

The way things were
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Introduction: We are in a constant battle for the mind.

- A. The parable of the sower is a description of a battle between God and Satan for us! **(Lk 8:11-15)**
 - 1. Satan has this world but works to defend his territory.
 - 2. God's word has great power but must penetrate the heart and must continue to be cultivated. **(Rom 12:1-2)**
- B. The memory is a part of the mind that must be cultivated.
 - 1. I am not talking about "positive thinking" that is in essence a distortion of reality. Satan wants us to live like that! **(2 Thess 2:10-12)**
 - 2. There are things in the past that must be remember and things that we must "let go." **(Phil 4:8-9)**
 - 3. You present mind is a product of the past. Have you learned to have the "mind of Christ?"

I. We have a strong tendency to reconstruct the past.

- A. If we are not accurately reminded we will create a distorted past.
 - 1. After looking at an old video of a past big game I was reminded of this.
 - 2. When I visit my old neighborhood and school I am amazed at how the size of things have changed. (Ex. The terrible hill I rode on my bike.)
 - 3. These distortions have made for some good stories for my children!
- B. Men would rather alter reality than to face their sin. **(Prov 16:2; 21:2)**
 - 1. This deception often also includes the past.
 - 2. There is a natural part of man that forgets the bad and remembers the good. If we did not do this then we would be burdened to despair. (Ex. trauma)
 - 3. God wants us to remember so that we can repent and then let it go! If God does not remember them then we can also release them!
 - a. Does God remember? --- No! **(Psa 25:7; Isa 43:25)**
 - b. Does God remember? --- Yes! **(Jer 14:10; Hos 8:13)**
 - c. Does God do this for you? **(Heb 8:12; 10:17)**

II. When we have a wrong view of the past we will not see the present

- A. The Pharisees had fantasies of how they would have defended and died with the past prophets if need be. **(Mt 23:29-36)**
 - 1. The truth is that they were they very kind of men that not only would kill the past prophets but also kill the Son of God!
 - 2. Examples of this abound today! (Ex. David Lipscomb College)
- B. The Jews thought the old temple was so glorious that they despised the beginning of the present one. **(Ezra 3:12-13)**
 - 1. These men could only remember the physical glory of the building and no doubt had a distorted view of the past as well.
 - 2. One of the reasons Israel went into captivity was a distorted view of God and His temple. **(Jer 7:4)**
 - 3. A wrong view of the past glory hampered them in their present duties! (Ex. The

University of Egypt.)

- C. The main fault of the spies and cowardly Israel in the wilderness was memory!
 - 1. Why did they view themselves as grasshoppers ready to be killed? **(Num 14:20-23)**
 - 2. On the other hand young David remembered how God had often worked in his life and was ready to face a man the entire army was afraid of. **(1 Sam 17:34-37)**

III. The power of a God-centered memory

- A. We cannot remember until we see God's hand in our lives. **(Rom 1:20-22)**
 - 1. No one can accurately look back upon their lives without seeing God's mercy and goodness. **(Mt 5:45; Acts 17:26-27)**
 - 2. The grace of God in Jesus should be the center of all that we are!
- B. We need to remember Jesus during temptation.
 - 1. We can know we are not alone. **(Heb 4:14-16)**
 - 2. If only we could see the cross every time we thought of quitting, striking back, compromising or becoming indifferent!
 - 3. Remembering Jesus will shut down our "pity party." **(Jn 15:20-21; Heb 12:3)**
- C. We need to remember Jesus in our forgiveness.
 - 1. If we know what Jesus has forgiven us of then we must forgive. **(Lk 7:42-47)**
 - 2. We destroy ourselves when we fail to be moved by what Jesus has forgiven us. **(Mt 6:12-15; 2 Pt 1:8-9)**
- D. We need to remember Jesus in worship.
 - 1. We must observe the Lord's supper. **(Acts 20:7)**
 - 2. What if we eat and fail to remember Him? **(1 Cor 11:29-30)**

IV. Principles to mold our memories

- A. Challenge the things you remember. **(Jn 7:24)**
 - 1. Some memories are nothing more than emotions.
 - 2. Other memories are flawed because of wrong judgment of others. (Ex. "The church is full of hypocrites" based on one hypocrite.)
 - a. It is easy to write off a past generation. (Ex. Children – Parents)
 - b. Some have treated individuals this way.
- B. Learn to forget what God tells you to.
 - 1. Here is where forgiveness blesses us. **(Eph 4:31-32)**
 - 2. It is very important to solve problems now lest years past and reality is distorted. **(Mt 5:23-24)** (Ex. Past Eldership process)
- C. Remember the stand of faithful men and stands in your own life.
 - 1. The Hebrew brethren needed to remember their stand. **(Heb 10:32-35)**
 - 2. They also needed to remember the great cloud of witnesses.
 - 3. I have good memories of my parents and of faithful men. Who do we remember here at Cahaba Heights?

Conclusion: Does the peace and joy of God reign in your life?

- A. If not we need to "gird up" our minds. **(1 Pt 1:13)**
- B. What do you remember? **(Phil 4:6-9)**