

Keeping the Heart In Providential Prosperity

The Text

DEUTERONOMY 6:10–12

10 And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

11 And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

12 Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

The Explication

Within these three verses, we are presented with the fulfillment of a promise.

That promise is the promise first made to Father Abraham in [Genesis 12:1](#) where Abraham is told to “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.”

Then, that promise was more fully revealed in [Genesis 15:18](#) where the LORD made a covenant with Abraham, saying “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

Then, that promise was more fully revealed still in [Genesis 17:8](#) where the LORD appeared to Abraham, saying “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Yet, in our reading this afternoon we are presented with the fulfillment of that promise, and the riches of the LORD’s mercies are exceedingly great by comparison to the words promised.

Then in verse twelve, there is a command that is given.

We have been taught by the Holy Scriptures that we are to keep our heart with all diligence.

We have been taught that this is the matter of all Christian labor.

Yea, that keeping the heart is the Christian's greatest fear and trembling.

For it is not the external religious rights or practices that makes a Christian.

But it is right ordering of the heart.

And there are different seasons, that is different circumstances that the Christian will find themselves in that we must consider if we are going to keep the heart.

We see this season in verses eleven and twelve, that season is great providential prosperity.

And in that great providential prosperity we are here commanded to keep the heart, and it is this duty in this season that we will examine this afternoon.

V. 12

Beware

Let us begin our consideration with the first action, which is found in the beginning of verse twelve in the word "*Beware.*"

The english word beware is a verb, which literally means to restrain or guard one's self from something.

That is to regard something with caution, to restrain one's self from anything that may be dangerous, injurious, or improper.

This word is translated from the Hebrew word *shamahr* (שמר) which means to keep something and to keep it totally.

This total keeping is best understood in three senses.

First, it means “to keep” in the sense of “tending” or taking care of something, and we first see this sense employed in [Genesis 2:15](#) “15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

Thus Adam was to labor, cultivate, and care for the garden “to keep” the garden.

Second, it means “to keep” in the sense of “watching over” or giving attention to.

And this sense gets extended to also mean “to watch, and carefully observe”

This gets used covenantally, and in such cases “to keep” means “to watch over” in the sense of seeing that one observes the covenant, and thereby keeping oneself to that covenant.

We first see this sense employed in [Genesis 17:9](#) “9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.”

However, we also see this sense used in the broader context of the scripture under consideration today in [Deuteronomy 8:11](#) “11 Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:”

Third, it means “to keep” in the sense of “saving” or “retaining.”

That is something is meant to be saved and retained mentally as a belief, so that it is saved and retained physically as an action.

We see this sense when Jacob “observed” or retained in his mind the saying of Joseph’s dream in [Genesis 37:11](#)

Therefore, we must seek “to beware,” that is to keep by tending to, watching over, and retaining something in our hearts.

Forget

We must beware that not we forget the LORD.

We must beware for fear that we forget the LORD.

We know that the word forget is a verb.

Which means to loose the remembrance of, or to let something go from memory.

No doubt we all remember this use in [Psalm 103:2](#) “2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all his benefits:”

However, it also means to slight something, or to neglect something, and we see understanding in [Isaiah 49:15](#) “15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, That she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, Yet will I not forget thee.”

Neglecting God to the extent that he is removed from our memory occurs in three distinct steps.

First, we see in [Jeremiah 30:14](#) “14 All thy lovers have forgotten thee; They seek thee not.”

That is the forgetful person’s worship of God deteriorates, and it does so first in our secret worship, second it escalates to our private worship, third, it is displayed in our public worship so that all of our religious duties become corrupted.

Second, the forgetful person’s mind removes God’s law as seen in [Hosea 4:6](#) “6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast

rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”

That is after failing to worship God secretly, privately, and corporately that person forgets the law of God it is no longer retained in their actions, in their thoughts, or in their hearts.

Third, the forgetful person’s heart removes God’s name as seen in [Jeremiah 23:27](#) “27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.”

That is after failing to worship God secretly, privately, and corporately, and after failing to obey God’s law in action, thought, and heart, that person removes the name of God for other things which they have devoted their affections to.

When we forget God, we forget our dependence upon Him, we forget our need of Him, and we forget our obligations to Him.

Then

There is a time, a season when they are to beware.

We see beginning in verse ten, it is when God will:

1. bring them into the land which He swore unto their fathers.
2. give them great and goodly cities, which they did not build.
3. and give them houses full of all good things, which they did not fill.
4. and give them wells, which they did not dig.
5. and give them vineyards and olive trees, which they did not plant.

