

3: NO LIMITS, JUST NEXT STEPS

By John
In Faith, Identity, Mindset

5 Min Read



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Unequipped Series: When No One Showed You How to be a Man

OPENING THOUGHT

You may not have had a strong start, but your past does not limit God. Not all of us came from strong Christian homes where our faith was built on a solid foundation. Our past haunts many of us. Some men struggle with the difference between “forgiving” and “forgetting.” Forgiveness is a choice. It’s an act of the will, empowered by God’s grace. Forgetting is not something you can force; the brain does not have a delete button. Forgetting means you’re not going to dwell on the past. So, forgiving is releasing the event, and forgetting is refusing to relive it.

Your past will follow you through your thought patterns, habits, and unspoken expectations of yourself. Our past is who the Devil wants us to think we are; instead of believing our identity is in Christ. Only God's truth can quiet our past.

I've learned through years of therapy that leaving the past isn't a one-time event—it's a daily choice to stop rehearsing it. God doesn't erase our past; He redeems it. Every chapter, even the painful ones, can shape the man He's forming you to be. The question isn't whether you've stumbled. The question is whether you'll take the next step.

SCRIPTURE

“...forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.”
—Philippians 3:13 (ESV)

Paul's words in Philippians remind me of watching the end of a track heat where two runners are approaching the finish line and one leans, stretching forward at the last possible moment to hit the tape first. The winning runner is hardly thinking about the start of the race. They had the finish line in sight, and nothing was going to prevent them from making a strong finish to the race. Paul had both: a resume filled with religious credentials and a record stained by persecution of the church. Yet his focus was fixed forward. Paul's race was toward Christ Himself, and the only way forward was to stop glancing back.

APPLICATION

It may be difficult to break free from our past—but it's not impossible. Colossians 3:9-10 tells us, *“You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”* Your past may explain you, but it doesn't define you. This renewing process works to dismantle the manhood you've absorbed along the way. The old self becomes more unrecognizable as God's Spirit continues to work in your life.

It's not practical to tell someone they must unlearn their past, but it is possible to let them know they no longer have to relive it. If God is calling you to something new, bringing the past along will rob you of future growth.

Moving forward may feel uncomfortable. Stepping into the unknown always is. But isn't that where faith flourishes? God doesn't ask you to take all the steps alone. He wants you to trust Him step by step. Where He leads, you must follow. He's there, by your side.

I decided to add a small segue here on how an individual can unlearn the lies. Here's how that looks in real life:

- **Name the Lie** – You can't fight what you can't identify. Either write it down or say it out loud, *“I'm not my father” “I do matter.”*

- **Measure It Against Truth** – Lies held up along side God’s Word quickly fade in importance.
- **Name the Source** – Where did the lie come from culture, a coach, or a broken parent—not God—it loses its authority over you.
- **Reverse Course** – If the lie says “*Don’t ask for help*,” ask for help this week.
- **Get a Spotter** – Invite a trusted brother to be your spotter when those lies creep into your conversation.
- **Rinse and Repeat** – Spot the lie. Reject it. Replace it with truth. Live it. Do it again tomorrow.

You’re not stuck. God has already given you the power to renew your mind, but you have to engage the process. Your past can inform you, but it doesn’t get to imprison you.

TODAY’S CHALLENGE: TAKE THAT FIRST STEP

Find 10-15 quiet, undistracted minutes today to reflect on these questions:

- What’s one “next step” I know God is asking me to take, even if it feels uncertain?
- What voices from my past still shape my decisions today?
- Which of those voices align with God’s truth, and which need to be silenced?

Then pray this:

“Lord, silence the voices from my past that hold me back from becoming the man You’ve called me to be. Give me courage to step fully into the purpose You have prepared for me.”

FINAL THOUGHT: KEEP MOVING

Your past doesn’t determine your future unless you let it. Your past limitations are opportunities for Christ to work in your life. He’s strong where you are weak. Christ can build a better future than your past.

Remember, you’ll never be completely ready to move—but you can take that first step. God has begun a good work in you and He’s not done yet.

This week’s step: Is a past thought limiting your present—a fear, a habit, or a false belief—then surrender it to God. Replace it with one intentional action toward the man He’s calling you to be. For instance, if you believe “*I’ll never be good enough*,” memorize and pray Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship...”

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Contact: John Leavy

Email: johndleavy@gmail.com

Website: 1Man2Another.com