

lifegroup

resource guide

for the week of 7 October

*He is God alone. There are no others…God is exclusively God.*

*“Give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently,*

*so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen*

*and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life…*

*Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God.”*

*(Deuteronomy 4.9, 10)*

There is nothing more heart-breaking than watching someone you love lose their memory. This personal and private treasury contains their knowledge, wisdom, history, sensitivities, and most of all relationships. The slow and relentless decay of one’s memory reduces adult intellect to infancy, vacates wisdom, erases history, neuters joy, and slowly disintegrates one’s most precious relationships. Watching my father lose his mind will forever be etched in my memory unless or until I might lose mine.

Dementia and Alzheimer’s do highlight a simple truth about relationships. We intentionally remember the relationships we value the most. Friendships and marriages that are not intentional and begin to “forget” to share life and time together are in jeopardy. Therefore, it should be no surprise that, because God is relational, He exhorts us to remember. In fact, the vibrancy of our faith will be contingent upon the spiritual discipline of “remembering.”

Amidst the maelstrom of daily urgencies, the absence of Christian fellowship, and the silence of biblical encouragement, it becomes easier to live like we forget God’s abiding presence and call rather then choosing to remember. Herein lies a fundamental problem: when we forget, we lose our perspective

* to expect God’s gracious visitation while at work;
* to see Kingdom purpose in our marketplace responsibilities;
* to be confident in the Holy Spirit’s presence, fullness, and counsel regardless of circumstance;
* to utilize the rich resources of worship, prayer, and Scripture while at work or on behalf of our friends and family;
* to experience congruity in their relationship with Jesus as we move through their own spheres of work, church, and home.

“Remember” is a spiritual discipline best encouraged by a dynamic liturgy that is both personal and communal. We need sacred relationships, places, and habits that engage us to remember. “Remember” will not foster a faith that is theoretical, mystical, or inconsequential. Just the opposite! Show me a person and people pursuing the discipline of “remember” and I guarantee you will witness people who are alive to God, vibrant in their friendships, and focused in their daily responsibilities. The people who choose to “remember” are a people on mission.

“Remember” is the easily overlooked evidence that we are made for relationship. “Remember” discloses God’s desire to have a relationship with us that is personal, immediate, substantial, and faithful. Because God “remembers,” He contends for an authentic relationship with us so that the benefits of His presence may make a tangible impact on our daily lives. God, for our part, expects us to intentionally live remembering Him loving others in the manner that He has taught us. May our thoughts, words, and deeds indicate that we joyfully and gratefully remember our God and the precious relationships we share together.

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

What is your earliest memory of disobeying your parent(s)?

Reading Scripture together…

Getting to know one another…

1 Samuel 15:1-35: Doing almost all of God’s will...

*Then Samuel said to Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ‘Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”*

*Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah. Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*

*Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal.” Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD.” But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed.” Then Samuel said to Saul, “Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night.” And he said to him, “Speak!”*

*Samuel said, “Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.’ “Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?”*

*Then Saul said to Samuel, “I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. “But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”*

*Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.*

*“For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.”*

*Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. “Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.” But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.” As Samuel turned to go, Saul*

*seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you. “Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.” Then he said, “I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God.” So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.*

*Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.*

*Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.*

What? (does the Bible say?)

What message from the Lord does Samuel deliver to Saul, and why?

What factors probably contributed to Saul's unwillingness to carry out God's explicit command?

Why is it so difficult for Saul to realize the seriousness of his sin against God?

How does Samuel describe Saul's disobedience?

Although Saul finally confesses his sin (15:24) what do his actions suggest about the sincerity of his repentance? What continues to be Saul’s primary concern?

Now what? (how will I think?)

What do we observe in this account about the nature and character of God?

Why do you think we sometimes settle for doing only part of God's will?

Why do you think God equates disobedience with idolatry?

How does this description differ from the way we view our sin when we do not do all of God's will?

So what? (what difference does it make?)

What "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" do we sometimes offer to compensate for our lack of obedience?

Identify one area where you have been content to do almost all of God's will. When are you tempted to carry out only part of God's command?

What steps can you take to complete your obedience to God? How can your LifeGroup encourage you

My prayer needs (write down in advance)

Praying for my group…