

Food for Thought—Remember the Things You Know



Photo by [Nico Smit](#) on [Unsplash](#)

In II Peter chapter 1, which Peter is writing at a time when he sees he is nearing the end of his life, he tells his readers that he wants to stir them up and remind them of things they already know but easily forget (Ch 1:5-16). And he of course is right: our problems often stem from forgetting things we already know. Remembering those things is often what's needed to get us back on track.

A friend and pastor I know reminded us often that “attitudes are caught, not taught.” Our attitudes are easily perceived by our children and others around us, and they often adopt those attitudes without even realizing they are doing so. We often are blind or deaf to the attitudes we ourselves are transmitting until we see it showing up in a child or someone else close to us and realize 2 things: 1) *This is a bad attitude, and 2) They got this from me. I have a wrong attitude.* And to change our attitude, we have to remind ourselves of the truth(s) which we've been forgetting or ignoring.

So...it is a good idea to remind ourselves often of what we know to be true—the things that should be guiding our lives and thoughts. Peter, in this passage, lists a number of the truths we need to be stirred up to remember. He reminds his readers that faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control/moderation, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape love are the things of true importance—not prestige, wealth, ease, etc. We know they are important—we're Christians, right?--but our focus and actions often reveal that we've lost sight of what is the truth about which things actually are important and which things will turn out at the end of our lives to have been mere wood, hay, and stubble. Peter also tells his readers to remember that they have been purged from their sins and to bear in mind what that means.

A good exercise in stirring ourselves up to remember is to make a list of some of the things which we know are truths that have often helped us gain perspective—things we know are important and meaningful to us and which have borne good fruit in our lives when we remember them. It is also helpful to note which activities in our lives have a good effect on us. For example, being out in nature is very good for me (and to be in nature doesn't require a national park—ordinary trees, the sky, and the wind are very much enough to encounter wonder... and the message all mankind can discern, just as Psalm 19 describes). Similarly, there's a series of detective books which I listen to often because I've noticed they have a good effect upon me. The detective has both a strong sense of right and wrong alongside the ability to think about circumstances, motivations, and possibilities from many angles, and that kind of careful thought is a good trait. When we notice which things have a good effect upon us, it's a good idea to try to make them happen fairly often.

Back, however, to making a list of truths that help us when we remember them...Here, for example, are just some things (far, far from all of them) that are on such a list for me (some are scriptures, some are helpful things I've heard others say, some are lessons learned through experience).

*...Run the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross. (Heb. 12)

*“It is God that works within you both to will, and to do, his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” (Ps. 103)

*“Godliness with contentment is great gain” (I Tim. 6:6)

- *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you”
- *Go on a fast from complaining (even legitimate complaints) for 2 weeks (pastor/experience)
- *There’s no such thing as a “mere mortal”; every human is on his or her way to becoming an eternal horror or eternal splendor; each is of extreme importance (C.S. Lewis paraphrase)
- *To compare is not to love (a pastor); this one helps a LOT when I notice I’m starting to envy someone
- *I have never regretted an instance in which I showed a student mercy, but I have regretted times when I didn’t show mercy. When in doubt, mercy is a safer bet. (experience)
- *Blessed are the pure in heart, the poor, the meek, the peacemakers.... (Matt.5)
- *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb.13:8)
- *He (Jesus) is a person, not a plan (Michael Card)
- *Why do ye seek the living among the dead? (Luke 24:5)
- *You shall know them by the fruit their fruit (this is such a great litmus test)
- *It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Hebrews 10)
- *Thought he be not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17)
- *Don’t believe everything you think (a pastor)
- *You can go into despair based on zero truth (a pastor)
- *If you’re good enough for Jesus, you’re good enough for me (a mentor)
- *The root of bitterness, springing up, will trouble you (Heb. 12:15)
- *Should I not spare 120,000 people who don’t know their right hand from the left, and also many animals? (Jonah 4)
- *If we should die for this child, it would be the greatest honor my family could have (Corrie Ten Boom’s father when an acquaintance urged him not to take in and hide a Jewish baby because it would make noise and it might cost them their lives if they were found out)
- *He came, He saw, He surrendered all (Michael Card)
- *Underneath (to catch us) are the everlasting arms. (Deut. 33)
- *When you are in pain, you can get ulcers, you can give ulcers, or you can give it to God (pastor)
- *And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 21)
- *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6)
- *Some people think X at one end of the spectrum, and others believe Y at the other end, but it is often the case that the truth is somewhere in the middle (Tom McKenney)
- *God makes beautiful things out of broken pieces. (Tom McKenney)
- *In the essentials unity, in the non-essentials liberty, in all things charity. (Augustine, Wesley, et al)
- *The daystar from on high has visited us (Luke 1)
- *...the trees of the field shall clap their hands (Is. 55)
- * The little hills rejoice on every side. (Ps 65)
- *In as much as you have done it to the least of my brethren, you’ve done it unto me” (Matt. 25)

Life is full of distractions, we live in a fallen world with many fallen ideas clamoring all around us, and we have an enemy who is the Father of Lies. So... we definitely need to remind ourselves--over and over--of the things that we already know but which we can so easily lose sight of. Peter did well to make *the importance of remembering* part of his final advice to believers.