

Weights / Sins of the Great Cloud ...

- Therefore **we also**, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance** the race that is set before us, Heb 12:1-2
- The weakness, weights and sins of those recorded in the OT should give us courage to do the same.
- Abraham Gideon David
- Moses Barak Samson
- Rahab Jephthah Prophets
- They were not perfect. Multitudes in the OT reveal that weights and sins can be compensated/forgiven

Lay Aside Every Weight

- Baggage
- Burdens
- Barriers
- Hindrances
- Impairments
- Obstacles
- Short Comings
- Stumbling Blocks
- Encumbrances
- Limitations
- Restrictions
- Character Flaws

Everyone has things they wish they could do better. Things that hold them back from the perfection they can envision / imagine they could be doing.

A part of the upward call is *“forgetting what lies behind and stretching to what lies ahead.”*

Things We have no Control Over

- Heredity – How we were raised...
- Environment – Who we were raised with ...
- Character Flaws ...
- Personality quirks ...
- Weaknesses – an eye can't do everything 1Cor 12
- Regrets over what might have been -time & chance
- Not as intelligent, a people person, diligent, virtuous as we can imagine or want to be.
- Timing of becoming a Christian ... later than we would have liked.
- These are weights that grieve and concern us.

Things We have Control Over

- Opportunities we didn't buy up and can't go back and fix now.
- Regrets over terrible decisions that hurt others and can't be fixed.
- Growth we should have made, but squandered.
- Sin we allowed into our lives and haven't removed
- Sins of Commission
- Sins of Omission
- Paul had many of these, and although he did it ignorantly in unbelief still felt less than the least

The Balm Bringing Failure

- We blame others and make ourselves victims
- **Parents:** Abuse, neglect, ignorance or folly
- **Friends:** evil companions / Bad Examples
- **Character** Weaknesses
- **Heredity & Environment**
- We feel better if we avoid responsibility.

It's Not My Fault

If We Don't Take Responsibility

- We can't fix it!
- The *empty way of life handed down from your fathers,*” 1Pet. 1:18
- The “*bad company that corrupts good morals,*” 1Cor. 15:33
- Being “*alienated from the life of God because of ignorance*” and “*hardness of heart*” Eph. 4:18
- Yet in spite of all reasons and justifications. we chose to do it.

It's Not All My Fault

We Can't Change the Past

- *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:12-14*

**First Repent and Confess ... Then
Lay aside: Forget & Look to the Future**

Putting Things in Perspective

- God knows ALL there is to know about us.
- All the sins we committed, all the opportunities we squandered, all the problems we created.
- He could tolerate Moses excuses, Jonah's outbursts, Jeremiah and Elijah's despondency.
- Paul's (persecuting the church) and Peter's (denying the Lord) He can tolerate us.
- Somewhere in the OT or NT there is someone just like us.
- We have a great cloud of witnesses cheering for us and ready to exhort and show compassion.

We All Begin at the Same Place

- *For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ... 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Rom 5:6-11*

Laying Aside Weights and Sins

- Jesus revealed that the emotions and feelings that lead to our need of encouragement to set aside these weights and sins to run the race are blessed.
- *Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Matt 5:3-6*
- It is our “poor spirit,” “mourning,” “meekness,” and intense desire for righteousness that leads the godly to need encouragement.
- If we never feel such things we need to assess why

Run with Patience / Endurance

- *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb 12:1-2*
- It is never going to be an easy race.
- It will take endurance, toil, and effort to reach the prize.
- The weights and sins we remove today are still lurking to return.
- Discouragement is always possible.
- Day by Day, we use the tools given to us to grow.

Measure of Christ's Gift

- *But to each one of us grace was given according to **the measure of Christ's gift**.*
- *"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And **gave gifts to men**."*
- *And **He Himself gave** some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the **equipping/Perfecting** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph 4:11-13*

By Means of

- the apostles and prophets(NT Scripture)
- being preached by evangelists
- Guided to live within by shepherds/elders
- Being instructed in it by the teachers,
- we return to an “*appropriate condition*”
- and can become “*deficient in no part.*”
- The gifts, “*one part after another,*” and “*in succession,*” will by “*reproving, rebuking and exhorting*” bring us back to a “perfect fit,” and “*such as we ought to be.*”

Perfecting/Equipping

- James and John mended their nets with twine and knots.
- Jesus mends our souls with His gifts.
- It is much more complex to mend a soul than it is a net, but the principle is the same
- To bring emotions, desires, and thoughts back to where they were created to be and ought to be is a life long task.
- We can mend our souls with these gifts!
- We Simply have to take responsibility

We Have Divine Power

● as ***His divine power*** has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us ***exceedingly great and precious promises***, that ***through these you may be partakers of the divine nature***, having escaped the ***corruption that is in the world through lust.***

2Pet. 1:3-4

Putting Off and Putting On

- *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)*

Be Transformed

- *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:1-2)*

Come out From Among Them

- *Therefore Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
(2Cor. 6:17-18; 7:1)*