

Let's Not Forget What We've Learned

A Godly Response to a Pandemic – Part 15

Series Overview

Proverbs 27:1 says, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” The COVID-19 outbreak certainly shows that this is true. When 2020 began, we had no idea we would face this new kind of challenge. Though it caught us by surprise, we know God was not surprised. He knew this would happen and will guide us through this challenging time.

This study guide is the second in a new Faith Baptist Bible study series called “A Godly Response to a Pandemic.” Each lesson will provide biblical teaching that enables us to think, feel, and live in a Christlike way throughout this pandemic experience.

Together, we'll tackle topics like fear, anxiety, and loneliness. We'll also examine our behavior as a church. Most importantly, we'll learn about our loving, sovereign God who is all-knowing, almighty, always present, and trustworthy in every way.

Series Guidelines

This series will continue throughout our period of “social isolation” in New York City. To participate, please take the following approach.

1. A new study guide will be provided each Saturday at Shepherd Thoughts. You can follow the guide online or download and print it as a PDF.
2. Use each guide for an in-home Bible study from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Sunday.
3. If you live with a Christian family, you can study together. If not, try studying together with another believer from Faith by phone or internet using a service like Facebook Video Chat, Google Hangouts, Skype, or Zoom.
4. For each study: (1) begin with prayer, (2) read the Scripture passage, (3) work through the study guide, then (4) end with prayer.
5. Then tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson. Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.
6. You can also leave comments on the blogsite at the end of the study guide page and Pastor Overmiller will respond by sometime Sunday.
7. As a bonus, memorize a verse or more from the passage and think about it throughout the week ahead.

Lesson Introduction

Slowly but surely, we're making some progress towards returning to a more normal life. We're not entirely "out of the woods," so to speak, but we're taking some encouraging steps – as a church, a city, a state, and a nation.

In a previous study, we learned how to handle the fears we may have in light of God's love and care in our lives. This is a very important lesson to embrace as we emerge on the other side of this COVID19 pandemic. In this study, now, we're going to learn another timely lesson. We're going to learn the importance of remembering what we've learned through this unusual pandemic experience.

Through difficult, painful, and long-lasting trials, God intends to teach us valuable, lifelong lessons about himself, ourselves, our relationship with him, and life in general. In our desire to "move on" and leave our trials in the dust, closing the book and locking the door on them forever, we should be careful not to forget the valuable lessons that we've learned along the way.

God doesn't want us to go through hard times for no reason. For us, we're just glad to get them over with so we can move on. But God wants us grow, deepen, and change in our hearts in a way that influences our lives long into the future and for generations to come. Knowing this, it's at times like these that we should pause to consider the things we've seen and the spiritual lessons we've learned before we turn the page and move on.

To do this, let's take a close look at what Moses said to a new generation of Israelites who were preparing to enter the Promised Land after forty long years of wandering in the wilderness. He said to them, "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren" (Deut 4:9). Can we respond to the things we've learned from this COVID19 pandemic in a similar way? I trust that we can.

Deuteronomy 4:9

Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren.

Study Guide

Consider the Background

After God delivered the Hebrew people from oppression in Egypt through his spectacular intervention, he brought them to Mount Sinai (Horeb), where he made with them a solemn covenant. According to this covenant, he would be their God and they would be his special

people who worshipped and represented him in the world. This treaty marked the beginning of the Israelite nation.

However, what should have been a 3-month journey to the Promised Land quickly devolved into a 40-year cycle of wandering in the wilderness as the Exodus generation gradually died away due to their unbelief and rebellion against God.

At the end of this long and disappointing period, a new generation prepared to enter the Promised Land. Before they entered, though, Moses presented them with a series of five heartfelt sermons. These five sermons make up the book of Deuteronomy, and this long message was designed to prepare this new generation to learn from the failures and difficult trials of the past 40 years.

Examine the Scripture

- The Hebrew word *shamár* appears twice at the beginning of this verse. This rough translation shows how it functions: “Only *shamár* to yourself and *shamár* to your soul.” Can you see how this repetition intensifies the instruction Moses gave to Israel?
- The first word *only* makes this emphasis even more intense, and the movement from the generic reference “to yourself” to the specific reference “to your soul” (or “inner self”) intensifies this emphasis even further.
- The word *shamár* means “to guard or to pay attention” to something, like a security guard keeps watch over an important location late at night. The first time it occurs in this verse, it appears in slightly different form than the second time. The first form causes the word to mean something like “be careful” or “watch out for yourself.” The second form causes the word to mean something like “keep safe or protect” yourself.

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- As the new generation of Israelite people prepared to leave their wilderness wanderings behind and take possession of land that was occupied for hostile, pagan people, name some things they would need to watch out for? In what ways would they need to be careful or protect themselves?
- Of all the challenges they were about to face, identify the one thing that Moses urged them to watch out for as they prepared to move into the Promised Land.

Examine the Scripture

- The word *lest* means that if the Israelite people failed to “pay attention” to their inner selves, then what Moses says next would happen. So, if A (“paying attention to their inner selves”) did not happen, then B would happen as a result. That makes this an important warning.
- The word *lest* appears twice in this verse, so two things would happen if the Israelite people failed to “pay attention” to their inner selves.

- The word *forget* describes the first thing that would happen and can mean something like to “ignore, overlook, or be unmindful; to not remember information and so lose sight of its significance, implying no proper response or an improper response in some contexts.”¹ What did God want the new generation of Israelite people to remember and not forget? (The answer is in the verses that come after Deut 4:9.)
- The word *depart* describes the second thing that would happen and can mean something like to “to turn away, depart, or leave.”² What would “depart” and where would it depart from?

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- Why do we forget the things we have seen God do and the lessons we have learned from his Word after we’ve gone through difficult times?
- What are some things we have seen God do over the past few months?
- What are some lessons we have learned from God’s Word over the past few months?
- How determined are we to “be careful” and to “pay attention” to our inner selves so that we don’t “forget” these things and let them “leave our hearts”?

Examine the Scripture

- Moses told the adult Israelites to guard their hearts so that the lessons they learned wouldn’t go out of their hearts, but he also told them to put these lessons into the hearts of some other people, too. He told them to *teach* their children and grandchildren what they had seen and learned.
- The word *teach* means something like “to cause someone to know something, to show something to someone; to teach or acquaint.”³

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- How can we pass along the lessons we’ve learned from our difficult past few months to our children and grandchildren?
- How can we instill these lessons into the hearts of new believers and future members of Faith Baptist Church?

Conclusion

As we take steps towards moving on from the COVID19 pandemic (we’re not out of the woods entirely, yet), we need learn from Moses’ warning to the Israelites who had suffered

¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos, 1997).

² William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 1001.

³ Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2003), 335.

through the wilderness wanderings. Through difficult, painful, and long-lasting trials, God intends to teach us valuable, lifelong lessons about himself, ourselves, our relationship with him, and life in general. In our desire to “move on” and leave COVID19 in the past, let’s be careful not to forget the valuable lessons that we have learned through this unusual ordeal.

Share Your Feedback

Now that you’ve finished this study, don’t forget to tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson! Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.

In addition to the footnoted resources, the following resources were also consulted:

Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Jenni, Ernst and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997).