

REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD!

(Deuteronomy 8:11-18)

In his 1863 National Day of Prayer speech, President Abraham Lincoln rebukes America not on account of a political sin, but on account of a spiritual sin. He refers to this spiritual malady as the sin of forgetting God. He said: *"But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us."* This act of forgetting the Lord is a recurring sin even among the people of God (Deut. 8:11, 14, 19). In light of this sin, the Lord, through Moses, gives us three essential lessons on how to guard ourselves from forgetting God. The central truth we need to learn and live out is this: a genuinely thankful heart remembers the Lord in all seasons of life because God is our gracious Savior.

1. A thankful heart remembers the Lord in _____.

God was very much concerned about how His people would handle life's comfort and prosperity in the promised land of Canaan. Hence, He admonished them to guard their hearts against the danger of disobeying Him (Deut. 8:11). The trigger for such disobedience was material prosperity. Material prosperity, if not properly handled, could tempt our hearts to pride (Deut. 8:12-14). A proud and thankless person has a self-absorbed and self-centered heart which takes all the credit for his prosperity, success and accomplishments (Deut. 8:17). God's Word clearly teaches that it's not a sin to have riches, but it's blatantly sinful to love your riches and trust in them (2 Chron. 29:12; 1 Sam. 2:7; 1 Tim. 6:10; 17; 1 John 2:15-16). In contrast to an arrogant and ungrateful heart, we as God's people should cultivate a thankful heart which remembers the Lord as the source of everything we have and everything we enjoy (Deut. 8:18; Ecc. 5:19; Ps. 50:23; Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18).

2. A thankful heart remembers the Lord in _____.

In our Christian pilgrimage, there are God-ordained seasons where we find ourselves in the wilderness wandering as the children of Israel did for forty years. These are times of trials, hardships, sufferings, bereavements, deprivations and spiritual dryness. During these seasons, we could still bless God and thank Him when we remember these divine encouragements. First, God is the One who leads us and preserves us in our seasons of adversity (Deut. 8:15). Because of God's preserving grace, we do not lose heart whenever we are afflicted in every way (2 Cor. 4:1,7-9). Second, God humbles and purifies us through our seasons of trials (Deut. 8:16). God loves us enough to chasten us and sanctify us through suffering (Heb. 12:6,11).

3. A thankful heart remembers the Lord as _____.

Whenever the Lord reminds His people about His covenant faithfulness to them, He always points them to His saving and redeeming grace (Deut. 8:14). The ultimate purpose why we are commanded in the Scripture to give thanks to the Lord is to remember the greatness of God as our gracious Savior. The life of a believer should be a perpetual thanksgiving celebration for God's saving grace in Christ (2 Cor. 8:9; Psalm 103:1-4).
