

Doors

Closing Doors

April 20 & 23, 2017

(John 5:1-14) Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

“I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! Afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.”

- ✓ We are looking for God to change our circumstances; God is looking to change us.
- ✓ Life-change begins when excuses end.
- ✓ A failure to change results in a lifestyle of pain.

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(Colossians 3:1-8 MSG) So if you’re serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it! Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don’t shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that’s where the action is. See things from his perspective.

Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God.

That means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That’s a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God.

1. Close the door of the past.

(Philippians 3:13-14 NLT) Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

(Luke 9:62) But Jesus told him, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”

I must release all people, pain, and regrets of the past.

2. Close the door of secret sin.

(Romans 6:12-14 MSG) That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don’t give it the time of day. Don’t even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time – remember, you’ve been raised from the dead!—into God’s way of doing things. Sin can’t tell you how to live. After all, you’re not living under that old tyranny any longer. You’re living in the freedom of God.

(2 Corinthians 7:10) Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

(Romans 13:12) The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

I must voice remorse of sin and cast off darkness.

3. Close the door of negative influence.

(Romans 12:2) Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

(2 Timothy 2:22) Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

I must remove sinful reminders and establish righteous habits.