

Message #8**Deuteronomy 4:9-31**

There are millions of people who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Another way to say this is there are millions of people who suffer from some type of memory loss that affects the way they live life. People with Alzheimer's disease become very confused and they have difficulty organizing thoughts and thinking logically. They have real memory issues. As people age, Alzheimer's and Dementia become a real threat. It is sad to see. I am certain if the person had something to say about it, he/she would never choose to think this way.

What is sad about some of the people of God is that they actually make a choice to be in a form of forgetfulness when it comes to God. It is a sad thing to watch. One of the greatest threats and dangers to God's people is they fall into a perpetual state of forgetfulness.

People who have known God for years and have seen God do some amazing things can easily forget what they have seen God do. They can actually forget who they are. The big difference between this kind of memory loss and other memory losses is that this is not a mental disease, it is a mental choice.

This kind of memory loss is brought on by a willful decision to forget about what God's people have seen God actually do. Now the positive about this is that it is preventable and it is curable.

So how do we prevent this from happening in our spiritual lives and mind?

**GOD'S PEOPLE CAN PREVENT THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL DETERIORATION BY
REMEMBERING AND NOT FORGETTING WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN GOD DO
WHEN YOU DISOBEY AND REMEMBERING AND NOT FORGETTING WHAT YOU
HAVE SEEN GOD DO WHEN YOU OBEY.**

This is a very simple thesis. Remember what you have seen and experienced when it comes to obeying or not obeying God. Don't forget it. This simple point can revolutionize your spirituality. Remember what happened when you were not obeying God. Remember what happened when you were obeying God. This is a critical key to spiritual success.

Verse 9 begins with a challenge to every believer and that is "**you need to give heed to yourself to guard your soul diligently.**" There is an individual responsibility that each of us has and that is to carefully guard and keep watch over our soul. You have a responsibility to guard your own soul and I have a responsibility to guard my own soul.

MEMORY #1 – Do not forget what your eyes have seen all the days of your life. **4:9**

Each believer has a responsibility to guard his heart, mind and soul. The verb "give heed" (shamar) is one that means to be very, very careful to keep a constant watch and guard (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 837).

Each believer has a responsibility to guard his own “soul” (nephesh). And he has the responsibility to make sure he does not forget in his “heart” (Lb).

The word “soul” and “heart” refers to that immaterial part of you that includes your intellect, emotion and will. According to Gesenius, the soul and mind is central to one’s thinking and understanding (*Ibid.*, p. 559). The heart has to do with how you think as it affects how you feel (*Ibid.*, p. 427).

Moses is telling the people you do not want to get careless when it comes to what you think, how you feel and what you choose when it comes to God. You need to stay constantly on alert that you do not forget the wonderful things you have seen God do.

We need to do this “all the days of your life.” You must keep this focus all the way through life if we want the blessings of God. In other words, there needs to be a continual reflection upon the blessings of God that one has seen and experienced.

Paul told Timothy “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (I Tim. 4:16).

MEMORY #2 – Remember to communicate what you have seen to your children and grandchildren. **4:9b**

One of the things that parents and grandparents have the responsibility to do is to tell their children and grandchildren of what they have seen God do in life.

They need to talk to them about God. They need to tell them if you obey the word of God, you will be blessed, but if you do not, you will miss out and experience many negative things.

It seems to me that many parents and grandparents today are shirking their responsibilities. They turn the responsibility over to Sunday School or children’s programs or the church. Nothing will ever replace a father or mother or a grandfather or grandmother telling the children about what you have seen God do. God sanctions you telling them.

MEMORY #3 – Remember what you saw and heard at Mt. Horeb (Sinai). **4:10-14**

According to **verse 10**, Moses takes them back to Exodus 19 and asks them to remember what happened there. Three months after the Israelites had left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, in the wilderness, God told Moses to assemble all the people for three purposes:

- (**Purpose #1**) - The people would hear the word of God.
- (**Purpose #2**) - The people would learn to fear God.
- (**Purpose #3**) - The people would teach their children.

Verse 11 says they came near to the mountain and stood at the base of it and the mountain burned with a blazing fire within a thick gloomy darkness. God, Himself, came with His presence to this mountain.

According to **verse 12**, God spoke verbally to the people and they heard Him but they did not see His form because the darkness hid it. All they did was hear His words from His booming voice. This shows you the importance of hearing the words of God.

According to **verse 13**, what God verbally declared to His people was **His covenant**. The noun “covenant” (berith) is a legal agreement or contract between two parties (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 141). In this case, God actually spoke and told the people that He was entering into a legal agreement between Him and Israel.

Now a covenant could either be conditional or unconditional. It could be bilateral or unilateral. For example, God has promised Israel a land and a king and a kingdom and that will happen regardless of how Israel’s behaves. The Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenant guarantee this.

However, this Mosaic covenant was not an unconditional covenant. The basis of this Mosaic covenant concerned those Ten Commandments, literally in Hebrew “ten words” that God wrote on two tablets (**v. 13**).

There are only three specific places where the words “Ten Commandments” are found in the Bible: Deut. 4:13; 10:4; Ex. 34:28. The Ten Commandments are the very heart of the covenant, upon which all the rest of the law is built. However, the Law of God is much more than just ten words or commandments.

According to **verse 14**, when God gave the Ten Commandments, He commanded that Moses teach the people the statutes (huqqim) and judgments (mishpatim). The word “statutes” emphasizes God’s decrees and ordinances that are designed to reveal specific limits, privileges and rights (*Ibid.*, p. 300). The word “judgments” refers to God’s righteous forensic judgments that reveal right decisions from God as judge (*Ibid.*, p. 519).

