

Stewardship - The Remedy for Forgetfulness

Deuteronomy 6:10-15

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, March 8, 2026

I. Introduction

Imagine an eight-year-old boy in western Nebraska looking out the window of his parent's large farmhouse. He sees trees that his grandfather planted and acre after acre of well-cultivated farmland that he anticipates inheriting. He has never known hunger. His father has shielded him from the fear of losing the farm because of Nebraska's onerous property taxes. His grandpa has shielded him from the pain they went through in great depression. All this boy has experienced is that the pantry has always been full and abundance is normal. He doesn't see the toys, the electricity, and the other comforts as a gift from God that is undeserved. It's not as if he has rejected God; he hasn't. After all, he goes to church every Sunday. But that's about the extent of His Christianity. God is not at the center of his thoughts. He does not see himself as a steward of his toys and everything else. He suffers from a very common spiritual disease: prosperity amnesia. That's a spiritual malady of being so preoccupied with the busyness and comforts of our prosperity that God is not in our thoughts very much. Keep in mind that chapters 6-11 are giving an exposition of the first commandment, and show the ways (including subtle ways like this) that we can put other things before God.

God did not want what happened to this imaginary boy to happen to Israel. They were about to inherit cities they had not built, wells that they had not dug, and olive groves they had not planted. And Moses says that this very *prosperity* presents a potential danger. He says in verses 11-12, "when you have eaten and are full - then beware, lest you forget..." That's the irony. Sickness, financial needs, and other problems that we hate are often hidden blessings that drive us to our knees and make us realize that we desperately need God, whereas prosperity and fullness *can* (it doesn't have to but it *can*) easily tempt us to forget our need for him. So Moses builds on the first nine verses by encouraging Israel to take some *further* steps (beyond the ones in verses 1-9) to maintain a multi-generational passion for Him. And stewardship is a key remedy to prosperity amnesia. I would encourage all parents to make one of your homeschooling goals to develop a stewardship attitude in all of your children.

II. Stewards recognize that God has enabled them to benefit from the industry of others (vv. 10-11)

And the first step in stewardship is recognizing that *God* is the one who enables us to benefit from the industry of others. Look at verses 10-11:

"So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you

did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—

A. Recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God

Isn't that a great place to be in? It *is*, if you first of all recognize that all those blessings are a gift from God. God is not against prosperity - so long as your prosperity does not short-circuit dependence upon Him. When you turn on the faucet, clean water comes out. That's great. Do you realize what a privilege that is? A large chunk of this world's population does not have that luxury. When you turn on a light switch, the room instantly lights up. Most of human history lived without that. When you flush the toilet - something we rarely thank God for - keep in mind that roughly 354 million people practice open defecation and open urination on the side of a street or in a backyard. Civilization is wonderful - until the plumbing stops working and we have to call Michael in to repair things. Verse 10 reminds us that *God* has blessed you with all of those privileges of living in America. It says, "So it shall be, when *the LORD your God brings you* into the land..." The land and everything in it was a gift from God - a gift that Israel did not work for. It showed God's love and care. And daily we have many reasons to thank God that we have good clothing, refrigerators, pickup trucks, Wi-Fi routers, and about a hundred other conveniences we didn't invent. We live surrounded by blessings so normal we don't even notice them—until the Wi-Fi goes down and suddenly we rediscover prayer. But it is much better to self-consciously do our dishes for Christ, plant our gardens for Christ, and drive our cars with a consciousness of God's presence, power, and care.

