

RESOLVING YOUR PAST

RECONCILE YOUR PAST.
EMBRACE YOUR FUTURE.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I'm Luke Kuepfer.

I help non-profit and business leaders understand how to maximize their God-given potential to lead and serve others. I do this primarily through speaking at events and leading half-day/all-day workshops.

I work with business leaders to create a serving leadership culture in our society, and I help provide leadership training, consulting and coaching to faith-based and non-profit organizations.

I would love to talk with you for 15 minutes to see if we would be a good fit!

INTRODUCTION

I will never forget a moment at age 19 while driving down the road in a friend's pickup truck. I asked the Lord to reveal to me anything from my past that I should attempt restitution or make right in some other way. Instantly two things came to mind. Since I was living close to 2000 miles away from where I grew up, I pledged to take care of those two issues when I returned home the following summer.

Though difficult, by God's grace I pushed through with each one. Having experienced a tremendous sense of freedom in each case, I decided to pray that prayer again, just in case God wished to reveal more. He did. Again I made a commitment and followed through.

Over the years, God has faithfully brought to mind different instances from my past that needed healing. I've made restitution for vandalism and theft and asked forgiveness for broken

relationships. It's been a humbling experience every time but worth it all for the freedom and clear conscience gained.

Years ago I came across this passage in the Old Testament: "But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land." (Exodus 23:29-30)

If God had revealed everything to me at once, I would have been overwhelmed. Instead, he showed me little by little so I could handle each case thoroughly before the next. It's a journey. I welcome you to pray the prayer that I prayed. Resolve your past to gain a clear conscience.

*"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."
(Lamentations 3:22-23)*

PART 1

God desires to reveal instances locked away in our memories that need restitution. One of those situations for me involved a broken relationship I

had not instigated. In other words, someone turned against me without any apparent reason. I searched my heart and turned up empty. Wasn't he therefore responsible to reach out to me for the forgiveness I had to offer?

I came across two passages that indicated otherwise. Matthew 5:23-24 could not have been more clear: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

The second passage (Matthew 18:21-35) gave me further pause. A servant owed his king an enormous sum of money; it was certainly beyond his ability to ever pay back the amount. The king forgave the man, releasing him fully from the debt. Unfortunately, this servant found a colleague who owed him a measly amount and demanded immediate repayment. Rather than granting him grace as he had been shown, the servant threw the man in prison where he was unable to work on paying back what was owed.

The point in the passage is clear: those whom God has forgiven much should be able to easily forgive those who have offended them little by comparison. Furthermore, those of us who are

"free" should release others who are not from whatever debts they may owe us. We are responsible to free people from prisons of their own making—in some cases, offenses they carry against us.

Both passages compelled me to seek out the person with whom my relationship was broken. His response was positive and the relationship restored.

PART 2

Nothing causes you to fear the “what ifs” (“What if _____ hears about this? What if _____ becomes public knowledge?”) when your past has been taken care of and resolved. You can look anyone in the eyes with confidence and live without shame or guilt. In this section and the next, I want to discuss a clear conscience.

A clear conscience sets us up for success in a number of ways. Conversely, a bad conscience has a very good memory, playing the role of tormentor in your life.

First, a clear conscience produces a close relationship with God. Hebrews 10:22 states: “Let us

draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”

Second, a clear conscience gives us freedom from guilt. Note Job’s words: “I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.” (27:6)

Third, a clear conscience positions us to have power over temptation. There’s this great story in the Old Testament about a pagan king who attempted an adulterous affair with another man’s wife but was prevented by God due to his clear conscience. “Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.” (Genesis 20:6)

Pretty cool, isn’t it! Doing the incredibly hard work of resolving our past pays huge dividends! In the next section, I’ll examine two more benefits that a clear conscience contributes to our present and our future.

PART 3

In the previous section, we discussed how a clear conscience produces a close relationship with God, freedom from guilt, and power over temptation. In this section, I'd like to look at two more benefits.

A clear conscience enables us to stand on what we believe and witness with our lives. In 1 Peter 3:15-16 we read: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

A clear conscience also gives us the ability to build genuine relationships. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, had this to say: “Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God.”

When standing before Felix he boldly declared: “So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.” (Acts 24:15-16).

PART 4

As we wrap up this e-book on resolving the past, I want to discuss some practical steps on acquiring a clear conscience through reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 informs us that we have a ministry of reconciliation: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

The first step in reconciliation is to identify the offense. We need to be honest with ourselves and specific about the offense.

Next, we need to purpose in our hearts to ask forgiveness. This second step involves commitment and may be best sustained by asking a close friend to keep you accountable to that decision.

Lastly, we need to ask forgiveness and make restitution when necessary. This is the most

difficult and may also cost you something. But no cost is too great for freedom in your spirit and a clear conscience.

As we wrap up this e-book, take some time to process your own past with the following exercise. I hope you have found this helpful in both your personal and professional life!

MAKE IT PRACTICAL

Schedule some solitude in your schedule next week to process your past and pray for guidance. Deal with your past so you can truly move forward.

Paul states in Philippians 2:5 that, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” God is the “author and finisher of your faith” (Hebrews 12:2). He is your sustainer in every part of the journey!



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or leadership team?**

**I would love to listen to your dreams and
struggles on a brief 15-minute phone call.
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or reach out to me on my website at
lukekuepfer.com.**