# You Can Start Over

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# 1

## God Originated the "Starting Over" Principle

God put the principle of a "new start" in the entire universe. In Genesis 1, He worked six days, and on the seventh day He rested. Sunday starts a new week all over again. We give praise to God as we celebrate on Sundays, because it's resurrection day. Jesus arose on this day, and the early church began to worship on the first day of the week.

We celebrate a new day every day, because the earth rotates every 24 hours. No matter how dark it gets in the night, morning always comes. A new moon comes up monthly. Every year, we have a new beginning as the earth makes one complete revolution around the sun during that one-year period. Then it starts all over again.

After winter comes spring. God said, **"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease"** (Genesis 8:22).

God put the principle of "starting over" in the earth. If you have a bad crop one year, you can start over and plant a new crop the next year! Each year brings a new harvest.

The Bible is filled with accounts of people beginning again. God made a beautiful, perfect Garden and put Adam and Eve in it. In spite of its perfectness, they fell. The moment they fell, God initiated a new beginning. He said, **"The seed of woman is going to crush your head, devil. It's going to destroy your power and take away what you've done"** (Genesis 3:15, Paraphrased).

When Jesus came, our calendar started over. It changed from B.C. to A.D. When Jesus came, time began again. That was no accident. Life begins, not at 40, but with the acceptance of Jesus Christ in your heart as your personal Lord and Savior.

# 2

# Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind

**Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.**

**I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

**Philippians 3:13,14 (KJ)**

**The prize of the high calling of God is in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the prize. He's the trophy. He's the wreath. He's the goal. He's the purpose of your life, for in Him is life. Jesus said, "...I am the resurrection and the life..." (John 11:25).**

**When the Apostle Paul said, "...I count not myself to have apprehended..." he was saying, "I haven't arrived yet. I'm not perfect." But he continued, "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind...."**

Do you have some things you'd like to forget from your past? It takes God's grace to forget. Grace is God's power, ability and enablement. It's not by your works, but it's by His gift of grace that you are able to let go of the past, knowing that because of Jesus' shed blood, the past is wiped out as you accept His completed work at Calvary.

People hold on to the past for several reasons. They've had some great things happen in the past, and in a nostalgic attitude, they relive it again and again.

Then there are people who hold on to the past because it was so bad. They hold on through regret and remorse, and the memory of it is played over and over again.

Today is a great day to forget and lay aside those things which are behind that are keeping you from going forward.

If you are holding on to things of the past, it's impossible to reach out and receive the fresh and new. Paul said, "I let go of those things." Paul had some difficult years, yet as he wrote this, he had some great things to rejoice about: what he had done in the ministry and his impact in the earth. He said, "I'm forgetting those things, because there are greater things ahead of me."

Your future is going to be better than your past You have everything to look forward to, because your future is out of this world!

# 3

## Life’s Greatest Calling

When you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, then you begin to press toward the high calling of God in Him.

The greatest calling in life is to know God and know that eternal life is yours through Christ Jesus. Jesus said, **"...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"** (John 14:6). There's no other access to the Father, no other door, no other entry.

The high calling is that you be raised up and seated together with Jesus in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). The high calling is that you go into the Throne Room daily to fellowship and commune with your heavenly Father. The high calling is that you walk and talk with the King of the universe each day of your life. There's no other calling that's any higher than to know Him.

There are many things that flow out of knowing Him, such as: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers and works that people are to do, but the initial and highest calling is *to know Him.* Paul said, **"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection..."** (Philippians3:10).

Some of the things of your past, if they're not placed under the blood of Jesus Christ, can keep you from really knowing Jesus. The bad things you've done or bad things that have happened to you that have turned you off to God, that have caused you to be cynical and critical about Christians and about Christianity, need to be laid down. Ultimately, this type of thing holds God at arm's length and you'll say, "Later, God...I'm not ready now."

Some people don't press on to know Jesus Christ because of good things that have happened. Perhaps you have a good job, a good education, a good family and good health, and you say, "I have no need for God. Everything is okay in my life. I'm satisfied." Millions of people have said that. They live independent of God, not because they don't need Him, but because they think they don't need Him. They feel adequate in themselves, but the point will come in life that they recognize, "I'm not an island. I'm not self-contained."

