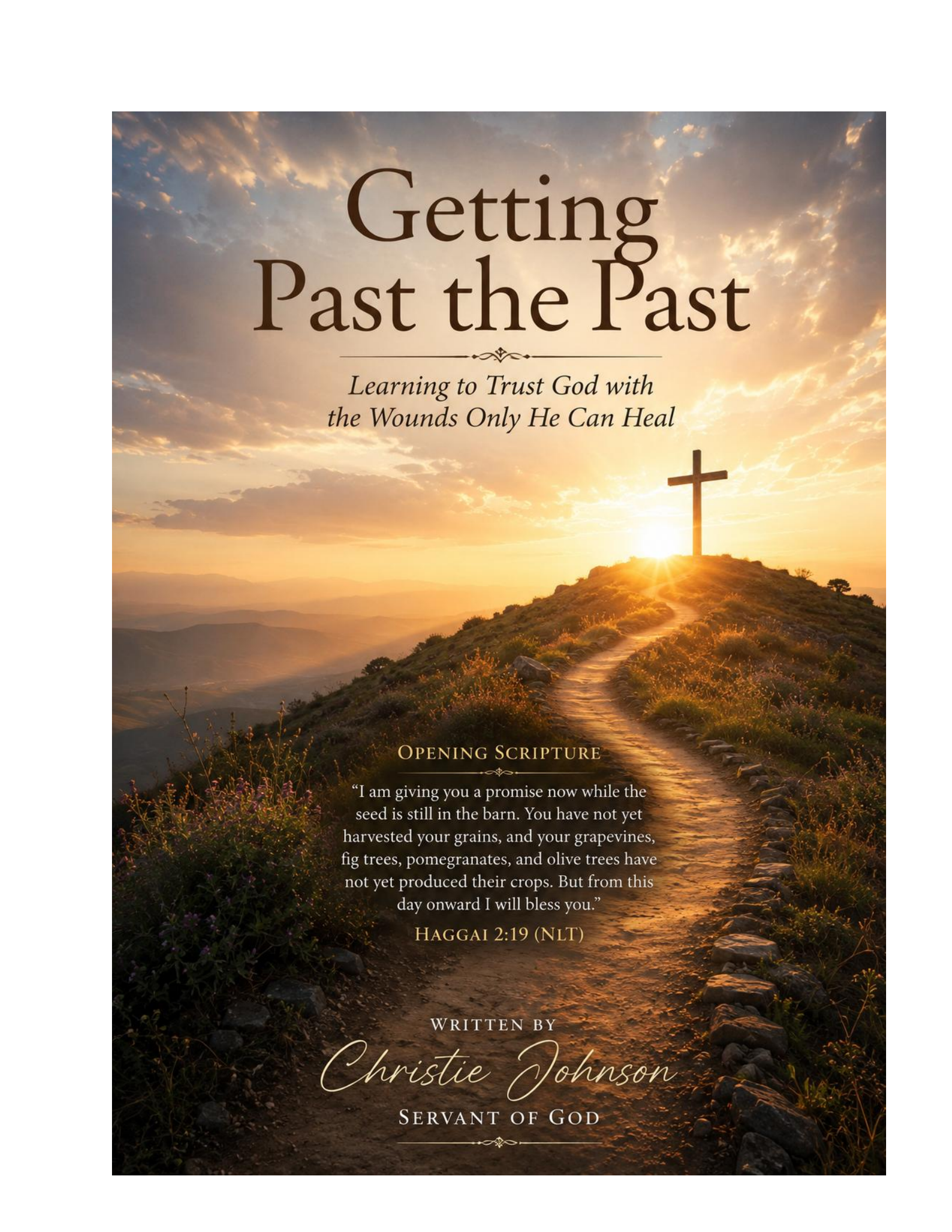


A dirt path leads up a grassy hill towards a large wooden cross silhouetted against a bright sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow across the sky and the path. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The path is bordered by a low stone wall on the right and wildflowers on the left. The overall scene is peaceful and evocative of a journey or pilgrimage.

