

Dr. Ron Armstrong • February 28, 2021
Is This It? Feeling Nostalgia and Regret

Ezra 3:8 In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel ..., Joshua ... and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) began the work. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the Lord.

¹⁰ When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the Lord, as prescribed by David king of Israel. ¹¹ With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever." And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. ¹² But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. ¹³ No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

Psalms 118:24 This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

A. Wishing it was yesterday.

- 1) Nostalgia is fundamentally wishing we could go home, mixed with the pain of knowing we can't.

- 2) Every generation gets nostalgic eventually, but technology may cause it to happen faster.
- 3) Nostalgia often sees the past as better than today, while regret sees today as worse than it should have been. Neither is reliable.
- 4) They "wept aloud" at the celebration. What did they feel? This "new" will never be as good as that "old."
- 5) The problems with nostalgia and regret:
 - Nostalgia and regret both keep me looking back and can prevent me from enjoying today's blessings.
 - They can make me blind to what God is going to do with my "tomorrows."
 - They often come with heavy doses of judgment toward others and condemnation of myself.
 - Both interfere with the rejoicing that I am supposed to do today.

B. What can we do?

- 1) We need an answer to two questions:
 - How do I enjoy my memories without letting them steal the joy from today?
 - How do I learn from my past failures without constantly condemning myself?
- 2) Our antidote starts with gratitude:

- Name every blessing and give thanks.
- Express joy to God. Tell him the things that bring you joy.
- Pray for a teachable heart. It's an acknowledgement that I need to learn and helps me accept being human.
- Ask forgiveness for the past and strength to accept it from God.
- Ask the forward-looking question, "What do I want ... to look like?"