

2024 SPRING CONNECT GROUPS
'GET REAL' WEEK 1: REAL PEOPLE HAVE A PAST
Week of April 7-13th

Introduction: The big idea: "Real people have a past, but your past doesn't define you."

Summary: The Bible is filled with real people that have a real past, but their past did not stop them from being used by God. It's the same with you and I. The fact that you have a past does not disqualify you from anything that God has for you. However, many people just can't get past their past. In this message we looked at three main points: 1. **Your Past Does Not Disqualify You**, 2. **Your Past Does Not Define You (It is Dead and Buried with Jesus)**, and 3. **Your Past Does Not Determine Your Future**.

In this message we looked at principles such as:

- You are not your past, but you are who God says you are
- God loves us knowing everything we would ever do before we did it
- God calls us in spite of our past, and chooses us knowing our past
- We should say about our past what God says about it: that old things are passed away
- Because our past is gone we can let old wounds heal and let go of regrets
- Your past may have brought you to where you are today, but it doesn't determine where you go tomorrow
- We can use our past as fuel for our lives, by learning from the past and living for the future

Scriptures to Explore:

1. **Isaiah 43:18-19, Philippians 3:13-14**
2. **1 Corinthians 15:9-10**
3. **Ephesians 4:22-24**

Discussion Questions:

1. At the beginning of the week's message, we talked about the Apostle Paul going from a persecutor of the church to an apostle of the church, do you remember Ananias' reaction (Acts 9:13) and what do you think people in the church thought about Paul's conversion when they heard?
2. Why do you feel we have such a hard time 'getting past our past'? How does the words in Isaiah 43 and Philippians 3 about 'forgetting the past' provide hope and encouragement in moving forward?
3. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul felt he did not deserve to be called an apostle because of his past. You may have felt that your past has disqualified you. What does the phrase 'by the grace of God I am what I am' mean to you?
4. From Ephesians 4, reflect on a specific aspect of your "old self" that you feel God is calling you to put off. How can you actively pursue the renewal of your mind and embrace the "new self" in Christ?
5. In what ways have you allowed your past to influence your identity? How can the truth of not being defined by your past make a difference in your daily life and decisions?

Personal Application: Identify an area of your past that needs healing and pray this week for God to begin to help you make peace with your past and show you how to move forward.

Prayer