes and Pharisees who wanted to eliminate this sect.



**2. To the Jewish community:** Paul defends himself against the uproar that had occurred, accusing him of disrespecting the Jewish faith.

**These verses are right after he recounts his conversion and is recounting the conversation he had with Jesus in a vision:**

Acts 22:19-20: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>And I said, Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in you. <sup>20</sup>And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.

Paul freely admits to the Jewish people that *on several occasions* he had Christians beaten and imprisoned. Where did the Law give him such authority? It did not! His actions and thoughts were so dark and evil. The only reason we know about this is because Paul himself told us. He embraced the pain of his actions and accepted what he had done to the point where he could talk about it in detail.

 **First component - denial, Don't Regret Regret, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk**

- But for these things that we actually do really care about and do experience profound regret around, what does that experience feel like? We all know the short answer, right? It feels terrible. Regret feels awful. But it turns out that regret feels awful in four very specific and consistent ways. So the first consistent component of regret is basically denial. When I went home that night after getting my tattoo, I basically stayed up all night. And for the first several hours, there was exactly one thought in my head, and the thought was, "Make it go away!" This is an unbelievably primitive emotional response. I mean, it's right up there with, "I want my mommy!" We're not trying to solve the problem. We're not trying to understand how the problem came about. We just want it to vanish.*

The Apostle Paul is showing us that to tame regret we *cannot* deny it; we have to accept it and embrace its pain.



We received an email this week from a listener: I just want to thank you for this beautiful Easter program. I was still crying when I walked into church this morning. The dramatizations were so moving... You are teaching me so much. God bless all who work on "Christian Questions..."

**Could anyone ever trust such a vile character as Saul of Tarsus?**

**3. To the Gentiles:** Paul is in trouble for preaching the Gospel.

(Source: McGee) Paul is now speaking to a man (King Agrippa) who understands what he is talking about. Agrippa is an intelligent man, he knows the Mosaic Law, and he understands the Jewish background. Paul really rejoices in this opportunity to speak to such an instructed man who will understand the true nature of the case.

**Paul before King Agrippa:**

Acts 26:9-11: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>I had to do many things hostile (antagonistic) to the name of Jesus of Nazareth <sup>10</sup>And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup>And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.



How would we view someone who did these things today? He pursued, hunted, tricked, shackled, imprisoned, pressured and consented to the killing of Jesus' own followers...would you trust him? As a Christian, you would want to stay as far away from him as possible.



A caller from Connecticut provided a quote from Paul Harvey, speaking at a graduation ceremony: "Avoid unerasable mistakes." (Complete quote is "Think overtime trying to anticipate and avoid unerasable mistakes.") One of this listener's favorite sayings: The School of Experience charges a high tuition and there are no scholarships.

### Put yourself in the shoes of Ananias, who was asked to trust Saul:

Acts 9:10-19: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, here I am, Lord. <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight. <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to your saints at Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup>and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name. (Clearly this assignment required deep faith and trust!) <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; <sup>16</sup>for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and he took food and was strengthened.



"Ananias restoring the sight of Saint Paul."  
(1631)  
by Pietro De Cortana

Can you imagine how uncomfortable it would have been to face the man who was trying to hunt down and kill you and your Christian friends and family? Ananias had great faith that Jesus knew better.

Saul was misdirected and violently wrong in his unbridled and raged-filled attempts to hurt and destroy the name of Jesus, but deep down he was a good man. He used his zeal in the wrong way.

Paul had no choice but to embrace the pain of his own actions; he needed to in order to cope with them because they were so bad. He did this by having the courage to repeat them to several different audiences: Jews, Romans and Christians. He hid his actions from no one. What he did was to apply the second principle (coming soon!) to make the first principle work.