Getting Past the Past

*Learning to Trust God with
the Wounds Only He Can Heal*

OPENING SCRIPTURE

“I am giving you a promise now while the seed is still in the barn. You have not yet harvested your grains, and your grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced their crops. But from this day onward I will bless you.”

HAGGAI 2:19 (NLT)

WRITTEN BY

Christie Johnson

SERVANT OF GOD

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This resource was written and created by Christie Johnson for Servant of God – Christie Johnson Ministries.

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation (NLT).

Unless otherwise indicated, emphasis within Scripture quotations has been added by the author for teaching purposes.

Ministry Disclaimer

This resource is intended to provide biblical encouragement, spiritual guidance, discipleship, and leadership development rooted in the truth of God's Word.

It is not intended to replace the care of a local church, pastoral counsel, professional counseling, legal advice, medical treatment, or mental health services. If you are facing circumstances that require professional assistance, please seek help from qualified professionals while continuing to trust the Lord for His wisdom, comfort, healing, and strength.

A Personal Note

Thank you for taking the time to study God's Word through this resource.

My prayer is that every page points you to Jesus Christ rather than to me. Any wisdom found in these pages comes from God's Word and from His faithful work in my own life. My desire is simply to faithfully teach His Word, encourage your walk with Him, and help you continue growing into the disciple He has created you to be.

Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, I pray this study strengthens your faith, deepens your understanding of God's truth, and encourages you to live as a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

“Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ.”

Contact

If this resource has encouraged you and you would like additional Bible studies, discipleship resources, leadership materials, or prayer, I would be honored to hear from you.

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Introduction

Every person has a past. Some memories bring joy and gratitude, while others remind us of painful experiences we would rather forget. Rejection, betrayal, abuse, disappointment, loss, and broken relationships can leave wounds that continue to affect our thoughts, emotions, and relationships long after the events have passed.

Even after we have received God's forgiveness and chosen to forgive others, we may still struggle with the lingering pain of what happened.

This reflection was written after God used a sermon based on Haggai 2:19 to speak directly to a struggle I had carried for many years. At the time, I was also completing my Doctor of Christian Leadership studies at Liberty University, where God was deepening my understanding of spiritual formation, healing, and the lifelong work of becoming more like Jesus Christ. Through His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, He began showing me that forgiveness is only one part of the healing journey.

True healing comes as we continually trust Him with the wounds, we cannot heal ourselves.

Many believers quietly ask, "Why does the pain remain? Why do certain memories still affect me? If I have forgiven, why am I still hurting?" These questions do not always reveal a lack of faith. Often, they reveal that God is continuing His healing work within us. Healing does not always happen immediately. Sometimes it is a journey where God patiently renews our minds, strengthens our faith, and teaches us to trust Him one surrendered day at a time.

As I listened to that sermon, I realized God was not asking me to pretend my wounds no longer existed. Instead, He was inviting me to trust Him with the places in my heart that still needed His healing touch. My greatest hope is not found in leaving my past behind, but in walking each day with the God who is faithfully redeeming it.

My prayer is that this paper encourages anyone who has forgiven but still carries the pain of the past. If you have ever wondered whether complete healing is possible, may these pages remind you that God has not forgotten you. Lasting healing is not found in forgetting the past, but in learning to trust God with the wounds only He can heal.



When Forgiveness and Healing Do Not Happen at the Same Time

For many years, I believed that if I could simply forgive those who had hurt me, the pain would eventually disappear. I thought healing would come quickly once I surrendered my wounds to God. I believed that after enough prayers, enough time in His Word, and enough faith, the memories would lose their power, and life would finally feel different. That, however, was not my experience. Although I had forgiven many of the people who wounded me, I discovered that forgiveness and healing are not always experienced at the same time. The bitterness was gone, yet the scars remained. Painful memories still surfaced unexpectedly.

Old fears continued to influence my thoughts, insecurities occasionally resurfaced, and the effects of rejection, criticism, abandonment, and abuse still shaped how I viewed myself, others, and, at times, even God.

One Sunday, while listening to a sermon entitled *Getting Past the Past*, based on *Haggai 2:19*, God gently exposed areas of my heart I thought had already healed. I realized those wounds no longer controlled my life as they once had, but they still influenced how I responded to certain situations and relationships.

