

## **“The Way We Were” by Barbara Streisand**

Do you ever long for the “good old days”? If you had a time machine ... and could go back, how far back would you go? And once there, what might you do differently?

That’s the question Barbara Streisand asks in her 1974 song, “The Way We Were.” Before we get to the song, let’s look at the Bible verse that helps us put this song in context:

### **Philippians 3:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved *perfection*, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,

<sup>14</sup> I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

MAIN POINT: Jesus is more interested in where you’re going than in where you’ve been.

## **Three Keys to Managing Your Memories**

### **A. Perfection is for the future, not the past.**

<sup>13</sup> No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved *perfection*,

All of us have to file stuff away ... receipts for taxes ... recipes for green bean casserole ... phone numbers and addresses ... birthdays of our grandkids ... and our memories. Each memory is filed away in the corners of our minds. Over time we go back and pull out those old memories, sometimes like a recipe even changing the ingredients. In our song for today the question is asked, “if we had the chance to do it all again, tell me, would we? Could we?” [Play snippet #1]

Memories,  
Like the corners of my mind  
Misty water-colored memories  
Of the way we were

Scattered pictures,  
Of the smiles we left behind  
Smiles we gave to one another  
For the way we were

Can it be that it was all so simple then?  
Or has time re-written every line?  
If we had the chance to do it all again  
Tell me, would we? could we?

People, like me for example, think of things we've done wrong, or things that didn't turn out perfectly ... and I wonder if I could go back and fix it.

We can't. Perfection isn't for now, it's for later ... for heaven. Earthly life is flawed, broken, and difficult. Embracing God's grace and forgiveness also means we let go of our expectation of perfection (for us, and others).

### **B. Focus on what you can change.**

Philippians 3:13b, "... but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead ..."

That file cabinet in your brain ... you're memory warehouse, you get to pick how it's organized and what you use the most. Barbara Streisand gives us a helpful clue about what to do with memories that continue to bring us down. [Play snippet #2]

Memories, may be beautiful and yet  
What's too painful to remember  
We simply choose to forget

Choosing to forget is okay. Difficult? Sure. When you forget something you have to replace that memory with something else.

2 Peter 1:5-7, 15, ... make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, then knowledge, then self-control, then patient endurance, then godliness, then brotherly affection, and finally love for everyone ... <sup>15</sup> and I'll work to help you remember these things.

Focusing on what we should be remembering from 2 Peter 1 will go a long way to replace those bad memories that spring up.

### **C. Press on for the prize.**

Philippians 3:14, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Let's give Barbara props for her last verse of the song ... she realizes there's no value in rehashing the pain ... find what is good and move forward remembering that:  
[snippet 3]

So it's the laughter  
We will remember  
Whenever we remember...  
The way we were...  
The way we were...

We long for happiness, laughter, and creating great memories. Paul is eager for us to experience all that life has to offer, and that is found in pursuit of Heaven as a prize for faith.

-- Racing requires staying "on track."  
-- Racing requires knowing where the finish line is.  
-- Racing requires moving forward, no matter how fast. Your "fast" is different than mine!

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, we ask for healing for those whose memories are scarred. Create a new faith-based set of memories to be made as we pursue heaven together. In Jesus' name, amen."