



Parkway Fellowship

Don't Forget • Don't Forget the Danger When Life is Good • Hosea 13:4-6; Deuteronomy 8:10-14 •

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Main Point

We should not give in to the temptation to take God for granted when life is good.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are things we commonly take for granted?

When have you felt others took you for granted? How did you respond?

We typically turn lights on, run appliances, drink water from a fountain, and surf the Internet without wondering if the electric power grid is working, the water is flowing, or the Wi-Fi is available. We only think about such things when they're absent.

God's presence, power, and grace are always there, but unfortunately, we often take them for granted—simply because God is always there. This is especially true when our circumstances in life are good. There is a danger in that, though. When life is good and we take God for granted, we can walk right into the trap of sin.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read Hosea 13:4-6.

What was the sequence of events described in verse 6?

At what point in that sequence should the Israelites have done something different?

God had done so much for the Israelites, but they took it for granted. They had a spirit of ingratitude. One of the few places in Scripture where God's will is explicitly expressed is 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Therefore, we are out of God's will—we are sinning—when we fail to show Him gratitude.

What are some practical ways we can avoid the Israelites' sin of ingratitude?

What are some blessings from God that we take for granted?

| Ask a volunteer to read Deuteronomy 8:10-14.

Why do you think the good news given in verse 10 was immediately followed with a warning?

What did God specifically identify as a danger in verses 11 and 14?

Why do we tend to forget God in the good times? Have you experienced this in your own life?

It is not only in the hard times that God intends to teach us to draw close to Him. It is also in times of prosperity that we have important faith lessons to learn. For Israel, God warned that once He gave Israel the land they were waiting for, they would be tempted to forget God. In the wilderness they knew they needed Him; He wanted them to know they needed Him in the Promised Land, too. If they didn't live with that same dependence on Him and obedience to Him, they would enter into a cycle of sin that would be difficult to break.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In what area(s) of life are you currently satisfied? What danger is there for you in that?

Why would the Enemy be happy for you to do well in life?

In what area(s) of life are you tempted to become proud? What do you need to do so that you remain humble before the Lord and dependent on Him?

How can we know if we are taking God for granted?

Pray

Thank God for His provision in your life. Invite Him to reveal any areas of your life where you have begun to take Him for granted. Ask Him to help you enter into a cycle of spiritual growth rather than a cycle of spiritual decay.

Commentary

| Hosea 13:4-6

13:4. Israel's sin represents theological amnesia. The Lord introduces himself again to his own people as their God who brought them out of Egypt. This introduction represents a shorthand version of the introduction to the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2). God's goal was an intimate personal relationship with his people, Israel. They had such a relationship with no other god. Their life as a nation depended on God since he alone was their Savior (Isa. 45:21). Israel had no history without God. But they had turned away from him. Having abandoned him as their God, they should expect their history to end.

13:5. Hosea continued to use the intimate term know, rendered by the NIV as "acknowledge" in verse 4 and as cared for in verse 5. In Israel's most desperate situation—forty years of wandering in the desert or wilderness—God became intimately acquainted with his people as he cared for them, providing manna, meat, and water. Burning heat is a word that occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible; it could also mean "drought."

13:6. Israel took everything they could get from God. Once these cattle raisers found grazing ground for their animals, they had everything they wanted. They could dispense with the God who provided those needs. They became proud. The result was predictable. Their proud hearts forgot God. They had no desire for intimacy with the Lord. They became self-sufficient.

| Deuteronomy 8:10-14

8:10. A land filled with such resources was designed to have a spiritual impact when it was received. When Israel had eaten and was satisfied, they were directed to praise the Lord... for the good land that they were enjoying. Combined with 8:1-5, this paragraph shows how God uses both positive reinforcement and painful adversity to achieve his purposes with his people. As a wise father, he understands how to apply these elements in precisely the proper proportions to accomplish his purpose, and his word is always productive: "My word that goes out from my mouth... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

8:11. Prosperity brings with it as many spiritual hazards as adversity. Although Israel was about to make the transition from a nation of homeless ex-slaves to a settled people, they would face many dangers. In particular, they would need to be careful and not forget the Lord. As they were about to invade the land, when life and death lay in the balance each day, they could hardly deny their need of God's favor and protection. Later, when their enemies were vanquished and life was less tense, they would find themselves lulled into a false sense of independence. That might lead to a pattern of failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees.

8:12-14. Israel would need to exercise spiritual alertness and recognize their natural tendency to forget the one who gave them everything. Otherwise, that inclination would cause them great sorrow and dismay. Once they began to build fine houses and settle down and to see their herds and flocks and personal wealth increase, they could fall victim to pride and spiritual arrogance.

The godly person is as much a student of himself as he is of God. The unguarded heart is always vulnerable to folly, and God extended his kindness to Israel not only in his gifts but also in his counsel. Becoming spiritually lax is not an option for a person who would be Christlike. The greatest test comes when the crisis is over and we seem to have won the battle. Then the heart tends to become proud; and with pride comes the lack of a sense of need.