

Lest We Forget

I know you've been doing your therapy, but are you sure you feel up to it this morning, Mrs. Jackson?" Jaime asked politely.

Dorothy looked at her young nursing assistant and smiled, "Yes, Jaime, I can make it."

Truth be told, Dorothy Jackson's arthritic joint pain was hurting her some, but she whispered a prayer for strength. She had been a resident of Crossroads Rehabilitation and Nursing Care Facility for almost a year. She had not only adapted at the nursing home, but she was flourishing. Various religious organizations came to the facility to provide services for the residents and patients. This Sunday, her home church was celebrating its 70th anniversary, and Dorothy didn't want to miss it.

"I'll be just fine, honey," Dorothy told her young nurse as she was being cleaned and prepared for the day. "The Lord has been extra good to me for all these years. He hasn't forgotten me, and I certainly don't want to forget Him."

Then the 86-year-old lady began to tell Jaime about the many exploits God had performed for her, the valleys He had seen her through, and the constant companion He had been.

"You certainly have a testimony," Jaime said, as she wheeled Dorothy into the dining hall.

"Yes," Dorothy said. "I want to be sure and be in the front row celebrating my church, but most of all celebrating Him."

- 1.** *What things are easy for you to remember?*
- 2.** *What things do you often forget?*
- 3.** *How do remembering and trusting go together in relationships?*

Remember God's Discipline and Provision

Deuteronomy 8:1-5, KJV

1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Deuteronomy 8:1-5, NIV

¹Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors.

²Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

In the earlier chapters of Deuteronomy, Moses had detailed the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness, and

in Deuteronomy 7 had reiterated God's original call to drive out the nations before them—especially as it was their rebellion against this call that had caused the last 40 years of wandering. Thus, in chapter 8, Moses reminded the people to obey God's commands. Only by "follow[ing] every command" would the Israelites finally inherit all that God had promised them.

Moses also again reminded Israel why their wandering had occurred: "to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart" (vs. 2). It wasn't that God needed to know what was in the people's hearts—they needed to know and thus be humbled into following God's ways.

Moses also reminded Israel of how God had provided food for them with manna in order to teach them that not only did they not need to worry about God's provision, but that this was not even to be their focus. The Israelites'—and our—true sustenance, instead, was to come from "every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (vs. 3). In addition, amazingly, "Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years" (vs. 4). God had provided for the Israelites in every way, despite their many complaints.

With that, Moses encouraged Israel to "know . . . in your heart" not only the purpose but the manner of God's discipline: "as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you" (vs. 5). This generation of Israelites could trust the discipline of a loving God who was parenting and instructing them, preparing their minds and hearts so that they could properly take care of the land God was about to bring them into.

4. *Why had Israel's wanderings occurred, according to Moses?*

5. *What had God provided Israel during their wanderings, and why?*

6. *What did Moses say was the manner of God's discipline? How did this help fulfill God's purpose?*

Remember God's Commandments

Deuteronomy 8:6-11, KJV

6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

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.

Deuteronomy 8:6-11, NIV

⁶Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him.

⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills;

^{8a}land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey;

^{9a}land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

¹⁰When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

¹¹Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.

After reminding the Israelites of how God had provided for them in the wilderness, Moses called them not only to obey Him but to revere Him; they were not just to honor Him with their actions but with their hearts. They were to respond as children would to their loving father. The King James version uses the word “fear” (vs. 6) here, and

this too is a part of reverence; the Israelites were to have a healthy fear of God, being careful not to do anything that would disappoint or dishonor Him.

God was bringing the people “into a good land” (vs. 7), a land plentiful with water, grain, crops, fruit, oil, honey, even minerals like iron and copper. In short, it was “a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing” (vs. 9). Surely the God who was giving them all this was worthy to be revered.

And yet, Moses again reminded Israel that they did not live by bread alone: “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you” (vs. 10). The correct response to God’s goodness and provision is to praise Him for it. God understood the people’s tendency to depend on and believe in themselves. Thus, He used Moses to remind them of the inclination of their own hearts: “Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day” (vs. 11). Israel had been disciplined for 40 years; now their hearts would be tested by the abundance of God’s provision.



These fertile fields in the Jezreel Valley in central Israel illustrate the richness of the promised land.

Photo: StateofIsrael

7. *What did Moses call Israel to do?*

8. *What was God about to do for Israel?*

9. *How was Israel to respond to God’s goodness? What did Moses warn them not to do?*

Trust in the Lord

Is it true that the more God acts in our lives, the more we are able to trust Him? Some people will emphatically say, "No!" That's because they perceive the wrongs they've suffered as coming from God. It may be because they actually don't believe in the grace of God, or it may be that they are in a low period in their relationship with God. For the Christians who joyfully say, "Yes!" to that question, however, they have become familiar with God's ways in their lives.

How do we become familiar with God's ways in our lives? It certainly isn't believing that He will grant our every request exactly as we want, nor is it believing that He is more concerned with world events than our own individual lives. In fact, there is an intimacy in our relationship with our Lord that confirms in our hearts that He truly loves us and in our minds that He always seeks our best interest in whatever He does.

Of course, humility is essential in our walk with God. In considering His ways in our lives, we must have a humble perspective and a submissive temperament, for the Lord knows far more than we do what is best for us.

Humbly keeping in mind how God has been involved in our lives affirms His trustworthiness. Confident that all the blessings that have flowed into our lives have come from Him inspires us to trust Him today even more than we have before. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6).

10. *Specifically, how have you perceived the ways of God in your life?*

11. *Why does regarding God with humility help you to trust Him?*

12. *How have you learned to trust God through what He has done in your life?*

The Impact of God's Ways

Before the ancient Hebrews entered the land the Lord God had promised them after wandering in the Sinai wilderness for 40 years, God reminded them never to forget or disregard the commands He had taught them. Likewise, we must always keep in mind the ways of God and humbly trust in Him.

► *It can be difficult at times to trust the Lord. Briefly describe here a time you failed to trust Him and what happened. Next, describe a current situation in which you are having trust issues and then write the words "I will trust in You" next to that situation.*

KEY VERSE

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. —Deuteronomy 8:11, KJV

Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. —Deuteronomy 8:11, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of March 28 through April 3

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Psalm 121—Help Comes from the Lord.
- Tue.** Matthew 20:1-16—The First Will Be Last.
- Wed.** Matthew 20:17-28—The Greatest Must Be a Servant.
- Thu.** Exodus 34:23-27—Faithful Appear before God.
- Fri.** Luke 19:41-44—Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem.
- Sat.** Psalm 125—Trust in the Lord.
- Sun.** Matthew 21:1-11—Hosanna to the Son of David!