In other words, "I don't have everything within myself to meet all my needs." There are needs of love, joy, peace and security concerning your future that only God can provide.

You don't have life without Jesus Christ. You may have an existence, you may be going through the motions and you may be on the treadmill of a daily routine, but without Jesus Christ, you're not really experiencing life. Many people are walking as dead men. They're living like zombies. They don't know it, but they've held on to the good things that have happened in their past instead of reaching forth to know Christ.

# 4

## Prodigal Son—Example of Starting Over

The parable of the prodigal son is an example of starting over. The prodigal son was a young man who had it made. He had the world by the tail. His father had lots of money and a big house. The son had work he could do, and he had a share in his father's inheritance, but he said, "Dad, I wish you were dead, because I want my inheritance *now."* His inheritance was to come after his father died, but he said, "I want it *now*."

His dad gave him the inheritance that would have later been his. The young man went away and squandered it on wicked living and wild parties. He turned away from the covenant of his father. After he blew all of his money and lost all of his friends, he found himself alone.

He had no money, no transportation, no one to go to, so he ended up selling himself to a pig farmer. He was a covenant child of Abraham and in that covenant, there were certain things he was not to eat, but now he filled his belly with the hog slop, because there was no other food.

Many people who criticize Christianity have said, "People only come to God when they're desperate." That's a pretty accurate criticism. But some people have enough sense to recognize it before they get to the bottom of the pig pen!

The prodigal son had a need when he was in his father's house, but he didn't recognize it until everything was stripped away. The wonderful thing about God is, His mercy will accept you back.

The young man began thinking about his circumstances, and he said, "Dad has people working for him who have better to eat than I have. They have a better place to live. I'm going back to my dad and say, 'Dad, I've rejected you. I've taken the inheritance, but would you take me back as a servant?'" The prodigal came home basically because he had physical needs in his life.

God will meet your needs and He'll heal your body. There are many prodigals who come home because they need healing in their body and they have physical needs to be met.

The goodness of God is that **"...He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust"** (Matthew 5:45). He's not just kind to Christians. God is kind to all. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). Romans 2:4 says, **"...The goodness of God leads you**

**to repentance."**

When the prodigal son came home just to get something to eat, he got something he didn't expect. He got a renewed relationship with his father. Dad was sitting on the front porch, looking down the lane when suddenly, he saw his son dragging home, clothes torn and dirty.

When the father saw him, he took off running toward his son. That's the picture of how the heavenly Father feels about *you*, even if you've been a prodigal. *He's running toward you, always compassionate and always reaching out.*

The son said, **"Father I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son"** (Luke 15:21). To start over you should confess your sin to God, realizing you have sinned against both God and man.

The father ran and threw his arms around his smelly son and kissed him. He didn't say, "All right, prove yourself." He didn't hold him at arm's length. He loved him. He put a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, and a robe on his back and said to his servants, "Go kill the fatted calf. We're going to have prime rib tonight! My son who was dead is alive. He was lost, but now he's found. Let's rejoice and make merry."

The prodigal son is a picture of what happens in heaven when one person comes back to God. This is God's attitude toward you. He is waiting for you to start over.

# 5

**Just Because You've Failed, It's Not Over!**

You may feel like you can't start over because you've denied the Lord, you've walked away from Him, or you've failed Him. Peter denied Jesus three times. He cursed Him. He denied that he even knew His name. Yet, an angel said to the three women at the empty tomb on the very morning of Jesus' resurrection, **"...Go and tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you"** (Mark 16:7).

Why did the angel say, "Tell the disciples *and Peter"!* Because Jesus had a commission for Peter, who had failed just a few days earlier. In the 40-day period that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, He showed Peter that He had a plan for his life and that, *just because he had failed, it wasn't over!*

On the Day of Pentecost, of all the disciples who could have preached, guess who God chose?

Peter, the one who failed. God didn't see him as a failure! He gave Peter a new start! Hallelujah! He will do the same for you.

