

Remember From Where You Have Fallen

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Revelation 2:4–5 (NKJV) “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”

The church at Ephesus seems like a model church. Jesus knew about their good works, their labor in the kingdom, their perseverance under trial, their commitment to test false apostles, their labor for His name's sake, and their continued activity without becoming weary. From the human perspective everything seemed like a model church. Unfortunately, the church at Ephesus was in trouble. Everything on the outside looked good. Jesus, however, saw something the Ephesian church didn't see. Jesus saw their condition from the divine perspective. They had left their first love. They were simply going through the motions. They were doing all the right things with all the wrong reasons.

Jesus told them to remember from where they had fallen. The church had fallen from a higher place to a lower place. Jesus told them to “remember”. He did not tell them to remember to where they had fallen. This would become a memorial to failure. Rather, He told them to remember from where they had fallen. Jesus wanted them to remember a time when He was their first love. This is a call to remember the high point in their love for Jesus. We must ask ourselves this question. Are we as much in love with Jesus today as we were when we were first saved? Are we as much in love with Jesus today as the time we look back on with fondness? Has there ever been a time when we were closer to God and Jesus than we are right now? If so then we have fallen. It is time to remember where we used to be with Jesus.

God gave each of us the gift of memory. Memory is very important. In a March 14, 2013 edition of the Wall Street Journal Shirley S. Wang stated in an article entitled, “The New Power of Memory”: “Memory allows for a kind of mental time travel, a way for us to picture not just the past but also a vision of the future, according to a growing body of research. The purpose of memory is far more extensive than simply helping us to store and recall information about what has already happened.” In reality, memory not only has the power to remind us of what was good about the past but it also has the power to restore vision for a better future. Memory of what was right about the past has the power to give us a vision for tomorrow and a motivation to change things today.

One important example is found in Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son. In his fallen condition, the prodigal son remembered: “*But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 And he arose and came to his father....”*

There are memory triggers that connect us to past memories. Memories are connected to past experiences. Some are good experiences while some are bad. Memories connect us to past relationships, emotions, events, and places. Memories are often triggered by the five physical senses: sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing. In the case of hearing a memory may be triggered by a voice, a song, or certain sounds. Memories can be triggered being in old surroundings, a family reunion, a restaurant, music, movies, recordings, photos, diaries, journals, holidays, anniversaries, commemorations, dedications, birthdays, trophies, ribbons, memorials, heirlooms, keepsakes, clothing, museums, altars, etc. Jesus Himself gave us a memorial known as The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service that reminds us of Jesus' death on the Cross and of the New Covenant.

We must let go of bad memories. We must take past sins and failures to the Cross. We must let the blood of Jesus break the power of guilt and condemnation that keeps us from experiencing God's best now and in the future. We must forgive others. Forgiveness breaks the power of bad memories to affect the present and to control our future. We must stop staining the canvas of our memory through sin and disobedience. The blood of Jesus is the sin stain remover: “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’”

Not only must we let go of bad memories, we must remember the good memories. It is time to remember from where we have fallen (high points of the past). It is time to recall the good in our past that will motivate us to pursue God's best for our future. It is time to use each of the triggers of memory to move us and the next generation back to God. We must share our memories with the generation to come. This generation does not know its roots. It does not know its history. It does not know its God. We must testify of God's goodness and work in our past to help others today and in the future: *"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. ² I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, ³ which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. ⁴ We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. ⁵ For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; ⁶ That the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, ⁷ That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; ⁸ And may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God."* Psalm 102:18 (NKJV) declares: *"This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD."*

It is time to remind God of His promises: *"Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted."* We must make new memories and establish new memorials today for the future. This generation needs memories and memorials to remind them of the right way that will encourage them in the days ahead. It is time to remember and to return!