

## Remember

By Daryl Wingerd

The first three chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesians contain only one imperative—that is, he only asks them to do one thing: *remember*. Other than that single instruction, mentioned in 2:11 and then repeated in 2:12, the first half of the letter is Paul's list of historical events and theological realities in God's redemptive plan. He lists them in chapters 1-3, then explains how they should be lived out in chapters 4-6.



If you are a Christian—I mean *really*, a true follower of Christ, not just someone who has grown up going to church because that's what you're supposed to do or what your family does—I would like you to remember these same truths and glorify God because of them:

- God has blessed you in Christ with every spiritual blessing (1:3).
- God chose to save you before the foundation of the world (1:4).
- In love, God predestined you for adoption as his child, through Jesus Christ (1:5).
- In Jesus, you have redemption through his blood—the forgiveness of your sins (1:7).
- In Jesus, God has lavished his grace upon you (1:8).
- In Jesus, you have obtained an inheritance in God's kingdom—an inheritance that is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit who was also given to you (1:11-14).
- Jesus, who was powerfully raised from the dead and is seated at God's right hand, currently rules over all things for the sake of his body, the church (1:19-23).

All of these things are presently true of you despite the fact that you did not start out so well. Remember also where you began:

- You were dead in trespasses and sins, living according to the course of this fallen world, doing Satan's bidding by obeying and indulging your fleshly desires (2:1-3).
- You were born a child of wrath (that is, destined for God's wrath)—born into condemnation with no inherent capacity to do anything about it (2:3). That's what "dead" means.
- You were "like the rest of mankind" (2:3)—no better than anyone else. No person has ever been less worthy of God's mercy and grace than you were. Remember that!
- Even so, God in his great love and mercy made you alive from the dead, giving you the capacity and ensuing desire to believe in Christ and be saved (2:4-5).
- "By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (2:8).
- You are "God's workmanship" (2:9). He took you as a piece of unformed, ugly material and fashioned you into a Christian—into a member of his household (2:19) and a recipient of his amazing gift of salvation in Jesus.

We know that there is an act of the human will in believing and being saved. You were not neutral or passive in God's merciful and gracious work of saving you. Other passages in the Bible deal only with the human response requirement—believe and you will be saved (e.g., Acts 16:31; John 6:37, etc.). But when we look behind the scenes as Paul does here in Ephesians 1 and 2 (and as he and other writers do elsewhere in the Bible), we are humbled by the fact that we could not, would not, and did not save ourselves, even partially or in partnership with God. We are saved because God saved us by grace! Remember!