**REFOCUS**  
*Regret*  
**PRINCIPLE #1**

**Accept and embrace the pain of whatever it is you regret**





## King David had regret - he, too, had to accept it and embrace its pain:

Psalm 51:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.* <sup>2</sup>*Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*

Psalms 51 was written because of David's sin with Bathsheba and the killing of her husband. David embraced the pain of his regret by writing it and admitting it before all - adultery, murder, pre-meditation...

How do we embrace the pain of our own regrets? One way is to be willing to be vulnerable to others whom you trust - tell them without excuses or rationalization of what you did. Own the pain.



**Second component - bewilderment, *Don't Regret Regret*, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk**

- The second characteristic component of regret is a sense of bewilderment. So, the other thing I thought about there in my bedroom that night was, "How could I have done that? What was I thinking," this real sense of alienation from the part of us that made a decision we regret. We can't identify with that part. We don't understand that part. And we certainly don't have any empathy for that part, which explains the third consistent component of regret.*

Sometimes we did the best we could and regret our decisions anyway, but more often we were doing something we knew was marginal or in a gray area and did it anyway out of anger, frustration, pride, ego, want or whatever. Now we are stuck with it and it replays over and over in our head.



*Regret should not be a destination; rather, it should be a tool of motivation.*

**REFOCUS**  
*Regret*  
**PRINCIPLE #2**

**Assume  
responsibility  
for your  
wrong  
thoughts  
and actions**



Accepting and embracing the pain is the foundation necessary for healthy regret. We want to turn our regret from something hurtful to something healthy. To assume responsibility might sound like the same thing, but it actually is a further step - consider again the Apostle Paul. What was the responsibility he had to own up to?

### Paul before King Agrippa - picking up where we left off:

Acts 26:14: (NASB) *And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*

*Kicking against the goads* - Paul states this in his personal testimony - it is not in the original telling of the account. This means we only know about the details of this conversation between Jesus and Saul because Paul tells us. By doing so he assumes personal responsibility for his actions.

What does this phrase mean? Basically, "You and your conscience know better."

(Source: NetNotes) "Goads" are pointed sticks used to direct a draft animal (an idiom for stubborn resistance).

(Source: Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary by Henry Alford) This is found here only; in Acts 9 the words are spurious. The metaphor is derived from oxen at plough or drawing a burden, who, on being pricked with the goad, kick against it, and so cause it to pierce deeper.

Jesus was telling Saul, "You are in the service of God Himself. You being a Pharisee, I have seen your love for God's Law and God's way. Saul, you truly are His servant, yet you know in your heart that you have violated your conscience. Even worse, you are a living violation of all the Law stands for! Why do you go against God and His Law? Why do you seek to discredit and destroy His people - my people? *It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*" With this statement, Jesus revealed to Saul what Saul already knew in his heart but chose to ignore. He was godless in his actions and used the name of God to cover his godlessness. (Yikes!) Saul had to accept responsibility that this was his fault.



### Third component - self-punishment, *Don't Regret Regret*, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk

- *The third consistent component of regret is an intense desire to punish ourselves. That's why, in the face of our regret, the thing we consistently say is, "I could have kicked myself."*

By Paul himself revealing these otherwise unknown details in his own testimony, he is claiming personal liability for the wrongs he committed and now regretted. "Jesus told me I was responsible," is what Paul is teaching us. Saul fought against righteousness and his conscience. While his misdirected passion was encouraged by his superiors, Paul freely admitted he allowed his own baser nature to rule - there was no excuse!





## What makes us do the things that we regret later?

To assume responsibility for our regretful thoughts and actions requires us to focus on what we pay attention to and what we ignore:

1 Timothy 4:1: (NASB) *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...*



Someone once said, "You become what you focus on." Inevitably, our focus is determined by the input we allow into our minds. This means that we can carelessly allow darkness to become an influencer (which in itself is a regretful action), which would lead us to potentially regretful actions.

King David also took dramatic steps to assume responsibility for his sins. He wrote down his sins and had the Psalms read to the people, elevating those sins to the deserved height of their evil rather than buffering or downplaying their effects in any way.

