

What Does the Bible Teach
about Yesterday?

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- Psalm 90
- “It’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.” (Lewis Carroll)
- “Realize the past no longer holds you captive. It can only continue to hurt you if you hold on to it. You can't have a better tomorrow if you spend today thinking about yesterday.” (Sarah Breathnach)

What Constitutes Yesterday?

- It exists only in subjective, fading human memories, in photographs, art and structures, in books and histories written from limited perspectives with incomplete information, and in stories passed from one generation to another. It is an imperfect, incomplete record preserved incompletely by imperfect record keepers on imperfect, insubstantial materials. *(prb)*

Yesterday Is A Great Teacher

- Paul reminded the Philippians of the many things he had taught them in the past
 - Phil. 4:9 - “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”
- Memories of past help from the Philippians sustained Paul in the present
 - Phil. 4:10 - “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.”

Yesterday Is A Great Teacher

- Paul's memory of past experiences informed him how to understand and accept his present and all future circumstances
 - Phil. 4:11-13 - “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Yesterday Is A Great Teacher

- Learn from family
 - 2Tim. 3:14-15 - “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Yesterday Is A Great Teacher

- Learn from the faithful
 - 2Tim. 2:2 - “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”
- Learn from the record of faith
 - Rom. 15:4 - “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

Yesterday Is A Great Teacher

- Unlike human records of yesterday, the Bible is Providentially maintained by our perfect God. It will not fade away
 - 1Peter 1:23-25 - “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

Yesterday Is A Poor Place To Live

- There is no living space in yesterday; we cannot linger there. We cannot even accurately recall it
 - Ecc. 7:10 - “Do not say, Why were the former days better than these? For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.”
 - Ecc. 1:11 - “There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after.”

Yesterday Is A Poor Place To Live

- Yesterday is often bigger and better, or smaller and worse in our memories than it truly was in reality. What we remember and what really happened are often different
 - We only know what we experienced
 - Even then we emphasize what was more meaningful to us and what was overlooked by the filters of our perceptions and prejudices, because that is our nature

Yesterday Is A Poor Place To Live

- For some, the memories of yesterday are pleasant, but for others, memories are unhappy, painful places to be avoided. Many have memories filled with mistakes and failures they regret and would like to forget
- We don't have control over what happens to us; we can only control our reactions to them
 - James 1:2-4 - “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Yesterday Is A Poor Place To Live

- Paul had very few pleasant memories of his past
 - Gal. 1:13-14 - “For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”

Yesterday Is Not The Present Or The Future

- Some people have yesterdays of faithful service to God, but not today
 - 1Tim. 1:18-20 - “This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

Yesterday Is Not The Present Or The Future

- Some people have yesterdays of faithful service to God, but not today
 - Heb. 6:4-6 - “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

Yesterday Is Not The Present Or The Future

- Some had yesterdays filled with evil, but not today
 - 1Tim. 1:13-16 - “Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”

Yesterday Is Not The Present Or The Future

- Some had good intentions in past, but not today
 - Acts 24:25 - “Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.”
 - Matt. 23:29-31 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.”

Yesterday Is Not The Present Or The Future

- God's standard is not yesterday, but today
 - Ez. 18:20-24 - "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. 21 But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 22 None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. 23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord GOD, and not that he should turn from his ways and live? 24 But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.

Yesterday Is Not The Present Or The Future

- We don't have to continue in the same wrong direction
 - Luke 13:3 - "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

What Does the Bible Teach about Yesterday?

- “Your life is before you. Be careful of the choices you make now that you could regret later. This regret is the subject of an old poem whose author has been forgotten. I hope you’ll never have reason to apply it to yourself.” (James C. Dobson, *Life on the Edge*)

“Across the fields of yesterday,
He sometimes comes to me
A little lad just back from play—
The boy I used to be.
He looks at me so wistfully
When once he’s crept within;
It is as if he hoped to see
The man I might have been.”

What Does the Bible Teach about Yesterday?

- “‘Someday,’ you said you'd do it yesterday; Yesterday, you said you'll do it today. Today, if you push it to tomorrow, it's likely tomorrow, you'll shift it to ‘Someday!’ Do it now!” (*Israelmore Ayivor*)
- If you don't do it today, then tomorrow you will carry the regret that you allowed today to become yesterday without doing it.