

# A God Idea

20 times, in the book of *Deuteronomy*, we are told to *remember* or *do not forget*. You begin to get the idea that maybe this is a key theme of the book! And it is; because we are a forgetful people. Let a crisis pass and we can easily forget the cause, the cure or the care we should take so we are not back in the same mess. Life can be a cycle of “the same old same old” unless we, somehow, break this cycle.



Plowing a field with a horse and plow may seem quaint and nostalgic, but it is only so to the one NOT having to plow. For the farmer, a tractor is the choice. In the same way, why not use modern tools to help us remember/not forget what God has done for us? This is a God idea because we typically forget more than we remember!



How would you answer the question God asked the Jews in the second verse of *Malachi*?

“I have loved you,” says the LORD.

They, in fact, did not have an answer – simply a question in reply – “How have you loved us?” I am sure this gave God a warm and fuzzy feeling, making Him feel real good!

I have always considered “If a tree falls in the woods . . .?” kind of a stupid question. But I do know that a gift can become a curse if we forget its source. And this, not because God is petty and curses us, but because we curse ourselves by forgetting our need and the source of help. Who cannot identify with the “wicked servant” in the following parable of Jesus? He forgot!

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.” Mt 18:23 - 35

When non-Christians look at those claiming to be Christians, they seldom see much difference in their homes, food, clothes, medical conditions or other physical and material attributes; this is certainly true on a “micro,” individual, basis while even surveys seldom reveal meaningful differences because there is too much chaff with the wheat.

And even non-materially, much that Christians call *sin* is still hidden by non-Christians (and certainly by professing Christians) so that when someone is truly changed others may not see a big difference because they hid their adultery, theft (yes, not paying your taxes is theft!), hate, anger, undesirable drives and passions, etc. so well. So while **others may not see** a big change, you would expect a Christian to know (if anything **has** truly happened to them) what difference God has made to them – whether He loved them enough to change them or make a meaningful difference in their life. If He told them, “I have loved you,” you would hope Christians would be able to say, “I know because . . .,” giving reason after reason. But we forget!

So here is the God idea; and an old-fashioned approach will work if you don’t have modern tools for the task. Any good calendar software program has the ability to input an item and designate it as “recurring.” This last Sunday, after over 31 ideas “came to me,” I went to my *Outlook* calendar and

entered significant and special blessing each day of the month (designating them as recurring so they will appear the same day each month) – if you don't have a software system calendar a "low-tech" approach of writing them on a piece of paper and keeping the page where you will see it every day (a bookmark for your *Bible*?) will work. I say "special" blessings because I am not talking about those "common" graces most people are given – health, food, clothing, shelter, good family, but those that are specific to my needs – those that are tailor-made for me – those I **know** are miracles.

I don't know how this will all "shake out," but the ideas that came to me, while not exclusively, non-material, they are the type blessings and changes we tend to forget as we progress and face other issues and challenges. Or even if we have not totally conquered a weakness (having simply improved in this area) we can forget where we have "come from." A reminder is a great motivator to future progress!

So what can you identify as miracles that have occurred to you? Changes you could NOT have made without God's help? I hope you can identify something! 5 somethings, 10? 31? Here are a few of mine:

2 Monday    3 Tuesday    4 Wednesday    5 Thursday    6 Friday

Hope & Purpose

Persistence

Peace/Joy

Rest

Exercise

Someone might think this is such a God idea that they should prepare a calendar, with 31 entries, that everyone can use. The problem with this is it is like comparing a picture of children to a picture of YOUR children – yes, most children are cute, but YOURS are somehow special (as it should be). Even good things can be or become clichés if they are not MY things. Just as everyone has a unique fingerprint and DNA profile, the blessings of grace God gives each person is just as distinctive and matchless. It would be a good idea to have a general calendar of blessings – it is a God idea to prepare and use YOURS. In fact, while I have just started using mine, I have had some God ideas for "tweaking" it. It is amazing, if you start reflecting on it, how much individually God does for each Christian!

Taking one example, I realize that a word like "exercise" may be just the tip of the iceberg but at least if I see the top of the iceberg I can hope to be reminded of the underlying benefits. Each of the blessings is like this, not only are they deeper than a single word, they are synergistic in that they work together to further multiply blessings.

Think about writing down God's unique blessings to you, those you want to be reminded of so you don't forget it – this is a God idea!

Be prepared someday to you hear:

"I have loved you," says the LORD.

It is so easy to forget – just read *Deuteronomy* if you want to see the blessings of remembering as opposed to the curses of forgetting!