

**“And this Gospel
shall be preached...”**
Matthew 24:14

Sermon Summaries from Ministers of the Worldwide Church of God

Programming Yourself To Remember

by Norman Smith

Probably the most marvelous of all modern inventions is the computer. In some ways it is designed and operates on the same principles as the human brain — but, of course, a computer is very, very much simpler than any brain. Nevertheless there are enough similarities to make it profitable to apply some analogies to the spiritual, the Christian life.

The computer is basically a matter of the on or off condition, the zero or one, the positive or the negative, the north pole or the south pole, of many individual “bits.” All information is stored that way, and all those calculations of the trajectories of our space shots, or computer models of society or of the world, or whatever, are made up of an orderly array of these simple on or off, zero or one conditions.

The advantage of the computer is the speed with which its calculations can be accomplished, and the speed with which it can store and retrieve information. The access time of our computer at Ambassador College is about a half of a millionth of a second, to go in, get information, bring it back, and use it. And I think I’ve heard that the individual zero or one, on-off condition is now approaching the order of 15 to 20 nanoseconds (or billionths of a second) in some of our more sophisticated computers. You might understand how fast a billionth of a second is if you multiply upward, the other way: One billion seconds equals approximately 31 years.

But all of a computer’s speedy “thinking” has to be thought out carefully in advance. It has to be set up to do this slowly and painstakingly by programming. In other words, it takes time to communicate with the machine. To make this easier and faster, programming languages have been developed so you can talk to the machine in English, and it can interpret your language into its language. The newer machines are developed with more efficient languages, and if the operator hasn’t learned the newer, more efficient language yet, it can take the older language, convert it into the newer language, and do that until you have time to learn it. And also computers can now learn by doing. They can be programmed so that if you ask them to solve a problem, they can learn how *not* to solve it, and if you ask them to solve it the second time, they’ll do it more quickly than they did the first time.

The computer has one outstanding feature in which it is superior to the human mind. The mind of God has this capability, and we as human beings need to develop it if we are to become like God. It is the ability to remember with crystal clarity stored data, past experience that has been fed into it, and to use it in solving a problem.

Israel Forgot

You’ve heard many times that typically Israel forgot God. On the other hand, we find in Exodus

2:24: "And God heard their groaning, and God *remembered* his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." So it is typical of God to remember, and typical of human beings to forget. In the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32, Israel was told: "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? *Remember* the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee" (verses 6-7).

"... Jacob is the lot of his [God's] inheritance. He found him in a desert land... he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young... beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him" (verses 9-12).

He brought them out of slavery, He provided water for them out of rock, He brought them into the Promised Land. He gave them all of the good things.

"But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (verse 15). A common human inability, is to neither properly esteem what has happened in the past nor to recognize the great blessings God has given.

Verse 18: "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast *forgotten* God that formed thee." If we, the called out ones, can change this natural human proclivity with the power of God, then we can be spared and we can be different.

God formed us for a purpose: He wanted a process to occur in our minds. He wants us to program our minds to this goal.

Verses 46-47: "And he said unto them, *Set your hearts* unto all the words which I testify among you this day... For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

If they would set their heart to remember, to indelibly print in their minds what He was telling them, they would have life. This would be the source of decision-making in their lives, of problem-solving, of direction for the activities of their lives. They would

still have individual choice, but be able to choose within the parameters of the law which God gave them for blessing and not cursing.

If they could have looked as vividly into their memories like a computer, they would not have gone astray. But they were not able to remember.

In the Input Mode

In Ecclesiastes 12:1 we are commanded to keep in mind the knowledge of God while we're young, while we have the opportunity to benefit from it: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth..."

So while you're young, while your life is in front of you, while you still have the opportunity for decision making, problem solving, choices, if you will remember your Creator, you're going to make decisions properly. And life is going to be happy, it's going to be abundant.

Apply the knowledge input and you won't have to apply as many of the more painful inputs of experience. You won't have to experience the evil if you will apply the knowledge input that is given to you.

Now originally there were two young human beings whose minds were basically blank. But God was able to communicate with them for a very short time. And you would have thought, since they had fresh blank minds, not cluttered with other numbers, experiences, or problems, and they weren't dulled by age or anything, that they could have remembered everything God told them quite vividly a few moments, hours, or days later, wouldn't you? But it didn't stick. Because in Genesis 3:6: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof..." She failed to use all the knowledge in her mind and made her decision without it.

The same thing occurred in Joshua 7:1, where "... Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel."

He had been told not to touch the spoils. It should have been in his mind. His mind should have gone into the search mode, or the recall mode: What was I told about this? I was told to leave it alone, therefore it is a firm, steady, steadfast, clear-

cut decision: I'm going to leave it alone. The decision is, no. (And if you were to wonder about some similar problem a thousand times with the same information, you'll come up with the same decision.) Achan should have recalled the fact that he was told that he should not covet, and told specifically here not to take of the spoil. But he did. And many people lost their lives because of it.