# 6

## You Can Start Over in Your Devotional Life

One area that many people need to start over is in their personal devotions with God on a daily basis. By personal devotions, I mean a time during the day that you set aside to pray and seek the Lord, to read the Bible, to listen to God, to repent and confess your sins before God, to pray for other people, to draw strength from Him and to worship Him.

It's possible you have had a period of time with strong daily devotions with the Lord, but you have lost your momentum. You can't live in victory unless you're spending daily time with Jesus. No matter how much you know, the knowledge you've gained in the past will not help you unless it's applied to the present.

Things that are known are often forgotten and locked in storage if we're not refreshed by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. When you open yourself up to God on a daily basis, then you can face your day and the circumstances that arise. The Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance the knowledge and the information that is needed, and He will enable you, by the wisdom of God, to know how to apply that knowledge.

Billy Graham, a man who has shaken our world, made this statement about your daily devotional time: "Nothing can take the place of a daily devotional time with Christ. Your quiet time, prayer time and time in the Word are absolutely essential for a happy Christian life. It will make the difference between success and failure in your Christian life."

I believe Christians don't need as much new knowledge as they need the application of the knowledge they've already received. This is what happens in a daily time with God.

If you pray, read the Word, and seek God every day, you'll be able to break any demonic influence that tries to come at you. Jesus wants to free you every day from the negative, demonic things that try to come on you in wrong attitudes, thoughts, imaginations, or feelings.

As you spend time in prayer, the Holy Ghost will reveal it to you, and you will break the power of the devil so it will not gain a fortress in your life.

*Daily communion with God is an absolute must for you to live in victory.* If

all you get spiritually is what you receive on Sunday, then you'll be like a yo-yo.

It's possible that you let up or stopped your devotional time because bad things happened and trials and troubles came. Instead of turning to God, you tried to work it out by your own effort.

On the other hand, it's possible you stopped your daily devotional time because of good times. "Everything is fine. I don't need prayer. I don't need to commit myself to God. I'll wait until later."

Maybe you thought, "I've got to do this. I've got big business deals going today;" and day after day, it's put aside until it's off in the distance somewhere. I have good news for you: *you can start over!*

Steve Davis, a former Oklahoma University quarterback, said, "My greatest battle in life isn't the linebackers of Nebraska, but it's the daily fight with the devil to maintain a quiet time with God."

Satan tries to keep you from a quiet time through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, the cares of the world, the drive for riches, or through affliction, tribulation, and persecution. If the devil can destroy this citadel of strength, he can take the fort!

Start over today by setting aside time alone with God. Get your Bible and pray. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Pour your heart out to Jesus. *It's a new day!*

# 7

## Fulfilling Your Call

You are not only called into fellowship to know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in daily communion, but you are called to fulfill God's call upon your life.

There is no human being on earth who doesn't have a calling from God. Now, you may not be called to the office of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher. You may not be called to the mission field, to teach in a Christian school, or to serve and work in a ministry as a fulltime employee; but there's a calling that God places upon every human being. Why? Because God has no spare parts.

If you are a member of the Body, you have something you are to do. You are not just stuck out there dangling in space and God says, "Oh, I don't know what I'm going to do with you!"

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are learning what God wants you to do. As you answer the first calling to be saved and the second calling to come into daily communion with Him, then you will discover the calling of what you are to do in life.

# 8

## Examples of Delayed Callings

Why do people lay aside their call? Sometimes it's because of sin, mistakes, or the mistakes of others. Because of it, some feel they can't pick up their calling again. Sometimes people try to do what they are called to do and they do it the wrong way and make a mistake; and out of the embarrassment or the predicament that results, they forget about the call, or they don't want to go on with it.

Other people lay aside their calling, not because of their own sin or their own mistakes, but because of the sins and mistakes of other people. They are hurt, wounded and rejected. Others try to do something for God, and people don't respond to it. Consequently, they lay aside that calling.

Let's look at three men in the Old Testament whose callings were delayed for a season: Samson, Moses and Joshua.

**Samson**

Samson had a call to deliver Israel, but he was pulled away from this call by the lust of his own flesh. There are many influencing demonic spirits that try to pull people away from their calling.

Samson fell for it. Delilah satisfied his flesh, but nearly destroyed his life and his call. He ended up with his eyes blinded, grinding meal like an ox.