B. Recognizing the role their ancestors had in securing these blessings for them

The second thing that stewards are grateful for is the role that their *ancestors* had in securing these blessings for them. He speaks of the land as "the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob..." And why did God swear to give the land to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? It was because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the preconditions laid out in verses 1-9 for a longterm multi-generational vision. They were the ones who were like the medieval cathedral builders I talked about last week, who laid foundations for magnificent cathedrals, whose spires they would never live to see. They had a longterm vision that was building things for their descendants, and they call for us to have that same longterm vision. They lived out verses 1-9. They believed God, feared Him, kept His statutes, passed on a covenant vision to their children, had a laser-focused devotion and love for God, internalized God's Word, taught it to their children, modeled it to their children, applied God's revelation to all of life, made enormous sacrifices so that future generations could have it better, and sought to be consistent in their worldview and practice both within the home and in culture. That's a mouthful, but that was all implied in verses 1-9. They had all the things that we saw last week made post-Reformation Scotland have such an impact on their families, and through their families on the world. God honors such faith. And he wants us to never forget what our own forefathers had to sacrifice so that *we* could enjoy these blessings.

In his book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, former District Court Judge Robert Bork lamented the fact that Americans have forgotten the Christian values of America's founding fathers, have taken for granted the blessings that flowed from their sacrifices, and more importantly, have forgotten that we became great because America once took more seriously our national motto, "One Nation Under God," and the slogan on our money, "In God We Trust." He notes that humans are *inescapably religious*, and if they are not devoted to God, they are going to be devoted to something else. For example, on page 3 he shows how the adolescents of his day were making other things (like radical leftist politics) a religion that they hoped would continue to provide what *they* want. But later, he brilliantly shows how their worldview is not capable of sustaining the greatness of America because it rejects the Christian faith of previous generations. Now, I will admit that his book is not a consistently Christian book. There are much better ones out there, but the point is that even *he* recognized a lot of the things that we talked about last week. On page 276 he said,

We all know persons without religious belief who nevertheless display all the virtues we associate with religious teaching...such people are living on the moral capital of prior religious generations...that moral capital will be used up eventually, having nothing to replenish it.¹

But I will hasten to say that it may not be too late for our generation to repent of having turned from the Christian faith of the past. Just as God reminded Israel that what they were about to inherit was largely because of the faith and sacrifices made by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we can remind our children that the things we enjoy in America are the *leftover* blessings that flowed from the earlier pervasive Christian faith that largely (though imperfectly) framed America's institutions. And there are many books that demonstrate this, such as Gary DeMar's three volume set titled "God And Government." Or if you are an academic who wants to understand the roots of American law, read John Eidsmoe's three volume work, "Historical and Theological Foundations of Law." R. J. Rushdoony's book, "This Independent Republic," shows many other ways in which we are living on the remnants of God's blessings to our forefathers in America. Or you can think of John Witte Jr.'s book, "The Reformation of Rights," Alvin J. Schmidt's "How Christianity Changed the World," Douglas F. Kelly's "The Emergence of Liberty in the West," and numerous other books. I don't think Christians appreciate as much as they should that many of the incredible blessings we enjoy in America are a direct result of the faith, sacrifices, and longterm vision of our Christian forefathers. America has forgotten that.

But I do want to comment on something that has confused people. God didn't just promise the land to the *descendants* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He promised the land to *them*. So what gives? Those three didn't really inherit the land, other than the cave Abraham purchased in Hebron that became a tomb for Sarah. Was God unfaithful? No. This is a great argument for the necessity of a future resurrection and a future transformation of even the

¹ A web copy of the book can also be read here:

https://archive.org/details/SlouchingTowardsGomorrahModernLiberalismAndAmericanDecline/page/n275/mode/2up?utm_source=chatgpt.com&q=%22moral+capital+of+prior%22

physical land. Let me explain. Interestingly, Romans 4:13 says about Abraham, “the promise *that he would be the heir of the world* [Let me stop there. That is very interesting! If what Paul is saying is true, then that must mean that the promise of Canaan was somehow a downpayment; a type of the future world. But he says, “the promise that he would be heir of the world”] was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” In that verse, Paul expands the promise given to Abraham *far beyond Canaan*. He expands it to his being heir of the *world*. How is that? Well, let’s break it down into its parts. In Galatians 3:16, Paul gives a Christocentric meaning to the promise when he says this: “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.” Ultimately the promise was made to *Jesus* to be heir of the world. Indeed, 2 Corinthians 1:20 says, “For all the promises of God *in Him* are Yes, and *in Him* Amen, to the glory of God through us.” So the only way that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or any of their descendants could partake of the promises was by union with Jesus - their future Messiah, and the ultimate Seed.

