

## LOOK BOTH WAYS BEFORE YOU CROSS

TEXT: (Ephesians 5:16-17, KJV)

<sup>15</sup> See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, <sup>16</sup> Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

## I. DO NOT FORGET WHERE THE LORD BROUGHT YOU FROM

1. “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deuteronomy 5:15, NIV).
2. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:9-11, NLT).

## A. Remember the Distance He Brought You

1. “Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands” (Deuteronomy 8:2, NLT).
2. “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life” (I Timothy 1:15-16, NIV).
3. “But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14, NIV).

## B. Remember, but Don't Long for

1. “We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic” (Numbers 11:5, NIV).
2. “Jesus replied, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:62, NIV).
3. “Remember Lot's wife” (Luke 17:32, NIV)!

## II. DON'T BE QUITTERS

1. “So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives” (I Peter 1:13, MSG).
2. “So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming this next year.”
3. “Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing” (I Peter 1:14, MSG).
4. “They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them” (Psalms 78:11, NIV).
5. “But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his counsel” (Psalm 106:13, NIV).

6. "They traded the Glory for a cheap piece of sculpture—a grass-chewing bull! They forgot God, their very own Savior, who turned things around in Egypt, Who created a world of wonders in the Land of Ham, who gave that stunning performance at the Red Sea" (Psalm 106:20-22, MSG).

#### A. A Proverb of the Faithless Christian

1. "Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel: 'The days go by and every vision comes to nothing'" (Ezekiel 12:22, NIV)?
2. "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD. Yet he too is wise and can bring disaster; he does not take back his words. He will rise up against the house of the wicked, against those who help evildoers. But the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, he who helps will stumble, he who is helped will fall; both will perish together" (Isaiah 31:1-3, NIV).
3. "I am going to put an end to this proverb, and they will no longer quote it in Israel" (Ezekiel 12:23, NIV).
4. "The days go by and every vision comes to nothing" (Ezekiel 12:22, NIV).
5. "Say to them, 'The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled'" (Ezekiel 12:23, NIV).

#### B. Scoffers

1. "Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.' But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water" (II Peter 3:3-6, NIV).
2. "For this they willingly are ignorant" (II Peter 3:5, KJV).
3. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (Habakkuk, 3:17-19, NIV).

#### C. Where There Is No Vision

1. "Where *there is* no vision" (Proverbs 29:18, KJV).
2. "Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction" (Proverbs 29:18, NIV).
3. "If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves" (Proverbs 29:18, MSG).

### III. A REALISTIC VISION FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

#### A. A Vision for a Deeper Relationship in God

1. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6, KJV).
2. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35, KJV).

3. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37, KJV).

B. A Vision of Developing a Prayer Life

1. "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened" (Luke 11:9-10, NIV).
2. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (Luke 11:11-12, NIV).
3. "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6, NIV)?

C. A Vision for Usefulness to God

1. "But Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there no prophet of the LORD here, through whom we may inquire of the LORD?'  
An officer of the king of Israel answered, 'Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah'" (II Kings 3:11, NIV).
2. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. "Say to them, 'The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled'" (Ezekiel 12:23, NIV).