

Will You Remember or Will You Forget?

By [Carl Kerby](#)

Are you thinking about what happened ten years ago? 9/11 is but a memory, and we must not allow it to fade from our minds. We can choose to remember or we can choose to forget, and the choice we make will have profound implications for future generations.



God told the Israelites, "Remember"

Many times God said "remember." In Ex 20:8, He said: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." God created the world and everything in it and on the seventh day He rested from His work. God wanted the same thing for His people. They were to work for six days and on the seventh day they were commanded to rest. God's desire was that His people would take a break from their work and find their rest in Him. By commanding and specifying a day of rest God was giving them a gift, and it was intended as a day of peace and quiet when they could reflect, remember and worship the One Who provided for them and met their every need.

However, in time the people forgot.

Many times God told the Israelites to remember. Here are but a few: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." (Deu 8:2) "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day." (Deu 8:18) "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." (Deu 32:7) "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land." (Josh 1:13) "Remember his [the LORD'S] marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;" (1 Chr 16:12)

Remembering is commanded by God in the Old Testament. We also see in the New Testament that Jesus told His disciples the reason why they should remember: "But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me." (John 16:4-5a)

Jesus knew the time was approaching that He would no longer be with them and He knew that if they remembered what He had taught them they would stand strong in their faith. "We see the angel at the empty tomb saying "remember." He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee." (Luke 24:6) "And we see Paul exhorting the people of the church to 'remember:' Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:31) "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh... But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph 2:1,13) "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:" (2 Tim 2:8)

Why is remembering so important? Why should we consciously strive to remember rather than carelessly allow memories to fade? There are two reasons:

1. Forgetting Always Precedes Falling.

When we forget our hearts are always prone to wander. Forgetting causes us to:

- think more about what we can do, instead of what God has done
- think more about what we desire than what God commands
- think more about who we can be, rather than who He made us to be
- think more about ourselves and less about God

Jesus said, Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? (Mark 8:18)

2. The Three R's - Remember, Repent, Return

Remembering is something we "do" and it is the first step to repenting and returning. It is by remembering that we are strong in knowing:

- Who God is
- What God has done for us
- What God commands of us
- Who we are in Christ

It is by remembering that we come to understand our need for repentance, which leads to restoration. Repentance is turning... a turning from ourselves, and our sinful ways, and turning to God. Remembering is the beginning that leads to a deeper relationship with God.

So we must never forget, lest we fall and we must always remember: Who God is, what He has done for us, what He commands of us and who we are in Him.

Our Lives Move in the Direction of Our Most Dominant Thoughts

What we think about directs our lives and our culture more than we might realize. So once again how and what we remember influences us greatly. Consider the importance of remembering in regards to history.

There are days that will live forever in our memory.

Do you remember where you were when John F. Kennedy was killed? Or, if you're much younger, how about when Princess Diana was killed in a car accident or when Michael Jackson died? We've already mentioned 9/11. It's likely that everyone 16 and older remembers that day. When significant and life altering events take place we not only remember where we were and what we were doing, but we also remember the emotions evoked. However, as time passes, emotions subside, memories fade and even some of the relevant facts can become unclear in our memory.

What happens when the memories fade or become unclear? The facts and the truth of what we remember is susceptible to being altered.

Historical Revisionism and Postmodernism

There is a methodology that is prevalent in our society today, and it is eroding the very fiber of our culture. It's called historical revisionism and it is propagated by postmodern thought. Historical revisionism is the reinterpretation of the facts, evidences, motivations and decision making processes regarding a historical event.

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (Isa 46:9-10)

We are told by God to REMEMBER, not to REVISE the things of old. Revisionism is born out of the "it's all about me" mentality. It's nurtured by a culture that says personal satisfaction and happiness is the ultimate goal and it leads to a life that strives to live by one's personal opinions, rules and preference. This is often referred to as relativistic and postmodern thought.

Postmodern thinking is a breeding ground for historical revisionism.

Postmodernism, a word not even found in the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, was first used in the 1870s in reference to European art and many years later in 1914 was referenced in a philosophy journal. Today it has become a popular, and commonly used, term. So what is postmodernism? The Mermaid-Webster Online Dictionary defines Postmodernism as:

1. of, relating to, or being an era after a modern one postmodern times; a postmodern metropolis
2. of, relating to, or being any of various movements in reaction to modernism that are typically characterized by a return to traditional materials and forms (as in architecture) or by ironic self-reference and absurdity (as in literature)
3. of, relating to, or being a theory that involves a radical reappraisal of modern assumptions about culture, identity, history, or language postmodern feminism.

It is the third definition that has taken hold in our society and causes much alarm and concern for our future generations. This radical reappraisal of culture, identity, history, etc, promotes:

- There is no absolute truth because all truth is objective
- There is no global cultural metanarrative because many, if not all, apparent realities are just social constructs, subject to change based on time and place.
- The role of language, relations, and motivations is elevated as important, while the significance of distinct classifications such as male/female, straight/gay is minimized.
- Realities are seen to be plural and relative, and dependent on one's own interpretation
- Ethics are based on situational definitions of right and wrong, rather than on any set of defined rules. Ethics are often compartmentalized (e.g. work ethics may be very different than school or home/personal ethics).

Jean-François Leotard, a French philosopher and literary theorist, is well-known for his explanation of postmodernism during the late 1970s. He said, "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodernism as incredulity toward the metanarrative."

Let's take a closer look at that statement to better understand his definition of postmodernism.

The word "incredulity" is stronger than just meaning disbelief, it implies a "scoffing disbelief." The word "metanarrative" isn't found in many dictionaries, although it is a popular term commonly used today. It's said to be a term developed by Jean-François Leotard to mean a theory that tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences, and social, cultural phenomena based upon the appeal to universal truth or universal values [we know that only the universal/absolute truth and values are found in the Bible].

So paraphrasing the statement above, in essence, Leotard says, Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodernism as scoffing disbelief toward the comprehensive account of historical events based upon the appeal to universal truth or values (we'd call that "the Bible"). So Leotard says postmodernism is scoffing disbelief of the Bible. That certainly is supported by what we see in our postmodern world.

As Christians we must take exception to such postmodern thinking. We know that the "comprehensive story of history" is God's story. God's account of history and it happened and as He prophesies it is yet to happen. History is events that need to be accurately remembered and truthfully retold....not speculation at and certainly not revised to better fit postmodern "truth" and "values." The Bible is the account of history that has been proven to be both accurate and true.

So we must stand firm on the narrative of history that we read in God's Word and rely on the Bible alone to define absolute truth, ethics, morals, relationships, etc.

I hope you are now seeing how important it is to adhere to God's commands to "remember." We cannot rely upon personal opinion, preferences, etc to influence our values, morals, ethics, behavior, or to revise our understanding of history.

So are we as a nation forgetting? If we are forgetting God, Who He is, what He has done for us, what He commands of us and who we are in Him, then it's no wonder we are forgetting history.

Or, if we revise history, our beliefs, values, morals, ethics, etc., toward an understanding based on anything other than God and the Bible, then we are falling. REMEMBER: forgetting precedes falling. Our country was founded on Christian principles by those who believed in Jesus Christ and His Word. If we forget or revise our past and neglect the legacy of our ancestors, we will fall. What can we do? We must remember our foundation -- the Triune God of the Bible, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the sound biblical morals and ethics that He has given us to direct our lives.

Luke 6:47-49, "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which ever built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

An important part of that foundation is remembering. Two things we hope you will REMEMBER:

Forgetting Always Precedes Falling. Remember, Repent, and Return.