But that still doesn’t answer the question of why Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob didn’t inherit the whole land of Canaan. Hebrews 11:13 is quite clear that “These all died in faith, *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*” So, if they didn’t yet receive the promise, was God unfaithful? And Hebrews goes on to say, No. “They were seeking a better, that is a heavenly country...” But more than that, they realized that they would inherit a new heavens and new earth. So while the cave in Hebron was a downpayment of Canaan, Israel entering into Canaan was a downpayment of something even greater - a perfectly renewed world. If Abraham will eventually inherit a renewed world, has he inherited the speck on planet earth called Canaan? Yes. Canaan was a type of the New Heavens and New Earth. And *that* was the ultimate longterm vision that drove them to be faithful.

But none of that negates the incredible tangible blessings that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had right here on earth *while they wandered through the land of Canaan*. They too enjoyed the fruits of the land. But all of those were simply a small foretaste of something even greater that all of us can look forward to in heaven, *and in the new heavens and new earth*.

And to me, all of this points to God’s interest in redeeming far more than simply invisible souls. Christ’s redemption blesses us now with healing, with finances, with food, and other tangible blessings. But Christ’s redemption also goes far as the curse is found. This is an essential presupposition needed to overturn the heresy of Full Preterism. Christ’s redemption will reverse absolutely everything that the curse in Genesis 3 impacted. Which means that since the cross reverses history, we can anticipate more and more reversals of the curse in history. That’s why we believe in healing. But healing is just a downpayment of our final healing in the resurrection. And ultimately we are looking for a complete reversal of the Second Law of Thermodynamics and every other downward pattern we find in history until the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth as the waters cover the ocean beds. *The Gospel is not a gnostic gospel that only impacts the soul. It impacts everything* in life and in the life to come. Praise God! That’s a side note to the main theme here, but it is an important side note.

C. Recognizing the role pagans play in God's plan to provide these blessings for them (v. 11)

But moving on to verse 11, God wants stewards to know that He is in control of even pagan nations, and God uses *their* labors, inventions, and produce to advance His kingdom and to benefit His people. It says, “houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—” God was allowing the pagans to live in Canaan and accumulate wealth, buildings, technology, water systems, and riches that would be inherited by the Israelites. Genesis 15:16 gives one of the many reasons God allowed Israel to remain in Egypt for so long. It says, “But in the fourth generation² they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” God’s patience with the pagan Amorite iniquity does not mean that God is not a God of judgment. Nor does it mean that God does not care. God’s patience with pagans is *for the sake of the righteous who in the future will benefit from their industry*. You may have wondered why God doesn’t answer our prayers right away to destroy the Muslim states, or destroy the Woke politicians who are trying to undermine the faith. But when you pair Genesis 15:16 with this verse, you can see that God has a purpose.

Verse 11 is highlighting the labor of the Canaanites in making the things that the Israelites would enjoy. God *Himself* was behind those pagan labors, enabling unbelievers to have the skills needed to produce amazing olive groves, vineyards, water systems, houses, and what he designates as “all good things.” This means that *it is OK to benefit from the industry of pagans*. Some people have guilty consciences about benefiting from pagans through the stock market, or through other exchanges, but you shouldn’t. Jesus Himself approved of lending money to the bankers to collect interest. And the bankers back then were not necessarily good guys. For example, in a parable in Matthew 25:27, He says, “So you *ought* to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own *with interest*.” I think Martin Luther didn’t understand this. Collecting interest on your money is OK. That involves benefiting from the industry of pagans.