Here's the good news, though. Samson's hair began to grow again, but his strength wasn't just in his hair. His strength was in his covenant relationship with God. He lost that strength, but it began to return because *he recommitted himself to God.* The anointing came back.

Let's look at Samson's final feat of victory in Judges 16:25-30. The Philistines called a great banquet celebration to sacrifice to their god, Dagon, for delivering Samson into their hands.

**...When their hearts were merry...they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.**

**Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them!"**

**Now the temple was full of men and women; all the lords of the**

**Philistines were there. In fact, there were about three thousand men and women on the roof who watched while Samson performed.**

**Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"**

**And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.**

**Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it**

**So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.**

Even though this was a bittersweet victory, it was still a triumph in that Samson returned to God in his last days. This means *you*, *too*, *can start over!*

**Moses**

Moses made a great mistake. When he looked upon the bondage and oppression imposed upon the Hebrews (his own people) by the Egyptians, he killed an Egyptian (Exodus 2:11,12).

Moses' heart was right, but his actions were wrong. That's the way it is with a lot of people. They attempt to fulfill their calling, but they don't get the wisdom and knowledge of God on *how* to do it.

As a result of this sin, Moses fled to the backside of the desert and spent 40 years there. It looked like it was over. Moses at 80 years old was tending his father-in-law's sheep. But his calling wasn't over, because **"...the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"** (Romans 11:29). This means God never pulls them back.

God called Moses to do something. Moses made a mistake in how he was to do it, but the day came when he saw a burning bush that wasn't consumed, which represented God saying, "I'm going to light the fire in your heart again, Moses, and this time, you'll not go in your own ability. You'll go in My power, strength and wisdom to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Read Exodus 3:9-14).

Moses messed up, but God gave him another opportunity to fulfill his call. If you've messed up, repent. Then accept God's grace and stand up on the inside! You can still fulfill that which God has called you to do!

**Joshua**

A third person who had his calling delayed was Joshua. Joshua knew he was to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. Joshua and Caleb were in agreement that they could take possession of the land. They said, **"We are well able to possess it"** (Numbers 13:30).

Joshua's heart was right, he had the right plan, but the people around him didn't understand. They sinned against God. *Joshua's call was delayed because of the mistakes of other people.*

The day came when God said to Joshua:

**...Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.**

**Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.**

**From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.**

**No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.**

**Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.**

**Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.**

**Joshua 1:2-7**

You may feel like you're in the desert because of the mistakes of other people. You may be thinking, "I'd be in the ministry right now if it hadn't been for this, that, or the other." I've got good news for you: *you can still start over!*

# 9

## God’s Grace—Key to Starting Over

If there's something the Lord has told you to do, but it has been delayed, *today* is the day to receive God's grace and begin again.

Perhaps there are things God has called you to do that you have either forgotten or deliberately said "no" to. You might be a Jonah. God told you to go to Nineveh, and you're sailing on a Mediterranean cruise, but you're about to hit a storm! Like Jonah, God's got your attention and you're saying, "Lord, I'll pay my vows. I'll obey You."

Demonic spirits are sent to stop people in their calling. You must say "no" to them. Faith in God breaks the power of the devil. The spoken Word drives out demonic power.

What are you to do when you run into the devil's yoke of bondage and oppression, his diversion or roadblocks? Just keep on running. Back up and run at it again with the Word of God coming out of your mouth!

I thank God we can start over. There have been times when I've needed a fresh start. One such occasion was when God called Victory Christian Center to reach out to the poor and needy of our city through an expanded Sunday bus ministry.

There are at least 40 government-subsidized apartment communities in our city, several with a thousand adults and children in them. These people are as valuable to God as anyone else. Because of the circumstances of many of these people, they have no transportation to church.

Due to the cost of purchasing buses, we delayed in obeying this call. Our temporary roadblock was financial, but sometimes the roadblocks are fear and misunderstanding.

Everyone needs the good news of Jesus Christ. A good percentage of the families in the apartment communities are directly affected by drug addiction and alcohol. Many are involved in witchcraft, with demonic spirits affecting their lives and family members. We've encountered many of them with no food, no job, no education and no money.

