



Will My Regrets Ever Leave Me Alone? (Part II)

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.*



Regret can be a killer! We often carry around and dwell on regrets from some of our past experiences. Not only do we dwell on them, but we sometimes build those regrets into shrines of discontent and sorrow that overrun our present and then take hold of and manipulate our future. Pretty nasty, huh? On the other hand, if we know the secrets of managing regret, it can become a tool of peaceful acceptance for our present and a deep personal motivation for our future. How do you change from one result to the other? A few weeks ago, we began unveiling the powerful biblical lessons on managing regret and today we get to finish that unveiling!



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.**

 **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.*

Being sinful makes us do things we end up regretting. To put regret in its proper perspective, we turn to the Bible and specifically to the Apostle Paul, who, when he was known as Saul, did much he later regretted. **(Please see Part I of this program from April 3, 2016, for more on Paul's life.)** His conversion and recounting of that conversion teaches us how to put our own regret in perspective, just like Jesus taught him.

There is a very distinct formula given to help us and the first part of this program discussed the first three principles. Let's go over those briefly:



REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #1

Accept and embrace the pain of whatever it is you regret

Paul telling King Agrippa about his conversion:

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 he had to accept: As Saul, Paul was persecuting his own long-awaited Messiah! Throughout all of Jewish history, the one thing they were all waiting for was Messiah. Messiah finally came and Saul, a dedicated Jew, ended up persecuting him and his followers. How did Paul fully accept the pain of his actions? He admitted them to everybody - Christians, Jews and Gentiles - and wrote them down. King David did the same in accepting the pain of his actions - he admitted them and he wrote them down.

Part of our acceptance of the pain of our actions is to be accountable as well. We should tell trusted individuals, confiding in them and admit the experience and its pain.

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #2

Assume responsibility for your wrong thoughts and actions

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 - rebelling against the direction you know you should go. 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.

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?

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!

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.



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.



Make peace - first and second steps, Don’t Regret Regret, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk

- *So, how are we supposed to live with this? I want to suggest that there’s three things that help us to make our peace with regret. And the first of these is to take some comfort in its universality. If you Google “regret” and “tattoo,” you will get 11.5 million hits. The FDA estimates that of all the Americans who have tattoos, 17 percent of us regret getting them. That is Johnny Depp and me and our 7 million friends. And that’s just regret about tattoos. We are all in this together.*
- *The second way that we can help make our peace with regret is to laugh at ourselves. Now in my case, this really wasn’t a problem, because it’s actually very easy to laugh at yourself when you’re 29 years old and you want your mommy because you don’t like your new tattoo. But it might seem like a kind of cruel or glib suggestion when it comes to these more profound regrets. I don’t think that’s the case, though. All of us who’ve experienced regret that contains real pain and real grief understand that humor, and even black humor, plays a crucial role in helping us survive. It connects the poles of our lives back together, the positive and the negative, and it sends a little current of life back into us.*

How did Paul avoid the deadly choice of wallowing?

Acts 26:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵And I said, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But 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; ¹⁷rescuing 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 his regret. Jesus did this because he needed Paul. 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 needed his regrets to be tools to use and not weights to tow!**

Those last verses explain the necessary steps of FAITH, TRUST and FORGIVENESS in the face of regret.

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.

None of us will receive a vision in a bright light from Jesus on a road like this. Instead, we have the written words of Jesus in the Scriptures. His words, actions and example “speak” to us and show us who we are dealing with - the son of God, the immortal divine being at the throne of God, who wants our lives to be in accordance to what he and the Father have called us.



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 of our regret, and once we have assumed full responsibility for it, faith **REQUIRES** us to stand up! **To stand in faith** is to accept and stand upon the gift of forgiveness. **To be forgiven** is to have your sins put away from you by God Himself through Christ.

Standing on this foundation enables us to have healthy regret.



