

Looking Back

What is the spiritual value of “looking back?”

Some truths to remember:

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1 Peter 2:5, NIV says, “...you also like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

**Truth: The battle always gets more intense the closer we get to God’s
_____!**

1 Samuel 17:34 – 37, NLT “But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock,³⁵ I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death.³⁶ I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God!³⁷ The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!” Saul finally consented. “All right, go ahead,” he said. “And may the LORD be with you!”

Truth: Previous battles are just a _____ ground for the major battles yet to come!

What spiritual victories have you experienced?

In what ways have you faced the lion and the bear, and what have you learned from those battles?

Three Biblical Reasons to Remember the Past:

1. To Rehearse the Victory

What story does God want you to tell yourself about past victories, so you are ready for today’s battles?

What’s the spiritual difference between a memorial and a memory?

2. To Report the Source

³⁷The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

Why is it important to report accurately the source of all our blessings and victories?

What happens when we take credit for success?

Truth: God wants to do extraordinary things through ordinary people who will give Him the glory!

Ephesians 3:20 – 21, NIV "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

3. To Reflect with Thanksgiving

David was known as a "praiser." How are you known by others?

Truth: Praise breaks the power of _____!

Looking Back.

Some of you will remember that a few years ago we took time to remember our church history. From the days of street meetings on Germantown Ave. in the year 1921, to the church building at 11th and Westmoreland, then to the old dairy at 3300 N. 11th St.; and then to the merging of two congregations at our present location.

Looking back is not about trying to repeat the past, looking back is about reminding ourselves that we are a part of a living, growing, moving forward body of believers who have this history of obeying God, taking steps of faith, risking it all for the Kingdom of God, and always moving on with vision to grasp what the Lord has next, and what He wants for us.

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Some truths to remember:

- We are here today because of someone else's faith and sacrifice.
- We are "living stones" in this church family, not just church attenders. **1 Peter 2:5, NIV** says, "...you also like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." That is who God says we are!
- We now become the foundation for those who will follow us. We are believing, and praying for the future that God has planned for us. Think about the legacy you will leave for your children, grandchildren, and also those yet to be reached. **It's not just about us!**
- We are God's people taking ownership of God's vision – it's not just our ideas or my ideas. It's not about what we want or need, it's about what the Lord wants for us!

Four Part Series:

1. Looking Back
2. Looking Up
3. Looking Out
4. Looking Forward

How many know that: **The battle always gets more intense the closer we get to God's promises?**

1 Samuel 17:34 – 37, NLT *"But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, ³⁵I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. ³⁶I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! ³⁷The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the LORD be with you!"*

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David looks back in these verses to past victories. He doesn't do that in order to pat himself on the back and brag saying, *"Well, I've won my victories. Look what I did."*

He looks back to remind himself of who His God is, and to remind himself that victories of the past are just training ground for battles yet to come.

Truth: Previous battles are just a training ground for the major battles yet to come!

When we look back to previous spiritual battles and faith battles, it is not with a longing to go back, but rather with a desire to learn from and build on the victories of the past, as we engage our present and future battles.

How many of you have had some spiritual victories in your lives? You faced the lion and the bear! They roared and growled and tried to intimidate, but you discovered that *"Greater is He that is within you, than he that is within the world!"*

What battles have you won? (Your memories)

The battles you have won prepare you for the battles yet to come!
God is moving you forward!

Three Biblical reasons to remember the past – to look back:

1. To Rehearse the Victory

If my God is stronger than the bear and the lion, then my God is stronger than this giant!

Past victories are memorials, but they should never be just fond memories. They should increase our faith, and help us grow spiritually so we are ready for what's next.

2. To Report the Source

³⁷ *“The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!”*

Who rescued us? Who helped us? Who came through for us? Who is the one who is stronger than lions, bears, and giants? Who is the one who enables us to do great exploits?

It is the Lord, and we must always report the source of our victory accurately. If your testimony sounds like, *“Well, it was because I was lucky. I was a shrewd manager or business person. It’s because I worked hard. I am deserving! I am entitled! I made better choices!”*

Have you forgotten what the Lord rescued you from? Are you know taking credit for your blessings and accomplishments? If so, that’s a dangerous place to be in because without God’s hand on us, we are on our own.

Do you know why we report the source? Do you know why we reflect on God’s goodness to us? Do you know why we remember all He has accomplished in and through our lives?

Truth: God wants to do extraordinary things through ordinary people who will give Him the glory!

Ephesians 3:20 – 21, NIV *“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”*

3. To Reflect with Thanksgiving

David was known as the “praiser.”

How are you known by others?

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- Complainer
- Critic
- Doubter
- Whiner
- Worrier
- Cynic

Praise breaks the power of fear!

Praise refocuses our lives on God. Praise reminds us of who He is. Praise positions us to see the past with thanksgiving and to face the future with expectation.

God is not finished with us!