

TIME TO REMEMBER

Matthew Johnson

Whether through age, or the multitude of things that take our attention, our human nature is to be forgetful. Scripture provides admonition and reminders that our forgetfulness can be a tool for good, but it need not, and indeed must not, prevent us from spiritual growth, or from doing those things we've been given to do.

What we should forget

Paul was one whose life was completely transformed that day on the road to Damascus and he went from persecuting and killing Christians to becoming one and a faithful servant and apostle. He no doubt struggled with the images and realities of the things he had done before his conversion, but he reminds us that forgetfulness in this regard can be a necessary part of our growth, *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Php 3:13-14).*

Not being a forgetful hearer

Perhaps the reminder in James is one with which we are most familiar, *“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was (Jas 1:23-24).* There is no indication in James that there is poor intention, but forgetfulness can quickly derail the best intentions. What are we doing to prevent it? With the things of this life we write things down, or set an alarm, or ask others for help, but what about making spiritual improvements? Even a look can bring to remembrance something that needs correction, *“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice” (Luke 22:61).* It's no surprise that just a few verses later James affirms

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how we become blessed in our deeds, *“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”* (Jas 1:25).

Remembering God’s work

We must also not forget to do the work of the Lord. It’s easy to be distracted and forget that this must remain a priority in our life. The Hebrew writer admonished the brethren by reminding them of our duty, *“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”* (Heb 13:16). He had already told them that God is faithful not to forget our works, *“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”* (Heb 6:10). We must give God something to remember because He certainly won’t fill in the blanks for us!

Truth versus false doctrine

False teachers can also have a devastating effect on our memory because many false doctrines perpetuate a sense of complacency and ease with which one may remain a faithful Christian – to the point that we even forget who God really is and serve a false God. This happened in the time of Jeremiah, *“How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal* (Jer 23:26-27). It’s a sober reminder that faithfulness to the truth is our only hope. The time for remembrance, whether young or old, is now. The Wise Man said, *“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”* (Eccl 12:1). Let us remember the Lord and what we need to do and be for Him.