To **stand** is to act. Saul/Paul was not the only one pressed into service by such a command:

Acts 10:17-20: (NASB) *17Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate; 18and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. 19While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you. 20But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them myself.*

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

Faith has to be applied first; then trust can follow. You cannot truly trust something in which you do not have faith. Trust is the heartfelt application of faith. Mastering this piece of the regret management puzzle affirms a new direction - regret can now work for us.

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, a perpetrator of evil. Jesus saw the potential of Saul because of Saul's heart.*



Jesus saw past the darkness and evil that Saul was on his way to commit and redirected him onto a path of honoring God who he was in the process of mocking. Saul was unkind, unjust and unscriptural - even to the point of murder. A miraculous act of forgiveness is shown in these verses.

Saul realized the error of his ways and instantly changed his direction. Jesus instantly forgave him! The forgiveness could not happen without humility.

Being re-directed is never easy:

John 21:17: (NASB) *He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Do you love me? And he said to him, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Tend my sheep.*

Peter had denied Jesus three times. After being raised from the dead, Jesus came back to Peter and redirected him three times. In looking at himself, Peter has a lot of regret and bitterness he has to get over. Jesus had to reassure Peter, then he had to re-affirm the reassurance that Jesus loved him and trusted him. It takes great humility to be redirected.



A caller from Connecticut recently heard this in a sermon: “Consecration, making a commitment to God for life, takes one decision. Sanctification, the commitment to carry out that consecration, requires a million decisions.” He wonders how many of those decisions he will regret! It is a challenge to make the right decision. Isaiah 30:21: (NIV) *Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, This is the way; walk in it.*

Humility may not naturally come to us. It is a decision to see ourselves for what we really are. We want to put ourselves into a position of being pliable for the service of God. This decision must be made again and again.



To humbly be redirected is to accept the miraculous grace of forgiveness:

1 Corinthians 1:26-29: (NASB) ²⁶For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no man may boast before God.

Think about how much forgiveness and grace overflow from the proclamation of this text! We, like Saul of Tarsus, have been drawn up and out of the mire to freely and fully serve our God.

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.*

Jesus foretells Paul of the life-threatening trials he would have and the corresponding trustworthy protection that Jesus would provide him.

Trust is faith deeply applied in a mature fashion with expectation and peace.

David displayed faith and trust in his regretful confession:

Psalms 51:5-9: (NASB) ⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. ⁶Behold, (Here comes the display of faith...) You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. ⁷Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Here comes the trust...) ⁸Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. ⁹Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

Not only does the trust clean us, but it *makes us to hear joy and gladness*, to come up out of the mire of misery and smile from within because we are forgiven. We can trust in Him.

We can bring praise, honor and glory to the Heavenly Father, even though we make mistakes.

Regrets unchecked have a mind of their own, but regret dealt with through biblical principles can be the mind of Christ.

This step of applying forgiveness, faith and trust is perhaps the most difficult step of all, for it is in the taking of this step that we consciously redirect our regret.

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





It is here that we take the pain, the consequences and the backlash of our sin and apply it to living rather than dying. It is here that we look our regret in the eye and solemnly proclaim it to be a tool of spiritual life in the hand of God rather than a destination of spiritual destitution.

Make peace third step/time, *Don't Regret Regret, Kathryn Schulz, TED Talk*

- The third way that I think we can help make our peace with regret is through the passage of time, which, as we know, heals all wounds - except for tattoos, which are permanent. So, it's been several years since I got my own tattoo. Do you guys just want to see it? All right. Actually, you know what, I should warn you, you're going to be disappointed. Because it's actually not that hideous. I didn't tattoo Marilyn Manson's face on some indiscreet part of myself or something.*

REFOCUS Regret PRINCIPLE #4

Adapt - choose to walk the spiritual path of sacrifice that your wrong actions can now inspire you towards and not the human path of least resistance

Now that we have applied forgiveness, faith and trust, we cannot simply sit still in the vacuum of that application; rather, we have to live the proof of it. Forgiveness is just the beginning and not an end result. Now we have to “walk the walk,” “talk the talk” and live the life of a faithful follower!

