



Bible Verses: Lamentations 3:22-23

Quotes: *"The best way in the world to deceive believers is to cloak a message in religious language and declare that it conveys some new insight from God."*— Charles Stanley

"We cannot start over, but we can begin now, and make a new ending."— Zig Ziglar

Resources: *Man Maker Project* (Author-Chris Bruno)

Podcast 45: Rites of Passage - Bart Lillie

My take on deception: "When I am deceived, I don't know it." Covered with religious language and supported with Bible verses, I lived a difficult season of life convinced I was right and that those who did not share my views were wrong. It started slowly, but after months of "immersion," I moved way off track by listening to the wrong voices instead of hearing from God. Now 12 years past this season of deception, I am now more careful when it comes to absolutes. I walk more cautiously knowing that areas of my life may not line up with God's truth, *and that I might not even know it.*

Our daughter was born during the eight months that Jenni and I were separated. I suppressed the pain of missing that day (and the other 240+ days as well) by wearing a mask to simply survive. I was hiding, shut down and stuck. I seemingly couldn't choose, and I seemingly couldn't act. That season challenged everything and shaped our future. However, God can redeem my fallings and failures, something I know very clearly.

As our daughter approached 12 years old, Jenni started planning a yearlong rite of passage for her. While both of us are involved in raising our kids, she is taking the lead with our daughter's initiation, just as I will lead with our son. As our daughter's year began, Jenni and I believed the time was right to not only share what happened around her birth, but to also intentionally create a "do over." My role as her father never ends, and even though I missed the first chapter, I have a choice to engage every subsequent chapter in her life.

Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us that God's mercy is *"new every morning."* God extends grace and mercy *every day.* A fresh start *every day.* As a father, I struggle to do the same. My default mode is often "not choosing/not acting." The antidote for me is intentionality. It takes a choice, followed by action. Sometimes it's a "do it right the first time." Sometimes it's a "do it over." Every time it's a better way to live.

—Bart Lillie

Talk about it:

- Where does deception show up in our world? How can you identify a lie?

Make it personal:

- Have you ever been deceived by someone or something? How did you get out of it?
- What day in your life would you do over if you could? Do you have anything with one of your kids, or with someone else that you need to take the initiative and create an intentional "do over?"

Accept the Challenge:

- We cannot change the past, but you can change the future with the choices you make today. Will you intentionally create a "do over" that addresses a failure or missed opportunity in your past?

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