



Churchill Factor

One of the greatest desires and longings of people is for conditions to be “normal” – we just don’t like uncertainty. We see an example of this in the Churchill Factor – the voting out of leaders who successfully lead people through difficult times. It is not that they inadvertently do not remember what the leaders did, they consciously choose to forget so they can get back to the customary and comfortable – they associate those who brought them through with what they came through and want to forget it!

But what if the dangers still exists? And this is exactly the problem of life – forgetting the dangers are never-ending (and, in fact, increasing as we age).

Almost (if not) all who become Christians do so in “fox-holes” –at a time they realize they are in real trouble and need God’s help. Likewise, there are many false foxhole conversions – those who cry for help, are helped, only to return to self-confidence, self-righteousness and self-sufficiency. Is faith best evidenced by a moment or a life? Yesterday’s moment of evidence and faith are not sufficient for today and tomorrow any more than yesterday’s or last week’s food suffices to relieve today’s hunger.

Many people are mistakenly comforted that they are Christians when they obviously do not meet the models, standards and criteria of the Bible. Examples are the prevalent false faith and confidence in misusing the truth, “Once saved. Always saved.” And its related error: “Jesus can be your Savior, while not yet (or until you die) being your LORD.”

How do those professing to be Christians get around what the Bible so clearly teaches? They either overtly (by commission) or covertly (or by omission) deny the Bible is true. In actuality, there is little or no difference between the minority who blatantly state much of the Bible is error and the many more who, by neglect and disregard, neither seek its truth nor follow it when they do know what it says (or outright avoid the Bible, going to church, being around Christians, etc. because they are afraid what they will find there!).

How do we counter this inclination and the damning results? One of the best ways is by taking the advice of the book of Deuteronomy. It has a dual theme of being the Book of:

- ✚ Blessing and curses (relating the inevitable results of either following or denying God and His commands), and
- ✚ Warning of the “natural” dangers of our forgetfulness.

Three recurring terms used in Deuteronomy are:

- ✚ Remember – 16 times.

- ✚ Do not forget – 4 times.
- ✚ Carefully/Be careful – 30 times.

50 times God warns we should be looking for ways to remember – and this is what Deuteronomy provides us in practical ways. FDR got it almost right when he warned: “All we have to fear is fear itself.” The truth is that all we have to fear is forgetting the dangers we face. In some sense, we are more to blame than Eve in begin deceived again and again by the devil’s “Did God really say?” Maybe Eve didn’t know of the danger, we should! And we should be looking for ways to remember the dangers and arm ourselves with safeguards against them.

As Ephesians says:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Ephesians 6:10-18

And we are not advised to ever take it off, put it on and leave it on!

Getting back to Deuteronomy:

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. Deuteronomy 8:1-5

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. Then the LORD'S anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. Deuteronomy 11:16-21

We should be thoughtful, diligent and disciplined in our:

- ✚ Selection of friends (and who we marry).
- ✚ Reading of the Bible.
- ✚ Devoting time to the things and people of God.
- ✚ Seeking occasions of faith and grace.
- ✚ Thinking about the underlying realities of life rather than the apparent and obvious "natural" things.

Remember – Do not forget – Be Careful!

These are necessary and important disciplines of disciples.