They need practical help as well as spiritual ministry. If you just give them the practical help without spiritual direction, they'll run in a ditch down the road. If you give them the spiritual without the practical, they'll face such dire needs in

their life, many will become discouraged.

At a special Christmas outreach to the people in the apartments, I asked, "What can we do to help you?" They responded, "Could you send a bus so we can go to church on Sundays?" They didn't ask for food, money or clothes. They wanted to attend church on Sundays. I said, "We'll come."

Sharon and I made a commitment to hold a tent crusade in at least one apartment project each month on a Friday evening and Saturday. We combined evangelism in ministry with a medical clinic and distribution of food and clothes. After the crusade outreach, Bible Fellowship Care Groups are established to train and nurture the people. Buses are sent each week for church services. God has supplied the money for buses.

Thank God for His grace that has given us a fresh start and a new opportunity to reach these people.

Because we started over, hundreds of people have been saved and are now attending church.

# 10

**Today Is Your Day to Start Over!**

If you're in the pig pen, like the prodigal son, or you have failed and you're living in regret over the past, it's time to say "yes" to Jesus Christ. It's time to come to your senses and realize that there's an emptiness on the inside and a lack of fulfillment in your life without Christ.

When many people are confronted with the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ, they say, "I'm not ready." There's not a thing you can do to get ready, except to be willing to accept Him. You can't turn over a new leaf and suddenly get right with God. You can't patch up a lot of things and suddenly get ready. You can't cleanse yourself and then accept Jesus. You can only come to God just as you are!

You may need to admit (like the prodigal son), "I've got to go back to father's house just the way I am. I'm broke, empty and hurting." The Father will receive you. He's waiting with open arms to receive you. He'll heal your hurts and cleanse you from sin. Your turning to God is the power of repentance that God uses to work in your life. Just open your heart and say, "Lord, cleanse me. Renew me. Give me a new start. I need to start over."

If you've grown up knowing about the Lord, but you've never entered a personal relationship with Him, it's your day to start over. If it has been a game for you to go to church, and say the right things to your family, but in your heart, you really don't know Jesus, you can answer the high calling of God today by coming into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Or if you're 80 years old and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it's not too late as long as you have breath! Today is your day to respond to Jesus. It's your day to start over.

If you're lukewarm, it's time to start over. The Spirit of God said through John:

**I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.**

**So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.**

**Because you say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind,**

**and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.**

**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.**

**Behold, I stand at the door and knock.**

**If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**

**Revelation 3:15-20**

It's time to wake up, to shake off the lukewarmness and the lethargy and become hot for God! Regardless of what your past has been, today is your day to start over!

## ***Personal Prayer of Commitment***

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus. I believe that You raised Him from the dead and that He now sits at Your right hand, daily interceding for Your children.

I want to become one of Your children today, Lord, so I repent of sin and renounce every work of the devil. I receive Jesus' forgiveness and accept Him as my Lord and Savior, which is the first step toward starting over.

Thank You for Your grace and mercy, Lord, which daily extends to me Your ability to begin again.

Holy Spirit, fill my life and flow through me in worship and praise. Let praise to Jesus Christ continually be upon my lips.

Thank You, Father, for saving me. Today, I am a new creation in Christ Jesus. The past is gone, You have no record of it and everything has become new!

(Signature) _____

(Date) _____

## About the Author

Billy Joe Daugherty is the pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Present ministry outreaches include a daily radio and television ministry; monthly crusades in government-subsidized housing projects in the Tulsa area; and crusades held in another nations.

Billy Joe has authored several books, including *Faith Power, Absolute Victory, This New Life*, *You Can Be Healed*, *The Demonstration of the Gospel, Be On Fire For The Lord, What Is the Fear of the Lord, You Will Increase, Diligence Produces Results, You Are Valuable, Overcoming the Storms of Life, You Can Start Over* and *How to Know God's Will* Victory Christian Center, established in 1981, operates Victory Christian School, Victory Bible Institute, Tulsa and St. Petersburg, Russia and the World Missions Training Center.

Billy Joe and his wife, Sharon, we.^ married in 1973 and have four children: Sarah, Ruth, John and Paul.