

THE BEACON BEAM

SUFFERING FROM SPIRITUAL AMNESIA

Weekly devotional by Paul David Tripp

Preface by Pastor Michael R. Karns

Paul David Tripp says that the fool who says, "There is No God" is not speaking solely of the atheist, but of those who suffer from God amnesia. The foolishness that sin produces is professing believers living Godlessly. We live as if God does not exist because God does not reign in our hearts.

There are days that we live without a God consciousness. We haven't abandoned our theology. We haven't abandoned our love for the Gospel, but we live with a forgetfulness of God throughout the day.

Consider with me 7 characteristics of living with Spiritual amnesia—that is, functionally forgetting that there is an Eternity that this life is preparing us for and living instead as though this life on earth is all there is.

1. Living with unrealistic expectations.

Because we are hardwired for Forever, we'll long for a perfect paradise, and we'll struggle with the reality that our current address—a fallen world—is anything but perfect. This longing and struggle are reasonable, but in our moments of eternity amnesia, we'll become unreasonable in expecting the present world to be what it can never be.

We want the here and now earth to behave as if it is our final paradise destination, when in fact, all that we are experiencing in the here and now earth prepares us for the Forever destination that is to come.

2. Asking too much of people.

In the same way, when we fail to live with Forever in view, we will unrealistically ask the people around us to provide the paradise for which our hearts crave. Just like a fallen earth cannot provide paradise, neither can broken people!

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Michael R. Karns, *Minister of Christian Education*
Robert F. LaTour, *Minister of Pastoral Care*
N. Hunter Strength, *Minister of Youth*
Gregory L. Phillips, *Minister of Music*

Sunday

Morning Worship.....9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

No human being, whether your spouse, child, parent, or best friend, can give you inner peace and satisfaction that we can only ever experience in eternity. Asking too much of people only ends in disappointment, frustration, conflict, and division.

3. Questioning the goodness of God.

If we don't understand God's Forever agenda and his purpose for keeping us in a less-than-perfect world with less-than-perfect people, we will end up questioning his character, goodness, love, and control.

Unless we live with the constant remembrance that God's promises only reach their complete fulfillment in the world that is to come, we will feel as if we have been hit with the cosmic bait and switch in the world we now live in.

4. Living more disappointed than thankful.

Unrealistic expectations will always lead to disappointment and pain. Yes, we will suffer the pain of a fallen world, and yes, broken people will sin against us, but our disappointment often reveals more about our own eternity amnesia than it does about the world and humans around us.

Many of us are primarily disappointed, not because God has failed us, or because we have it extremely hard, or because the people around us have been particularly difficult to live with, but because we approach life today hoping that it will deliver to us things that we can only experience in Forever.

““Most of us find it very difficult to want "Heaven" at all—except in so far as “Heaven” means meeting again our friends who have died. One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world. Another reason is that when the real want for Heaven is present in us, we do not recognize it. Most people, if they really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise.”

5. Focusing too much on self.

Expecting the world and other people to serve our desires and bring us pleasure is more than just the result of eternity amnesia; it's a general consequence of the selfishness of sin. Eternity amnesia presents a more specific element.

God hardwired human beings to live big-picture, long-view, Forever lives. We were made to live with something bigger in view than this present moment's comfort, pleasure, and happiness.

Eternity confronts us with the fact that we are not in charge, that we do not live in the center of the universe, and that life moves by the will and purpose of Another. The instantaneous, self-serving “me-obsession” of our culture never leads to inner peace and contentment. Eternity confronts me with the realities that transcend my momentary wants, feelings, and needs.

6. Being controlling or fearful.

When eternity confronts us with the reality that we are not in charge and reminds us that life moves by the will and purpose of Another, rather than resting in the security and comfort of Forever, we tend to swing between fear and control. Why? Because in our eternity amnesia, we feel as if somehow, someday, life is passing us by, and we don't get a say. We forget that true, everlasting life is yet to come, and that this life is not meant to be ultimate.

Those unfilled longings, which none of us escapes, do not so much announce to us that this world has failed us, but rather alert us to the fact that we were designed for another world. Peace in this world is found only when we live with the coming world in view.

7. Lacking motivation and hope.

All of these consequences have the power to weaken our motivation and hope. Life on earth is hard, people will disappoint, God's hidden will will remain hidden, and you will face things you never imagined you would face. But this world is not all there is.

You are not living in the final chapter of the story. What is broken will be fixed, what has been bent will be straightened, and what has decayed will be restored. The fact that this world is not an endless cycle of dashed hopes and fading dreams, but by God's plan is marching toward a moment when all that is broken will be restored, can fill you with a reason to get up in the morning and press on.

