

Dangers of Forgetting and Turning Away From God

Read Deut. 8

Introduction. It is a very evident fact both from observation and Biblical history that nations and people tend to turn to God or gods in time of distress and hardship, and to forget God in times of prosperity and wealth and turn away from Him. Our nation has been wonderfully blessed and has achieved the pinnacle of being above every nation that has ever existed. (i.e. putting a man on the moon, etc..) However, circumstances seem to be indicating that our position of staying there is threatened and that we may already be slipping into a decline that could even be disasterous in the future.

When our nation began it had a deep trust in God and strong convictions that we should look to Him and depend on His blessings and strength to see us through whatever dangers lay ahead, and it was thankful and grateful to Him for whatever, even if it was meager bare necessities with which it was blessed. That general attitude seems to have greatly changed.

It seems that we are quite like children that are given a privilege of watching TV at a certain time as a reward, if they clean up their room or some other simple task. After awhile it changes to a right and not a privilege. They want more and more, and consider watching TV anytime they

want to something not to be denied for it's their right! They don't feel grateful that they can watch TV.

It seems that humanity has a trait of becoming spoiled and just expecting more and more and if given an inch will take a mile. We may start out being thankful for what we are given, but after awhile feel highly insulted at the suggestion that we might be indebted or cut-off.

When we take a look at how thankful and grateful our forefathers were and how they remembered to look to God for all their blessings and strength, haven't we changed into thinking more about what we can do for ourselves and more and more are forgetting and turning away from God? Let us look at this scripture reading pertaining to the nation of Israel. They were warned about forgetting and turning away from God.

First we take note that they had a:

I. Dependence on God when poor and needy.

- 1. As slaves in Egypt their cries went up to God.**
- 2. They depended on Him at the Red Sea.**
- 3. They depended on Him in the wilderness.**
- 4. They depended on Him in the conquest of Canaan.**
- 5. Our nation depended on God's providence in its beginning. It certainly doesn't exhibit that dependence today.**

II. Danger of not looking to God when prosperous and wealthy.

1. Israel turned away from God in times of prosperity, even when they were blessed with good land that “flowed with milk and honey.”
 - a. Mesopotamians – delivered by Othniel
 - b. Moabites – Delivered by Ehud
 - c. Canaanites – Deborah and Barak Delivered
 - d. Midianites – Gideon (also Ammonites) Jeptiah and Philistines –Samson and David Delivered
 - e. Assyria-Northern Israel disappeared after division
 - f. Babylon – 70 yrs captivity
2. The order in the laws of nature can cause one to forget God.
 - a. Men tend to look to natural explanations of what happen. We had good weather and made a good crop. I planted it at the right time—I figured it out.
 - b. Scientists only give explanations based on natural laws. God made the laws of nature and controls them.
 - c. He controls the animals at times. He controls the weather. He controls the earth and matter – swallowing up Dathan, etc.

Note: Israel quickly forgot lessons learned in adversity and chastening. When down and out or facing death.

III. Prosperity and wealth can cause one to forget God.

1. Israel turned away from God when prosperous.
 - a. There seems to be a parallel existing in other nations to do likewise. Our country is no exception. It has been so rich blessed with wealth.
 - b. Morality – anything goes in Movies or on TV.
 - c. Crime rate – Worse in the world.
 - d. Religious influence – Lowest ebb (Scandals, Priests)
2. One man told his friends “When you see me getting wealthy, pray for me.”
 - a. The big danger of wealth is we can forget to look to God who is the source of all. Do we depend on world?
3. Wealth can be a disappointment, certainly if we lose our soul over its temptations. What about children?
4. An Arab who escaped death after losing his way in the desert, told this story:

He was weak and famished, his strength and hope seemingly almost gone. Then, he found a bag and he was filled with joy and delight as he thought it must contain grains of wheat. But what bitter disappointment filled him when he discovered it contained pearls. Earthly material things or wealth can fall short in certain situations—won’t be worth much when we stand in judgment.
5. I believe the old devil (Satan) uses money or wealth to capture souls about the same way.

Illus. – African natives capture monkeys. When the native wants to capture another monkey, he gets a gourd and cuts a hole in it about the right size for a monkey to squeeze his hand through. Then, he places some nuts or rice inside the hole and waits for the monkey to find the gourd. When the monkey finds the gourd he puts his hand inside and grasps the nuts or rice in a clenched fist and doesn't let go. He can't withdraw his hand and can't climb trees to get away and is easily captured. We can clinch those dollars until Satan captures us. Satan knows all the tricks.

III. One needs to have a humble thankful Spirit to have the right relationship with God. (Matt. 23:12).

1. To be humble, one needs to realize that creation is of God.
 - a. All that he has to enjoy is a result of God's providing or allowing him to "have." It all comes from God.
 - b. One is nothing if God is left out of the picture.
 - c. That is facing reality and that is what God is telling us when he tells us to be humble. Just look at ourselves and realize that is the way it is.
2. 1 Thess. 5:18 (commands) "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
 - a. If we are thankful for all the blessings we receive, we can't possibly forget and turn away from God
 - b. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat. We may work for it, but God did the providing.

We just kinda put it together. We claim the credit for prosperity. When times are slow we blame God.

3. Without thankfulness for past mercies and blessings, it's impossible to pray for future ones.
4. Being thankful strengthens our faith and gives us encouragement.

IV. A Faithful Obedient Spirit is needed to keep one from forgetting and turning away from God.

1. Faith means we trust God. It relieves us of the worry and frustration that those without God have. We know that whatever happens, God is in control and eventually it is all going to turn out right.
2. We are to walk by faith and not by sight. According to Rom. 1:17: "The just shall live by faith."
 - a. We will believe and do all God says.
 - b. We will obey His commands.
 - c. We will not forget and turn away from Him to the world.
3. John 9:4(AS & Rev.) "You must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work."

Conclusion: If we are busy in His work we won't forget and turn away from God.