

January 2008

But then I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.

—Psalm 77:11-12, NLT

Much can be learned from life experience. Many important clues lie hidden in the rubble of yesterday, clues that reveal God at work in our lives. Yet surprisingly few of us conduct the treasure hunt that will uncover the evidence.

Finding treasure in past experience requires that one become skilled at the art of biblical reflection. Let's probe this idea of digging for treasure.

Biblical reflection is different from merely probing childhood memories or pulling skeletons out of a dismal past. It's learning to unpack life and its events—positive and negative—and distill meaning and lessons from it all. It's really as easy as taking time to revisit life's emotional experiences and learn from them.

As we develop an investigative mentality, we will better understand what God is saying to us and prevent repeated mistakes and errors. God admonishes us over and over to "remember" (see Deut. 5:15, 8:2, 9:7; 1 Chr. 16:12; Ex. 20:8; Eph. 2:11-12).

Here are a few questions you might ask during a time of spiritual reflection: How did I truly feel about the experience? What was I going through at the time that might have contributed to it? What was God saying to me?

You might be wondering, Is this type of reflection scriptural? Absolutely! In fact, Scripture reveals that the Hebrews have always been a reflective people.

Isaac practiced it in the cool of the evening (see Gen. 24:63). David practiced it by remembering all God had done (see Ps. 143:5). Jacob revisited his dream and came to the realization that God was in the place he had stopped for the night, but he did not know it at first (see Gen. 28:13-17).

Can you imagine all we've missed by not reflecting?

Of course, not all experiences in life are a direct result of the will of God. However, Romans 8:28 reminds us that God uses every experience and weaves them together for good, especially for those "who love God and are called according to His purpose for them" (NLT).

As you begin this new year, are you willing to go on a daily treasure hunt in your own life experience? You might be surprised by the clues you uncover—clues that point to God's work in your life over the years.

Go ahead, search for hidden treasure. There remains much to be learned from past experience.

John Chasteen is the assistant dean of Southwestern Christian University Graduate School in Bethany, Oklahoma. He writes a weekly blog at .