Likewise, it’s OK to use roads you didn’t pave, and cell phones that pagans have manufactured. Some have asked, “Is it OK that Americans have benefited from rare earth mining in other countries?” I don’t see why not - even though America *itself* has sinned by

² And for those who wonder how 400 years in Egypt could be four generations, let me go down *that* rabbit trail. A generation can refer to either a 40 year span or the span of a person’s entire life (which could be 70 to over 100 years. And in this case, he is definitely referring to second definition - the literal generations of father, to son, to grandson, to great grandson during the 400 years spanning Genesis 21 to Exodus 12. For example, there was a Hezron (who was an infant in Genesis 46:8,12, and his son Caleb (a much earlier Caleb than Joshua’s co-laborer), whom Hezron fathered at the age of 65, and Caleb’s son Hur who was fathered by Caleb in *his* old age, and then Bezalel (the fourth generation) who was a mature man in Exodus 31. That’s four generations. And commentators have traced other lines of people to exactly four generations between Genesis 21 and Exodus 12, which was exactly 400 years. So there is no contradiction.

obtaining some of those rare earths by bullying and expansionism. Is it OK that we keep warm and drive cars by using oil from Muslim countries and other pagan countries? Yes. Proverbs 13:22 says, “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.” There is nothing inherently sinful about the *goods themselves*. This verse calls the things the Canaanites manufactured “good things.” They are good things even though they were manufactured with bad sinful motives of the Canaanites. And similarly, there is nothing inherently sinful about Christians enjoying the technology produced by pagans today, such as electricity, refrigeration, hospitals, motor vehicles, airline flights, well-stocked grocery stores, and myriad other things. *We don’t have to be Amish to be righteous.*

But as stewards, we need to always keep in mind that the Lord gives and the Lord can take away, and that even the blessings that come from pagan industry are a gift from God’s hand and cannot be taken for granted. This will keep us from envying the wicked, emulating the wicked, or becoming enamored with the wicked. God *alone* enables them to produce these things by His Providence. There is a sense in which we too have inherited cities we did not build, wells we did not dig, and vineyards we did not plant. We are enjoying the fruits of previous generations and even the labors of the pagans of our own generation. All of these things are a gift from God’s hand and show one of the purposes for God’s patience with pagans before He judges them.

III. The danger: prosperity-driven forgetfulness (v. 12)

But verse 12 reminds us that this very prosperity can easily make us lazy and self-indulgent if we are not careful. It says, “then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Apart from God’s grace, Israel could still be in slavery in Egypt and not be enjoying these benefits. Yet it is a sad reality that when things go well, it is so easy to forget the LORD. You may think that you haven’t forgotten God at all, but let’s put it to the test.

We thank God for salvation, but we rarely thank Him for plumbing. Do you thank God when the fridge hums? Do you have a heavenward gratefulness to God when the furnace kicks on in January. Those things feel automatic — *until a storm hits or the grid fails*, and suddenly you realize you’ve been treating God’s gifts like personal rights. But you have no ultimate right to those things. They must be seen as an undeserved gift from God that must be treated faithfully as a stewardship trust. Prosperity can easily train us to confuse regular mercy with natural entitlement. And the next generation may take it one step further. And the third generation may entirely neglect their devotion to God.

So just as Israel was dispossessed when they began to be unfaithful, America can easily become dispossessed as well. Never assume that life must of necessity continue on with all the comforts we currently have. We need to remind fellow-Americans that disaster can happen when we forget two things:

A. Forgetting that blessings come from faithfulness to God

The first thing we can forget is that blessings come from faithfulness to God, not from military might. It's sad that it takes a man like Robert Bork to rebuke the church in America for forgetfulness. This rebuke should have come from the *pulpits* of America, but hey - God can use even a donkey to rebuke His people, as 2 Peter 2:16 reminds us. Anyway, this former District Court Justice asks this question:

why the West has become so rapidly secularized. A number of factors might be cited, but underlying them and giving them force I would put the advance of egalitarianism and individualism together with the progress of technology that made lives easier. Those of us used to the soft, therapeutic religions of the present day forget how rigorous religion used to be, Protestant as well as Catholic. As life became easier and diversions more plentiful, men are less willing to accept the authority of their clergy and less willing to worship a demanding God, a God who dictates how one should live and puts a great many bodily and psychological pleasures off limits. [p. 282]

Last week I gave a number of quotes showing how Protestantism, and especially Calvinism, gave the kind of comprehensive worldview and passion to take dominion and advance science, technology, the arts, and many other areas of life. We have forgotten that.