Psalms 51:3-4: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>*For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.*

David laid his life squarely on God's judgment, labeling his sin as done against God. He did not ask for mercy; he simply assumes all responsibility upon his own shoulders.

To accept and embrace the pain of our regretful actions (**Refocus Regret Principle #1**) is the foundation for healthy regret. To stop the process here would be a disaster for all we have thus far is pain that has no hope of subsiding. Fully and unequivocally assuming responsibility (**Refocus Regret Principle #2**) creates even more reason for regret to swallow us, yet we cannot refocus our regret unless we do this.

So, how do we positively assume the responsibility of our own regretful actions? NOT like this:

 **Fourth component - obsession, *Don't Regret Regret*, Kathryn Schulz, TED**

- *The fourth component here is that regret is what psychologists call perseverative. To perseverate means to focus obsessively and repeatedly on the exact same thing. Now the effect of perseveration is to basically take these first three components of regret and put them on an infinite loop. So it's not that I sat there in my bedroom that night, thinking, "Make it go away." It's that I sat there and I thought, "Make it go away. Make it go away. Make it go away. Make it go away."*



Assume responsibility honestly and with courage, knowing that God's grace and strength will not leave us here to wilt under the intense heat of honesty and truth.

**DO NOT STOP HERE!**



As we said before, although occasionally what we regret is as a result of us falling short while doing the best we could at the time, many times our regretful actions were bad choices that came out of fear, laziness, ego, carelessness, etc.

**Such is the following example of a regretful action:**

**Galatians 2:11-14:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup>For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup>The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy; with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.*

**Paul sees Peter as guilty of being hypocritical and not as one who was doing his best. Peter knew better!**

<sup>14</sup>*But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?*

Paul calls out Peter's hypocrisy in public. The lesson? When we know better, we are expected to do better. When we lead, it should be with spiritual integrity. Do not let others' opinions bring you to regretful actions!



A caller from Connecticut has a huge regret. Her first son was born in 1973 and was born premature with deformities. As a young mother, she refused to hold him or look at him and he died two days later. It is the biggest regret in her life and she does not know why she did that. God helped her through and after raising her other children, she works at a school cafeteria and treats those children like they were her own. She is sorry for all those who have lost handicapped children.

It takes great courage to share this experience! Having such a difficult thing happen to a young mother would be fearful and unexpected. Working with and loving other children no matter what their condition shows God helped her to take the regret and make it something positive. It now drives her to have open arms to whatever is before her. We know she will see that little baby in the resurrection.

**We accept the pain, assume responsibility but can't obsess!  
Where do we go from here?**

**REFOCUS**  
*Regret*  
**PRINCIPLE #3**

**Apply faith and  
then apply trust  
that we are forgiven,  
and therefore  
in a position for  
spiritual growing  
and not  
emotional groaning**



Here is where many of us lose the battle of regret and end up wallowing in the mire of self-pity and guilt. We do not apply faith, trust and forgiveness.

 **Cannot undo some things, Don't Regret Regret, Kathryn Schulz, TED**

- This is obviously an incredibly painful experience. And I think it's particularly painful for us now in the West in the grips of what I sometimes think of as a "Control + Z culture." Ctrl + Z, like the computer command, undo. We're incredibly used to not having to face life's hard realities, in a certain sense. We think we can throw money at the problem or throw technology at the problem. We can undo and unfriend and unfollow. And the problem is that there are certain things that happen in life that we desperately want to change and we cannot. Sometimes instead of Control + Z, we actually have zero control. And for those of us who are control freaks and perfectionists, and I know whereof I speak, this is really hard, because we want to do everything ourselves and we want to do it right.*



