

# **REPEATED MISTAKES:**

## ***GOING BACK TO EGYPT***

### **INTRODUCTION**

It has been said, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana). In other words, if we do not learn from our past we will repeat our past. The truth be told, we all have moments in our pasts we are not proud of (things we have done and things that have been done to us). These are some of the very things we would never want to have to relive. The famed actor Bruce Willis once said, “You can’t undo the past, but you can certainly not repeat it.”

Do you ever find yourself longing to go back and repeat something, even though that experience caused an excruciating amount of pain in the past? For most of us the answer would be certainly not. Why would we want to go back and repeat something that caused us heartache and pain? This just seems like a no brainer, doesn’t it?

Several weeks ago, I was talking to a young man who had created a lot of problems in his life. He had made several bad decisions and was waiting to see what consequences lied ahead. As we talked, I told him he needed to make some changes in his life no matter the consequences that were awaiting him. I will never forget what he said next. He said, “I will try, but I can’t make any promises.”

Why would this young man not be willing to make any changes after all the problems he had brought on himself? Perhaps, it was because he thought the mistakes he had made offered him something better than the life of following Jesus. What a tragic thought.

### **BUT... EGYPT IS BETTER**

Can you imagine someone wanting to go back and relive something painful? The children of Israel were notorious for complaining about their circumstances. Even though God had miraculously freed them from 430 years of Egyptian bondage (slavery), they still voiced their

longing to go back to Egypt any time things became difficult. When they found themselves planted between the Red Sea and the army of Pharaoh, they said, *“Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness’”* (Exo. 14:11-12).

Although they were slaves who were suffering harsh workloads (Exo. 5:1-14), the Israelites still longed to be back in Egypt instead of fleeing the Egyptian army. Why do you think they felt this way?

In another instance, after the 12 spies returned from their scouting trip and 10 of them gave a bad report concerning the land God had promised, the people cried out, *“Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt? Let us select a leader and return to Egypt”* (Num. 14:3-4).

Time and time again we see God’s chosen people longing to return to a time of slavery in Egypt. Again, why would they desire to go back and repeat something that brought them nothing but misery?

## **REPEATING PAIN**

We sometimes look at the children of Israel and think, “How could they be like that? Do they not remember how bad Egypt was?” Moses recorded, *“So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves”* (Exo. 1:13-14).

Although we might not realize it, you and I are not much different. We have all had this same desire to go back and repeat something that was not good for us. Consider just a few examples of how we go back and allow ourselves to repeat something that has brought about much pain.

- 1) How many times have we continued to hang around certain people even though we know associating with them has a detrimental effect on our relationship with God? Paul

said, “*Bad company ruins good morals*” (I Cor. 15:33). The wise man said, “*A companion of fools will suffer harm*” (Prov. 13:20). Why do we allow ourselves to go back to these “so called friends” who only bring us down? Friends who are constantly bringing us down and helping us destroy our relationship with God aren’t friends we need to continue to go back to hanging around.

- 2) How many times have we engaged in destructive or ungodly behavior even though we have seen how it harms our families and friends? Why does the recovering alcoholic continued to drink? Why does the drug user continue to use? Why does the teenager continue to live a life of sin? We are called to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions (Tit. 2:11-15). When we become Christians by putting on Christ (Gal. 3:26-28), we are to put to death whatever is earthly in us (Col. 3:1-10). Why do you think Paul says to put it to death? If we don’t put it to death, we may find ourselves repeating the same mistakes.
- 3) How many times have we continued to use our words as weapons of great destruction even though we continually see the detrimental effects they have on others? The wise man said, “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue*” (Prov. 18:21). The words we speak can either bring life to people (which is good) or they can bring death to people (which is bad). Elsewhere, Paul tells us to use our words to build one another up (Eph. 4:29). Too many times, we have seen the pain and heartache caused by our words and yet, we are still guilty of going back down that same road of using our words to destroy others.

## CONCLUSION

What is your Egypt? What is the thing you continually desire to return to even though it has brought you nothing but heartache and pain?

Sometimes we are no different than the children of Israel. Like them, we desire to go back down to our Egypt because we think it is better than going God’s way. Despite all the hurt and pain Egypt might have caused, we find ourselves longing to return and all too often, actually returning only to repeat the same mistakes again.

My prayer is that God will bless us with the wisdom to know our Egypt, no matter what it may be, has nothing on the life God has promised those who faithfully follow Him.