B. Forgetting the bondage that previously came from unfaithfulness to God

But we have also forgotten how quickly God can remove our comforts when we forget Him and become unfaithful. Here He reminds Israel that He was the One who rescued them from bondage, and God can bring us once again into bondage if America does not wake up. There is a marvelous speech that Os Guinness gave³ on the reasons for America's forgetfulness, the impotence of the church, our current inability to recognize that the Trinity alone gives the balance to avoid anarchy on the one extreme or totalitarian control on the other, and why there is no reason why we cannot turn things around if we will have the faith of Moses and Joshua. In that speech he said,

our Western civilization today, especially at the elite levels, is a cut-flower civilization, *and the flowers are dying*. Unless there's a revival and a restoration of the *roots*, the days of our Western civilization are numbered.

And I say, "Amen!" I guess the point is that forgetfulness doesn't tend to happen during times of chaos and revolution. The danger begins when prayer and gratitude fade, and worship becomes a formality, and comfort consumes us.

³ <https://www.facebook.com/colsoncenter/videos/334992334212433/>

IV. The remedy: exclusive covenant allegiance (vv. 13-14)

So what's the remedy? It's not a vow of poverty. Verses 13-14 give a four-fold remedy for forgetfulness.

A. Fear the Lord

He says first, "You shall fear the LORD your God..." We saw in chapter 5 that when Israel caught a glimpse of God's glory and holiness, it caused them to fear Him. And we saw that the fear of Lord (though it is unnerving) produces true worship, loyalty to God, and the kind of faith that Joshua had under his command in the book of Joshua.

But in addition to producing those things, the fear of the Lord removes the fear of man. When God is big, people suddenly become small.

It also produces humility in God's people. And that's good, because God *opposes* the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

And we saw that the fear of the Lord makes us unwilling to question any portion of His Word. It produces people of the book.

The fear of the Lord is a foundational remedy for the symptoms Bork outlined that have made our country slouch towards Gomorrah.

B. Serve the Lord

The next remedy is given in the next clause - "You shall fear the LORD your God *and serve Him.*" What did it mean for the average citizen of that day to serve the Lord? After all, they weren't all pastors. Too many people think of serving the Lord as involving Bible studies, evangelism, or some kind of ministry that pastors do. But who was Moses talking to? Most of them weren't pastors. They were dads and moms, soldiers and accountants, homeschoolers and tradesmen. Yet they knew that they were serving the Lord with even the most mundane of their tasks. In Martin Luther's *Treatise on Good Works*, he said that we are serving God and doing a good work even if the work is as insignificant as picking up a piece of straw - if it is done in faith to God.⁴ Calvinists have repeatedly emphasized that there must be no sacred-secular divide - as if this part of life is secular and this part of life is sacred. All of life can be service to God *if we consciously do that work to His glory and in dependence upon Him.* This is an essential feature of *true* stewardship. True stewardship sees everything we do in life as being done to God's glory. Abraham Kuyper once said, "there is not one square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ,

⁴ The exact quote is, "Now every one can note and tell for himself when he does what is good or what is not good; for if he finds his heart confident that it pleases God, the work is good, even if it were so small a thing as picking up a straw."
https://ccel.org/ccel/luther/good_works/good_works.v.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”⁵ And the owner of all has given us a stewardship trust of our time and talents. And this was a common theme in Calvinistic preaching from hundreds of years ago. For example, the Puritan preacher, William Perkins said,

