

Lesson 4

When you are enslaved to your past

1. *“There are many Christians who cannot thrive in their faith walk because they don’t seem to be able to let go of their past. We may live in bondage to past sins, hurts and traumas, so much so that they become like a pet to us: we feed them, pamper them and often refuse to do something to overcome them and let them go (p.31,32).”*

This is a quote from the beginning of this chapter. Did it remind you of anything in your past that keeps coming back to haunt you? Have you ever thought that you may just not want to let it go? Meditate upon this statement and discuss it with your group. Jot any insights below.

2. *“For years I looked back to find justification for my bad attitude and shallow faith. I would blame my insecurities on my parent’s broken marriage and my poor self-image on things that I heard growing up. I blamed my jealousy on that boyfriend who was unfaithful and my reluctance in giving up bad habits on the fact that I was raised in a more liberal culture. Blame, blame, blame. Attached to the chains that keep us bound to our past is the Blame Monster. And we feed it every time we drag the past around, allowing it to rob us of an abundant, successful present and future (p.33).”*

Have you been feeding the Blame Monster? As you read my confession, could you relate? Write down some of the things you have blamed your past or your parents for. Then write down a prayer to ask God to help you leave the past where it belongs.

3. *“...there are hurts of the past that have a measure of self-infliction which is hard to confront. It’s easier to continue blaming mom and dad, or the ex-husband or ex-wife, than looking within ourselves, asking God to help us and allowing Him to teach us how to move forward and take ownership of our destiny (p.34).”*

Is there any pain in your past that you have been blaming on others, and which you need to take responsibility for? Only you can choose to decide to let go. With God’s help, you can do it. But first you have to admit that you need to let it go. Write down your thoughts and/or discuss it with your group. Then pray, asking God to empower you to let go. Find a verse of Scripture that will remind you to leave the past where it belongs. Write it on a 3x5 card and post it on a visible place in your house. A good verse is Isaiah 43:18. Read it and write it down below.

4. One of my most popular stories is “Setting Mom Free”(adapted on p.34). I incorporated it into this chapter after realizing how many women have the same type of bondage with someone in their lives (like me, many of you have a similar story with your moms.) Write below some of the insights that God has given you through this story. Then write down some of the things you need to forgive someone for.
5. *“As we stand in a position of self-righteousness, holding on to thirty year old grudges, we fail to realize that we are the ones held in bondage. Even if the person who wronged you has a hardened heart and continually hurts you, do yourself a favor: Set them free! Ask God to help you forgive them and pray for them. Extend the same forgiveness that you so long to receive from those you hurt.”*

Write down a prayer, asking God to help you forgive someone who has wronged you. Finish the prayer with this sentence: “In Jesus’ Name and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I ask you God to help me set (name) Free.

6. On “We are not our sins” (p.37), I write: *“Holding on to our past mistakes grieves God’s heart. When we refuse to let go, we take a position that belong to God alone: we become judges. In a very twisted way, we assume a position of self-righteousness. You mean, God forgave you, but you can’t forgive yourself? Really?”*

Is there any sin in your past that you find yourself remembering? Do you realize that this is a mighty weapon that Satan uses to keep you defeated? Have you ever thought that you are becoming your own judge? Write down and/or discuss some of the revelations you have received by reading this passage:

7. *“We can choose to stay bound to our past and live defeated, or we can choose to use our experiences to strengthen us and build our testimony of deliverance. Then we can be used to give hope to people in bondage. Undeniably, God can use our testimony of deliverance from a particular sin to strengthen others. That’s one of the reasons you’ll find former alcoholics helping alcoholics, former addicts helping addicts. There is nothing more powerful than the song of a redeemed life as it is being rebuilt (p.40).”*

As you meditate upon the truth of this statement, ask God to show you how you can minister to others who are making the same mistakes you once did. Write down any ideas God may give you to use your past to help others not repeat the same mistakes you did.

8. *“Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic? Oh, my! If we are not careful, we may fall into the same mistake as the Jews did time and again. As we wander in our own wilderness at times, waiting for God’s promises to be fulfilled in our lives, we may fall into Satan’s trap of so focusing on our seemingly better past that we totally miss God’s miracles of provision and deliverance in the present (p.42).”*

Did this passage speak to your heart in regards to lack of gratitude to God’s provision for you? Discuss. Write down a prayer of thanks to all God’s provision for your life, even if what you currently have is not ideal. Vow to trust God’s provision as all that you NEED for today.

9. From this chapter, write down the Bible verses that will remind you to keep your past where it belongs. Post them in places where you won’t miss them and commit them to memory. When you are tempted to dwell in your past, anchor your mind on the Truth of these verses.