

5: YOU'RE NOT BEHIND

By John
In Faith, Family, Mindset

5 Min Read



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

OPENING THOUGHT

Maybe you feel like you're late to the game—like you should have learned this stuff years ago. I came to Christ at 33, after years of ups and downs—poor choices, painful consequences, and missed opportunities. My parents' marriage was marked by conflict and eventually divorce, and I often wish my childhood had been different. But when I gave my life to Jesus, everything changed. With Christ at the center of my marriage, my family's story—and legacy—took a very different path. I decided it was better to leave the past where it belongs.

It's become a reality, that men measure their marriages, career, and even their spiritual walk against other men. If you're not equal to or better than everyone else, you must be

falling behind. Comparison has become its own kind of locust. It eats away at your confidence, robs you of your joy, and convinces you you're losing valuable ground.

Be glad God doesn't measure you by the world's timeline. He's in the restoration business. God won't turn back the clock so you can relive your childhood with happier memories, or remove the consequences from those bad decisions, but He brings new life from what felt wasted. You can't go back and raise your kids a second time, but you can step into their lives today and make a difference. The lost love of the past can be replaced with real love today. Maybe you can't remove the years you experienced drifting away from Him, but you can choose to be closer to Him now.

Restoration isn't instant—it takes time. God's work in your life will take time. Remember, repentance (turning away from sin,) redemption (the work of Christ,) comes before restoration (the ongoing work of renewal.) Restoration is also not replacement. God will not give you back the exact years and opportunities that were missed.

SCRIPTURE

“I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten...”

—Joel 2:25 (ESV)

Joel's promise of restoration came after a call to repentance. The people had wandered, and God invited them back with the words, *“Return to me with all your heart.”* (Joel 2:12). Restoration begins with return. It begins with a turning of the heart.

APPLICATION

God doesn't use a rewind button—instead, He promises His redeeming power. He can take years marked by sin, regret, and work them into His plan for your life. What you thought was gone forever, God can transform into something that bears fruit.

God's restoration plan is not about replicating those lost years—it's about renewal. God is not bound by time, nor are His plans. He can create new opportunities, fresh ones in the season you're in now. You can't rewind the clock, but you can redeem the moment.

And brotherhood is part of the redemption journey. We're not expected to walk it alone. Other men sharpen us, lift us up, support us, and encourage us to continue. The devil whispers, “You're done.” God tells us in His Word that He's only begun to bless us.

If you want restoration, you must be willing to repent, to let go of comparison, and to step into the process God is working out in your life. That means choosing progress over perfection and presence over regret.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE: FIX YOUR EYES ON TOMORROW

Today, stop measuring yourself against another man's highlight reel. Instead, declare this truth out loud:

"I am not behind. I am exactly where God can grow me."

Then pray this:

"Father, I feel like I've lost time, but I trust Your Word. Restore what the enemy has eaten, and help me see new fruit in this season. Keep me from comparison, give me courage to repent where I've drifted, and surround me with brothers who sharpen me."

FINAL THOUGHT

You may feel like you've wasted years, but God wastes nothing. Restoration is not a race to catch up—it's a walk of grace with the One who restores. Don't expect instant results. Don't demand that God hand you back exactly what you lost. Instead, trust Him to bring renewal in ways you never expected.

The world tells you that you're defined by your past mistakes or how far you are behind others. God tells you that you are His child, and He knows how to redeem what's broken.

This week's step: Make a list of the "locust years" you believe are gone—lost time, wasted opportunities, regrets that still sting. Bring them before God in prayer and then share at least one with a trusted brother in Christ. Watch how God begins His restoring work—not just in your circumstances, but in your heart.

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