

When we look at our present situation in life, we know that it is a result of our past. Our future is thus determined by what we do now.

Past → determines → Present → determines → Future

We must act now to make changes that accomplish our plans for the future.

Future → plans_for → Present ← learns_from ← Past

My past actions - or lack of action - resulted in my present situation. We should not dwell on the past; we should avoid repeating our mistakes, but we should continue our successes.

Look at what happened to Lot's wife - she knew they had to leave, but she wanted one look back at her past.

Genesis 19:26

His wife looked behind him and she turned into a pillar of salt.

God never changes the past. He recalls the past as examples to guide us away from wrong thinking and direct us toward practical, positive, fulfilling plans.

Psalms 119:52

I remember Your judgments from of old, YHVH, and comfort myself.

Romans 15:4

For whatever was written before was written for our instruction, so that through patience and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

When our past was a failure, we can still make it useful for others.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

When reviewing the past, be accurate and honest about it. However, don't dwell on negative talk or negative thought - it's destructive. Do not pass anything negative on to others. It's destructive to them, also.

Psalms 42:11

Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.

Proverbs 3:24-26

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; for YHVH will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

Proverbs 11:9

With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

Proverbs 15:1-2, 4, 13,15,23,30

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly. A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit. A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken. All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast. A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word! Bright eyes gladden the heart; good news puts fat on the bones.

Proverbs 17:4, 7, 20, 22

An evildoer listens to wicked lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue. Excellent speech is not fitting for a fool, much less are lying lips to a prince. He who has a crooked mind finds no good, and he who is perverted in his language falls into evil. A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 18:6-8, 14

A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body. The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but as for a broken spirit who can bear it?

We should stop reliving the past - whether painful or joyous. Recalling the past differs from reliving the past. Dwelling on it, or (worse) imagining what today might be if I had done differently in the past (that "what if" daydreaming), will not change my present. Only appropriate action now will change your future.

Isaiah 26:13-14

YHVH Eloheinu, other lords beside You have had dominion over us, but we remember Your Name alone. The dead do not live - dead souls do not rise. Thus You punished and destroyed them and wiped out all memory of them.

Matthew 8:21-22

Then another of the disciples said, "Master, first let me go and bury my father." But Yeshua tells him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Isaiah 43:18

Do not remember former things, nor consider things of the past.

Each of us is individually responsible for our actions, and each of us individually lives with the consequences of our actions. We also cause consequences to others for our actions - and their actions cause consequences for us. That's a complex mess!

Deuteronomy 24:16

Fathers are not to be put to death for children, and children are not to be put to death for fathers - each one is to be put to death for his own sin.

When we sin, we are not just rebelling against God, but we living as though we can change the laws of nature - the rules of the universe: like "what goes up must come down" but we want a different version. What is done (something wrong) will hurt someone or something. It can't be undone, but only corrected.

We have free will, and we can ignore God's offer of redemption, or accept it. Why do I need redemption? When I disobey God, I commit sin. Sin is rebellion against God, going against His commands. Redemption makes it so I can live my life in harmony with God's creation. All of creation WAS perfect until sin came.

James summarized what we do that leads to sin. Each of us will at some time stumble.

James 1:14-15

But each one is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death.

God knows we are imperfect, and that complete obedience out of love for Him is a long journey.

1 John 1:8-9, 2:3-6

If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, then, since He is trustworthy and just, He will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing. The way we can be sure we know Him is if we are obeying His commands. Anyone who says, "I know Him," but isn't obeying His commands is a liar - the truth is not in him. But if someone keeps doing what He says, then truly love for God has been brought to its goal in him. This is how we are sure that we are united with Him. A person who claims to be continuing in union with Him ought to conduct his life the way He did.

If you fail (you sin), get up, confess and repent, dust yourself off, and move on! The important thing is to get back up on the Way and keep going!

