

Turning the Crap of Life, Into the Fruit of the Spirit

Forgetting

Life Questions:

Have you ever had a need for help? Someone, maybe at great expense to their own well being has given their effort to help you only for you to forget about their assistance? Is there someone that has forgotten about you and the help you have offered?

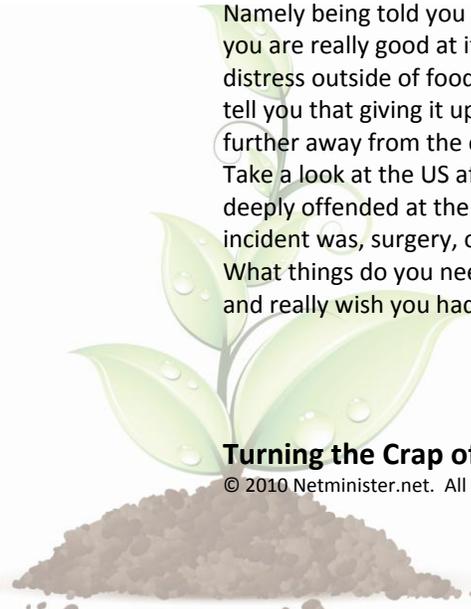
If you have kids or are around kids you have heard it at least a few times a day, I forgot. You may remember it from your own childhood. Remembering to play, but forgetting to clean up your room. Remembering to call your friends but forgetting to do your homework. We all have done it, oh how easy it is to forget. And never does forget ever seem to lead to something good, and yet we continue to do it. How come?

“Oh I forgot!” Have you ever been driving along and realize that you missed a turn and have no idea where you are headed? Maybe you have been in the car with someone when this happens, they or you are lost in thought or just lost period in your own mind and realize that you have forgotten where you are and where you were going. It is easy to laugh it off. Usually you get a ragging about it and you go where you wanted to in the first place. But what would happen if you didn’t remember where you were going?

“Oh I forgot!” As you sit red-faced in a gathering suddenly remembering that you were suppose to provide a key element of the event. Throughout the day you had kept a meticulous record of things to do but somehow or another, this one thing fell through the cracks and you completely forget it. Now the event you had such high hopes for is in danger. What do you do?

“Oh I forgot!” You open your suitcase and realize you forget the most basic thing: underwear. Everything else you remembered, but the one thing that you most definitely need is missing. Or maybe it is deodorant, in which case those with you are going to be most upset you have forgotten it.

Each one of these situations is really easy to remedy in the future, you keep lists, you put things into your calendar on your phone or you do mental exercises that are designed to sharpen your mind to help you remember. Each one of them can be avoided in the future. But there are some things we forget mostly because it isn’t fun to remember them. Or they require a change in behavior we are not ready to accept. Namely being told you have a medical condition that requires you to lose weight. But you love to eat, and you are really good at it, aren’t we all? Or you have to give up something that causes you a great deal of distress outside of food, talk to any person who is an admitted addict and they will be more than able to tell you that giving it up is difficult. What makes things even more difficult is that as you get further and further away from the event that should have changed your life, you find it easier and easier to forget. Take a look at the US after 9/11 and you will see people who were clamoring for things that now are deeply offended at the idea of being searched before boarding an airplane. We forget how bad the incident was, surgery, or the way we felt, to remember now that we need to change things for the better. What things do you need to remember? What things are coming to you right now that you had forgot and really wish you had not remembered? There are a few reasons we forget:



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1. We do not want to share the glory with those who preceded us.

Ex 1:8-9

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.
NKJV

Joseph, the guy that was sold into slavery by his brothers; that rose to prominence in Pottifer's house then was wrongly accused; and lastly helped the nation of Egypt survive the famine finally dies. Everything that he has done was known to the people, but the new king did not know. Ex 1:8 We may therefore understand by the new king's not knowing Joseph, his disapproving of that system of government which Joseph had established, as well as his haughtily refusing to acknowledge the obligations under which the whole land of Egypt was laid to this eminent prime minister of one of his predecessors. It could more appropriately be stated; he refused to know of Joseph.