A vocation or calling is a certain kind of life, *ordained and imposed on man by God*, for the common good. . . . *Every person of every degree, state, sex, or condition without exception* must have some personal and particular calling to walk in. The main end of our lives . . . *is to serve God* in the serving of men in the works of our callings. . . . *the true end of our lives is to do service to God in serving of man.*⁶

John Calvin⁷ and many others said much the same. That means the mechanic can serve God under the hood of a car, the farmer serves God in the field, and the mother serves God while wiping peanut butter off the table for the third time that day. This makes all of life an exciting adventure of service to the Lord. If you are wiping up that peanut butter for the Lord, it becomes much less frustrating. It’s a fantastic remedy against forgetfulness of God. It is certainly an essential feature of stewardship - training our minds to have a constant consciousness of God’s presence and that He is pleased to accept our sweeping of the floor as an act of service to Him.

C. Take vows in His name

The third remedy to forgetfulness is in the last clause of verse 13: “and shall take oaths in His name.” Swearing by His name is a public allegiance to God that is *declared before other humans*. It can be made in church. It can be made in the military. It can be made in other locations. The idea is *to pledge oneself to be loyal to God*. And this brings up the importance of accountability with other saints. One of the reasons we are developing small groups of 3-4 people in our shepherding is to keep this accountability happening on a weekly basis. There is something about knowing that others are watching our steps to help remind us to not slip into pornography, laziness, bitterness, or other sins. Brothers and sisters, if we are to keep each other from being forgetful, we need accountability. And you can start your own accountability group without having us to push you into one. And don’t turn those groups into gripe sessions; turn them into opportunities to personally grow. But certainly,

⁵ Abraham Kuyper, “Sphere Sovereignty (1880)” in Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader, ed. James D. Bratt, (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 489.

⁶ William Perkins, ed. Joseph A. Pipa et al., The Works of William Perkins (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), 43, 58.

⁷ For example, Calvin said, “Every man’s mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord, that he may not be always driven about at random. So necessary is this distinction, that all our actions are thereby estimated in his sight, and often in a very different way from that in which human reason or philosophy would estimate them.” John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997). Also available here https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.v.xi.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

when you take oaths of membership in this church, you are vowing to live life as stewards to King Jesus. That is the third step of avoiding forgetfulness - making promises of accountability.

D. Maintain antithesis with other ultimate authorities

The fourth remedy for forgetfulness is to constantly maintain an antithesis in your thinking with other ultimate authorities that want to replace God. Remember that we have already seen in this book that anything can become another god if it comes between you and God or it becomes more important than God in your life. Verse 14 says, "You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you." There were times in Israel's life when they thought that they could serve God and other gods without any contradiction. It seems weird to us. For example, it wasn't until Genesis 35 that Jacob made his family get rid of all their idols, religious earrings, and other paraphernalia that was associated with other religions. It's weird that it took him 24 years after marrying Rachel before he did this. Christians quickly judge him for that. But many Christian families are not much different. They have items in their homes that give legal ground to demons to keep working in that home. Some of those items are decorations; others are games; others are music or videos. If you are sold out to the Lord, you will get rid of horoscopes, tarot cards, games based on witchcraft and spell-casting, books teaching astrology or horoscope systems, Ouija boards, rune stones, crystal balls, statues of Buddha or Hindu idols that are decorations. Those are not just decorations! Those are idols that give demons legal ground to come into your home and into your life. You might think they are beautiful - just like Rachel thought her cultic earrings were beautiful. "What's the big deal?" Some Christians actually have African tribal fetishes as decorations, totem poles, crystals used for spirit healing, lucky charms, supposedly protective amulets, Satanic music, jewelry used in occult rituals, decorative masks that have been used by witchdoctors, ritual drums that have been used in the past to summon spirits, etc. If there is anything that might have demonic connections, do like Jacob in Genesis 35 and bury it; get rid of it. And once you have gotten rid of it, pray out loud against any demons that may be present and break their curse, and ask God to escort all demons out of the place and to send His holy angels to encamp round about your house. So many people can't break their sin habits because they have never completely broken the demonic strongholds that continue to bring temptations.

