

Remember

A Better Retrospective

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We have just crept into January 2021, having passed through the traditional end-of-the-year contemplation of the *annus horribilis* we have just come through, and the drive to resolve to do better. That is always part of these year-end things; people make resolutions for the new year. What caught my attention in these last couple of weeks has been the retrospectives of the old year. That is what I have been thinking about. It was a year dominated by a virus—we all know what that is—an election—we all suffered through that—and also a post-election squabble over votes, which is still going on. That seems to be all that happened last year—all that anybody ever talks about: the virus, the election, and post-election, almost as if nothing else happened during this past year.

Retrospectives are not a bad thing. It is good to look back and contemplate both successes and failures. What did we do? What did we succeed in? It is good to look back to see where and how we messed up, how we made mistakes, and consider how we can avoid those mistakes in the future. We can also reminisce about good times and good friends, and think about recreating those situations in the year to come. We can remember people whom we have lost over the past year or two and recall their wisdom or their accomplishments or kindnesses to us—even their good humor and friendship.

Many of the retrospectives are of this latter kind: a list of people who died over the past year. Videos of such memorials are easy to find on the Internet, some of them with themes like “Those we lost to COVID-19 during the pandemic” or “Athletes who died in 2020” or “Celebrities we lost this year.” You can find them all over the place.

[TheFamousPeople.com](https://www.thefamouspeople.com) and [People.com](https://www.people.com) provide exhaustive lists of 2020 deaths of well-known people that include, among many others, Kobe Bryant, Sean Connery, Pierre Cardin, Kirk Douglas, Eddie Van Halen, Chadwick Boseman, Kenny Rogers, Olivia de Havilland, Chuck Yeager, Diana Rigg,

Charlie Pride, Ravi Zacharias, Alex Trebek, and perhaps the most celebrated in the media, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

These men and women made their marks on various fields of activity, some good, some not-so-good. We don't know how history will treat any of them. But people knew them and respected them. Many were role models for younger aspirants in their fields. And that is fine. That is great that people left some good things that others can follow. But they were people, just human beings, very fallible, and all unconverted. I don't think I saw one converted person on the lists of celebrated people.

If we are going to take the time to remember, it is good for us as children of God, as Bill was talking about, to remember things that God wants us to remember, not what the media wants us to remember. Who are the media? Just a bunch of people with agendas driven by their human natures. But there is God, who is perfect, and when He tells us to remember something, there is a good reason why we need to remember it.

I felt it was an interesting study to go through a concordance list of all the times God tells us to remember something. It provides an exhaustive list of things that we need to be thinking about, meditating on—not about futile things like an actress' films or an athletes' feats in big games. Those are fun to maybe Google at one point another, but they are not things that are going to change our lives. However, the things that God tells us to remember are things that can change our lives. Here a few for you to chew on. I am just going to give you a list of about twenty things God tells us to remember, and since we are in the remembering mode at the end of a calendar year, maybe you can think about these things instead.

- Exodus 13:3: Remember the day God freed you from Egypt
- Exodus 20:8: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
- Deuteronomy 5:15: Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt
- Deuteronomy 7:18: Remember what God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt
- Deuteronomy 8:2: Remember that God has led you all the way
- Deuteronomy 8:18: Remember that it is God who gives you power to get wealth

- Deuteronomy 32:7: Remember the days of old and what God has done for you
- I Chronicles 16:12: Remember God's marvelous wonders and judgments
- I Chronicles 16:15: Remember His covenant forever
- Psalm 20:7: Remember the name of the Lord
- Ecclesiastes 12:1: Remember your Creator in the days of your youth
- Isaiah 46:9: Remember that God is God and like no other
- Malachi 4:4: Remember the Law of Moses with the statutes and judgments
- Luke 17:32: Remember Lot's wife
- John 15:20: Remember that a servant is not greater than his Master
- I Corinthians 11:23-26: Keep the Passover in remembrance of Christ
- Ephesians 2:11-13: Remember that you were once without Christ but now you are brought near
- II Timothy 2:8: Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead
- Revelation 2:5: Remember from where you have fallen, repent, and do the first works
- Revelation 3:3: Remember how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent

This is just a sampling of the more than 200 times that the words *remember*, *remembered*, *remembering*, *remembrance*, etc., are found in the Bible, and there is a sermon in each one of those things God tells us to remember. What they do, I believe, if we think about them enough, if we meditate on them, is that they focus our minds on what is truly important, what God wants us to think about. And if we do this—if we, let's say, take one of these a week—they will help us make the most of 2021.