Living with a Forever perspective every day really does give you a reason to continue every day, even when nothing right now seems to be working. Forever challenges my feelings of futility by reminding me that what I am experiencing right now is not permanent.

Life, real life as it was designed to be, simply cannot work without Forever. You were made for Forever. That is your inescapable identity. Life only works as it was meant to work when you live with Forever in view.

"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:13-16)

Regaining Forever

So where do we go from here? Well, in a word: **remember**. It sounds so simple, but for many of us, we have just forgotten or neglected to remember Forever. So, pray every day for the grace to remember that this life is not all that there is.

Many of us treat today as the final destination. Whatever our confessional theology says about eternity, at the functional level, we live as if this is all there is. We live with a **destination mentality** instead of a **preparation mentality**. This present world, with all its joys and sorrows, is not our final address. When we treat it as if it is, we try to get from this world what we can only experience in the next. We try to pack as much pleasure, happiness, and excitement into our present life as we can. We do this because the thought that this life is all there is carries an inescapable fear that life will somehow pass us by.

Here is what a destination mentality fails to understand: **our complete, present, personal happiness is not what God is working on in the here and now**. Why? Because the plan of his grace is to deliver us out of this world to one that is much, much better.

You see, God has designed that this would not be the final destination for his children. He knows that this is a terribly broken world that, in its present state, does not function the way that he intended. This world is not a safe place to look to for a sense of well-being. For that, we need to live with a preparation mentality, approaching each day knowing that this world is not intended to be our final destination, and that God is preparing another world for us.

Living with a preparation mentality also means living with the knowledge that God is using the disappointments and difficulties of this world to prepare us for the next. God uses the pressures of the present to craft us into the kind of individuals with whom he would choose to spend eternity.

You were made for Forever. That is your inescapable identity, and it is your guaranteed destination. Life only works as it was meant to work when you live with Forever in view.

Could it be that you are trying to achieve your best life Now while forgetting Forever? C.S. Lewis said it best in Mere Christianity: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

*God bless,
Paul David Tripp*

Reflection Questions

- 1. How might your everyday life change if you were to live in light of forever? What seems to be shaking you right now because you have forgotten about your eternal future?*
- 2. Do you think other people would see the way you live every day and say that you are living in light of eternity (think of family members, coworkers, close friends, etc.)? If not, why not? Do you live it and not just "believe" in it?*
- 3. Why isn't this world a safe place to look for your own well-being? How can having a preparation mentality instead of a destination mentality drastically affect you and those around?*
- 4. What "desires for now" are motivating you on a daily basis? In the context of prayer, in what ways can you help yourself remember that this life is not all that there is?*

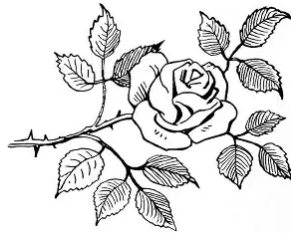


A Prayer for Today

God, I desire a better country than the one I live in on this earth. My soul is seeking my true homeland, and I need you to help me live in light of my Forever home. It's so tempting to focus too much on myself, to struggle with fear and control, and to lack motivation and hope. Please help me to remember my true heavenly home when I find it so easy to get frustrated and weighed down with the current difficult situations I find myself in. I need you to help me more clearly see the reality of my future Forever. Help me to live today with that kind of sight. In Jesus' name I pray,

--Amen

A girls' weekend with my four daughters included a long overdue clean-out of our attic. My goal was to empty that space of all but Christmas decorations. It was amazing when all was done, how little there was left of things with any value. The "toss" pile was by far the largest and it was surprising to see how much we had kept of things that should never have been saved to begin with. It was quite a task, but enjoyable as we shared trips into the past, finding long forgotten treasures. My favorite find? A handwritten composition assignment written by my husband in 1963 when we were in ninth grade. Here, with his permission, in his words...



“Life on the Sandlot”

By Greg Barkman

Webster defines “sports” simply as athletic games or games of physical skill and competition. However you define them, sports seem to have followed me throughout my life thus far. A summary of the athletics in my life would pretty much reveal a typical cross section of my fifteen years on earth.

Being born to two athletically inclined parents on April 28, 1948, I might have had a head start in competitive sports. If anyone had analyzed my ancestry, they probably would have predicted a sports inclination for me. Please understand, I’m not trying to boast, as I know that there are many others better than I in any sport you name, but I am simply using sports as a theme for this school assignment because I have been interested and active in sports all my life.