Let me read Acts 19:18-19. It says,

And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

That was a pretty costly burning! Why didn't they sell those things and make some money off them? Because they didn't want others to have the bondage associated with those things. And those new believers didn't want anything from their former religion to be a part of their lives. Sometimes people don't realize that their sicknesses and other problems in the home have come as a result of occult objects that they have held onto. But certainly this is also a remedy for forgetfulness.

V. The stakes: the LORD's jealous wrath against idolatry (v. 15)

Finally, verse 15 shows the *stakes* of forgetting God. This is serious stuff. It says, "(for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth." Does God get angry with Christians? Yes He does. And it's not fun to have God angry at you.

What about jealousy? This says that God is a jealous God and He doesn't want anything to come between you and Him. If a husband says, "I love my wife... but, I also have a few *emotional* commitments that I don't want to give up," we call that a form of heart-adultery. If in your imagination you are sleeping with someone or something else when you have intimacy with your husband or wife, you are guilty of heart-adultery. A person who is not jealous when something intrudes into their marriage, is not very loving. Well, in the same way, God is a jealous God who treats all syncretism as spiritual adultery. He doesn't like it.

There are plenty of reasons for God's jealous anger to be unleashed on the church in America. And don't think that our military superiority over Iran automatically means that we will win the undeclared war. We may well win it. God could have mercy on us. Or we could end up in another world war, and God could decimate America with nuclear missiles from some other country. I don't know what is going to happen in the next fifty years. All I know is that history tends to repeat itself, and we are ripe for judgment and need to repent on behalf of our nation. True, American leaders might give lip-service to God on special occasions, but our nation has drifted from the Bible's moorings and as far as God is concerned, America has forgotten its Maker.⁸ And I think the church at large has forgotten its Maker and is also ripe for judgment like the church of Laodicea was. To sum up, this passage calls us to have a stewardship attitude that never forgets God. It reminds us that

⁸ Even Robert Bork's book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* highlightst this fact. He says, "Lasch stressed 'the degree to which liberal democracy has lived off the borrowed capital of moral and religious traditions antedating the rise of liberalism.' Certainly...Christianity... taught moral truths about respect for others, honesty, sexual fidelity, truth-speaking, the value of work, respect for the property of others, and self-restraint..." [p. 145] The inner need for pervasive meaning was satisfied through most of history in Western civilization by religion. [And in context, he was referring to the religion of the Bible. He continues.] But as a religious faith began to retreat, beginning in the eighteenth century and proceeding apace in the nineteenth and twentieth, the intellectuals need for meaning did not decline but remained urgent. Now, however, meaning must be found in a secular belief system... In our time that means left-wing politics, which offers a comprehensive worldview and a promise of ultimate salvation in a Utopia that conventional politics cannot offer. The religious impulse underlying left radicalism has often been noted. [p. 90] As in a Christian world where all shared the same belief, anyone, regardless of his worldly status or position, could regard himself as connected with his neighbor and reconciled with him through the transcendant God, and furthermore he might not even envy him because to do so would reflect on God's wisdom; so the agnostic twentieth-century intellectual seeks a new god, promising the same protection as the Christian God's... [p. 98] "

1. You can lose your devotion to God without ever renouncing Him. It can happen so subtly.
2. It reminds us that comfort can keep us from stewardship. It doesn't need to, but it can.
3. Third, every generation must decide: will we worship the Giver, or only enjoy the gifts?
4. Fourth, forgetting God rarely happens in rebellion. It usually happens in comfort.

We need to examine our hearts on each of those points and see if there are any things we need to repent of. And when we do repent, Christ forgives us, washes us white as snow, and renews us in our calling to be stewards in all that we do. If you remember nothing else from this sermon, remember this: next time you flush the toilet or flip on a light switch, thank God for His generosity. Let's pray.