

I heard Shirley speak on this at a Mother's Day service and I thought it was fantastic. It is a real encouragement to Mothers. I pray that God will speak to you through these words. It is well worth the time it takes to read this. Please email me with any comments or questions at [Evangeline@womenwhoworship.com](mailto:Evangeline@womenwhoworship.com)

Evangeline Inman

## **FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND**

Written by Shirley Lewis

### **Philippians 3:13, 14**

**“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.”**

**It is a wonderful honor to be a Mother!! However, I will confess to you that I have some regrets when I think back to the years I spent raising my children. If I could live my life over, there are some things I would do differently.**

**One incident in particular comes to my mind. My daughter was a member of our church quizzing team. Her team came in 1<sup>st</sup> place in the District Tournament and won a trip to St. Louis to compete in the National Tournament. It all happened so fast, and with only a few weeks left, we had to raise money and plan a trip to take these quizzers to St. Louis. My daughter was very young and I knew one thing for sure; there was no way she was going on that trip without her mother. I was overwhelmed with it all. It was just too much to think about or plan. After much discussion with the parents of the other quizzer, we decided we would not make the trip. We called the District Quiz Coach and told him we would not be going. So the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team went in our place. My**

**daughter had worked hard, studied long hours and won this trip, but because it was too much for me to work through, I was the one who cancelled. I was wrong!**

**As Moms, there are times we feel guilty - sometimes with good reason - but often only because we haven't lived up to our expectation to be the perfect mother. "Perfect" means...complete in all respects, flawless, faultless.**

**I have news for you... there are no mothers who are flawless. All of us Moms fail in some area, sometime. If you are a young mother today, you know you have already made a few mistakes in raising your children. It just goes with the territory.**

**To me a perfect mother is one who, when she is faced with a situation, considers all the possibilities and then does what she feels is best ... at the time.**

**So, let's face it ... we all make mistakes! We may not spend enough time playing with our child. We may not be there when our child needs us. We may be too easy on them, or we may be too tough a disciplinarian.**

**A working Mom is often racked by guilt because she's not there for her child when he returns from school to ask how his day was, or to go over his homework with him and eat dinner with him. We regret the times when we were tired, which caused us to be impatient with our children. We were pushed beyond our limits. We regret the days we had given our best to other people or our job, our resources were depleted and we had nothing left to give our children.**

**We regret some things we said... and we regret some things we did not say.**

**We regret some things we did... and we regret some things we did not do.**

**We regret that we set too many limits and were too hard on our children. .. and we regret that we did not set enough limits and were not hard enough on our children.**

**We regret we didn't send our child to private school... or maybe we regret that we did.**

**We regret we didn't encourage our children to do better... or maybe we regret that we've pushed them too hard.**

**We regret we didn't work harder in providing for them...and we regret that we worked too hard and did not spend more time just having fun with them.**

**The list of potential regrets is endless.**

**If Only... We can spend our time looking back over the past and be consumed with guilt. "OH, if only I had done this; If only I had not done that."**

**"If only I had provided better for my child, been able to buy him designer clothes like his friends wore."**

**"If only I could have afforded to get orthodontic work on his teeth; if only I could have given him a better education."**

**"If only, If only, If only..."**

**God understands that we did our very best with what we had... In Isaiah 49:16 we read that God said, "[Your walls are continually before me." We have walls before us.**

**We have financial walls. There are some things we just cannot afford to do for our children. I felt that taking my daughter's Quiz Team to St. Louis was beyond what I could do. I was facing a wall.**

**We have physical walls, when we are restricted from doing what we would like to do because of sickness. The earliest recollection I have of my Dad was seeing him lying in bed for many days because of a back injury. There were many things my parents could not buy me or do for me at that time because my Dad was not able to work.**

**If we allow our minds to think and dwell on the past mistakes long enough, we can open a door and allow guilt and regret to take over our minds. Guilt & regret will bind us with chains. It will place us in a prison. It will be our master; we will be its servant. It will control our life. It will steal our peace, our happiness, our joy.**

**There is a difference between guilt and grief. It is only right and natural to grieve, to let the tears flow. There is a healing that comes to the heart through grieving. Grieving will help remove the terrible hurt we feel. We must walk through the dark valley of grieving, for only then can we come through to the sunshine again.**

**We all have good memories and bad memories in our past. One way to help guilt fade is to not dwell on painful memories. The more we replay a bad memory in our mind, or talk about it, the harder it is to let go of it and the painful emotions which accompany it. It's not easy to let go of painful memories. When we are finally able to let go of all the guilt, peace fills the space previously occupied by these negative emotions.**

**How do we “let go” of painful memories of the past?**

- 1. Ask God to forgive us for our mistake.**
- 2. Forgive ourselves.**

**We need to be willing to forgive ourselves, after we've asked God's forgiveness. Forgiving ourselves is often far more difficult than forgiving someone else. We tend to be harder on ourselves and expect more from ourselves than we expect from others.**

**We need to realize that just as we are expected to forgive someone else, so, we are expected to forgive ourselves. We are not to have anything against a brother or sister, another child of God. So, why would we continue to punish or hold unforgiveness against the child of God whom we are, when if it were someone else, we'd forgive them?**

**Continuing to carry guilt says one thing; we have failed to forgive ourselves. This means we keep punishing ourselves for what**

**happened. If I am full of the love of Christ, I will not continually keep punishing someone for what happened in the past. I will forgive them and let it go. If I have sought God's forgiveness and received it, then I need to forgive myself. How can I withhold forgiveness to myself, when He has already granted it?**

**3. Then we must forgive others.**

**Sometimes we blame others for the guilt and regret we have. "If only my child had the influence of a Christian Dad, things would have been different." "If only the pastor or youth leader had shown more concern, things would have been different." We must forgive not only ourselves, but others.**

**Forgiving ourselves and others... releases guilt and allows love to flow more easily. Most of all, forgiveness makes us happier people—and happier people aren't focused on the past. When we do forgive, it is so easy to forget.**

**4. Accept that things are the way they are.**

**Our minds return again and again to what "might" have been, "could" have been, or "should" have been. We replay the images in our minds over and over. We must get rid of these images! We must LET GO!**

**5. Believe that you did the best you knew how at the time, in every situation in raising your child, even though today maybe you would make very different decisions.**

**6. Embrace your freedom!**

**God wants you to be free from the guilt of the past. He does not want you to live in a prison. He came to set you free!**

**7. Focus on the great things ahead!**

**It is not enough to forget the things of the past. We must focus on those things ahead. There is so much ahead that we cannot waste time on past failures. The best is yet ahead for the child of God. "The path of the just shines more and more unto a perfect day."**

**Yesterday may not have been perfect. Today may not be perfect.  
However, there is a perfect day just ahead!!**

**Make your decision today to “forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before....and press toward the mark for the prize...”**