

Three Views of Our Life

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Introduction

1. Our study will be based upon three words: RETROSPECTION, INTROSPECTION, and PROSPECTION.
 - a. Retrospection: A looking back . . . the past.
 - b. Introspection: To look into or within, as within one's own mind (the present).
 - c. Prospection: The act of looking forward . . . the future.
2. These words have to do with our lives – Past, Present, and Future.
3. It is always good for us to examine our lives – 2 Cor. 13:5.

I. The Retrospection View of Life

- a. Retrospection is to look backward, to contemplate the past.
 - i. This retrospective view of life has to do with our MEMORY.
 - ii. MEMORY is the mind's power to retain and to recall things which it has previously known.
 - iii. "A man's real possession is his memory"
 - iv. Without the ability of memory, there could be no happiness, no sense of identity, no knowledge of environment.
 - v. Without memory, one's wife and children would mean nothing to him because he could not recall having seen them before.
 - vi. The New Testament points up the importance of memory – I Cor. 15:2; Jude 17
- b. With this wonderful gift of memory all of us can recall events that were happy and gay, and also remember the sad ones too.
 - i. Sometimes our mistakes leap out of the past to haunt us.
 - ii. These we can forget – Phil. 3: 13 – 14.
- c. It is sometimes good to look back – Deut. 32:7 – "*Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.*"
 - i. There are many good things in the past.
 - ii. The study of history and the Bible is looking back.
 - iii. Israel was to remember:
 1. Remember the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8) The Sabbath was a remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt – Deut. 5:15.
 2. Remember the bondage of Egypt, and the Lord redeemed them – Deut. 24;18 (Passover).
 - iv. Christians are commanded to remember:
 1. The Lord's suffering and death – The Lord's Supper – I Cor. 11: 25.
 2. Our bondage in sin – Eph. 2: 11 -12.
- d. It is good to review the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4); the gospel (I Cor. 15:2); and our lives (2 Cor. 13:5).
- e. It is sometimes NOT good to look back – Jesus said, "*Remember Lot's wife*" – Luke 17:32.
 - i. Jesus also said, "*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*" – Luke 9:62.

- f. It is never good to linger too long in the past on some things.

II. The Introspection View of Life

- a. Introspection means to look within; self-examination; appraising ourselves.
 - i. Very few people really know themselves.
 - ii. We know others well and can tell, and often do, the faults of others.
- b. We should weigh ourselves to see if we are wanting.
 - i. We should know our strengths and weaknesses; our good habits and bad habits.
 - ii. Peter did not know himself – Matt. 26: 33 – 35.
- c. The gospel requires a looking within – 2 John 8; I Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5.
 - i. Don't look for faults in another until we have examined self – Matt. 7: 3 – 5.
- d. We need to know ourselves so we can properly judge – Rom. 12:3.
 - i. We usually overestimate or underestimate ourselves.
- e. Introspection is too rare a process.
 - i. How would our souls look if we had a photograph?
 - ii. We would be ashamed; it would make us blush for our friends to see it.
- f. How is Introspection accomplished?
 - i. We look into a mirror to see our face; we look into the gospel to see our heart – James 1:22 -25.
 - ii. Our hearts may not be right – Acts 8:21.

III. The Prospecion View of Life

- a. Prospecion means to look ahead; look forward.
- b. We must not linger too long on the past – it may cause us to desire to return.
 - i. Israel desired the flesh pots of Egypt – Ex. 16:3.
 - 1. They forgot the bondage.
 - ii. Christians are admonished – Luke 9:62; Phil. 3: 13 – 14.
 - iii. Lot's wife – Luke 17:32; Gen. 19:26 – “*She became a pillar of salt*”.
- c. We must purpose and plan to improve.
 - i. I should try to see myself 10, 20, 30, etc. years from now . . . determine what I want to be then.
 - ii. Planning is necessary to success – Examples: Farmer, Merchant, Lawyer.
 - iii. Individuals and the church should have some plans for the future – some objectives.
 - iv. Too many times we are limited by small plans.

IV. CONCLUSION

- a. We need to look away from the world – Moses – Heb. 11: 24 – 27.
- b. Paul saw the Crown – 2 Tim. 4:8; 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 12:2