

NUMBERING OUR DAYS: Remembering the Past

Introduction

- 1) If we let God teach us to “**number our days**” we will gain a heart of wisdom (Psa. 90:9-12)
- 2) As the days pass and the calendar years change, it is wise to contemplate the fleeting nature of our earthly lives and the stages we pass through (Psa. 39:4-6; 144:3-4; Jas. 4:14)
- 3) We speak of our earthly life in three tenses: **Past – Present – Future**
- 4) As we grow older, our **PAST** becomes a more significant part of our earthly lives (more of it!)
 - a) The past has a continuing impact on our lives because of our God-given ability to remember the “former times” (cf. Heb. 10:32; God remembers – Ex. 2:24)
 - b) We use “memorials” (cf. Josh. 4:5-7, 20-24; 1 Cor. 11:23-25; earthly memorials)
- 5) What principles and truths does the Bible teach about “numbering” our **past** days?

I) Not Return to Any Former Conduct of Sin

- A) The Christian has been forgiven of his past sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
 - 1) Old man of sin has been put off (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)
- B) We recall past errors so that we learn not to repeat them (“*Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it*” – Santayana), and that we may appreciate our freedom in Christ
 - 1) Paul (Gal. 1:13-16; 1 Tim. 1:12-15; 1 Cor. 15:9-10)
 - 2) Brethren (1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)
- C) God does not “remember” sins He forgives – never again held against us (Heb. 10:17)
 - 1) We must manifest that same kind of forgiveness to ourselves and others (Eph. 4:32)

II) Learn from the Examples of Those Who Lived in the Past

- A) People tend to forget the dead (cf. Psa. 31:12); lessons of history lost in the passing of time
- B) We are to remember Jesus’ example (1 Pet. 2:21); He pointed to past examples (Lk. 17:32)
- C) We are to learn from Old Testament examples (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4; Heb. 11; Jas. 5:10)
 - 1) We are *not* to follow the Old Testament as our faith (doctrine) today (2 Cor. 3:14)
 - 2) But we must *not* fail to remember the prophecies and principles from the Old Testament that assist our understanding of the covenant of Christ (2 Tim. 3:14-15)
- D) We can learn from those who have stood for Christ in past generations among brethren (Restoration history), our families, and in local churches (2 Tim. 1:5; cf. Heb. 13:7)

III) Remember the Truths Learned and Experienced in the Past

- A) Remember the truths we were taught in years past (2 Tim. 3:14-15; Heb. 12:5)
- B) In times of weakness we need to remember past times of faithfulness (Rev. 2:4-5)
- C) In times of persecution we need to remember past times of strong faith (Heb. 10:32-34)
 - 1) Weakness and lack of growth will cause us to forget who we are (2 Pet. 1:9)
 - 2) A lifetime of faithfulness should be our legacy for others to remember (2 Tim. 4:7)

IV) Be Careful Not to “Live in the Past” and Forsake the Needs of the Present

- A) Easy to romanticize the past and be critical of present situations (“good old days”)
 - 1) The Bible warns against this (Eccl. 7:8-10); we do not know how things will work out
- B) God can do greater things with what we perceive as inferior circumstances (Hag. 2:3-9)

Conclusion

However we may feel about days gone by, our past is...well...still **past**! We really should not try to “live in the past,” but we can use our memories and lessons learned to help us be better Christians **today** and **tomorrow**. Start now by obeying Jesus – hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized into Christ, and put an unfaithful, unproductive, sinful past behind you!