

Devotion given by Brother Richard Lam at the Serving Board Meeting on July 23, 2017

Do People Forget God When They Become Successful?

17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

As the cost of housing in the Bay Area goes up, people moving in tends to be those of a certain income level. A recent survey of new homebuyers here shows that many are successful white collar workers with graduate degrees and earning good salaries. It is a well-known fact that many people who are successful and can afford to have things they need for a comfortable living, do not feel they need God in their lives. When Christians are successful there is the danger and tendency to believe that it's from their own effort and not from God. When we accomplished goals in our life we start to rely more on ourselves and less on God. Eventually we come to believe wholly in our abilities. This robs glory from God because ultimately everything that happens in our life is the result of a loving and sovereign God.

The Israelites learned the habit of depending on God in the Sinai wilderness where they had no choice; they needed God's daily intervention just to eat and drink. But when they finally stood on the banks of the Jordan River, they faced a more difficult test of faith. After they entered the land of plenty, would they soon forget God? The Israelites knew little about the seductions of other cultures, having spent their lives in the desert. Moses was afraid the coming prosperity, the alluring sensuality, the exotic religions and the glittering wealth, would cause the Israelites to forget the hardships of the desert and the God that fed and protected them.

Let's us look at ancient Israel's history. Every time they became prosperous they forgot their God and He would send them into captivity. This happened time and time again. They prospered, were sent into captivity, then humbled themselves and God delivered them. Even though God had warned them numerous times, they refused to learn the lesson of success. If only they had taken to heart what God said in **Deuteronomy 8:10-20**. There are several important things that God mentions here that we should take to heart. When things are going well we better not forget the Lord. When our wealth (or success) increases, don't let our hearts become proud. Like the Israelites who depended on God in the wilderness, are we like that when we are undergoing trials? When we are delivered out of our pain and sufferings (wilderness with hunger and thirst), remember it is God who delivered us...we did not deliver ourselves. When things go well are we tempted to think, "My power and the strength of my hands" have done this? Whenever we do this we rob glory from God for He alone gives us the power to have wealth. Anything good that happens to us is always from God's gracious hands. It is not from us.

