

LEARNING TO FORGET

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: Philippians 3:8-14. From Roy H. Enoch 03-06-1994.
- B. Memories are like filing cabinets, or a hard drive: they are available for reference.
 - 1. Sometimes our filing system is not very orderly or we can't find what we are looking for.
 - 2. We may drop something in the wrong folder or under the wrong heading.
 - 3. But memory is very valuable.
- C. But if we keep everything, our files become so cluttered that they are almost useless.
 - 1. One of the most valuable aids for any filing system is a wastebasket!
 - 2. Our memory badly needs that too: it is called forgetting.
- D. Paul gives a key to peace of mind and an efficient focus on the job at hand; "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,..."
 - 1. Paul had done some important discarding in his life (Phil. 3:7-8).
 - a. "rubbish" means what is thrown to the dogs. (Strong's)
 - b. He had completely discarded it: into the wastebasket.
 - 2. Now he was able to focus on what was more important: the work of X and salvation.
- E. Let us examine some guidelines on remembering and forgetting.
 - 1. Some things should be remembered.
 - 2. Some things should be forgotten.
 - 3. Forgetting may be more difficult than remembering.
 - 4. There is much in the future to look forward to.

I. THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT WE SHOULD KEEP AND REMEMBER.

- A. Past-due bills and obligations should be remembered.
 - 1. A responsible person will want to remember obligations.
 - 2. We find reminders of obligations unpleasant, but we do appreciate the opportunity to fulfill them.
 - 3. We don't want to forget our pledge of loyalty to God when we became His child, and should be thankful of reminders.
 - 4. A husband and wife must not forget their vows before God and other witnesses to be faithful to each other till death.
- B. We must not forget the wrongs we committed until we have corrected them.
 - 1. Don't forget the apology that you should make.
 - 2. We must do what we can to correct our mistakes.
 - 3. We must try our best to heal wounds.
 - 4. God not only expects us to quit doing wrong, but to make restitution as far as possible.
 - 5. We cannot have peace of mind until old wrongs are righted.
 - 6. God hasn't forgotten, and neither should we.
- C. We should not forget the kindnesses that others have shown.
 - 1. Remember the flowers sent when your heart was heavy.
 - 2. Remember the sympathy when you were in grief.
 - 3. Remember encouragement when you were struggling.
 - 4. Remember the steady hand when you were about to fall.
- D. We should not forget that God's blessings are so abundant. Paul remembered the Lord's blessings (Phil. 3:9-11).

II. BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WE SHOULD THROW AWAY AND FORGET.

- A. Forget the times you were wronged in the past.
 - 1. Why would you want to keep them?
 - 2. Throw the memories into the wastebasket.

- B. Forget the times somebody injured you, deceived you, cheated you.
 - 1. If you remember, the memory will fester into bitterness and hate.
 - 2. Hate will turn to cynicism that causes us to become bitter, antagonistic, and disillusioned.
 - 3. You might even get even--get revenge--and suffer the pangs of eternal punishment.
- C. After you have done your best to correct your failures and mistakes, then forget them.
 - 1. Do not let past mistakes, which you tried to correct, cast a shadow across your future.
 - 2. Many become so obsessed w/ their failure that they do not try to do better in the future.
- D. We should forget old sin.
 - 1. If we have truly repented of it, then forget it--God has.
 - 2. If we will not forgive ourselves, we will not accept forgiveness from God and others.
 - 3. This was what Paul was speaking of when he said, "forgetting those things which are behind...".
 - a. This does not mean he did not remember he had done it, but that he no longer dwelt on it.
 - b. The reason he did not dwell on it, was that he had accepted forgiveness with gratitude (1Tim. 1:12-16).
- E. We must each forget ourselves.
 - 1. Paul gave up himself and became X centered (Gal. 2:20).
 - 2. It is a tragedy to stay self-centered: It will result in continued failure and heartache.

III. FORGETTING MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN REMEMBERING.

- A. Simply deciding to clear our mind is not enough (Mt. 12:43-45).
- B. We must fill our lives with the Lord's work, or the devil will fill it again with the world.
 - 1. Paul had this attitude (Phil. 3:13-14).
 - 2. He only referred to his former life to warn and teach others.
- C. We travel in the direction that we look.
 - 1. If we are looking at our past life, we will stay there.
 - 2. We must leave the past and look to the future to go on.

IV. THERE IS MUCH IN THE FUTURE TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

- A. Jesus X is always ahead of us showing us the way.
- B. Eternity is ahead of us.
 - 1. Our place in eternity will depend on our use of this life (2Cor. 5:10).
 - 2. We still have this opportunity to receive forgiveness.
- C. The resurrection with an immortal body is ahead of us (Jn. 5:28-29).
- D. An eternal home is ahead of you.
 - 1. It is either a home in heaven with God.
 - 2. Or it is in the Lake of Fire with the devil and his angels.
- E. Jesus offers the home in heaven as a free gift.
 - 1. We have to trust Him enough to do what He says.
 - 2. We must turn from the life of sin or perish.
 - 3. We must confess Jesus as our lord and master to obey.
 - 4. We must be buried in baptism and raised to walk a new life.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Let us say with Paul, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in X Jesus."