

Looking Back Helps Us to Move Forward

Verses

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced. *Psalms 105:4-5*

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. *Deut 11:18*



Many people believe that in order to move on, we need not look back. It is true that the past is over and there is little reason for you to look back. However, visiting the past doesn't mean you have to live there. Looking back has many benefits. It can actually help you move forward!

Being human, it is so easy for us to forget very quickly what the Lord has done for us. In the Old Testament it was written that the Israelites saw God's miracles happened before their very eyes and many of their prayers to God were answered directly. Yet once they crossed the Red Sea, they began to forget what God had done for them and turned to complaining and praying to idols. To help them remember God's power and faithfulness the nation of Israel built monuments and established traditions (Joshua 4:20-24, Exodus 12).

Many of us lead busy lives. Often we are so caught up with what's happening daily that we can't see how far we have come. If we document God's faithfulness when troubles and doubts threaten to overwhelm us, we can then look back on these moments in the future and draw strength from them. As Christians we will face trials and tribulations. God will use them to teach us lessons. Some are small, some are fun and some are hard lessons to learn. But if we do not stop to reflect on the lessons learned and to remember God's faithfulness when troubles and doubts threaten to overwhelm us we could forget what God is trying to teach us later.

Like the Israelites we too have short memories and need to be reminded to help us remember God's faithfulness, grace and love. Most of us can only remember certain aspects of a past event. Can you remember the things that happened during your wedding? Without the photos and notes from the wedding album we could not remember many of the fine details. I have a friend who told me that he has to lock his front and back doors and windows in his house these days. He missed the "good-old-days" when he could leave them open all day without fear of thieves getting in. Yet he conveniently forgot that in those "good-old days" there were no LED TV, no smart phones, dialup internet connections and the operating system on computers was MS-DOS. He only remembers the good thing but not others. Like him, we do not want to go back to live in the "good-old-days" but it's ok to remember them.

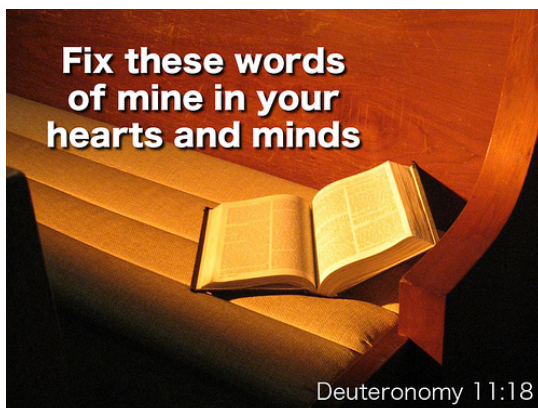
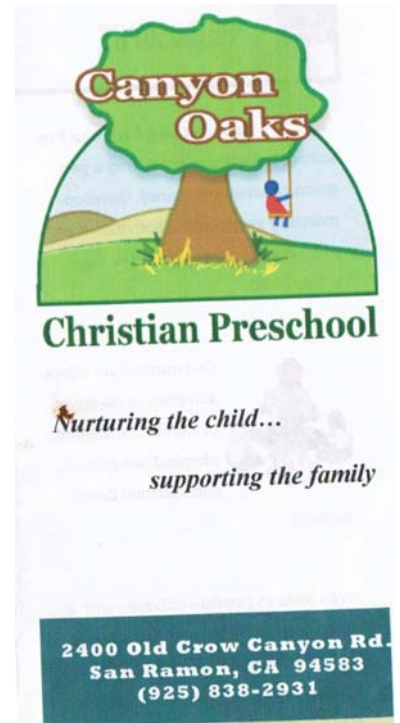
Trials and tribulations happened to individuals as well as to churches as a whole. Gilead is no exception – our church has experienced many trials through the years. Some were small but a number of experiences were hard lessons. The hardest lesson experienced by Gilead happened in

1999, a year after we moved into this facility. The plan was to start a pre-school, using the tuition to pay its debts. At that time I was the treasurer and we were way over our heads in debts.

The church in buying the property and renovating the buildings borrowed extensively from the bank, from members as well as from other organizations. When the pre-school failed, the church was unable to pay for the mortgage and other debts it owed. In May 1999, Gilead was a month from delinquency in paying the mortgage.

By the grace of God, a Christian couple approached the church in June 1999 to lease the site to run a preschool - the Canyon Oaks Christian Preschool. The 3-year lease provided the financial support needed to sustain the church through this most difficult period.

By remembering to look back at what God has done for us, through us, and to us, can move us forward to the future. Deuteronomy 11:18 told us to remember the lessons we learned and the blessings God bestowed on us. We are to “Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds” and tie and bind them on our hands and foreheads as a reminder. Remembering the past trials that Gilead had gone through remind us of God's leading, discipline, faithfulness and grace, and prepare us to confidently look and move forward and see how blessed we are. If God sustains Gilead during its toughest trial, He will not abandon us now.



Given by brother Richard Lam
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