

# IF YOU WANT TO STOP WASTING YOUR LIFE.

## *Acknowledge sin's power in your life.*

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18).

## *Repent of sinful attitudes and actions.*

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

## *Take Jesus' offer of a new start.*

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## *Believe God's power for a new life.*

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:4-6).

## *Become a student of Jesus.*

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

For additional information or requests contact:

### The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin.

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# JUST FOR YOU



## SECOND CHANCES

To make a list of all my mistakes and poor choices would be both time-consuming and embarrassing. While I don't remember all of them, some stand out clearly in the illuminating power of hindsight. I now see clearly what I could have done differently to experience a better outcome. I've often wished for a second chance, an opportunity to take back a word, undo an action, or make a better choice.

Many of life's opportunities are "only chances." One chance to pass a final exam, ace a job interview, or choose a life partner. If we aren't prepared or make a poor choice, the results may haunt us for a long time. We move on to other opportunities and choices, but we can never remake that one.

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### *Life is full of second chances.*

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Fortunately, life is full of "second chances." We can learn from mistakes and try again; seek forgiveness and start over. We are living proof that second chances exist! If all of our chances were only chances, life would be impossible.

Every day offers another chance. Did I mistreat my wife, mess up at work, or make a poor moral choice? When the sun comes up, I have a brand-new opportunity to live differently. Whatever the failure, every tomorrow offers a fresh chance.

The tragedy of second chances is that so few people make good use of them. They may not realize their mistake, or pride keeps them from acknowledging it. People form deep habits, and though they dislike what sin is doing to their life, its grip on them is strong. Every morning, they take their new opportunity and squander it. Knowing the shame of pornography, they return to the computer for more. They've lived the misery of a hangover, but on Friday, they're back at the liquor store for another round.

Most people extend second chances to those they love. Wives forgive their husbands . . . for a while. Bosses forgive their

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### *Second chances become last chances.*

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workers . . . once or twice. But sooner or later, second chances become last chances. Then it's over.

Realizing that we've just wasted our last chance is an awful feeling. Why did we come down this road so far? Why didn't we wake up sooner? We have no one else to blame but ourselves, and we finally realize it.

Fortunately, God is the ultimate provider of second chances. Even after we've wasted so many, God offers the ultimate opportunity. His "second chance" is not a license to ignore my sin a little longer, but to repent and to deal with it.

King Manasseh was Israel's most wicked ruler. For fifty-five years he did every wrong thing imaginable: worshiping idols, profaning God's temple, and sacrificing his children. He did more to accelerate Israel toward the end of God's patience than any other king. God finally allowed the Assyrians to capture him and drag him back in chains. And we would say, "Good! He had it coming!"

But in Assyria, Manasseh thought about his wrecked life. He humbled himself and repented. And wonder of wonders, God gave even Manasseh a second chance. He was returned to Jerusalem, where he reigned for the rest of his life.

Manasseh did not misuse his second chance. Until his death, he worked to undo the evil he had done—removing idols, tearing down their altars, and restoring the worship of God. He could not unmake all his wrong choices, but he did all he could to repair the damage he had caused.

God's mercy often postpones God's just punishment, but even with God, second chances eventually become last chances. And what if we miss our last chance with God?

Mario was middle-aged and a heavy drinker, and I knew him well. His habit had impoverished his family, destroyed his reputation, and wrecked his health. He was just starting another drinking binge when I stopped by to talk. "Don't you know this could kill you?" I asked. He nodded. "Wouldn't you like to find help to quit?" He hesitated. "I'll check on you tomorrow," I finally said. We prayed together—for his home, his health, and his spiritual state. Then I left.

Six days later, my phone rang. "Did you hear about Mario? He died this afternoon." It was night when I drove to the home of his grieving family. There, lying on the couch and covered with a sheet, was the body of a man who had squandered his last chance to find the help that he so desperately needed.

Life has given us so many chances that we take them for granted. We rarely recognize our last chance, and Mario didn't recognize his. On the day that he died, Mario had one last chance to repent and get right with God. I don't know how he used it. But I do know this; Mario will forever remember, either with great joy or deep regret, his one last chance.

**"YOU CANNOT REPENT  
TOO SOON, BECAUSE YOU  
DO NOT KNOW HOW SOON  
IT MAY BE TOO LATE."**

**-FULLER**