James 1:14 tells us that basically the same problem occurs today if we're not careful: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." When lust becomes all-consuming, it blots out and prevents the recall of knowledge, commands, instructions, and even blots out past experiences where the same mistake was made and a penalty incurred.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (verse 15). So because we forget and don't keep the knowledge in mind, we pay the penalty.

"Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above . . ." — certainly God maintains the program He has in mind — ". . . with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (verses 16-17).

Programming Ourselves

With human beings, the writing of the program does not occur all at once. Perhaps we are also like the computer in that it takes a lot of time to translate to a language the computer understands. But it does occur, it must occur, if we're going to be like God.

Hebrews 8 recounts the remedy, in showing how the new covenant is made. Verses 6-7: ". . . He [Christ] is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." If the information that was given by that first covenant had been stored in human minds, so that it would have been used through their lifetimes, there would have been no need for a second covenant — because the fault was with them, with their incapacity to recall and to apply.

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . . For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,

saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts . . ." (verses 8-10). So the essence of the new covenant is having it written indelibly in our human minds to the point that we will *recall* it and *use* it. The law hasn't changed; that's part of the basic program of the universe.

Remember the Future

If you have the understanding and the meaning of II Peter 2-3 programmed into your minds, you will be able to reject false ideas about the new covenant. If you program this, if you remember it vividly and with clarity, it will give you the capability to know ahead of time that there will be people telling you something different about the new covenant and about many other things. So let's activate our minds, put them in the learning mode and make sure we have this printed in our minds.

II Peter 2:1: "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Verse 3: "And through covetousness [itself a violation of the commandment of God, itself a rejection of what should have been programmed into their mind by the basic tenth commandment] shall they with feigned words [deceit, falsehood] make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

Verse 18: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh. . . ." When you hear these false teachings, you will know they are false. Remember they were prophesied to come. And let that be a flag, a signal to you to search further and examine and find out.

Verses 19-20: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" — promised liberty, but really brought into bondage — "again entangled [in] . . . the pollutions of the world."

Peter continues in chapter 3:1: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." So that is the purpose of his writing, to stir up minds to *remember*, that they would apply it when they hear false teachers. "Knowing this first, that there shall

come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (verses 3-4). They'll say that things have always continued on, and they'll try to get you to *forget* what is prophesied for the future, that God is really going to intervene in world affairs.

If you keep in mind that Jesus Christ is going to return, that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," and that "the elements shall melt with fervent heat," it will direct you away from folly and error. You will see "what manner of persons ought ye to be . . . Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verses 10-13).

And verse 17: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." In other words, *remember!*

And in addition to that, you should "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . . ." (verse 18). You should grow in the understanding, the development of character, having the program of God's law written more firmly in your mind to affect every decision, so the recall time is instantaneous. Consider that the Holy Spirit is the means by which your mind can be softened, whereby the Law of God can be written there, and can be firmly, indelibly printed there so that it remains.

There's one other key ingredient of the future: uncertainty. Because you don't know the details of everything that might happen you must all the more keep in mind what you do know to decide what further to do and plan.

Memory Rejection

Computer models might tell the world how to avoid mass starvation and famine; and your spiritual

computer can tell *you* what to do. But these computers can make neither the world nor you do anything. You can listen to what your memory tells you, and reject it. That's what we usually do.

Rejecting what is in your memory is called going against your conscience, and Paul talks about the conscience becoming seared when you constantly reject the knowledge that is there. It's bad business to reject your conscience. Because the next time it may not give you a clear message. It begins to say, over a period of time, "If you don't like what I tell you, I won't tell you anymore." Instead, we need to develop and revitalize our search and application ability to make efficient use of the knowledge that is in our minds and consciences.

Maybe it scares you to think that God is programming your mind. But it's not the rigid, limited type of programming of a man-made computer. It is setting in your mind the basic pattern of law, of the way choices should be made, and within that pattern is great flexibility, great opportunity for individuality, for choice, for you to be an individual in the Family of God, different in some respects than either God the Father or the Son, but programmed like them in basic purpose. You can look around you at the design in nature, at each other, and see the individuality God has created. So there is no need to fear that you're going to be put in some kind of a straitjacket where you can't be free. The only way you *can* be free and have the opportunities of all eternity to express yourself, is to let that Law be written, programmed, in your hearts and minds.

If we can, as individuals, do in our minds what we've been able to build into a silly little machine, to remember what we have learned and apply it vividly and clearly to the present and future decisions that we make, then we can have the mind of God, and we can qualify for great rewards in His Kingdom, and He will place us there.