

The Saddest Two Words

A well-known psychiatrist points out that the majority of people who come to him for help have one thing in common. Their use of a two-word phrase that he has heard hundreds of times. He calls them the two saddest words in any language- "IF ONLY!"

The man who failed in business; the woman who never finished high school; the parents of a juvenile delinquent and hundreds more crying, if only! If only I had acted differently. If only I had not lost my temper or said that cruel word or told that foolish lie. If only I had made wise choices in life.

The trouble with saying "if only" – nothing is changed or solved. It keeps you facing in the wrong direction, backward instead of forward. It acts as a road- block against any real progress. In order to enjoy our present opportunities, we must avoid that common human weakness of looking backward with vain regrets.

But to give proper balance, I might add that it is perfectly right to reflect upon fond memories from the past. "Precious memories, how they linger. How they ever flood the soul." It's okay occasionally to think about the good old days, but let's be honest; the so-called good old days were not all good.

But, if we're not careful the past can be the devil's territory, reminding us of foolish failures and painful memories. Most, if not all of us, have hurts from the past that need to be healed? And they can through God's healing grace. But I must add, only under one condition. The wound needs to be kept clean from bitterness, resentment and other negative emotions.

I like the way Richard Halverson put it, "You are going to meet an older person someday, down the road ahead; some 20, 30, 40 years from now. He or she will be waiting there for you. And the kind of person you meet will depend entirely on yourself. Because that older person will be YOU – that's right! He or she will be the sum total of everything you think, say or do each day. They will be exactly what you make them, nothing more, nothing less. It's up to you, every day you are becoming more and more like yourself.

Remember, these things don't show up immediately, but they are adding up inside. So examine your motives, attitudes, goals. So, check up on yourself when pliable, before the hardness sets in. Better take personal inventory, we all need it in the light of God's

word. Then, you'll be far more likely to meet a splendid older person, at the proper time, down the road ahead."

God can heal our broken hearts if we are willing to give him all the pieces. And if you forget everything else, remember this – *The past cannot be changed, but the past can be forgiven, and the future can be different by the grace of God.*