

# What Are You Doing With Your Do-Over?

By Moe Becnel

This week Paige and I were talking about how many second chances we have been given in life. Most of them have been extended to us by our gracious Heavenly Father and our Savior & Friend Jesus. Many have been freely given by our parents. Some of them have been by supervisors, and a few of them have been by friends. And of course my buddies on the golf course let me have a mulligan (a free shot) on the first hole of each round of golf, if I need it --- and I always need it.

How many second chances have you been given in your life --- a lot or a few? Your answer to that question is probably based on a combination of the quality of friends you have surrounded yourself with, plus the quality of your relationship with God.

The next question is actually more important than the first. What have you done with your second chances? Another way to ask this is, *what have you done with your do-overs? And what will you do with your future do-overs?*

## **Our need for second chances:**

The reason we need second chances is that we usually have messed something up the first time, or we were part of someone else's mess-up.

For me, this happens at least a few times each day. I do something wrong without thinking. I express an opinion that hurts someone who I did not mean to hurt. Negative thoughts may take control of a situation momentarily.

I jump to conclusions before I have the facts, and wrongly accuse my children and others 97.42% of the time.

I thank my God that the people in my life love me enough to forgive my blunders and extend second chances on a daily basis.

I'm sure none of you are like me --- right?

The Bible says that we all fall short of God's glory --- His expectations for us.

God extends grace to us when we fall short of His expectations for our lives. Grace means that God gives us what we do not deserve. He forgives us when we sin --- when we do not obey Him.

One of the greatest examples of God's grace is in John Chapter 8, when Jesus is brought an adulteress by the men who want to stone her to death. As the story ends, her accusers left one by one because Jesus showed them that they were not worthy to pass judgement on her. In John 8: 10-11 Jesus says these words to her, *"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"* *"No one sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

What great grace she received to be relieved of the penalty of death by the same God who gave Moses the Law which condemned adultery for the Jews several hundred years before. Grace demonstrates the great love God has for people. People matter to God! You matter to God! Your spouse matters to God! Your children matter to God! Your family matters to God!

If you have been through divorce and are remarried, God has given you a do-over!

## **Benefiting from second chances:**

Our mistakes and failures *should* become part of our growing and learning process. However, many times we fail to learn valuable lessons from our mistakes --- to our own future detriment.

Consider the habitual gambler who blows every paycheck in the neighborhood slot machine, or the habitual neglectful parents whose children turn to the wrong crowd for acceptance, or a marriage partner so caught up in their hobby that their spouse feels lonely, or -- -- -- the list goes on! Every day those people may receive some form of a second chance from their spouse or child or loved one, but they do nothing with the second chance. They continue in their damaging pattern.

I think about when I go to the driving range to practice my golf game. I choose a certain club, place a ball on the tee, position myself to hit the ball in a certain direction, and swing. The ball goes 35 yards to the right of my target. So I try again! I get another ball and repeat the steps above. The second hit usually looks just like the first one. So I try again --- and again --- and again! The results look very similar.

I am getting all the second chances I want, but nothing changes. What is the problem! The problem is most likely me. It is extremely unlikely that all of my clubs are bent. It is equally extremely unlikely that all of the balls in the bucket that I paid for are defective. The problem is that I am not changing what I am doing.

As associate pastors, we regularly see the same pattern in the lives of hurting people. They have a relationship difficulty so they go to counseling, make changes for a short time until emotions settle down, and then fall back into their same relationship-damaging routines. Others go through a divorce, later find a new mate, remarry, and begin to have very similar issues that they had in their previous marriage. Scary, isn't it!

### **Second chances carry responsibility:**

Let's look again at the story of the adulteress. John 8: 11 says, . *"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

That last statement is the key to successful living. The adulteress had responsibility to not waste the do-over she was being given. Her responsibility was to leave her life of sinning.

God gives us grace as a new start of something. The new start needs to include application of God's Principles for successful living. In John 10:10b, *Jesus said, "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* It is through following Jesus and applying His principles to our lives that we begin to live the abundant life. Without it, we continue to struggle through life.

You see, if the adulteress just received the grace, but did not change, she would later find herself in a similar scene, and the ending may be drastically different the next time. Grace without change is a wasted opportunity to grow, mature, and take responsibility for your actions.

Sure, grace alone gets us off the hook for the moment, but until we decide to make positive change in ourselves, we continue to be the same person with the same flaws, and we will repeat the same behavior and continue to damage the same relationships over and over again.

When we do not change, we waste the grace that was given to us! Identify your shortcomings and make a commitment to make positive change in yourself!

### **Application to Your Life**

Begin to apply God's Word and God's principles to your life and your family!

1. Do not waste the grace that God gives you today!

Consider the story in Luke 17: 11-19 when Jesus healed ten people with leprosy. Only one came back to give thanks. All ten were given grace that day, but nine took the grace for granted. They did not show proper appreciation, honor and respect to God.

2. Do not waste the grace that your spouse gives you today! Many marriage relationships suffer because of one or both spouses are not responsive to the grace that each extends to the other. It is so easy to take each other for granted.

3. Do not waste the grace that your children give you today! Hug your children today. Give them your time and attention! Look them straight in the face --- and just give them a smile! Let them know they are special to you and to God!

4. Be a grace-giver today! Give someone a second chance that you think they do not deserve. Maybe they will change!

Be blessed today!

*Moe Becnel*

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