

From the Author of *Getting Up Again – Surviving Unemployment and Pursuing Destiny*

Pursuing Purpose – A Life Without Regrets

by Philip H. Page, Jr.

It seems as if regrets are an unfortunate certainty of life. It's not a question of whether you'll have them, but how many you'll have before you die. One of my most haunting regrets occurred 20 years ago during football practice for the Community Athletic Association. At the age of 10, I had been a playground legend for years. I was the local master of running touchdowns, catching passes for touchdowns and returning punts for touchdowns. Now, I was finally going to lend my abilities to an organized team and put my glory on display for a larger base of fans.

As you might imagine, the first week of practice drastically and mercilessly changed my perception. While my mind feasted on its own delusions of grandeur, my body hit the hard reality of the daily football practice in 90-degree heat. In the process, my body also hit a number of players and repeatedly hit the ground. In addition to that, there was no crowd, no cheering and no congratulations. The scarce amount of encouragement the coaches managed to utter was directed at other boys who evidently were legends from much larger playgrounds and appeared to stay one step ahead of me. So, after a full week of practice, I decided to quit organized football and return to the familiar (and less stringent) world of playground football.

Now, two full decades later, I've rehearsed that decision over and over again in my mind.

It comes to me regularly when I'm watching a football game, but also when I'm driving

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the car or working. Strangely enough, I'm not really bothered by the fact that I didn't make it to the NFL. (Even without playing football, there is enough evidence that I wouldn't have been a professional athlete.) What I regret the most about quitting practice is that I never found out how good I could have been. Without submitting to the process and putting my full effort into practicing, I gave up the opportunity to be tested. I allowed the fear of an F to rob me of the chance to get any grade at all. Rather than risk a failing grade, I opted for an Incomplete.

The good part of this is that I finally realize that my actions were based on a misunderstanding of God's tests. Up to that point in my young life, I believed that tests were something to pass or fail with the results becoming part of your permanent record. Now I know that there are many passing marks and the only way to fail is to quit before the grading occurs. Life's tests are merely opportunities to reveal to us (for God already knows) where we are and where we need to go. This is done repeatedly and only out of God's mercy until we earn the "A" that God designed us to make.

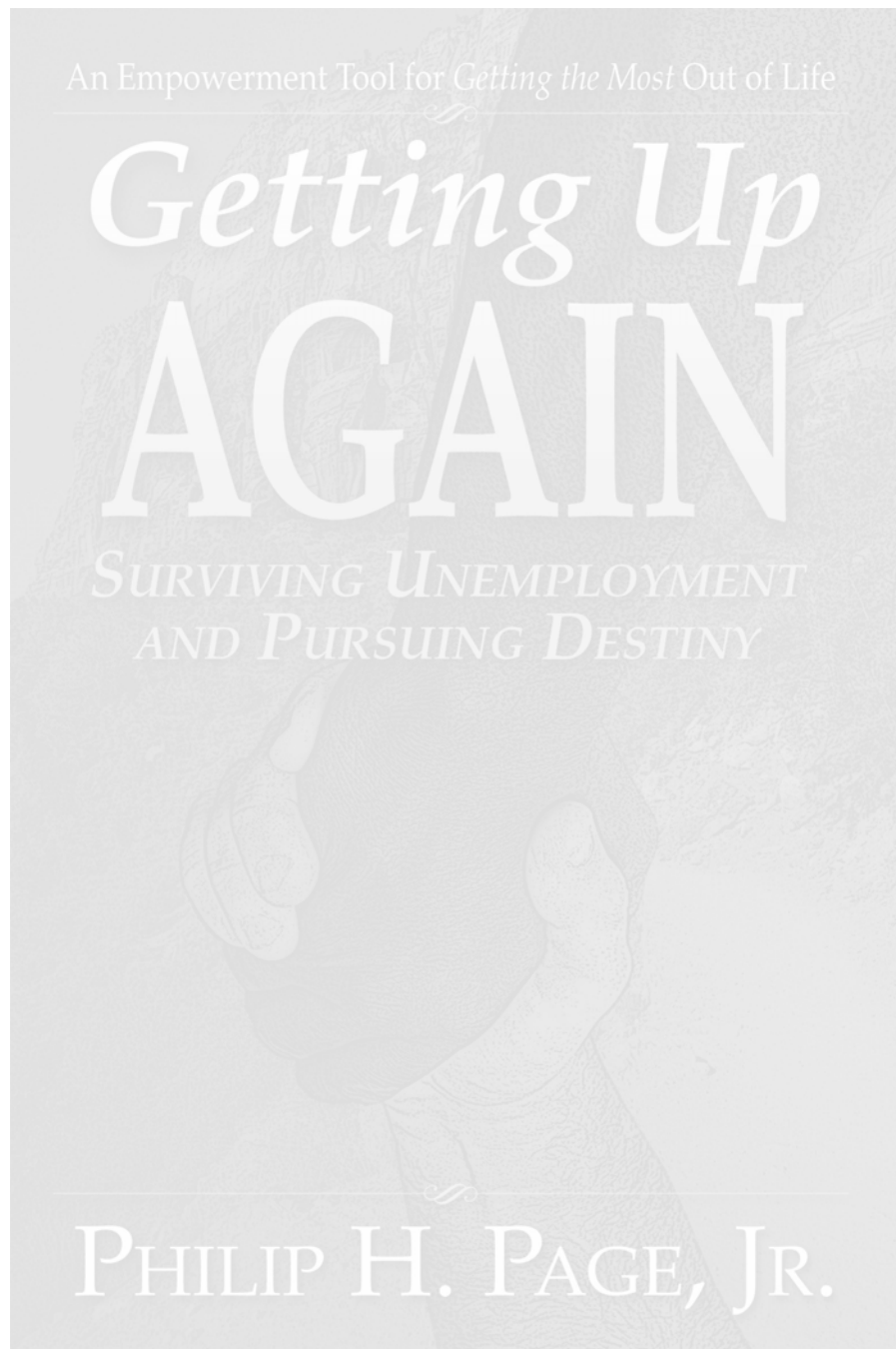
In retrospect, I guess the term regret is often misunderstood. Many believe, as I once believed, that regrets are 'unfortunate certainties in life', that they are permanent, historical facts that can never be changed or fixed. Well, in light of God's unending mercy and grace, regrets are really just unsuccessful first attempts. Although we may not have reached our full potential in the past, we can take joy in the fact that the test isn't over. Each day represents another opportunity to be tested or to turn an Incomplete into an actual grade. And that grade is not fixed, it continues to improve the more you

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embrace God’s tests rather than fighting or running from them. So, whatever your regrets are in life, keep in mind that your past has not determined your future. The final grade is up to you.



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