Jesus continues to show Paul what life would now be about:

Acts 26:18: (NASB) *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.*

Jesus is saying, “Show others what I am now showing you.” Let’s break this down phrase by phrase, as his words are so profound that examining phrases at a time will be beneficial.

Look at the description Jesus gave Paul about the path he was to walk:

...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light - Saul had just been blinded by light, and in that physical blindness he was able to see pure light and truth for the first time. His mission was to





aid others who had been living in the blindness of sin as he had, so they also might see as he now did.

...and from the dominion of Satan to God - Paul's mission was also to show the way to the dominion of God from the dominion of Satan. Who better to do this than one who had done such wrong, who had fallen into Satan's hands and who now would have so much to regret? Because he had so much to regret, he would have so much to live for! That is an important point we miss if we allow our regrets to manipulate and overrun our lives.

...that they may receive forgiveness of sins - Forgiveness is built on faith and trust. Paul was being heartily forgiven, and he would stand on the power of that forgiveness for the rest of his life. Who better to walk others towards the miracle of forgiveness than one whose sins were so spiritually dark and utterly regretful?

Jesus helped Paul use his regret as a tool, teaching him all the ways his former darkness could create light for others.

...and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in me - Paul was one of those sanctified by faith. His faith, trust and forgiveness would throughout his life absorb the deadly poisons of his regret and turn that regret to constructive energy for Christ. Paul's path would now be fully adapted to doing only the will of God and NOT using the name of God to do his own will. There is a big difference between those two things!

Let's be practical. Adapting to a new path is not easy - how do you do it?

King David also adapted his will and way towards God. His regret was strong, but rather than it feeding upon him, it was made to feed his godly devotion:

Psalms 51:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You.

David adapted his life back to God. Beyond asking for a sense of joy, he prays, *sustain me* in order that *he could teach transgressors Your ways*.

Paul and David showed us the power of refocused regret, but it did not come easily or naturally to either of them. They had to carefully build their determination on the faith and forgiveness of God and then adapt themselves to a new path. Our path - our example of sin, regret, forgiveness and action - can inspire others as well. Are we willing to walk this path as well, where our regrets can push us forward instead of pull us back?

People we witness to can take courage when they see our mistakes and they can follow our example and overcome something similar. It involves transformation - being accountable, accepting the pain of the experience, assuming the responsibility and adapting ourselves to a new path.

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #4

Adapt - choose to walk the spiritual path of sacrifice that your wrong actions can now inspire you towards and not the human path of least resistance



Her tattoo, *Don't Regret Regret*, Kathryn Schulz, TED

- *When other people see my tattoo, for the most part they like how it looks. It's just that I don't like how it looks. And as I said earlier, I'm a perfectionist. But I'll let you see it anyway. This is my tattoo. I can guess what some of you are thinking. So let me reassure you about something. Some of your own regrets are also not as ugly as you think they are.*



REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #5

**Attack the future
- not the past -
with the lessons
learned, and with
forgiveness, faith
and trust applied!**

Attack can sound like a harsh word and often it does depict harsh actions. We often attack our past with our regret, and the result of that attack is to ravage the present and ruin the future.

The need to “attack the past away” is removed if we exercise the previous four principles in place to refocus our regret:

- Accept the pain
- Assume responsibility
- Apply forgiveness, faith and trust
- Adapt to a spiritual path

Now the past is a valuable tool put in place to attack and alter the *present* and therefore *unveil* the future. Attacking the present means attacking the *sinfulness* of the present to make it God-glorious.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do.” - Mark Twain

We can regret what we did *not* do and for times we did *not* take action, opportunity or responsibility.

If we apply these five principles to what we regret in our past, they automatically (if we allow them to) make us look at our present with different eyes of opportunity.



The Apostle Paul attacked the present:

Acts 26:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but 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.

I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision - Before the heavenly vision, Paul as Saul only obeyed the darkness of his own actions. When the vision came, he recognized it and followed it.

