

MOVING PAST WHAT YOU CAN'T GET OVER

J.J. Turner, Ph.D.

“Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue” (Job 14:1, 2). The longer I live, and with each passing day, I know from experience the words of Job are true—DAYS ARE FULL OF TROUBLE. I venture to say you know this too. [] Yes [] No.

We even have a popular hymn that reminds us of what Job uttered thousands of years ago:

JESUS IS COMING SOON

(By R.E. Winsett)

Troublesome times are here, filling men's heart with fear,

Freedom we all hold dear now is at stake...

Humbling your heart to God from the chastening rod.

Seek the way pilgrims trod, Christians awake.

Jesus is coming soon, morning or night or noon

Many will meet their doom ...

While this is a song that tells us to hang in there because sooner, or later, Christ is going to return and render judgment on the lost. Therefore, we need to be ready at all times. I believe this. However, my challenge is today. How do I deal with the *“Troublesome times”* and *“Days filled with trouble”*? How do I rebound from life's setbacks?

Life has a way of tumbling in on US at unexpected times. **It may be:**

- The unexpected loss of a job; even one you've had for years. Maybe a reduction of pay.
- The sudden loss of health: diabetic, blood pressure, cancer, vision, hearing, etc.
- The loss of a loved one: spouse, parent, child, sibling, or close friend. Shock waves!
- The loss of finances: Stock Market, scammed, robbed, etc.
- An attack on your character or integrity. Betrayed by a close friend.
- Problems with children, family issues, marriage breakup, etc.
- The doubts about our relationship with God because of a mistake or sin.
- A change in circumstances you have no control over. Divorce, drugs, alcohol, etc.
- Even the dumb things we are personally responsible for doing

The Empty Words: “GET OVER IT”

A mother was questioning her daughter about the girl’s wrong behavior and how she was very displeased with it. The daughter replied in a loud voice, *“Well Mother, I guess you’ll just have to get over it.”* The expression *“get over it”* has become the ultimate tool used by people today to make light of a person’s response to something that is hurtful, upsetting, or resentful. It is demonstrating a lack of respect for the feelings of another person. It is an escape hatch to avoid being blamed for something wrong or hurtful. It is unloving and uncaring toward a person.

As we look closer at the three words: **Get over it**, what do they really mean or imply? For example you can come to a bridge and “get over it.” You can come to a river and “get over it.” You can have a bad cold and “get over it.” However, when a loved one dies how do you “get over it”? Do you get over it by having a blank memory of the deceased? Do you get over it by never feeling the pain of the loss? Do you get over because someone tells you to get over it?

The apostle Paul is a perfect Bible example of what moving past what you’ll never get over. He was a terrorist against the church in the first century (cf. Acts 7:54-8:3). He persecuted, beat, placed in prison, and killed Christians (cf. Acts 26:9-19). After his conversion to Christ, he never got over the pains from his past behavior. However, with God’s help and power, he moved past it: *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, FORGETTING those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize...” (Philippians 3:13, 14).* Paul is not stating he has a blank memory about his past, his writings prove otherwise. He is stating that he doesn’t dwell on them by letting his past cause him depression, etc. He moves past them knowing they are covered by grace and the blood of Christ. In psychology we call this REFRAMING. The past cannot be changed!

Attempts at Comforting

Have you ever noticed how some persons, even Christians, are quick to give you words of encouragement when life tumbles in? In those times when you are exiled from the joy, happiness, and peace promised by God, well-meaning friends, and even non-friends, try to comfort you. Here are some of the more popular expressions we hear and use:

- ✓ “Everything is going to be okay, just trust God.”
- ✓ “You need to snap out of it.”

- ✓ “Pick yourself up and dust yourself off and get back in the race.”
- ✓ “He/she is in heaven.”
- ✓ “Keep a stiff upper lip.”
- ✓ “Whistle a happy tune.” “Don’t worry be happy.”
- ✓ “Things aren’t as bad as they seem.”
- ✓ “Time heals everything.”
- ✓ “You need to get over it.”
- ✓ And quoting Scriptures: *“Let not your heart be troubled” (cf. John 14:1).*

I am not trying to cast an accusation about anyone, which includes myself, for using these expressions in genuine effort to help the hurting. However, it must be noted that even good intentions can turn out to be negative. Most of us don’t know how to help the hurting.

Good intentions may not be enough. This was the case with Job’s friends. *“Then Job answered and said, “I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all! Shall words of wind have an end? Or what provokes you that answers? I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul’s place. I could heap words against you, and shake my head at you; BUT I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the comfort on my lips would RELIEVE your grief” (Job 16:1-5).* Job had lost everything, from his wealth, family, and health, to being accused of being a hypocrite. His friends used theology to correct him, but they were wrong.

I am thankful for all those brethren, and others, who try to encourage persons who are in emotional exile. The Scripture admonishes us to *“bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:1, 2).* I am grateful for persons who have learned to move beyond what they will never get over. These are the persons who experienced emotional and physical earthquakes in only a few minutes—but the aftershock pains continue to go on and on. Each one is discovering the strength to move beyond what they will never get over. This doesn’t mean they have a blank memory; they simply reframe the pain, etc. They are dependent on God and His word for strength and comfort.

Living in Exile

When life tumbles in on us we are driven into a state of emotional, and sometimes physical, exile. We are exiled from the joy, peace, happiness, energy, company and desire to get up and

get on with life. Many times we beat ourselves up for whatever reasons we can think up. I want us to take a look at what Jeremiah told Israel when they were exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon (cf. Jeremiah 29:1-3). The prophet told them numerous positive things to do, as they would never get over how they had been brought into captivity, but they could get past it by taking positive steps to create a new place of joy in a foreign land. In reading Jeremiah 29:4-10 there are several positive steps they can take to get past what they can't get over. They need to get busy:

- ✓ *They need to build houses and dwell in them. This can be exciting work that takes one's mind of the past.*
- ✓ *They need to plant gardens. Few things calm the spirit more than a beautiful garden.*
- ✓ *They need to eat the fruit from their gardens. Eating together is an amazing way to get past what you can't get over.*
- ✓ *They need to get married and have families. Few events in life lift the spirits more than a wedding and the birth of children.*
- ✓ *The need to take a proactive approach in making peace with the officials and citizens where they are captives.*
- ✓ *They need to reject all false prophets and their teaching that are enemies of God and their relationship with Him.*
- ✓ *They are promised a bright future; after 70 years they will return to Jerusalem and return to worshipping and serving God. God's promises can be truest!*

From these seven actions and promises Jeremiah shared with Israel, we learn that we are not helpless or without hope. Even while in exile we can do things, both physical and spiritual, to move past what we may never get over. A reading of Psalm 139 reminds us that God is always with us. Jesus promised to be with us always (Matthew 28:18-20).

Don't wait for things to change before you start moving. It is a waste of time. *"This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be happy in it" (Psalm 118:24).*

My book *Trusting the God Who Won't Let Go* ([amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)) is a great source of comfort and help in times of exile.