



THE EXHORTER

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start #2157

Proverbs 4:5 "Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth."

It's back to school time. As I write, a yellow school bus drives down the street picking up kids and heading for a day of school. A big chunk of a young life is spent in school. It is there that we learn, make friends, interact and often face some of our earliest challenges. Most issues with bullies take place the first month of school. Each school year there are new faces, new teachers, new schedules and for many a different building to attend.

Our verse is a good one for this time of year. The words come from a dad to his son. The first several chapters of Proverbs are fashioned that way. Get wisdom and get understanding and do not forget what I've told you. Good advice. Heavenly advice. Works not only in the classroom, but the corporate room as well.

Wisdom and understanding are not about mathematics, the sciences and history. It's about life. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. The knowing comes first and the using it and doing part follows. The wisdom and understanding that is talked about throughout Proverbs is godly. This has nothing to do with backpacks, yellow school busses, but listening and learning the will of God. This wisdom and understanding would come from parents, prophets, and later on rabbis. For us, it comes from the word of God. We read to know and we read to become. God's word doesn't lie dormant within our hearts. God's word is alive and active. It works on and with our conscience. It leads us to make changes. It catches us before we say things we shouldn't. It motivates us, challenges us, encourages us and comforts us.

In our verse today, dear ole' dad says, "do not forget the words of my mouth." Don't forget. That's good for all of us. We tend to forget. We get running so fast, and there are so many things to do that we often forget. How many times are we out the door, ready to leave and suddenly remember something that we have forgotten and back into the house we go, looking for it. But here, in this verse, it's not forgetting to put the bills in the mailbox or forgetting to let the dog out, or forgetting lunch money, it's forgetting the words of wisdom from dad.

"Oh, yeah, I forgot," is said much too often. I forgot to pray. I forgot to stay away from evil influences. I forgot, and gossiped. I forgot and got caught up listening to someone tell something that

should have walked away from. I forgot.

We can forget the good that comes from attending worship services. Some of us have been going to services most of our lives and it's just something that we do. Others have not been so fortunate. One can forget the warmth, the love, the encouragement, the closeness to God, the great things learned that comes from worshipping God. We can allow our schedules to dictate whether or not we worship God. We can allow our tired bodies to determine whether or not we will go. In the back of our minds our verse calls out, "Don't forget."

We fall into trouble when we forget God's word. Satan tempts and God provides a way of escape. Often the key to the door out is remembering a verse. Jesus used verses to turn the tide on Satan's temptation to Him. We can forget to be kind to others. Forgetting this, we come across aggressive, rude, harsh and mean. And, much too often, that's the way we are even before we leave the house. We can forget to let our lights shine. Before us every day is opportunities to show the world Christ. We forget. We get busy doing what we do at work and we forget about the spiritual status of our co-workers. We take a few phone calls and we are bothered, in a bad mood, grumpy and not very Christ-like. It hits us later. We forgot. We forgot about that rock that our house is supposed to be built upon. We forgot that we can do all things through Christ. We forgot to be thankful, even for tough days. And, at the end of the day, we feel like a wrung out wash cloth. Tired, messy and coming home to a dozen more things to be done. The sunshine has gone out of our spirit and realizing that tomorrow it starts all over again. It doesn't have to be that way. There has been sermons that taught us how to get through tough days. There have been classes on Elijah, hiding in his cave. We've learned about prayer. We been taught how to handle discouragement. We know the story of the fiery furnace and the lion's den. We know how to be brave. We know the good that comes from following Christ. We know, but we forgot. The day got the most of us. The stress and the hectic pace pushed all those things we knew to the background. And, here is our verse, "Do not forget the words of my mouth."

So, it's easy to see that we often forget. Had the Lord not instituted the memorial supper on the first day of the week, we wonder how many weeks would pass before we thought of that wonderful sacrifice on Calvary. We forget. Now, how can we remember.

Try some little things, baby steps to help you remember.

- Put a post-it note on your steering wheel with one word, "Pray." As you drive down the road today, pray.
- Put in your schedule, on your phone, "Read Bible." Take a few minutes and just read some of the Proverbs today.
- Instead of stuffing your faith into the background of your mind and day, pull it to the front. Reminders on your tablet, computer, phone can help you from forgetting.

You are a Christian. What an honor that is. It has changed your life for the better. What a mess you would be today, had it not been for Christ. You belong to the amazing Kingdom of God, the greatest kingdom in the world. Don't put up with sore attitudes, blasphemous out bursts, and those critical of your Jesus. Most are not interested in engaging in a real discussion, they just want to trash what you believe. Walk away from that.

Count your blessings that you have today. Life. Health. Family. A God that loves you. The opportunity to glorify God. A difference you can make in someone's life. Because someone is having a melt down doesn't mean that you have to join them. Comfort others. Show hope and optimism. Smile more. Be thoughtful.

Remembering, will make you thankful. It will pull you closer to God. It will keep you where you need to be. Remember my words... good for school kids and good for us big kids as well.

Roger Shouse