My mother’s father, my Grandfather Norris, was said to be a marvelous swimmer, which has never been one of my strengths. He mastered the breaststroke as well as other strokes. His reputation as a diver was such that he was called upon to search for bodies of men who drowned at a nearby stone quarry. His enormous lung capacity enabled him to stay underwater for long periods

of time. When but a boy, he caught a large bass with his bare hands while swimming in a nearby river. He also participated in other sports, but was best known as a first class swimmer.

Although my mother may not have inherited her father’s aquatic talent, she definitely received his physical prowess. Known in her neighborhood as a “terrible tomboy”, she often rivaled the boys in batting a ball or wrestling. My father’s father was a terror with a baseball bat. When “Barky” came to bat, the fielders showed their respect by retreating several yards. Football and track were also strong points of his. His five boys, raised on the farm, were known in their community for dominance in football and track, but especially baseball.

My own father, Beryl Barkman, loved baseball and track, but played “quite a bit” of football as well. When he enlisted in the Navy in World War II, he was classified as the second most physically fit in a group of more than six hundred new recruits. With a heritage like that, if my mother’s eldest son hadn’t had an eagle eye and a bloodhound nose for sports, he probably would have been considered a disgrace.

When we moved from Chicago, my birthplace, I was but a few months old. I'm sure my parents thought they were leaving for career or similar reasons, but I am convinced that the underlying subconscious reason was the furtherance of my physical and athletic development. After all, anyone should be glad to move a couple hundred miles to find a better sandlot for their boy, shouldn't they? Seriously, I am glad we left Chicago because it is probably not the best place for developing athletic ability. There are not enough playgrounds, empty lots, and recreational facilities in Chicago to accommodate all the thousands of kids running wild.

**In 1950, our move to
Galesburg, Illinois,
birthplace of Carl
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When we moved to East Moline, Illinois, I was too young to remember many details. I do know that we lived in one of those "all houses look alike" developments and that we had a deep wooded ravine behind our house. My recollections are pretty limited to the day I crossed the hot, asphalt street in my bare feet to swim in a neighbor's wading pool. She invited four or five playmates but had only two pieces of candy. I still remember how slighted I felt when I didn't get any candy.

My mother often told me about a time in East Moline when I was playing with a neighbor girl in my sand box. We were both about two years old, and we decided to go downtown. We took sand pails for purses and "tootsie toys" for money, and went to inform my mom. Thinking that we were only playing, she graciously gave us permission to leave. But we were in dead earnest! We knew where the bus stop was, we started off, but seeing no bus, we kept on walking. Back home, my mother suddenly realized what was happening. She called the father of my friend, and found us several blocks away. We were tired, hungry, discouraged, and very willing to return. This event may not have much bearing on the subject of athletics, but it convinced my mother to take my stated intentions more seriously.

In 1950, our move to Galesburg, Illinois, birthplace of Carl Sandburg, was one of the biggest influences on my early life. The neighborhood into which we settled was an ideal place to develop athletic skills.

The largest elementary school in town, with playground and baseball field was only one block away, and the kids in our neighborhood were as numerous as flies in a slaughterhouse. Although the area was rather old and established with an air of dignity, it was literally bursting with the energetic activities of youth.

Baseball was the first competitive game to which I was introduced, and it remained my favorite sport for many years. Even as a preschooler, my friends and I tried to play baseball with a hollow rubber ball, using only one base. I'm sure we didn't look very coordinated, but it was a start. Before I was old enough to play Little League baseball, I played with the "big boys" on a quiet side street running beside our house. We would all keep a sharp eye for cars and yelled, "Jiggers," if we saw one approaching.

My love for baseball was indicated when my only request for my eighth birthday was a baseball uniform. When I received it, I doubt there has ever been a boy prouder of a uniform than I was of that one. However, baseball was not my only love.

One sunny day, I was playing football with some older boys and taking some hard knocks. When my parents drove by and saw my valiant but often futile efforts, they realized that an eight-year-old playing football without any equipment with boys eleven and twelve, was in for some pretty nasty jolts. They took me straight downtown and bought me a red football helmet and a pair of shoulder pads. This was a rare occasion when I received a gift like this for anything other than a birthday or Christmas. I wore that poor helmet until it literally split in two, I still have the shoulder pads which no longer fit, but bring back sweet memories.

My third grade year was blossoming with organized sports activities. I went out for Little League and was fortunate to make the team. I acquired membership at the local YMCA where I took swimming lessons. I tried a little bit of bowling and golf as well. I don't remember anything especially significant about that year, but my exposure to the larger world of sports began to grow.