Each of us has free will, and can turn against the Creator, the One who loves us. Every decision I make is my own personal responsibility. I can't say "the devil made me do it" - because I chose to do it. I can't say that "the enemy attacks

me and causes my problems" - decisions by others affect me, and my decisions affect others.

NONE of the negative situations in my life are the desire of YHVH for me. It's not about bad things happening in my life - it's about how I handle my response to those bad things.

YHVH gave us commands that were known from the very first (later written by Moses) because we tend to forget the things we should remember (why am I in this room? what was I going to do?). YHVH shared with us how to live in this universe - the user manual - the Torah and then the rest of the Tanach.

When I fail, and sin - His wrath comes against me. His anger? His wrath? More like intense frustration. Parents go through this emotion_and_response when their child deliberately goes against the rules and gets hurt by that action: "Don't play in the street. Look both ways before crossing." You love the child, but you want the child to remember and obey. Most of us (like children) only learn from our own mistakes - not from the warnings given to us by others in advance of doing something stupid. So, like a parent who watches (in frustration) the crying child, YHVH lets us make our mistakes and suffer the consequences, so that we can (hopefully) avoid those mistakes in the future.

His love is more than the whole universe can contain. He shows us that love by giving us TOTAL freedom. Love is meaningless if it is forced, or if it is the only possible action. That is NOT love. Love and freedom (to choose) are mutual components of daily life. There is ALWAYS a choice - sometimes multiple possibilities - but the best choice is always to follow God's desires - to obey His commands. Out of that obedience comes peace and joy, usually mixed with other consequences from living in a fallen world, but always with comfort of being in His love.

As believers, our failures bring us back to confession of sin (Leviticus 1, 1 John 1). Redemption is an ongoing process; after our initial covenant with YHVH (through acceptance of atonement by Yeshua), we have a new heart and a new spirit, and often an elation and a joy better than any before.

Sometimes our sin and forgiveness (with its cycle of relish it, regret it, remorse over it, repent of it, and restore righteousness) has the same intensity of feeling as our first encounter.

God is always giving us new life after repentance, so we can take off the old life that is dead in sins and be born again. When we stumble and return to the old life, and confess it and take off the old life again, that repentance feels like being born again. Unfortunately we repeat this cycle many times, until we reach that final redemption in God's presence.

Psalm 32:5

I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 103:10-12

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Jeremiah 31:34b

I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more.

Isaiah 54:4

Fear not, for you will not be ashamed. Nor cringe, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the shame of your youth, and you will remember the reproach of your widowhood no more.

Romans 8:1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua.

Let's not presume that our past actions will work for our present situations. Like David, we should always consult YHVH first, and trust Him for each day, one day at a time.

2 Samuel 5:20-25

So David came to Baal-perazim and defeated them there; and he said, "YHVH has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters." Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim. They abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away. Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim. When David inquired of YHVH, He said, "You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees. It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then YHVH will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines." Then David did so, just as YHVH had commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

Don't get caught up in emotion - nothing wrong with emotion, but self-control requires logic and discipline - emotions are secondary. Obedience to God's commands, as in the Bible, gives our lives a foundation for our actions.

No one really knows God's plans, but we can know what He wants us to do. However, only knowing God's word is not enough - we can read manuals on driving a vehicle, but until we start actually driving, we really have no understanding of all that is involved in that. We should obey God's commands.

Psalm 103:17-18

The mercy of YHVH is from everlasting to everlasting on those who revere Him, His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant, who remember to observe His instructions.

Leviticus 18:4

You are to obey My ordinances and keep My statutes and walk in them - I am YHVH your God.

Deuteronomy 11:1

Therefore you are to love YHVH your God and keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances and His mitzvot at all times.

Deuteronomy 26:16

This day YHVH your God is commanding you to do these statutes and ordinances - so you are to take care and do them with all your heart and with all your soul.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

A final word, when all has been heard: Fear God and keep His mitzvot! For this applies to all mankind.