Paul's previous life as Saul the persecutor was indeed a driving force of his ministry - regret refocused in a positive way! His message was one of Christ, spoken with the conviction of one whose own life had been mercifully ripped from the jaws of Satan's lies and brought to the privilege of salvation. The Apostle Paul had no time to wallow in his regret.

Acts 26:21-23: (NASB) ²¹For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. ²²So, 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; ²³that 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.

...stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place - he went from adding onto and bending the Law to do what he wanted, to nothing but pure scriptural principles. This is how he was *not disobedient to the vision*. He focused on saying what the Scriptures and Jesus told him...period!

Paul would brush against death many times throughout his ministry, yet he never flinched in his mission to proclaim the Gospel or in his devotion to the will of God. Jesus, not regret, was his Lord.

What does the final picture of regret refocused look like?

Paul's regret now served as a powerful reminder of the angry life he had led and the dark choices he had made. His regret reminded him how that previous life was instantly transformed by grace and forgiveness to a life of loving humility, joyful service and willing sacrifice. His regret now fueled his unrelenting attack on the darkness of sin with the light of the Gospel.

David also learned to dwell in the light of God and use his regretful past for God's glory:

Psalm 51:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise. ¹⁶For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

...You are not pleased with burnt offering. God is not looking for us to serve and honor Him with lip service and rote ceremony. He is looking for *a broken spirit and a contrite heart* - our transformation within our hearts to be godly and not sinful. God can rebuild a broken spirit. If we wallow in our regret, we cannot fulfill this verse. It is a choice and there are five clear steps to make that choice work.



It is this broken and contrite heart that reflects our being forgiven, which gives us the ability to refocus our regret. **It does not say we are to have a depressed heart**, but a contrite heart that now has broken open to make room for joyful singing of God’s righteousness and praise.

If we bring our sins before God and are accountable for them, making right our sins as best we are able and accept forgiveness, God does not want us to be depressed.

 Regrets lesson, *Don’t Regret Regret*, Kathryn Schulz, TED

- *But it turns out, it doesn't remind me of the thing I thought it would; it reminds me constantly of something else instead. It actually reminds me of the most important lesson regret can teach us, which is also one of the most important lessons life teaches us. And ironically, I think it's probably the single most important thing I possibly could have tattooed onto my body. Partly as a writer, but also just as a human being. Here's the thing, if we have goals and dreams, and we want to do our best, and if we love people and we don't want to hurt them or lose them, we should feel pain when things go wrong. The point isn't to live without any regrets. The point is to not hate ourselves for having them. The lesson that I ultimately learned from my tattoo and that I want to leave you with today is this: We need to learn to love the flawed, imperfect things that we create and to forgive ourselves for creating them. Regret doesn't remind us that we did badly. It reminds us that we know we can do better. Thank you.*

Finally, as the Apostle sums up his life, his regret is still obvious and its power is now godly:

1 Corinthians 15:8-10: (NASB) ⁸and last of all, as to one untimely born (he was not originally called), he appeared to me also. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain;

He did not deserve what he got, but by the grace of God, he was an Apostle and was given unbelievable opportunity. He was kept humble by his past.

The experiences of persecuting, pressuring and punishing the followers of Christ always stayed with the Apostle Paul. Approving the deaths of many saints stayed with him. Consenting to the death of Stephen stayed with him. Paul’s past was dark with dishonor and evil, and he had a mountain of regret that he carried for the rest of his life, which Satan could have used to torment him. He tried but could not get through the armor of God’s grace and forgiveness. What we do with our regret is a choice.

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #5

**Attack the future
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Paul accepted his actions and assumed their responsibility. Paul was forgiven and applied it. Paul was faithful and applied it. Paul had trust and applied it. Paul, through Christ, had learned to hold onto his regret tightly, for instead of being a destination of destruction, Jesus showed Paul how to adapt his regret into a tool of salvation. Paul wielded that tool for the glory of God and to the honor of Christ as he attacked the darkness of Satan with the light of the Gospel.