As I listened, one question rose within my heart: “Lord, how do I truly move past the pain that has shaped so much of who I am?”

You have asked a similar question. You have forgiven, prayed for healing, and desire to follow Christ, yet memories, fears, or insecurities from the past still surface. If so, you are not alone.

That day, God lovingly reminded me of something I am still learning today. Healing is not about pretending the pain never existed. Healing is about learning to trust Him with the parts of our story that still hurt.

Looking back now, I can see that God was not disappointed with me because my healing was incomplete. Instead, He was inviting me into a deeper relationship with Him. He wanted me to stop measuring healing by the absence of pain and begin measuring it by the growing trust I was placing in His faithful hands. That realization became another significant step in my journey with Christ and continues to shape the way I walk with Him today.



What God's Word Teaches

As I continued seeking the Lord, I realized that the answers I longed for were not found in my feelings but in God's Word. Scripture reminded me that God never asks His children to carry their burdens alone.

Throughout the Bible, He invites us to bring our brokenness, fears, disappointments, and deepest wounds into His presence.

One of the first truths God impressed upon my heart was that He is near to those who are hurting. *Psalm 34:18 declares that "the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* Those words became more than a comforting promise; they reminded me that God had never abandoned me.

God also began teaching me that healing is often a process rather than an event. While He has the power to heal instantly, He often works patiently within us, renewing our minds, strengthening our faith, and transforming our hearts over time. As we surrender our pain to Him, He replaces fear with peace, lies with truth, and despair with hope. His goal is not only to remove our pain but to make us more like Jesus Christ.

One passage that became especially meaningful to me was Romans 8:28. God promises that He works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. This verse does not mean everything we experience is good. Abuse, rejection, betrayal, and loss are never presented in Scripture as good. Rather, it reminds us that our sovereign God can redeem even the most painful parts of our lives for His glory and our spiritual growth.

One of the greatest lessons Scripture teaches is that God wastes nothing. Throughout the Bible, we see Him redeem broken stories. Joseph's betrayal became the means of saving many lives. Naomi's grief became part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. Peter's failure became a testimony of God's restoring grace. Again, God demonstrates that no wound, failure, or season of suffering is beyond His redeeming power.

The message of Scripture is clear: our past does not define our identity. Our identity is found in Jesus Christ. Because of Him, we are forgiven, loved, redeemed, and continually being transformed into His likeness.

True healing is not found in forgetting what happened but in trusting the God who is faithfully redeeming every chapter of our story.



Living This Truth

Learning to trust God with my past has been one of the greatest acts of faith in my Christian walk. It has not meant that every painful memory has disappeared or that every wound has been instantly healed. Instead, it has meant learning, day by day, to place those hurts into God's hands and trust Him to continue the work He has begun within me.

There are still moments when memories surface unexpectedly or old fears try to influence the way I think. There are still seasons when disappointment, grief, or rejection remind me of places that once brought deep pain. Yet those moments no longer have the same power they once had because I have learned that I do not have to face them alone. Instead of allowing my past to control my present, I bring those thoughts to the Lord and allow His truth to guide my heart.

One of the greatest changes God has made in my life is teaching me to see my story through the lens of His grace rather than through the lens of my pain. Instead of asking, "Why did this happen to me?" I have learned to ask, "Lord, what are You teaching me through this?" That change in perspective has not erased the hurt, but it has given my suffering purpose and reminded me that God is always at work, even when I cannot yet see the outcome.

I have also learned that healing is measured less by the absence of pain and more by the presence of God's transforming work within us. As I continue walking with Christ, He is replacing fear with trust, bitterness with forgiveness, discouragement with hope, and self-reliance with a deeper dependence upon Him. Every step of obedience, every prayer offered in faith, and every promise of Scripture hidden in my heart reminds me that God is faithfully making me more like Jesus Christ.

You find yourself on that same journey today. There are wounds that still hurt or memories that continue to surface. If so, do not become discouraged. Healing is not a sign that you have forgotten your past; it is evidence that you are learning to trust God with it. He is patient with your journey, faithful in every season, and committed to completing the work He has begun in your life. Bring your pain, questions, disappointments, and fears to Jesus. He is not finished with your healing. One surrendered day at a time, He is drawing you closer to Himself and transforming you into the person He created you to be.



