

# Remember and Worship, Then Trust and Obey<sup>i</sup>

by John Hawkins

*There's not much to be gained from sitting fearfully by and expecting the worst. There's much to be gained by remembering God's past faithfulness and trusting in His future goodness and sovereignty. — Alison Worsham*

*The psalmist has spent the earlier part of this hymn of praise recounting great deeds of God in the past. He is now filled with gratitude and confidence. It is our part to remember these deeds and praise God, so that our hearts remain confident and trusting in all circumstances. As John Newton put it in one of his hymns, "His love in times past forbids me to think he'll leave me at last in troubles to sink." These deeds are not just the things he has done for you personally but preeminently include Jesus's sacrifice of his own life for you. Remembering God's past love is the only way to face present stress with confidence and poise. — Tim and Kathy Keller commenting on Psalm 66:13-16*

*The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle; they did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them. He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan. He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand up like a wall. He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers. — Psalm 78:9-16*

*O Lord, you are my God;  
I will exalt you; I will praise your name,  
for you have done wonderful things,  
plans formed of old, faithful and sure. — Isaiah 25:1*



What was God's message to His people in the Old Testament? One of the great blessings of regularly reading through the whole Bible is that you continuously ponder fundamental questions like this one. We know and believe that all of the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the Christ of the New Testament. However, for God's people in the Old Testament, in their moment of history, what was He saying to them?

I believe one way to summarize His message to His people in the Old Testament is in the following phrase: Remember and Worship, Then Trust and Obey.

- Remember who He was in Himself AND remember who He was in His covenant relationship with them.

- Worship Him for who He is in Himself AND worship Him for who He has been in His relationship with them.
- Trust that He will be who He said He would be and do what He said He would do now and in the future.
- And from this tri-part remembrance, worship and trust - then obey Him

The cowardice and rebellion of the men of Ephraim are coupled with their forgetting of God - forgetting who God is and who He has been for His covenant people (Psalm 78:9-16). Cowardice and rebellion link with forgetting God to form an unfaithful living cycle. Cowardice and rebellion fuel forgetting God, forgetting God fuels cowardice and rebellion.

King David's courageous and faithful confrontation of Goliath (I Samuel 17) was a stark contrast to Ephraim's cowardly and faithless refusal to fight. David's summary - "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." - links his courage and faith to God's faithfulness to him in the past.

Remembrance and worship fuels trust and obedience. If, as a result of daily remembrance of His faithfulness and subsequent worship of Him, we are daily trusting and obeying Him, we are more likely to do the same tomorrow. If we've been adrift from remembering and worshiping, then trusting and obeying, it is much more likely that we'll do the same tomorrow.

So tonight, as I wrap up today and anticipate tomorrow, I ask myself again, "Who is God?" and "Who has He been for me, and how has he been faithful to me, in the past?". This leads me tonight, right here and now, to worship Him. It also leads me to trust Him with the things of this now ending day and trust and obey Him tomorrow. And then I rest, knowing that "He gives to His beloved sleep." (Psalm 127:2).

### Other Great Thoughts and Passages to Consider

*Remembrance permeates all Old Testament worship institutions, both seasonal (Exodus 13:3, 9) and Sabbath (Exodus 20:8). ... a properly understood biblical motif of remembrance in the Old Testament pinpoints divinely commanded covenant practices which focused a community's relationship with God and expressed their worship. — Tim Ralston*

*21 Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. 23 For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. 24 You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. 25 And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. 26 And when your children say to you, 'What do*

*you mean by this service?' 27 you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*

*28 Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. — Exodus 12:21-28*

*I will remember the deeds of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate on all Your work and muse on Your deeds. Your way, O God, is holy; what god is great like our God?" — Psalm 77:11-13 (NASB)*

### **Take it to the Lord**

1. Read through this meditation again, asking God to open your eyes, mind, heart and soul to His message for you today.
2. As He speaks to you, listen. Ask Him to guide you as to what you should do with what He says and for the grace to do so.
3. End your time with some form of worship—prayer, praise, thanksgiving or surrender.

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<sup>i</sup> From *Longings Toward a God-Centered Life: Meditations on Great Thoughts and Passages* by John Hawkins. The purpose of publishing these meditations is to share perspectives for leaders and followers on biblical understanding for daily living. The meditations are derived from John's reflections on quotes from Christian leaders and from God's Word.