

Remembering Where We Were

T. Sean Sullivan

We are faced with a slight dilemma in the fact that we are caught between our desire to be free from our past and a need to remember from where we have come. It is true that we are admonished, through Paul's writing, to forget our past (Phil. 3:13); and we should all agree with Paul on the point that he makes in that passage.

We do not need to relive the burden, and guilt that weighed us down and disqualified us from accessing eternal life. Our heavy burdens have been lifted through Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:28). Once our sins are forgiven, we should clear them from our conscience. In fact, obedience to God's will [His commands] should directly result in a clear conscience (1Tim. 1:5; 1Peter 3:21). However, all of this being understood, there is still a need for remember where we came from, for these reasons.

To Appreciate Being Forgiven... Consider Paul, when he calls to remembrance his past sins. We know the things that he formerly did as a persecutor (Acts 8:1-3). Paul, himself, remembered his former conduct when he spoke of the grace of God that saved Him (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). When Paul called to mind his past, he did not do it to seek pity or to wallow in self-pity. Paul called to remembrance his past so that he would appreciate his salvation even more. Did Paul appreciate his new life in Christ? Absolutely! 1 Timothy 1:12-17 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. "

When Paul dealt with the Corinthian brethren he used a reminder of their past lives to demonstrate the importance of not jeopardizing their new life in Christ. The brethren in Corinth had begun to entertain two wrongs: They were fighting among themselves, boasting worldly wisdom and their relationships as brethren were suffering (1Cor. 1:21-31; 3:4-6). They were also slipping back into immorality (1Cor. 6:15-18). Paul reminded them of their past to demonstrate the importance of the forgiveness they had received (1Cor. 6:9-11). His hope was that they would appreciate being forgiven instead of wandering back when they were faced with temptation (1Cor. 6:20). We need to be mindful of our past so that we do not fail to appreciate our forgiveness.

To Never Repeat Them... When we, as Christians, sin, we jeopardize our salvation and our hope of eternal life in Heaven (Heb. 10:38). I want you to be mindful of the situation you were in before you were a Christian. The scriptures describe your state as spiritually dead [Separated from God] (Rom. 3:23, 6:23a), alienated from God in sin (Eph. 4:17-18), on the broad way, which leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14).

We need to remember and be careful not to repeat our mistakes because even as a Christian, you are able to fail and go back to sin and be lost. We cannot afford to have sins in our life, let alone continually repeating them. We need to put on and maintain a new life (Eph. 4:17-32). Paul exhorts us to not walk as the rest of the world or as we used to walk (vs. 17-19). He continues to say we need to put off the mistakes of your past (vs. 20-23). Then he finishes up his exhortation by telling us to put on a new life; one of true righteousness and holiness (vs. 24). We need to carefully maintain our new life. Ephesians 5:15-17 "Careful to watch your steps".

To Be Patient with Others... A character trait of a Christian must be patient understanding (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13). When we forget our own failings we can become haughty which is an attitude we must not have (1Peter 5:5 - "All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."). We may be too harsh and devalue those who are younger because we have forgotten that we too were once young lacking strength and wisdom.

Youth is an important time in life: It is a time when we are physically strong and able to do many things that are eventually hindered by age. (Ecc. 12:1). We who are older and stronger must exhort the young to work hard and grow (Titus 2:1-8). We need to remember what it was like to be young and need direction. Youth, as a Christian, is also an important time. It is a time of growth (1Peter 2:1-2).

It is a time of development (2Peter 2:5-10). We need to remember our own lack of foundation and how much you needed to be built up, when we were young. Those of us who are older need to be a reassurance of the possibility of success. We need to bear with those who are struggling (Rom. 15:1-2). Our job as the stronger is to build up the weaker (Heb. 10:24). Our goal is to edify one another (Eph. 4:16).

We need to know where we came from to appreciate where we are. If you are a Christian you came from darkness and now you are in the light (Col. 1:13). We were in line for death but now we are in line for the gift of God (Rom. 6:23). Remember where you came from so that you: Appreciate your forgiveness, do not return to your past mistakes, and stay patient with others who are still growing.

Praying with an Instrument

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord..." (Eph. 5:19). A television documentary on foreign countries showed a family that had a rotating wheel in their home, which was used with praying. Supposedly, when the wheel was spun, it sent the worshiper's prayers up to God. In one's worship, there is no difference in praying and singing with an instrument. Both violate the principles of faith (2Cor. 5:7), make void the word of God (Mark 7:13), and reject Christ's authority (Col. 3:17).

A Moments Wisdom

- A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else.
- To carry a grudge is like being stung to death by one bee.
- To err is human, to blame the next guy even more so.
- The easiest thing to find is fault.
- You don't know what power you have until you make good choices in a hard time.
- In my day, we didn't have self-esteem, we had self-respect, and no more of it than we had earned.
- The greatest friend of truth is time, her greatest enemy is prejudice, and her constant companion humility.
- How you spend your time is more important than how you spend your money. Money mistakes can be corrected, but time is gone forever.
- It is difficult to live in the present, ridiculous to live in the future, and impossible to live in the past. Nothing is as far away as one minute ago.