

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

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## Learning From History

It is likely that you have either heard or said the phrase, "Those who fail to learn history are doomed to repeat it." Now, often this saying is offered jokingly when talking about a history class in school, but at some level we all understand the deeper underlying truth to it. If you look at the things that have happened and do not learn from those earlier mistakes, then it is reasonable to assume that you will be making those same mistakes again in the future, thus repeating history. Thus we get the feeling of *déjà vu*, like we are going through something we already have, because in lots of ways, it is true.

However, failing to learn from our past shortcomings is not the only reason why we might be feeling like we are doing something over again. Those who have lived long enough will tell you not only is this thought true on an individual level, but it applies to groups of people as well, whether you are talking about nations, generations, or whatever. By ignoring what has happened in the past, either to you, your direct predecessors (parents, grandparents, former presidents, etc.),

or even to others that you have no real connection to, you risk falling into the exact same problem as they did before. What makes this so much worse is that for us later to come along and fail in the same way that they did is that we did so despite the warning signs.

Applying this simple yet useful concept to ourselves spiritually, the first thing that comes to mind is sin.

"Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires," (Eph. 4:17-22)

Everyone who is a Christian was once an alien sinner, an enemy of

the Lord, separated from God by their sins. In short: we all have a past. What we must remember is that is where sin belongs: in the past. If you have decided to follow Jesus and wear His name, then sin cannot be a part of your new life as a reconciled child of God. Now, we know that Christians are not immune from temptation and that we can sin.

"And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." (James 5:15-16)

God continues to offer His mercy toward us when we sin after being baptized into Christ, if we repent and pray, asking His forgiveness. Yet even though He promises to forgive, that does not give us license to continue living in sin. Rather, we must learn from our past lives, when we were separated from God, in order that in the future we might fight off temptation more effectively. That might sound complicated, but it is actually very simple. What tempts you? What sins were you guilty of in times past? Human beings are creatures of habit; likely, if something enticed you before, it is still enticing to you now. In addition, we know that Satan is very good at what he does, and he knows our weaknesses (perhaps even better than we do).

"He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil." (1 Tim. 3:6-7)

That passage was talking about elders of the church and how they need to be careful regarding Satan's snares! Our old habits, along with new ones, can lead us down a wrong path away from the Lord, right into the devil's hands.

Another important thing to consider: we can and should not only learn from our past mistakes, but from the history of others too. This is pretty hard to do sometimes, because we like to throw out excuses and justifications, such as: "Well, I know this caused him a lot of problems, but I'm not tempted by it" or "Yeah, she really regrets saying that, but I have more self-control, so I'll be okay." Anytime we try to think that we can make the same mistakes we have seen in others and yet not be weakened or discouraged by them, we are fooling ourselves. So many times, insanity has been defined as repeating the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

Have you learned from history? Have you understood that people are influenced by those around them?

"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" (1 Cor. 15:33)

Perhaps you have seen others, loved ones even, deal with the heartbreak caused by divorce. Learn from that history and understand what it means to be married! Understand what God created and intended marriage to be! Most importantly, learn that BEFORE you say, "I do!"

"He answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So

they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?' He said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.'" (Matt. 19:4-9)

One of the biggest lessons for us when it comes to learning from history is to learn from the Israelites. Through the exodus, the conquest of the land, the period of the judges, and the kingdom, both united and divided, they had serious issues with trusting in the Lord. While in the wilderness, they grumbled and complained, even though they could plainly see God with them as the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night! The whole reason why God gave them judges was to deliver them from their oppressors, who had only overcome them because they went after idols in the first place! Even after they had been given kings like they asked for, they still wanted to worship other gods, and it not only split the kingdom, but resulted in them being attacked and made captives of Babylon!

For us today, in the Lord's Church: do we trust in God, or do we complain about how difficult we have it (even though we are blessed beyond words)? Is serving God our first priority, or have idols crept in (be it sports or tv shows or food)? Can we really say we have learned from history if we are making the same mistakes that they did? Learn and grow, both from your past and from history in general, and be a better & stronger Christian as a result.

Jarred Currence

Happy Moments,  
*Praise God.*

Difficult Moments,  
*Seek God.*

Quiet Moments,  
*Worship God.*

Painful Moments,  
*Trust God.*

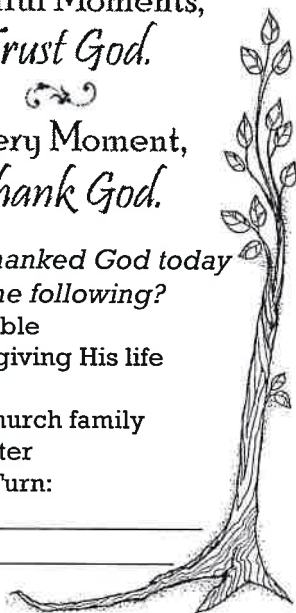
*Every Moment,  
Thank God.*

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:

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**WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST**

92 Rose Cottage Lane  
Wellsburg, WV 26070  
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



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# BIBLE Trivia!

**DIRECTIONS:** After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

**1. Whom did Abraham's eldest servant find a wife for?**

- a) Ishmael
- b) Jacob
- c) Isaac
- d) Lot

**2. What church's elders fasted before sending Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries?**

- a) Thessalonica's
- b) Philippi's
- c) Jerusalem's
- d) Antioch's

**3. Which gospel is the only one to mention the Roman soldiers piercing Jesus' body with a spear?**

- a) Mark
- b) John
- c) Matthew
- d) Luke

**4. Who was killed as he slept in the tent of Jael?**

- a) Jephthah
- b) Samson
- c) Eglon
- d) Sisera

**5. What king of Israel had two navies?**

- a) Solomon
- b) Jeroboam
- c) Ahab
- d) David

**6. Who was the sorcerer Paul encountered on the isle of Paphos?**

- a) Elymas
- b) Simon
- c) Sceva
- d) Demetrius

**7. When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, what priest was taken prisoner to Babylon?**

- a) Hilkiah
- b) Seraiah
- c) Ezra
- d) Abiathar

**8. What ruler imposed tribute in Jesus' day?**

- a) Herod
- b) Pilate
- c) Philip
- d) Caesar

**9. Which son was Isaac partial to?**

- a) Simeon
- b) Reuben
- c) Esau
- d) Jacob

**10. Where did Paul exorcise a spirit from a girl who later became a believer?**

- a) Philippi
- b) Cyprus
- c) Ephesus
- d) Corinth

## **LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:**

- 1) B, Reference: Exodus 3:1-22
- 2) A, Reference: Psalm 137
- 3) D, Reference: John 4:15
- 4) C, Reference: Acts 15:32
- 5) B, Reference: Joshua 24:32

- 6) D, Reference: 2 Corinthians 3:14
- 7) C, Reference: Matthew 20:30-34
- 8) B, Reference: Jonah 4:9
- 9) A, Reference: 1 Samuel 21:1-6
- 10) C, Reference: Acts 17:5