

MEMORIES SPARKED

I shared a few weeks ago how I received shocking news on a Sunday night that one of my dear friends in ministry had died suddenly earlier that day. This past Sunday I learned of another person's sudden passing. I did not receive a phone call this time but rather discovered it as I looked at the obituaries from the previous week's Brantford Expositors.

I recognized this man's picture immediately because his daughter played on a few of the basketball teams I coached. He was only 55 years old at the time of his passing and not only left behind a daughter who is the same age as Coral, but two younger children from his second marriage. My heart broke for the loss these children were going through having just lost their dad.

I found myself many times on Sunday recalling memories with Coral and Nadine of our basketball days with him. I recalled the times he would compliment my daughter after games and offer her tips from his experience having played basketball at the university level. I remembered as well how he would offer advice from the stands during games to certain players so they would be in a better position while playing defense. I smiled when I recalled the time his daughter got a technical foul and I looked over at him at that moment in the stands shaking his head. I also recalled how we drove his daughter to a tournament one Saturday in London because he had to work in Ancaster until noon. I couldn't believe it when he appeared at the game at 1:00 p.m. I asked him afterward how he could get from Ancaster to London in just one hour. I can still envision his smile when he replied, "I just find myself a rabbit on the road and fall in behind them." It took an event like this loss on Sunday to have these memories spark again in me.

My daughter experienced the same thing this past Friday. The event that sparked a whole host of memories for her was the younger sister of one of her closest friends getting ready for her high school prom. My daughter dropped off a card as well as bobby pins at her friend's house as she was putting the final touches on her sister's hair. Later that night my daughter began looking at some of the pictures taken of the sister wearing her prom dress. This resulted in our family reminiscing two year's back to my daughter's prom and the events that still hold special memories for us from that day.

In both of these cases, events sparked us to recall memories from our times with certain people and moments in our lives. Sad events can result in us doing this as well as remembering good ones. It reminded me how, as time

passes, we tend to focus less and less on people and events from our pasts. This often happens because we focus on other things and people in the midst of the busyness of our day-to-day lives. This tendency and nature that we have reminded me of something God wanted Joshua and the Israelites to do once they crossed over the Jordan river.

When all the people had crossed the Jordan, God instructed Joshua to have one man from each of the twelve tribes retrieve a stone from the very place in the river where the priests were still standing so that they could be used to build a memorial. After the memorial was built Joshua said to the people:

In the future, your children will ask, “What do these stones mean?” Then you can tell them, “This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the river right before your eyes, and he kept it dry until you were all across, just as he did at the Red Sea when He dried it up until we had all crossed over. He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the Lord’s hand is powerful and so you might fear the Lord your God forever (Joshua 4: 21-24).

It is interesting to take note that the first thing that God wanted Joshua and the Israelites to do after crossing the Jordan was not to rush off to Jericho and begin the journey to possess the land. God wanted them instead to take time first to **focus on Him** and remember He was guiding them in the past at the Red Sea and still at that moment at the Jordan. If Joshua and the Israelites had rushed off without doing this, it may have resulted in them losing their focus on God and forgetting how He was guiding them.

A tendency we do have is to rush off into a new season in our lives and not take time to focus on memories or lessons from previous seasons. We most likely are guilty of making this same mistake when it comes to our experiences with God and what He has done and is still doing for us. It is important that we **do not let our busyness** prevent us from taking time to reflect on God, and how He has faithfully guided us in the past and the present. If we cannot find quiet moments in the midst of our busy days, then let's make sure we begin each new day with a moment to focus on God. We will be flooded with memories of His past faithfulness, and His ongoing goodness.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean