

Remember

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Sometimes I listen to the Elvis channel on Sirius XM radio and once in a while they will play a song entitled “*I Forgot to Remember to Forget.*” That’s a rather profound statement when you think about it. At times I embarrass myself with my lack of remembering. A researcher at Johns Hopkins noted the top three things people most often forget are: (1) Names, (2) Where something is and (3) and telephone numbers.

John Morley a British Liberal statesman, writer and newspaper editor said, “*The proper memory for a politician is one that knows what to remember and what to forget.*” We could say that is true for Christians as well. There are things we need to forget, but there are things we need to remember. The next few minutes I want us to consider some things that we need to remember.

I. REMEMBER GOD AND HIS WORKS. How forgetful can we be? “*After stopping for gas in Montgomery, Alabama, Sam drove more than five hours before noticing something, or better someone, was missing. Sam had forgotten his wife. Sam stopped at the next town and asked the police to help him get in touch with his wife. Sam then called his wife to tell her he was on his way back. He admitted, with great embarrassment, that he just hadn’t noticed her absence.*” How could Sam forget his wife for five hours?

But you know, we are not much different in our relationship with God. Far too many of us forget about the one who created us and redeemed us. We can forget God when we are under pressure, we don’t have time to think about God or religious matters. Or, when we are simply in the midst of our daily routines, God isn’t on our minds. We forget we are His children or recall what He has promised to do for us. We don’t remember His awesome power and His wondrous love. As a result, when we face temptations, we try to overcome by our own strength. When we face a sticky problem, we try to solve it with worldly wisdom.

God knew this would be a problem; that is why the Bible is full of reminders. The book of Deuteronomy contains more reminders not to forget than any other book in the Bible. Moses constantly warned the Jews not to forget God and His work on their behalf. Notice Deuteronomy chapters 4, 6, 8.

Deuteronomy 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons;

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, (11) And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; (12) Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 8:11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

Notice too how God warned through the prophet Jeremiah that Israel had forgotten their God. *Jeremiah 2:32 Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.* The example used is fascinating to me. Can you imagine a bride forgetting her wedding dress on the day of her wedding? That is how much God should be on our minds. Yet the Jews forgot God innumerable days. Later Jeremiah would tell that they forgot God and preferred trusting lies. *Jeremiah*

13:25 This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood. Then we have the passage in Ecclesiastes that we began with where the wise man instructed us to remember God when we are young - Eccl 12:1

Why is this important; what is the result of forgetting God? Short answer – spiritual death. Notice what David wrote. **Psalms 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.**

But here is a comforting thought. We may forget God, but God will not forget us. The prophet Isaiah makes this point with an everyday analogy. In Isaiah 49:14-16 he says that a mother will forget about her nursing child before God forgets His people. **But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. (15) Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. (16) Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.**

Some days we are intensely absorbed in the details of our activities that hours can slip by without even a momentary thought of God, but we can take comfort knowing that God is never too busy to think about us. It is said that Sir Jacob Astley, a Royalist commander in the English Civil War, prayed before marching into the Battle of Edgehill, *“O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not thou forget me.”* which he followed promptly with the order *“March on, boys.”* Even in our indifference towards God, what a comfort it is to know as we lie down at night to rest our weary bodies, our souls can rest in the assurance that our God, who neither slumbers or sleeps, lovingly watches over us.

Because of who God is and who we are, we need to consciously include God in all that we do and say – seeking His wisdom, relying on His strength, and praising His goodness. When we face difficulties, we sometimes forget God’s past faithfulness. We only see the detours and the difficult path. But look back and you will also see the joy of victory, the challenge of the climb, and the presence of a traveling Companion who has promised never to leave you. Knowledge of God’s past help will give us confidence to face present trouble.

Remembering the past was the purpose of the Old Testament Sabbath. **Deuteronomy 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.** In leading the children of Israel to the Promised Land, God led His people through trials, gave victory in battles, and provided for their daily substance. Everything God promised came to pass. **Joshua 23:14 ... not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.**

Likewise, God continues to care for us today and our daily blessings should serve as daily reminders of God. If you have a difficult time thinking of such blessings, begin with the alphabet and consider what blessing you enjoy that begins with the letter “A”, then “B”, etc.

II. REMEMBER GOD’S WORD. Do not forget to remember God’s Word. **Psalms 1:1-2 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.** Solomon put it this way. **Proverbs 4:4-5 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. (5) Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.**

It’s important to remember God’s Word: because without it you will be lost. Israel was destroyed for a lack of knowledge. **Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:** Consider what James said; he said it brings the hearer blessings. **James 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**

When you visit in someone's home, you usually see pictures on your walls of people and events of the past. They are there as a reminder of important people and times. Being where you see them often, you don't forget. If we are going to remember God's Word, we must see it often. ***Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.***

The best way to remember something is to put it into daily practice. It is one thing to learn a mathematical formula, it is quite another matter to use it daily in your work. Deuteronomy 8:11 teaches us that if we don't keep God's commands, we will forget. ***Deuteronomy 8:11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day.*** James 1:25 we consider a few minutes ago says we must be a doer of what we learn

III. REMEMBER OTHERS. We don't remember every great deed that has been done to us as we are inclined to forget, and often we forget the past kindnesses of others. This is what happened to the Old Testament character of Joseph. In Genesis 40 we find Joseph in prison due to no fault of his own and while there he helped Pharaoh's butler. When the butler was about to be released, Joseph asked to be remembered - Gen. 40:14-15. Yet in spite of the kindness Joseph had shown the butler and in spite of the plea to remember Joseph, once he was released he forgot the kindness rendered. Despite Joseph's kindness, the chief butler forgot. ***Genesis 40:23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.***

It's easy to be critical of this man but we need to be careful that we are not guilty of doing the same thing. Finally two years later, he remembered his fault and Joseph (Gen 41:9). Instead of forgetting, we need to remember the kindness of others and at the very least express gratitude for what they did. To quote the late Paul Harvey, *"Blessed are those who give without remembering, and blessed are those who take without forgetting."*

In addition to remembering the kindness of others, we would do well to also remember their misfortunes. Christians are to remember those who are less fortunate. ***Galatians 2:10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.*** There was a time in the life of Job when he lost everything and was poor. This was a time he needed to be remembered by his friends and family; but that was not the case. ***Job 19:13-14 He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. (14) My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.***

A story is told of young boy living in a poverty-stricken section of a large city who found his way into a gospel meeting and was converted. Not long afterward, a bully tried to shake his faith. "If God really loves you, why doesn't someone take better care of you? Why doesn't He tell somebody to send you a new pair of shoes?" The boy thought a moment and then said, as tears filled his eyes, "I guess He does tell somebody, but somebody forgets."

As Christians, our primary obligation is to lead people to Christ. But our duties do not end there. ***Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*** Paul would teach us in Galatians 6:10 that we need to do good – to those within and those without. As Christ's love for us grows within, that love should spread to those without. As a means of comfort, let us not forget that God remembers our deeds. ***Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.***

IV. REMEMBERING GOD'S FORGIVENESS. Peter gives us a list of virtues in 2 Peter 1:5-8. But notice from verse 9 what if we do not grow. ***2 Peter 1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*** We need to continually remind ourselves to live the Christian life. This lifestyle is not forced on us, we freely take on this obligation as Peter

goes on to mention in verses 10-11.

Jesus gave us a memorial so we will remember his sacrifice and his forgiveness of our sins. “*Do this in remembrance of me*” we are told in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25. Jesus wants us to remember his death on the cross, the price he paid for our sins, and to anticipate his return.

Jesus made a way by which you can be saved. Have you obeyed the gospel?

Invitation.