How This Truth Shaped My Ministry Calling

As I look back over my life, I can now see that God was doing far more than healing my own heart. He was preparing me to walk alongside others who carry wounds that seem too deep to heal. The very experiences I once wished had never happened have become some of the greatest tools God now uses to help me understand the pain of others and point them toward the hope found in Jesus Christ.

Throughout my Doctor of Christian Leadership studies, God continued confirming what He had already begun teaching me through His Word and through my own healing journey. He showed me that spiritual formation is not simply about gaining biblical knowledge or becoming more disciplined in my faith.

It is about allowing Him to transform every part of our lives—even the painful parts—so that we become more like Jesus Christ and reflect His love to a hurting world.

Today, I understand more clearly than ever that God has called me to minister to broken, hurting, and spiritually weary people. My desire is to walk beside those who feel trapped by rejection, abuse, grief, disappointment, shame, or the wounds of their past and remind them that healing is possible because of Jesus Christ. Through biblical teaching, discipleship, and the testimony of God's faithfulness, I want others to discover that their identity is not found in what has happened to them but in the One who loves them, redeems them, and calls them His own.

This truth has also shaped the way I view ministry itself. I no longer see my past as something to hide or simply overcome. Instead, I see it as part of the testimony God is using to display His grace.

My story is valuable only because it points to His story—His mercy, His faithfulness, His healing, and His redeeming love.

If my experiences encourage even one person to trust Christ more deeply or believe that God can restore what seems beyond repair, then every step of the journey has been worth it.

My prayer is that this ministry will always be a place where people encounter the love of Jesus Christ. I want every Bible study, every paper, every conversation, and every opportunity God gives me to reflect His heart for those who are hurting. The same God who has patiently healed and restored my life is still healing and restoring others today, and it is my privilege to point people to Him. After all, true healing is never about us—it is always about the transforming grace of God at work within us.



Closing Scripture

"And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we do not know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory."

Romans 8:26–30



A Thank You to God

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your unfailing love, endless patience, and faithfulness throughout every season of my life. Thank You for never abandoning me when I struggled to understand why healing sometimes takes longer than I expected. Instead of leaving me in my pain, You have patiently walked beside me, teaching me to trust You more deeply with every wound and every unanswered question.

Thank You for redeeming the broken places of my life and using them to reveal Your grace, strengthen my faith, and deepen my dependence upon You. Thank You for reminding me that my identity is not found in my past but in Jesus Christ. Every step of healing has been a testimony of Your mercy and Your love.

Lord may every word written in this paper bring glory to Your name. May my testimony never become the focus, but may it always point others to the hope, healing, and redemption that are found in Jesus Christ alone. Continue using my life to encourage those who are hurting and to remind them that no wound is beyond Your ability to heal and no story is beyond Your power to redeem. I give You all the praise, all the honor, and all the glory.

In the precious name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

A Prayer for the Reader

Gracious Heavenly Father,

I lift every person who has read these pages. You know the wounds they carry, the memories they cannot forget, and the burdens they have carried for far too long. Thank You that nothing about their lives is hidden from You. You know every hurt, every disappointment, every fear, and every unanswered question.

Lord, I pray that You would draw them close to Your heart and remind them that they never walk through life's struggles alone. Help them trust You with the parts of their story that still hurt. Give them the courage to surrender every burden into Your hands and the faith to believe that You are faithfully working, even when they cannot yet see the outcome.

Replace fear with peace, shame with the assurance of Your forgiveness, and discouragement with the hope that is found in Jesus Christ. Continue healing their hearts, renewing their minds, and transforming their lives through the power of Your Holy Spirit. May they come to know that their past does not define them — Your love does. Their wounds do not determine their future — Your grace does.

As they continue walking with You, strengthen their faith, deepen their trust, and fill them with the confidence that You are still authoring their story for Your glory. May they leave these pages knowing that You are the God who heals, restores, and makes all things new.

In the powerful and loving name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Amen.

Prayerfully prepared by

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"Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ."