The new king came to power and didn't want to share in the things that his predecessor had done. Remembering of course that the nation of Egypt had survived a terrible famine with Joseph's help, more than help his guidance and interpretation of the king's dream. The new king was actually there and alive because of the efforts of Joseph. But it didn't matter, all that mattered was his own glory and the new king was not about to share any of it.

Ever worked for an organization for years only to have a new person come in and take over. New ideas and better ways of doing things, ignoring your efforts and contributions over the years and even going so far as to criticize you because he or she doesn't understand what has happened in the past. They cannot understand it because they want to receive the glory, not share it.

Church life can be this way when we allow ourselves to think more highly than we should of ourselves. That means that we think, why this place couldn't make it without my help. Or there isn't anyone here with the ability and financial resources that I have; therefore, the church is really my place. Like the new king we assert ourselves into a place and command everyone to see us, rather than the efforts of those that have come before us. This creates a political system in the church whereby we cannot offend this person because he or she or they will take their considerable abilities and finances and leave and where will that leave us? In God's hands, right where we should be. You see, being that we say as believers that God spun the heavens into being with a mere thought, how is it that He is not able to deal with a financial issue? You really think He is that weak? If so, why do you continue to follow Him or have you forgotten what He has done for you because you too want to take the glory for yourself? Hand it back, things will get a lot easier then.

2. We fail to realize what we have

Num 11:4-6

4 Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said:"Who will give us meat to eat?5 We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;6 but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"
NKJV

At it again, the children of Israel are out in the desert after leaving Egypt. As they travel they complain, now it is about the food that they wish they had. So intense are the cravings that they actually talk about wanting the things they had when they were slaves! Here a bounty is placed before them in that they are

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given manna daily, they have seen Pharaoh's army defeated at the sea, but even with that they still would rather serve as slaves than to continue to follow the path God has chosen.

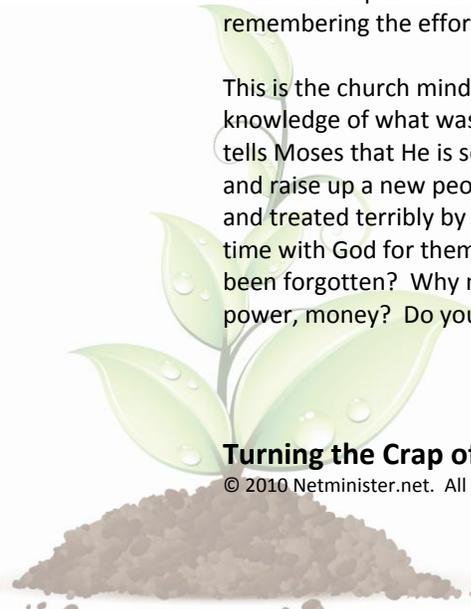
They have been freed from slavery, taken into the desert and are surviving because they have been blessed by God. They are not planting nor harvesting, yet they have their needs met. What they do not have is their wants met. Therein lies the problem with us and them, we have a want that we mistaken for a need. I want a new car, but the car I have is perfectly sufficient – then we complain because we haven't been blessed with a promotion that would pay for the new car. Lacking contentment in our lives brings us to the point of mistaking want for need. When we do that, we completely fall into the trap of not appreciating what we have been blessed with in the first place.

Danny got a call some time ago from a church that was hurting. They had paid a company a large amount of money to do something for them only to find that the job he had done was tremendously substandard. Now they had no money left to fix the problem. So Danny goes out to the church and helps by completing the project for almost nothing – taking a loss to help the church. Only to find out later that the church took the project and turned it over to another person who charged five times what Danny charged to do the project now that they have the money. They forgot that someone helped them in a time of need and returned the effort by turning their back on Danny. Like the church, we too can turn back to Egypt wanting to go back because things weren't as bad as we remember. Hey remember you were SLAVES to sin!