6. God will have fed them, and they will have eaten and been full.

We can summarize this, by saying God will providentially prosper them.

And when God has providentially prospered them, that is when they are to beware.

Because when God has prospered them, they are most prone to forget Him.

Now we can truly understand the prayer of Agur in [Proverbs 30:9](#) “9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, And say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, And take the name of my God in vain.”

**CHILDREN REMEMBER THIS, WHEN GOD HAS BEEN
MERCIFUL TO US, AND WHEN HE HAS BLESSED US, WE MUST
KEEP OUR HEARTS, BECAUSE OUR HEARTS ARE GLAD TO
FORGET GOD WHO IS THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD.**

The Doctrines of The Text

Keeping and Managing the Heart from Pride and Carnal Security and Constancy of Creature-Comforts While Under Providential Prosperity

We must keep our heart, that is our mind and our thoughts, or our will and affections in the Christian’s frame which is the Word of God to the glory of God.

› **But how are we to keep our hearts from pride and from carnal security under the prosperity of creature comforts?**

The Scriptures provide us with seven helpful considerations to secure our hearts from the dangerous snares of prosperity.

To perform this keeping let us

Consider they are a snare

First, let us consider the dangerous and ensnaring temptations which attend prosperity.

Our Lord has told us this in [Matthew 19:24](#) “24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

And again let us remember the teaching from the apostle Paul in [1 Corinthians 1:26](#) “26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:”

Consider many have been worse for them

Second, it may keep us more humble if we consider how many of our Christian brothers and sisters have been the worse for them.

When they were in a low condition in the wilderness; then Israel was called as we see in [Jeremiah 2:3](#) “3 Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.”

Yet, when they had come into Canaan, and were fed in a land flowing of milk and honey, then we see in [Jeremiah 2:31](#) “31 O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?”

If we are still not convinced let us consider of all of the kings of Israel and Judah there was only one Jehoshaphat, of whom it is said [2 Chronicles 17:5–6](#) “5 and he had riches and honour in abundance. 6 And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord”

Consider that God values no man for these things

Third, let us consider that God values no man more for any of these things.

God values no man by outward excellencies, but by inward graces.

We know this from [1 Peter 3:4](#) “4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

God despises all worldly glory, and accept no man’s person; “but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.” ([Acts 10:35](#))

Consider those who bewail setting their hearts upon these things

Fourth, let us consider, how bitter the soul is upon its deathbed, who has set their heart upon these things.

Remember the teaching of our Lord in [Luke 12:16–21](#) “16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Consider the clogging nature of earthly things

Fifth, let us consider the clogging nature of earthly things.

[Luke 8:14](#) “14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”

Consider for all our mercies, shall be our account for them

Sixth, let us consider that for all of our mercies, we shall be called to account for them.

Did he not say to Israel in [Micah 6:5](#) “5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him From Shittim unto Gilgal; That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.”

The Lord has recorded each mercy to an account and we see this clearly evidenced in [Luke 12:48](#) “48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

Consider how the mercies of God have worked upon the spirits of others

Seventh, and lastly, let us consider how the mercies of God have worked upon the saints triumphant, which we will consider in two distinctions.

GOD IS EXALTED

First, how God has them by his mercies, and they have laid themselves lower before God.

This is exactly what Jacob when God had given him much substance in [Genesis 32:10](#) “10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.”

It was also so with good king David, when God had confirmed the promise to him, to build him a house, and not reject him as he had done to Saul, then David responds in [2 Samuel 7:18](#) “18 Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?”

GOD IS MAGNIFIED

Second, how others have freely ascribed all the glory of their enjoyments to God.

Let us remember what David said in [2 Samuel 7:26](#) “26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.”

We see this again when God had delivered David from all of his enemies [Psalm 18:2](#) “2 The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

The Uses of The Text

Exhortation To Keep The Heart

First, this does exhort all Christians to that reasonable duty of keeping their heart in times of providential prosperity.

We have seen this duty clearly set forth in [Deuteronomy 6:12](#) “12 Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

Admonishment To Keep The Heart

Second, this does admonish those Christians to this duty who have neglected in keeping it in times of prosperity.

- › Is there a particular time when God has prospered us and we have not guarded our hearts?

Then in fact we are admonished to begin training to keep our heart with all diligence for that next prosperous season.

- › Is there a particular part of prosperity that we find attractive so that we would forget God and be less attendant to Him?

Then we have a part of prosperity that we need to administer the Word of God to, so that we can live to the glory of God.

Exhortation To Not Forget

Third, this does exhort all Christians to not forget God.

[Deuteronomy 8:11](#) “11 Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:”