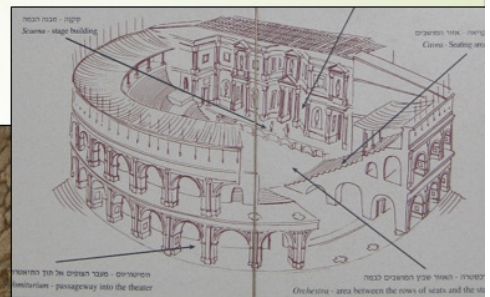
A caller from Connecticut tells of her regret from her teenage years. Her best friend was pregnant and her parents and boyfriend wanted her to get an abortion. She fought for her friend to keep the baby but does not think she fought hard enough to help her, but she also was a teenager. She regrets to this day not helping her friend. Our caller has since worked with underprivileged children, including taking in foster children.

Our caller should take heart in the fact that an effort was made. Perhaps she could have done better but she was young and her life has been about helping others, especially children. There is great value in understanding how to channel regret into something positive.

Back to the Apostle Paul...



Today's visitors to Israel can explore **Caesarea Maritima** along the Mediterranean Sea. Paul was imprisoned here for two years and preached to King Agrippa II presumably in the theater. The only remnants left from the theater are rows of seats, the orchestra and the ornamental wall behind the stage. A drawing at the archeological site imagines it as it might have looked.







## How did Paul avoid the deadly choice of wallowing?

**Acts 26:15-17:** (NASB) *<sup>15</sup>And I said, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup>But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; <sup>17</sup>rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,*

The amazing thing about regret and this account of Paul's past is that Jesus taught him step-by-step how to manage regret. Jesus did this because Paul was to be an integral link in the gospel plan and needed to be able to thoroughly focus on the challenges he would daily face. Paul would not have the time nor available energy to go back to the past and wallow in it. He had too much else to do. Jesus taught Paul how to take his regrets and use them as tools to move forward.

Here is an overview of the necessary steps of FAITH, TRUST and FORGIVENESS in the face of regret. We will review these in detail, as well as Refocus Regret Principles #4 and #5 in Part II of this program.

FAITH and TRUST can only feed FORGIVENESS when:

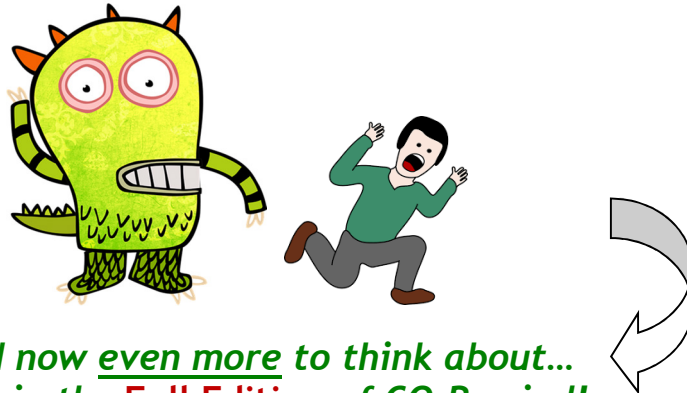
- A. You know who is dealing with you:** *And I said, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.* Saul's experiences of perpetrating evil came to this - he had been persecuting his own Messiah, his own Savior and he now knew it. Our sinful actions and the resulting regret are in their appropriate place when they are placed before Jesus OUR Savior.
- B. Faith is put into action:** *But get up and stand on your feet* - Faith is not just a thrill for the heart or an exercise for the intellect; it is a transformative conviction: "Get Up! Stand on Your Feet!" Once we have accepted and embraced the pain from the cause for our regret, and once we have assumed full responsibility for it, faith requires us to stand up!
- C. Faith is based in humility so that it can be redirected:** *For this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you.* - Forgiveness and grace overflow with this proclamation from Jesus to Saul, the perpetrator of evil. Jesus knew his heart and saw his potential because of his heart. JESUS SAW PAST THE DARKNESS AND THE EVIL OF SAUL'S ACTIONS.
- D. We trust based upon our faith:** Faith is the foundation. Faith accepts forgiveness, trust is the building. Trust applies forgiveness to our deepest and most mortifying sins and circumstances. Trust is not a topical ointment! Trust is faith deeply applied in a mature fashion. Jesus showed Paul his need to build a secure trust upon his faith: *rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you.*

There is so much more to managing our regrets! Part II is just two weeks away!  
We can manage our regrets in a godly way - Jesus taught us how.





