



Have you ever heard that old proverb? No, not one from the Bible, but the one that's a piece of general wisdom from simple observation: "You can never go home again." It means something like: No matter how hard you try, you can never truly revisit the past or recapture an old experience.

But we sure try, don't we? We call it "nostalgia." I turned 40 this year and found myself revisiting some old books lately which I enjoyed in my teen years. While there is still some delight in

rereading them, the surprise and fun of my first experience is long since gone. I believe, however, there is a deeper and more significant reason why we "can't go home again"—why nostalgia doesn't satisfy the way we'd like it to.

There is a deep, significant reason why nostalgia doesn't satisfy.

We have high school reunions, make trips back to places we've been before, keep up with what old friends are doing via facebook or phone calls. We're addicted to those feelings. Even if we sometimes have to recolor the pictures with emotions that weren't present in the original experience. Even if we have to use rose-colored glasses and lie to ourselves about how good the good old days were.

Let's look at a few passages of Scripture which may help us understand why the past doesn't satisfy.

In 1 Peter 1:1, the apostle addresses his letter to "those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion." This is a fairly loaded phrase. What I want us to notice is our Christian identity as "exiles." An exile is one who is detached. We are detached from the condition

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and destiny of our sinful and broken world. In a sense we do not belong.

Nostalgia is the practice of recapturing an old experience by way of belonging. Yet Peter tells us precisely that we are a people who don't belong. One of the things from which Christ has redeemed and rescued us is our past. It's not sinful to enjoy something from our past (provided it wasn't sinful then), but we must watch how much our hearts want to reattach to something that didn't last then and therefore won't last now. We are saved to eternal things, not past and temporary things. We can't go home again because we have no home.

Jesus defines our past, present, & future.

Another passage to help us, interestingly, encourages us to pursue two specific things from our past. Revelation 2:4-5 states, *"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first."* In this letter Jesus chides the Ephesian church for abandoning two things from their past:

- 1) Their first love (love for Jesus Christ)
- 2) the works they had done in the past for Christ that ought to continue.

While rooted in the past, this is not about nostalgia. These things are anchored not to a temporary point in our past, but in the eternal person of Jesus Christ. Jesus defines our past, present, and future. Jesus, and service to Him, satisfies in a way nostalgia can't.

Sam, his wife Rachel, and their four children, live in Springfield, Oregon where Sam serves as Village Missionary at Mohawk Community Church. He is interested in reading, writing, film, and theater.



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