Or take the local ministry that works exclusively off donations. Ronnie works hard to help them out by giving them materials, time and effort. But the people never see any value because they do not have to earn their services from Ronnie. So, when someone comes along and tells some outlandish story about Ronnie, hey who are we to argue and we follow whoever is talking the loudest. Therefore we forget because we didn't have to work hard to get it in the first place so we don't have to worry about treating Ronnie bad because someone will come and take over for him. Back to Egypt we go, because we can't think for ourselves because that would require us to remember and value what it is that we have been given. Like this ministry, the children of Israel aren't having to earn anything so what they are given isn't enough. They want more. Want being the key word, instead of needing.

When we forget those that put in the effort to make our lives better, or the ones that work hard at church or in social settings, what we are doing is treating them in a way God never intended. To that end Jesus tells us not to throw our pearls before pigs that will just tear them up. Why do you think it is so difficult to get volunteers to work in church? Because of the way they have been treated! And that ends up making two groups, the ones that use people and the ones that are used. Why would anyone in their right mind want to be a part of either group? Which group are you a part of? Think about it for a moment, are you remembering the efforts of those before you, and do you really realize how good you have it?

This is the church mind you, just like the children of Israel this wasn't a group of people who had no knowledge of what was the right thing to do, this was His people treating folks this way. Ultimately, God tells Moses that He is so tired of the complaining and problems that He is going to destroy all the children and raise up a new people for Moses' descendents to lead that will be greater. Moses, the one forgotten and treated terribly by the children, even being threatened with stoning, was the one that pleaded each time with God for them. He, unlike they and us, did not forget. Are you defending someone who has been forgotten? Why not? Are you willing to pay the cost called for? Are you afraid of losing prestige, power, money? Do you think Jesus was worried about it when He remembered us on the Cross?



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3. Remembering Requires Us To Humbly Ask

Luke 23:40-43

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

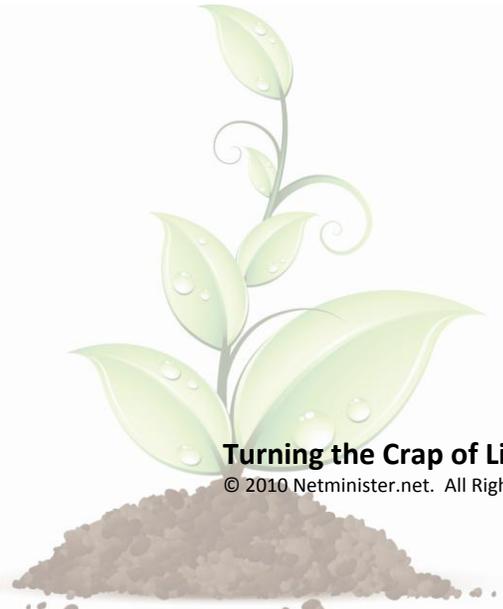
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Here he is, a criminal. We don't know what he had done, but surely it was bad for him to be crucified. Even today, experts tell that crucifixion is one of the worst ways to kill a person. So bad, that the Romans who did the crucifying wouldn't crucify their own citizens. So here is he dying, asking for Jesus to remember him. When we are at our weakest, God is at His best.

Stripped naked, nailed to a cross, dying before everyone, this criminal at Jesus' side realizes that he has nothing. That is where you and I are. We have nothing, we are dying, the difference between us and that criminal, we just don't choose to remember. How easily we forget as we are struggling to get through something that it is Jesus that has brought us this far. Unlike Him we know Jesus can, has and will bring us through each and ever problem of life. Not without scars, bruises and bumps, but He has always been faithful. Maybe it is time to simply turn to Jesus, while everyone else around you is criticizing you, everything you have is gone, and everyone is seeing you for the person you really are – weak, dying and despicable – and ask Him to remember us.

All you have to do is ask.

Final Analysis: I forget a lot. Most people I know forget. Sometimes we kiddingly call it middle-timers. But we can stop forgetting if we want to. We can change the way we view the world and the situations that come our way if we want to. We need to realize all that we have – not the things we want but the things we need and have been provided; we need to remember those that have done for us and we need to humbly ask Jesus to be with us, to remember us. That is all it takes. What is stopping you?



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