The law of planting and harvesting still applies in all of life. Although we don't want to dwell on the past, its consequences still come from the law of planting and harvesting.

1 Samuel 15:22b

To obey is better than sacrifice, to pay heed than the fat of rams.

John 15:10

If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love.

Esther 4:14

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place - but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows whether you have attained royal status for such a time as this?

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived - God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he also shall reap. For the one who sows in the flesh will reap corruption from the flesh. But the one who sows in the Spirit will reap from the Spirit eternal life.

We should align our expectations with God's desires.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in YHVH with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Psalms 37:3-5

Trust in YHVH and do good. Dwell in the land, feed on faithfulness. Delight yourself in YHVH, and He will give you the requests of your heart. Commit your way to YHVH. Trust in Him, and He will do it.

Matthew 6:31-34

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the pagans eagerly pursue all these things; yet your Father in heaven knows that you need all these. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Exodus 16:14-15,18

When the layer of dew was gone, on the surface of the desert was a thin, flake-like frost, as fine as the frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said one to another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Then Moses said to them, "It is the bread that YHVH has given you to eat." When they measured it with an omer, those who gathered more had nothing left over, and those that gathered less did not lack at all. Every man gathered according to his appetite.

Focus on the present - our actions now determine our future.

Luke 14:28-32

For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and figure out the cost, to see if he has enough to finish it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and isn't able to finish everything, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and wasn't able to finish!' Or what king, going to make war against another king, won't first sit down to consider whether he is able with ten thousand to confront the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If not, while the other is still far away, he sends an ambassador and asks for peace.

2 Corinthians 6:2

For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Even when we do wrong or don't plan ahead, God is in control.

Genesis 45:4-8,50:20

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near me." So they came near. "I'm Joseph, your brother - the one you sold to Egypt," he said. "So now, don't be grieved and don't be angry in your own eyes that you sold me here - since it was for preserving life that God sent me here before you. For there has been two years of famine in the land, and there will be five more years yet with no plowing or harvesting. But God sent me ahead of you to ensure a remnant in the land and to keep you alive for a great escape. So now, it wasn't you, you didn't send me here, but God! And He made me as a father to Pharaoh, lord over his whole house and ruler over the entire land of Egypt." "Yes, you yourselves planned evil against me. God planned it for good, in order to bring about what it is this day - to preserve the lives of many people."

We should not dwell on our future to the exclusion of acting in the present.

Acts 1:7

He said to them, "It is not your place to know the times or seasons which the Father has placed under His own control."

James 4:13-14

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. What is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Proverbs 16:3

Commit your works to YHVH and your plans will be established.

Instead, live each day in the joy God gives us.

Nehemiah 8:10

So he said to them, "Go! Eat choice food, drink sweet drinks, and send portions to those who have nothing ready. For today is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of YHVH is your strength."

Isaiah 35:10

The ransomed of YHVH will return and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Matthew 28:7-8

"Go quickly now and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead. And behold, He's going before you to the Galilee. There you will see Him. See, I have told you!" They quickly left the tomb, with fear yet with great joy, and ran to bring news to His disciples.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Philippians 3:13-14

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself as having taken hold of this. But this one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal for the reward of the upward calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also get rid of every weight and entangling sin. Let us run with endurance the race set before us, focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame; and He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Let's live our lives with a positive outlook, because we (more than any other people) have reasons for joy - dwell on it.

Psalms 40:16

Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let those who love Your salvation say continually, "YHVH be magnified!"

Psalms 19:14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, YHVH, my rock and my Redeemer.

Proverbs 12:14, 17-18, 25

A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words, and the deeds of a man's hands will return to him. He who speaks truth tells what is right, but a false witness, deceit. There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.

Philippians 4:4-8, 12-13

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the

secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Colossians 3:12-13

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

The great thing about freedom is that you are totally in control;
the sad thing about freedom is that you are totally in control.