

One Year Later - Lessons Learned After The Return

Sunday AM 05/23/21

Introduction:

On May 17, 2020 we returned back to having services at the building. Do you remember what it was like? No Bible Classes, no Sunday evening services, no Wednesday night services. It took almost a whole year to get back to those things and kind of getting back to normal. Here are three things I have learned from this past year and getting back to normal.

I) People Make Decisions Based on Two Things

A) What they know or think they know.

1. What we know comes from two sources – what we have been taught, and/or what we have deduced ourselves.
 - a. Decisions of mask or no mask, services or no services, were based on what we were taught.
 - b. Some decided against or for those things based on their own logic and deductions.
 - c. The problem in both areas is the limitations of human knowledge and our reasoning.
 - d. Things stated as facts turned out to be untrue.
 - e. Some people's reasoning was faulty and it led to bad decisions.

B) Emotion- such as fear, anger, excitement, etc.

1. Fear can be good as it gets our attention and can motivate us- fear of heart disease, stroke, snake bite, etc. .
2. Fear can be bad it can be irrational, phobias – fear of

3. Fear can paralyze us, some people are afraid to leave their house.

C) This is true in religion.

1. What we decide to believe and do is based on what we have been taught.
 - a. Hence the Bible has numerous passages speaking of training and instruction.
 - b. ***Ephesians 6:4*** ***And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.***
 - c. ***2 Timothy 2:2*** ***And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.***
2. Unlike man's knowledge which tends to change and be updated, God is all knowing and never wrong.
3. As long as our reasoning is based on God's word, we will make good decisions.
 - a. Remember the story of Naaman the leper in ***2 Kings 5***. He was told by Elijah what to do but he thought otherwise.
 - b. ***2 Kings 5:11*** ***But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.'***
 - c. ***2 Kings 5:13*** ***And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet***

had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?"

- d. Or Moses – **Acts 7:25** *"For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand."*
- 4. Or we can be emotionally driven by fear. The fear of "what could happen?"
 - a. **Matthew 25:25** *'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'*
 - b. We need to fear the Lord and keep His commandments.

II) Habits Can Be Good or Bad

A) For many of us our "habits" were changed overnight.

- 1. Sunday mornings were not the same, Wednesday nights were different.
- 2. Some did their best to replace the old habits with new habits – still getting up and getting dressed for services.
- 3. Others developed bad habits – not thinking about God, using the time to work or recreate.
- 4. People became "weak" during this time while others did their best to stay spiritually strong.

1 Peter 2:2 *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,*

B) Habits formed by habitually doing something over and over again.

1. They become part of your character, do without thinking.
2. There are bad habits – using profanity, being constantly late, laziness, etc.
3. There are good habits – being on time, exercising, etc.
4. The problem with habits is we can become so used to them we do without thinking.
 - a. One “knock” on having the Lord’s Supper is it becomes old and loses its importance.
 - b. Such is true for all our areas of worship- singing without thinking, praying by rote, giving without consideration of blessings, preaching without conviction.

C) Think About Our “Habits”

1. Is this a “good habit” or a “bad habit”.
2. Would I want others to follow my example?

1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

3. Do I think about Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, the shame, the physical pain, the humility, the reason He died on the cross?
4. Do I think about my prayers, mention others, thank God for His blessings, ask for His help. Do I pray often?
5. Am I singing with the heart?

Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

III) We Learn from Our Trials

A) Struggle makes us rely on God.

1. When we are weak, we know we need God.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: **12** I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. **13** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

2. I think all of us have told stories of earlier days when we were really poor, just barely getting by, no food in the house, no money in the bank. We often end those stories with the words “but we somehow got by” or “I wouldn’t trade those days for anything.”
3. We learn how to be content, to rely on God, that our lives consist or more than things.

Luke 12:15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

4. When you are going through those trials and don't have anything you know your life is not what you own, what you drive, the clothes you wear, etc.

B) Makes us appreciate the good times.

1. “Only if you have been in the deepest valley, can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain.”
Richard M. Nixon
2. The finest steel has to go through the hottest fire.
3. Do you think Job had a different perspective in Job 42?

Job 42:11 *Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold. 12 *Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. 13* *He also had seven sons and three daughters.**

4. Our struggles makes us appreciate the blessings we have. Hot water, indoor plumbing, air conditioning, our family, our jobs, the ability to go to Walmart, etc
5. Being able come here and see each other, being able to sing together, speak to each other, worship together.

C) Prepares us for later struggles

1. The trials of a 10-year-old will be different from a 20-year-old, a 30-year-old, a 40, 50, 60-year-old, etc.
2. Each trial is getting us ready for the next trial.

James 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3* *knowing that the testing of your*

faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

3. Faithfulness in the face of trials will lead to blessings.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

Conclusion:

We never know what the future holds but we know who holds the future. We know Christ will return, all those who are faithful in the graves shall be raised, then those alive will be taken with Christ, then the rest will be raised. There will be a day of Judgement, we will either spend eternity in heaven or hell. We want to go to heaven and be with God but we have to decide to obey His Son.