

I recently came across a stack of last year's Christmas cards and was surprised to learn how I had totally forgotten who all had sent cards. Forgetfulness comes naturally to man; it is so easy to forget even important things. The real challenge, however, is forgetting the things we *need* to forget.

We sometimes think memory – or lack of it – is purely an intellectual affair: either we have the “brain power” to remember or we don't. But this is not entirely true. Much of our memory is influenced by our attitudes and feelings.

For example, if a total stranger is verbally abusive to us, we may be upset for a while but eventually the memory fades. However, if a friend or family member were to say the same thing, we might be so deeply affected that the memory lingers for years. Why the difference? Because we evaluate the acts differently based upon our emotions.

Pride, disappointment, insecurity and guilt can all affect our ability to forget the things we should forget for our own peace of mind and for future progress.

*Some things to forget about 1996:*

1) The hurts inflicted by others. The reaction of other people toward us is probably the biggest inhibitor of our own progress. Forgiveness is not merely for the benefit of the offender; it also frees the offended to get on with life and do the things they need to do. Unhook the ball and chain and go forward.

2) Our failures. If we keep rehearsing our own mistakes and failures we can sink into defeatist frame of mind. “What's the use in trying,” we tell ourselves, “when I failed before?” We must learn to accept the fact (though not become satisfied with it) that failure is part of learning and growing. Some of the most successful men in history made their mark only after repeated failures. When 1997 rolls around, let's get up and try it again.

3) Our successes. The successes we occasionally enjoy in life are important, for they confirm our ability and value in service to the Lord. But we must not dwell on them too long lest we begin to unduly praise ourselves: “*For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends*” (2 Cor 10:18). Let the Lord make His own scrapbook of your life, “*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name ...*” (Heb 6:10). Our job is to keep on working.

May we forget the things we need to forget for a happy and prosperous 1997.