

“Looking Backward to Move Us Forward” **by Rev. John C. Tittle**

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 7: 5-13 NRSVue

⁵For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—disputes without and fears within. ⁶But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, ⁷and not only by his arrival but also by the consolation with which he was consoled about you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. ⁸For although I grieved you with my letter, I do not regret it. Although I did regret it (for I see that that letter caused you grief, though only briefly), ⁹now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance, for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. ¹¹For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter. ¹²So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who suffered the wrong but in order that your zeal for us might be made known to you before God. ¹³In this we have found consolation.

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back on your life, what are some of your biggest regrets?
2. Regrets can be put into four basic categories according to Daniel Pink:
 - a. Foundational Regrets: If I'd only done the work (discipline and responsibility)
 - b. Boldness Regrets: If only I'd taken that risk (growth and potential)
 - c. Moral Regrets: If only I'd done the right thing (Goodness and conscience)
 - d. Connection Regrets: If only I'd reached out (love and friendship)
 - e. What regrets do you have in each of those areas? Do your regrets tend to hover in one of the categories in particular?
3. Paul says in the passage that “God consoles the downcast.” What attitude do you think God has for us when we're struggling with regret? What would God say to us?
4. How can willingness to go through short-term pain first help us have deeper meaning and joy later? What happens to us and our relationships if we put off pain for pleasure in the moment?
5. How would you define worldly grief? Godly grief?
6. If you had a friend that was struggling with beating himself/herself up over a regret (create your own regret scenario), what guidance would you give?
7. Paul makes a connection between godly grief and repentance. How can repentance open up new vistas for us that were previously not possible?
8. If you're struggling with a regret that can't be changed, what are some ways that you can make life better, even if you can't erase the past?
9. The good news is that all of this doesn't depend solely upon us. How can Christ help you with your regrets?