

A photograph of a cracked terracotta cup sitting on a rocky shore. The cup is empty and has a visible crack running down its side. The background is a blurred sunset over water, with warm golden light reflecting on the surface. The cup is positioned on the right side of the frame, resting on a dark, textured rock.

Empty to Become

Part 1: Capacity, Continuity, and the Discipline of Forgetting

Introduction: Why Emptiness Matters

Spiritual growth does not stall because God stops working. It often stalls because we stop making room. Scripture consistently shows that God pours into lives that are willing to be emptied first. The issue is not God's willingness to move, but our capacity to receive what He is doing.

This study invites all of us to examine something subtle but serious. We often want God to move, speak, and change us, while still holding tightly to what already fills our hearts and minds.

Topic 1: The Full Cup Problem

Why Being “Full” Can Stop God from Filling Us

The picture of a cup that is already full is simple, but it is revealing. A cup that is full cannot receive anything new, no matter how valuable what is being poured into it may be.

Many of us come into the presence of God already full. We are full of opinions, full of past experiences, full of wounds, full of labels, and sometimes full of certainty about how God should work.

The issue is not only sin. Very often, the deeper issue is self-sufficiency that looks like maturity.

Scripture reminds us,

[“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”](#)

James 4:6

Pride is not always loud or obvious. Sometimes it sounds like confidence. Sometimes it sounds like, “This is just how I am.” Sometimes it comes from years of experience that quietly close us off from growth.

A full cup does not necessarily mean a healthy cup. It simply means there is no room left.

God does not compete with what we refuse to release.

Jesus taught that new wine requires new wineskins. Without flexibility and humility, even good wine is wasted. Before honor comes humility, and Scripture warns us that it is possible to believe we lack nothing while being empty on the inside.

Spiritual stagnation often begins when we stop being teachable. Growth requires intentional emptiness from all of us.

Topic 2: Capacity Determines Continuity

Why Yesterday Controls Today When Our Capacity Is Not Renewed

Capacity determines what can continue in our lives. When our inner world is filled with yesterday's narratives, today's grace has nowhere to settle.

A simple but challenging truth confronts us here. If we have no capacity to experience the new, we will predictably live out the old.

This helps explain why many of us find ourselves repeating the same cycles. The same reactions surface. The same fears reappear. The same offenses resurface. The same limitations define us. We may be facing new moments, but we are responding through old filters.

God speaks clearly through the prophet Isaiah,

"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old."

Isaiah 43:18

When our capacity is not renewed, reactions replace responses. Instead of discerning what God is doing now, we replay what already happened. Faith becomes defensive. Behavior becomes predictable. Decisions become emotional rather than Spirit-led.

Scripture calls us to transformation through renewed thinking. God's mercies are new every morning, and new life requires new space.

Spiritual maturity is not measured by how much we remember, but by what we no longer allow to define us.

Topic 3: Forgetting Without Erasing Gratitude

How We Release Trauma Without Losing Thankfulness

The Apostle Paul gives all of us a powerful model. He learned how to forget without becoming ungrateful.

Paul carried a violent past, public accusations, deep suffering, and ongoing spiritual warfare. Yet he made a deliberate decision that shaped his future.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind..."

Philippians 3:13

Paul did not forget God's mercy. He forgot the trauma that threatened to limit his calling.

There is an important difference between remembering redemption and rehearsing pain.

Paul remembered who he was without Christ and what grace rescued him from. At the same time, he refused to keep reliving shame, self-condemnation, and accusations that tried to define him.

**Gratitude fuels
worship.
Trauma fuels
hesitation.**

Paul understood that living anchored to trauma, even redeemed trauma, could quietly sabotage forward movement. He chose to press forward rather than live backward.

Scripture reminds us to forget not God's benefits, while also showing us that grace is sufficient even in weakness. Healthy gratitude allows us to remember what God has done without reopening wounds He has already healed.

Gratitude fuels worship. Trauma fuels hesitation.

God calls all of us to remember His work without reliving what nearly destroyed us.

Closing Thought

Becoming who God is shaping us to be begins with shared humility. None of us graduate from emptiness. None of us outgrow the need to make room.

Emptiness is not weakness. It is preparation. What God pours next is often determined by what we are willing to release.