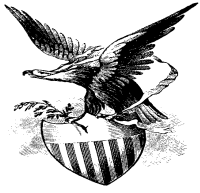


Light Brings Salt

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Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God



Forgetting God

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Proverbs 3:1 begins with the exhortation "My son do not forget my teaching." Back in chapter 1 we have the teacher, personified by wisdom crying out (1:20f.) with a strong exhortation to listen to wisdom! The point being made is that you have been blessed over the years with good teaching that was available, God's wisdom crying out to you!

Your future success, whether you recognize it or not, depends on what you do with that Word you have been taught. The Word you heard. Did you believe it, apply it or did you blow it off, because you had more important things to do, to pursue?

In Chapter 2 we have the student crying out to be taught; expressing the desire to learn the Word of God. [student = each believer]

So from an emphasis on the importance of teaching truth/wisdom; to an emphasis on the learning; with the student/believer making the necessary choices to learn; [2:1-4; benefits of the word in 2:5-17]

Now in chapter 3 the emphasis shifts to **obedience**; our response as believers to God's wisdom and its impact on your life. You have been taught, you've learned some truth, now live it! The very real sign or reflection of maturity is obedience to the Word.

Solomon begins with a negative cmd "My son do not forget my teaching." At this point the question here is what does it mean to forget? Does this mean to go in one ear and out the other? In the OT there are basically 2 concepts taught related to forgetting.

#1. **lapse of memory** [lock keys in the car, misplace something] this is not the primary use in the OT.

#2. **lack of will forgetfulness**; to choose to be forgetful; to be selective in our memory which is considered one of the most horrible sins of the OT.

Proverbs 3:1 is saying to us do not have a lack of **will forgetfulness related to my teaching**, that is the wisdom that only comes from God and His Word.

Let's examine what it mean to **forget God??** What it means to **forget His teaching?** How do we identify whether or not we have forgotten God?

1. Failure to know God is to forget God.

If we do not know God, from His perspective, we have forgotten Him. Often we look at antonyms which helps us to understand the meaning of a word. You would think that the antonym of forget is to remember. But in the OT we find that the antonym for forget is actually not to know.

Hosea 4:6 says "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge,

I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." So failure to know God, is to forget God.

They have **willfully rejected** knowledge of Him and therefore have forgotten God. So the answer to the first question, What does it mean to forget God? Is to not know Him. The question is are we guilty of this?? All of us must admit that there is much we do not know and should about God!

2. Failure to obey God is forget God.

Deut. 8:11-14 speaks of this lack of obedience!

3. Failure to recall His works what He has done for us is also to forget God. (Psalm 106:12-15)

For Israel it was all that God did in delivering them from Egypt! How could they forget that? As important and miraculous as it was! Saw it, believed it, sang His praise in vs:12 then quickly forgot what God had done for them! Eyes off of the Lord and onto whatever! That is no longer occupied with Him and their relationship with Him.

For us today how can you forget the fantastic provisions we have as believers to live the Christian life, yet we do! We become complacent and apathetic. We tend to forget all the provisions made in Christ and revealed in the word! We forget it seems so easily all the things that are ours as a result of our position in Christ.

To forget any of these things is to forget God!

4. If we fail to perceive that all of the blessings we receive is from the grace of God we have forgotten God! (Deut 9:6-7)

The legalist tends to think that blessing is based on his merits, what he can do not on the grace of God. God says to them I'm giving you this good land, blessing you in this way, but do not forget that it is by grace, not because of any merit in you. Don't forget just how rebellious you have been. If you fail to remember that what you are blessed with is by grace, you will have forgotten Me!!

5. To be afraid of another person is to forget God! A startling concept! (Isa 51:12-13)

6. What is the main reason that Israel forgot God in the OT?

What is the major stumbling block that leads to forgetfulness! The root cause of forgetting God is **material prosperity**. This includes even the blessings of God that they received! [not handling them or putting them in right priority] (Deut 8:11-14; 15-17)

What God is saying is that there is a real danger of complacency when all your needs are fulfilled, when all your material needs are satisfied. This is true even when as here the blessings are from God! Key becomes where do these things fall in the scheme of ones priorities?? Self-centered arrogance leads to forgetting God, as noted in Hosea 13:6.

Next in Proverbs 3 Solomon exhorts with a positive command, "*But let your heart keep my commandments.*" So his challenge is to keep His word not forget God.

The word to "*keep*" (נָצַר) has several interesting nuances.

#1. to guard or protect something, the implication here then is that the commandments of God are under attack. Think about it! Can that be true? Is there a sense where the commands of God that are

already in our mentality could be in any sense under attack? We must recognize that the word of God, even in our mind, our frame of reference is under attack first of all from what? Our sin nature!

The warning here is for the believer. That the Word of God in you is going to be under attack internally from the sin nature but also from the external pressures to move away from the commands and precepts of God and **go with the flow**, the prevailing human viewpoint of the day! The Mooing herd!

Need to remember that we are living today in the cosmos of Satan; he is the god of this world. So this word *natzar*, to keep, encourages us to be on guard constantly against these attacks.

#2. is the nuance, to obey. Through out ch 3 obedience is going to be a major thrust of the challenge of Solomon. This is also seen in Psa 25:10; 78:7.

Also word for commandments, *mitswah* מִצְוָה refers to the authoritative declarations of God, His orders, His way of doing things, it carries with it the idea of obligation, therefore the importance of obedience.

Solomon then follows with a **Promise in 3:2.**

If you will not forget God, protect carefully His word by obeying it in your life there are 3 blessings that flow out from that!

#1. Is "length of days" obedience has benefits in longevity of life. This is seen in both OT and NT this promise; Ex 20:12; Eph 6:2-3

#2. Does length of years mean the same as length of days?? Is this just another way of saying the same thing or is there a different nuance of meaning? Answer is NO, that in the OT it does have another

meaning. Length of days talks about longevity of life; while "years of life" emphasizes quality of life. That is Life worth living! (Deut. 30:20)

#3. "And the peace they will add to you."

The basic idea of peace, *shalom*, is completeness, completeness of condition; freedom from danger; serenity of life. This doesn't mean there will not be opposition and tests but that in the midst of them you can be serene, at peace as you keep, guard and obey His commandments, not forgetting God!

The heart of chapter 3 is that we will learn how to find favor with God and with man, our neighbor and friend. For this to be a reality we must first deal with our vertical relationship with God. Do not forget My teaching, my torah, my instruction.

If you are forgetting me know that you will not have success that you should. You must also recognize that the word of God in your life is under attack.