*So, will my regrets ever leave me alone?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*

Principles: Regret cannot be simply stopped; it must be refocused.

- Refocusing Regret Principle #1: Accept - Accept and embrace the pain of whatever it is that you regret
- Refocusing Regret Principle #2: Assume - Assume responsibility for your wrong thoughts/actions
- Refocusing Regret Principle #3: Apply - Apply faith and then apply trust that we are forgiven and therefore in a position for spiritual growing and not emotional groaning
- Refocusing Regret Principle #4: Adapt - choose to walk the spiritual path of sacrifice that your wrong actions can inspire you towards and not the human path of least resistance
- Refocusing Regret Principle #5: Attack - Attack the future, not the past with the lessons learned and with forgiveness, faith and trust applied!

A little bit more about King Agrippa:

(Source: Matthew Henry's Commentary) Agrippa was the most honorable person in the assembly, having the title of king bestowed upon him, though otherwise having only the power of other governors under the emperor, and, though not here superior, yet senior, to Festus; and therefore, Festus having opened the cause, Agrippa, as the mouth of the court, intimates to Paul a license given him to speak for himself, Acts 26:1. Paul was silent till he had this liberty allowed him.

(Source: Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible) *I gave my voice.* Paul was not a member of the Sanhedrin, and this does not mean that he voted, but simply that he joined in the persecution; he approved it; he assented to the putting of the saints to death.

Other commentaries say Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin.



There are three different accounts of Paul's conversion, each provide different details.

### The actual conversion:

**Acts 9:1-19:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, <sup>2</sup>and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; <sup>4</sup>and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? <sup>5</sup>And he said, who are You, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, <sup>6</sup>but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do. <sup>7</sup>The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. <sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, here I am, Lord. <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight. <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup>and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name. <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; <sup>16</sup>for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus.

### Paul's defense before the Jews:

**Acts 22:1-21:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Brethren and fathers, hear my defense, which I now offer to you. <sup>2</sup>And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said, <sup>3</sup>I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. <sup>4</sup>I persecuted this way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, <sup>5</sup>as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished. <sup>6</sup>But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, <sup>7</sup>and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? <sup>8</sup>And I answered, who are you, Lord? And he said to me, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting. <sup>9</sup>And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup>And I said, what shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do. <sup>11</sup>But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus. <sup>12</sup>A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, <sup>13</sup>came to me, and standing near said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight! And at that very time I looked up at him. <sup>14</sup>And he said, the God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the righteous one and to hear an utterance from his mouth. <sup>15</sup>For you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup>Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name. <sup>17</sup>It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, <sup>18</sup>and I saw him saying to me, make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me. <sup>19</sup>And I said, Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in you. <sup>20</sup>And when the blood of your witness





Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him. <sup>21</sup>And he said to me go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.

### Paul's defense before Agrippa:

**Acts 26:1-23:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Agrippa said to Paul, you are permitted to speak for yourself. Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense: <sup>2</sup>In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; <sup>3</sup>especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. <sup>4</sup>So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; <sup>5</sup>since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. <sup>6</sup>And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; <sup>7</sup>the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. <sup>8</sup>Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead? <sup>9</sup>So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup>And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup>And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities. <sup>12</sup>While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, <sup>13</sup>at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. <sup>14</sup>And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads. <sup>15</sup>And I said, who are You, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup>But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; <sup>17</sup>rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in me. <sup>19</sup>So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup>but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. <sup>21</sup>For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. <sup>22</sup>So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; <sup>23</sup>that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of his resurrection from the dead he would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.