



**Deut. 6:10-19**  
***The Danger of Prosperity***

10 " So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,

11 "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant -- when you have eaten and are full --

12 "then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

13 "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

14 "You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you

15 '(for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

16 " You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.

17 "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you.

18 "And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers,

19 "to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

In Dicken's great novel *Great Expectations*, Pip starts out well as a poor but kind and honest boy until he comes under the influence of spiteful Mrs. Havisham whose ultimate end is to destroy him and all men in her revenge, and the ward she means to do it Estella. Pip comes into a great inheritance, which is actually give to him by a convict by the name of Abel Magwitch, but he assumes he came into it via Mrs. Havisham. This very inheritance and the life of ease it brings, becomes the means to his undoing. Pip aspires to live a life as a gentlemen of the world and he ceases to be friendly and humble and despises his actual benefactors and instead idolizes and sycophantically follows those who are seeking his destruction.

In this scenario we have an analogy for what Moses is warning might happen to Israel. Israel has been delivered from the House of Bondage

Paul pointed out in Romans 8:35-39 that nothing can separate the Redeemed from the Love of Christ, unfortunately though as Christopher Wright reminds us there are plenty of things that can separate God from the love of his people. He identifies three main sources:

*1) The danger of forgetting and despising God because of Prosperity*

*2) The danger of abandoning God because of the idolatry of those who live around us*

### 3) *The danger of doubting God because of difficulties and hardships*

***Prov. 30:8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches -- Feed me with the food allotted to me;***

***9 Lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.***

#### **1) The danger of forgetting and despising God because of Prosperity**

Pride is unfortunately the reigning sin of prosperity, and it is usually the case that instead of causing us to dwell upon his mercies, the more we prosper the less we remember God, until

Deut 4:30 "The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

It was said as a man who had come into great prosperity through his labors was passing by, "there goes a self-made man" – "yes, and he adores his creator" commented another. Those men who generally

When we are doing poorly we cry out to God for his mercy as the Israelites did in their time in Egypt and during the cycles of oppression in Judges. We see our need in that moment, but once the difficulty is gone we begin to despise and ignore the one who delivered us.

Unfortunately for Christians, we can treat God's grace with similar contempt, when we are in terrible straits brought to the bottom of the barrel, we cry out to God and he delivers us, but then when we are delivered and begin to prosper, our family is doing well, our marriage is finally on an even keel, our vices no longer rule and destroy us, we are growing in our theological knowledge, we perversely begin to grow spiritually proud. We forget as Spurgeon put it that ***"All our spiritual, mercies, and many of our temporal ones, are very much like the inheritance of Israel in the land of Canaan, wells that they did not dig, and vineyards which they did not plant. Our blessings come from sources that are beyond our own industry and skill; they are the fruits of the holy inventiveness of God, and the splendor and fullness of his thoughtfulness towards his poor children."***

Grace itself became a stumbling block for Israel, they inherited:

**Cities they did not build**

**Houses filled with good things they did not fill**

**Cisterns (explain to the kids what a cistern is) they did not hew out of the rock themselves.**

**Vineyards and Olive trees they did not plant**

They were given these things, and perversely valued them less than if they had had to work for them themselves. Its often the case that Christians whose salvation is of grace, treat their religion as less valuable than those in works based religions who believe they are working for salvation!

Christian never forget where you were when Christ found you, or where you would be today if he abandoned you. Never forget the price of your redemption or treat it as a small thing. God had to destroy Egypt to deliver his people from their physical slavery and bondage. God had to crush his dearly beloved only begotten Son to deliver you from your spiritual bondage.

## 2) The danger of abandoning God because of the idolatry of those who live around us

The temptation to abandon God and his laws and accept both the idols and the values of the surrounding Canaanite peoples were very great. This normally began by acting as though these gods they served were real and becoming pluralists. Its not that we abandon God entirely we just make room for other gods in our homes and in our hearts.

Our covenant God and deliverer rightly expects our love of him to be singular.

In the Old Testament we see many examples of polygamy in marriage, which God never commanded, but one element is constant throughout, wherever there was polygamy there was jealousy. The wives hated having to compete for the love and attention of their husband and end up despising and fighting with their rivals.

This is not surprising considering that God has designed the human heart for *monogamy*, not *polygamy*. And he uses monogamous marriage as the grand example for his relationship to the church. The church is his bride. But when the church attempts to share her affections with other husbands, disaster results. Polytheism is no more successful than polygamy. He being the only true and righteous God and our alone provider will not share our love with others.

13 "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

14 "You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you

15 '(for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

## 3) The danger of doubting God because of difficulties and hardships

In verse 16 Moses raises the example of Massah for Exodus 17

3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

5 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.

6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

7 So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Is god really with us? So often when we are tested, and under trial we become practical atheists. Nowhere is this more common than in marriage.

Application:

What then is the answer to these threats remembering: "do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you"

Remember your salvation is all of grace, Eph. 2:11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands -

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12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

The Lord has given us this meal of remembrance as a reminder.

When you are tempted, remember the example of our Lord Jesus who when He was tempted by Satan appealed again and again to the commandments of God from this very book. Remember therefore not just your salvation, but the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them":

Israel failed and was driven out of the Land, because they had no heart for his commandments and did not teach them to their children. Let us not be like them, let us not forget who are real benefactor is and become like Pip.