

September Remembering

One of the greatest songs ever written during my lifetime is "Try To Remember." The lyrics begin with a look back at better times.

Try to remember when life was so tender
When no one wept except the willow.
Try to remember when life was so tender
When dreams were kept beside your pillow.
Try to remember when life was so tender
When love was an ember about to billow.

The America I grew up in, when churches were full on Sunday mornings and people really cared deeply about one another and the future, was a wonderful time for me. This song has experienced a major resurgence in dealing with the pain, loss, and lessons from September 11. I believe it can prompt us to value the things which are most important in our lives before it is too late.

September, according to the song, is a time to think back to when things were more tender, happy, and full of dreams. A time, as the writer proclaims, when "love was an ember about to billow."

Each September, when the weather begins to cool and leaves begin to turn, is the chance to turn to the things which really matter. It is a time to concentrate on faith, hope, and love as churches ramp up for the fall, winter and spring.

Why pick September for the song? "Well," Tom Jones, who wrote the lyrics, responded, "Once you've gone so far as 'remember,' my friend, I fear you are headed inevitably toward September. I guess I felt that September is a time of passage from the romanticism of youth to realism. One moves from the over-statement of summer to the clarity of winter."

So, in a very real sense, we all need Septembers to remember. Times when we look at our lives, examine them, and see what things should be rediscovered, reclaimed, and done with them. We must not roll on from year to year with no focus, just running in circles and trying to keep up.

In September, we can remember that God cares about us just as much as he ever has. From the time we prayed childish prayers kneeling beside our bed, to the time where we are now, God loves, guides, and makes us into the persons he has created us to be.

When we look at how we spend our time in the week, we must "remember" the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as God's word says. That Sunday is God's day, to be spent in worship, study, and service. We try to remember those times when we felt close to God and run to his arms once again when we realize he never ever left us.

We remember when we pledged to follow Jesus, to raise our children to meet him, and evaluate whether we have dropped the ball or not. And if we have dropped it, God rejoices when we pick it up once again.

We remember when someone reached out to us in love and realize that we may be the ones now who reach out to others. We remember the hard times of service in the church and now try to support others who do the same things we were blessed to do long ago.

I want you to have a September to remember, dear reader. I want you to show this column to those who need to rejoice in the wonderful things God is doing in today's world. I want you to take the time to bow again in prayer and pledge that this year is going to be even better than last year because you have taken a step closer to God.

Tiesto, a Dutch DJ and record producer, recounts a September moment. "I was playing a gig in Greece in September 2003 and this guy walks up to me and says, 'Hey Tiesto, I just heard you play; you're amazing. I want you to play at the opening ceremony of the Olympics.' I looked at him, like, 'Sure pal!'"

He did play, at the 2004 Summer Olympics opening ceremony in Athens. He was the first DJ to play live on stage at an Olympics.

This September can be full of promise, new beginnings, and blessings for us and ours, or it can be a quite ordinary month. The choice is up to us.

Does September speak of Godly endeavors to you? Or does it speak of the confusion and darkness of the world which has yet to see him?

When Jesus comes into our hearts, a new "September to remember" begins. We begin to see things differently. Our priorities change. New life begins.

The great comedian Groucho Marks was around at a black and white television time for America. Now we can live in living color with God. He said. "My favourite poem is the one that starts 'Thirty days hath September' because it actually tells you something."

Are you a poem that doesn't make sense? Or when people look in your direction, do you actually tell them something? About God. It just might be a "September to remember" for them and theirs.

Let the ember of God's love begin to billow in you this very day.