



## GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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### WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

*Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Hebrews 12:12-13*

William Wordsworth, the English poet, wrote, "The child is the father of the man," meaning the events of childhood shape your destiny and future as an adult. Another way of putting it is the rather old saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

Looking back over your life, would you tend to admit Wordsworth was right? It's a fact: we are the product of our genes and chromosomes, our heredity, and our environment. But the question is: "Must your future be determined by your past?"

Many people believe that is the way it is. "I can't help the way I am," they say, "It's what I grew up with." They use the past to disclaim any personal responsibility for their lives, and at times they strive to justify or explain the difficulty of the present by searching the past for something to hang responsibility on.

I'm thinking of the woman who was told by a counselor that undoubtedly she was abused as a child which, felt the counselor, was the only explanation for the problems which confronted her in her marriage. Looking back she said, "I never remember being abused as a child, but it must have happened." Actually, her memories of her father and her childhood were all positive. There were no incidents in her memory which bore marks of abuse. Yet a counselor almost convinced her that it had happened. "It's no wonder I'm the way I am," people think. "It's all because of what happened to me as a child."

One author was driving at this concept when she wrote, "...although you don't remember all the events of your childhood, who you are today is a reflection of the culmination of events that began in childhood, especially in the parent-child relationship."

In life can you get to where you want to go, from where you are right now? Notice that when you are constantly looking backwards, looking for an excuse for problems, you can't make much forward progress.

The real issue is not where did I come from, or even what happened to me or my parents before me, but where do I want to go? What do I want to become, and how do I reach my objectives? The past may be difficult, but the future is a new page. Dwelling on past failure or difficulty doesn't help you put together a positive game-plan for advancement.

Long ago Paul dealt with this very issue, and what he wrote provides guidelines for living as he said, "Forgetting those things which are behind..." such as your background, your parents' failures in raising you, your own mistakes and past sins. Forget them and refuse to replay them over and over in your mind, justifying your present problems. Paul continued, "reaching forth unto those things which are before...." The real issue is not, "Where have I been?" but "Where do I go from here?"

One question: "How do you get where you want to go?" Paul knew you would be thinking of that as he said, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

As the writer of Hebrews put it, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). It's the upward look, not the backward look, that gives you hope for tomorrow.

Resource reading: Hebrews 12:1-12