So this covenant of God was conditioned upon the people of God obeying the word of God in regard to various decisions and judgments in life. God says if you will just obey this and do this, you will go into the land and I will bless you in every way.

MEMORY #4 – Guard yourselves from any form of idolatry. 4:15-19

Notice once again Moses uses the word “shamar” “watch yourselves carefully.” Be very, very careful to guard yourself from something. Now the first thing on the list of those commandments was don’t worship anything other than the true God. So Moses says when you get over into that land, don’t worship anything other than God. Now there are three key specific points that God makes about this:

Point #1 - Remember that when God spoke to you, you did not see any tangible form. **4:15**

Obviously God was not something tangible. He was invisible. What they saw was an awesome display of His glory. What they did not see was the visible God. So don't fall for the trap of worshipping something you can see, like some idol.

Point #2 - Do not make any form or image to worship. **4:16-18**

God says since you did not see a physical form of God, don't make one. Don't design any figure and call it God. Don't make some figure of a male or female; or likeness of any animal or bird or anything that creeps on the ground or any fish.

Moses said if you do this you will become corrupt (**v. 16**) in the sight of God. The Hiphil stem of the verb "corrupt" means you will cause yourself to become so putrid and corrupted and wicked in the sight of God that you will bring yourself to destruction and ruin (*Ibid.*, pp. 815-816).

Point #3 - Do not worship any celestial heavenly created objects. **4:19**

God says do not worship the sun, the moon or the stars. Do not worship celestial bodies including things such as angels. Do not worship any created thing classified as "all the host of heaven."

These are created things God has given to the whole world. These heavenly things were not ever to become Israel's object of worship. God had given the sun, moon and stars to the whole world and to nations that do not even reverence Him.

One of the trends today in many churches is to try and pattern the church after the world's marketing strategies. The idea is let's make people in the world feel comfortable at church. So the sanctuary becomes a place for entertainment. But Dr. Warren Wiersbe cited something G. Campbell Morgan once said, "The church did the most for the world when the church was the least like the world" (*Be Equipped*, p. 40).

MEMORY #5 – Remember where you came from and where God has brought you. **4:20**

Moses says remember where you were when God delivered you. You were in an Egyptian furnace, which means you were in a hopeless situation of slavery and bondage. God took you from that status and not only brought you out but He made you a people for His own possession.

Now the Egyptians were known to heat iron and mold it into whatever it wanted. They used furnaces to do that. That is what the Egyptians were doing to Israel. They were making them do what they wanted and right in that context. They were slave labor in the wretched heat of Egypt. God came and delivered her when she had no chance of delivering herself.

Don't ever and I mean ever say you were better off before God saved you. Before God saved us we were on our way to hell and we were empty and going nowhere in life. Don't ever forget that. God has made us a people for His own possession.

MEMORY #6 – Remember that I will not be able to enter the Promised Land with you.

4:21-22

This is the third time that Moses has said that God will not let him cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land (1:37; 3:26-27; 4:21-22).

The reason why Moses would not be permitted to enter was because of the people. Their rebellion and his own disobedience cost Moses the great blessing of going into the Promised Land.

He really wanted to make this trip into the land with them. But he blew it. Instead of speaking to the rock to produce water, Moses hit the rock two times (Num. 20:8-12) and, as a result, he was penalized.

What made Moses so mad was the constant grumbling and complaining of the people. So Moses said do not ever forget that the thing that prevented me from experiencing the ultimate blessing was the disobedience of your ancestors. Don't you do the same thing.

There are times when it is right to share how we have seen God discipline and chastise us when we were not obeying Him. When we speak of those times, we don't want to be telling our children and grandchildren it wasn't fair or we weren't treated right. We want to tell them, we were the cause of it and if we had not done what we did, we wouldn't have gone through it.

MEMORY #7 – Watch yourselves and don't forget this conditional covenant. **4:23-24**

Again **verse 23** is the word “shamar,” be very, very careful. Do not forget the covenant God made with you and do not make some idol. God has commanded you not to do this and understand that God is a consuming fire and a jealous God. If you make some idol, or if you do things against what God has commanded, you will anger God.

MEMORY #8 – If you do that which is evil, you will anger God and suffer consequences.

4:25-28

It is interesting that this begins by referring to the future fact that the people are in the land and they have children and grandchildren. So what that means is **after a while, complacency can set in. After a while God's people can let their guards down and drift away from Him.**

No matter how long God's people have known Him and no matter how much He has blessed them, if God's people start acting corruptly and doing things that are evil, God will be angered and when that happens there are consequences:

Consequence #1 - God can quickly remove blessings. **4:26a**

Consequence #2 - God will destroy His own people. **4:26b**

Consequence #3 - God will scatter His own people. **4:27**

A few will survive and will be scattered out of the land into other nations.

Consequence #4 - God's people will end up in forced idolatry. **4:28**

In other words, God will give His own people up into sinful things that will never bring about His blessings.

The church has a responsibility to do this. If a person who says he is a believer persists in sins such as sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, reviler, drunkenness or swindler, we are not to eat with that kind of person. Let them spend their life in the corruption of their flesh.

MEMORY #9 – If you will return to the Lord when He is disciplining you, He will again bless you. **4:29-31**

God offers His people who have blown it amazing grace. No matter what your present condition, no matter how deep you have sunk into sin, if you seek the Lord you will find Him.

When you are in distress, if you return to the LORD, He will not forget you. He will be compassionate to you and remember the covenant He has made with you.

All of us need to remember this all the days of our lives and we need to tell this to our children and grandchildren.