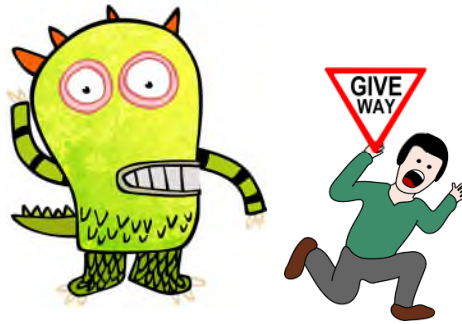
We, too, have such an opportunity as this. All we need do is apply these five principles by grace to our regrets:

Isaiah 40:28-31: (NASB) ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

In our experiences, we have to learn to wait on the Lord. That is not always simple. Waiting on the Lord means you are putting other things aside in favor of scriptural principles, looking for guidance. He promised to give us strength to get beyond ourselves. Our regrets want to keep us inside of ourselves with self-pity. That does nothing to praise and honor God! It is all about honoring Him footstep by footstep.

You have regrets. I have regrets. How long until we learn to use them to honor God? It is a choice. Do not allow yourself to wallow in self-pity. Win the victory of managing your regrets through Scripture. Follow Scripture, pray and let God guide you.

*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.

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #1

Accept and
embrace the
pain of
whatever it is
you regret

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #2

Assume
responsibility
for your
wrong
thoughts
and actions



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

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #4

Adapt - choose to walk the spiritual path of sacrifice that your wrong actions can now inspire you towards and not the human path of least resistance

REFOCUS
Regret
PRINCIPLE #5

Attack the future - not the past - with the lessons learned, and with forgiveness, faith and trust applied!

(Source: Excerpts from “We All Live With Regrets,” article by Hunter Camp, posted June 21, 2013 in The St. Augustine Record)

The philosopher Rene Descartes famously wrote, “I think therefore I am.” But, perhaps, we might also say: “I regret, therefore I am.” Even God, according to the Hebrew Bible, lived with regrets, the most famous (but not the only time God regrets something) being, “And the Lord regretted that he had made humanity.” (Genesis 6:6)

There are different types of regret. There is the regret of commission and the regret of omission. The former type of regret stems from hurting something, either emotionally or physically. The latter type of regret is born from not seizing an opportunity.

Some good thoughts! However, we take issue with the idea that God “regretted” creating mankind:

Genesis 6:3-7: (NASB) ³Then the LORD said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. ⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

This paints a very sad and dark picture. Imagine being a father and observing this in your children!

⁶The LORD was **sorry <5162>** that He had made man on the earth, and He was **grieved <6087>** in His heart. ⁷The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am **sorry <5162>** that I have made them.



Repented/sorry: Strongs #5162 - sigh, i.e. breathe strongly, to be sorry, to pity, console or rue or (unfavorably) avenge

Grieved: Strongs #6087. bue æatsab aw-tsab'; a primitive root; properly, to carve, i.e. fabricate or fashion; hence (in a bad sense) to worry, pain or anger

God was sorry and deeply pained that He had made man - does this mean He wished He had never done it? No, rather the meaning is more along the lines of a loving father who knows their child is disobedient and rebellious and knows that this child must suffer for their wrongdoings. The father is not sorry that the child had been born; he is sorry the child had to come to such a severe place of reckoning.

⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

This is actually proof that God did not regret - did not wish that He had never created mankind! God chose Noah to provide the salvation of the human race and therefore enable them to be eligible for a future resurrection!

Noah really did live his righteousness:

2 Peter 2:4-5, 11-13: (NASB) ⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ... ¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³Then God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

God's observations are repeated, telling us how utterly obvious the evil was! He followed through with the flood, but not before he provided the safety of the ark.

Do we grieve God? If we do, it is cause for regret and now you know how to make such a regret work for your eternal welfare rather than against it!