When I was ten, following fourth grade, my Little League team had a really good season. I was not in the starting lineup and therefore did not contribute a great deal to our winning the championship, but when I was put on the field, I played with my whole heart. I still have the trophy given to each member of the winning team. I suppose the greatest highlight of that season was our trip to Chicago to see the White Sox play, which was my first Major League ball game. Of all the sports experiences in

Galesburg, the most exciting was my last season at the age of twelve. By then, I was in the starting lineup at shortstop, and our team, the Indians, was having a good season. One night, we faced the league leaders in what was later termed the best played game of the 1960 Galesburg Little League season. We arrived at the bottom of the last inning trailing two to nothing. One by one, our players got on base until the bases were loaded. It was my turn to bat, and I was scared stiff. I swung viciously at a low outside pitch and “sent it sailing over the center field fence” in the words of the local newspaper report. I did not get all the way around the bases before I saw my Dad leap the fence by the dugout and tear onto the field. “That’s my boy! That’s my boy!” My teammates mobbed me as I came around the third base line. Boy was I hungry!

Before school opened for the Fall term in 1960, our family moved to Greenville, South Carolina so that my Dad and I could attend school at Bob Jones, he in the

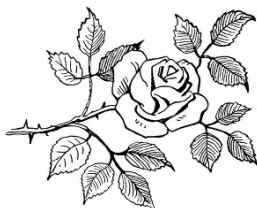
University where he completed a BA and an MA in Bible, and I into seventh grade at the Academy. Here I have received innumerable blessings including playing sports for the Aztecs. Since my sports activities at the Academy are pretty well known, I will not enumerate them here.

My tennis experiences did not begin at BJA, but rather at Cleveland Park in Greenville. It was the Summer of 1962 that I took advantage of free tennis instruction offered by the City. I quickly grew to love the game and seldom missed a day on the courts. At Summer’s end, the Recreation Department held an open, city-wide tennis tournament. I was fortunate enough to bring home a trophy for first place in doubles and second place in singles.

I love sports, but I do not plan to make that my main goal in life. I believe Christians can find better ways to serve the Lord in other areas. However, I firmly believe that sports can help to develop mind and body to make one a healthier, more well-rounded, and more greatly useful servant of Christ.

Throughout our 56 years together, though we didn’t share athletic abilities, I have been blessed to be married to a man who, from his early years, understood the importance of right priorities for the Christian. This has been a guiding force in his life; therefore, in our home. I have been blessed!

by Marti Barkman



BEACON BAPTIST
CHURCH

Monday thru Friday

WNAH 1360 AM (Nashville, TN)	2:00 p.m.
WTTA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WBAG 105.9 FM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
	10:00 a.m.
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
	10:00 a.m.
WSKY 1230 AM (Asheville, NC)	7:15 a.m.
WYYC 1250 AM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.
WYYC 98.1 FM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.

Monday thru Sunday

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV)	10:05 a.m.
	10:05 p.m.

Sunday

WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.

WGNQ mixlr.com/wgng-radio (M-F)
8:45-9 a.m. & 4:45-5:00 p.m.
(Internet station based in Greenville/Washington, NC)

Saturday

WNAH 1360 AM (Nashville, TN)	2:00 p.m.
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The Beacon Broadcast

BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR AUGUST

Calendar

03-06	Vacation Bible School
09	Lord's Table
11	Elders/Deacons Meeting
12	Impact Training
15	Movie Night
16	Members Meeting
19	Impact Training
20	Silver Saints Kick-off
23	ESL Resumes
26	Impact Training

Member Birthdays

02	Pam Kelleher
07	Bret Newton
11	Brenda Blanchard
12	Larry Apple
17	Charlotte Evans
21	Pat Duncan
24	Scott Lewis
25	Alan Dyer
26	Crystal Guthrie
31	Kelly LaTour

Missionary Birthdays

01	Samuel Vahala*
03	David Edens
06	Nicky Vaughn
08	Tony Payne
13	Ezra Jensen*
14	Donna Edens
22	Renato Giuliani
30	Lane Snider*
	Anthony Vahala

*Children of Missionaries

LIVESTREAM SERVICES

beaconbaptist.com or sermonaudio.com

Sunday Morning Worship	9:30
Evening Worship	6:00

*We express our
heartfelt sympathies to the families of:*

Herb Craig
Larry Faircloth
Rodney Freeman
Don Guthrie, Sr.



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After this is done, you will receive a link where you may enter the rest
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