

## Soul Memories

Two events happened to me recently that have caused a lot of thought about the past and how it affects a person today. To a certain extent we are a product of our environment and memories of the past lie just beneath the surface and can take control at the least expected moment.

I was watching a bluebird catching worms on the lawn, along with catching insects on the fly. I was thinking of nothing in particular just enjoying nature and the quiet when out of the corner of my eye I saw an old brush pile. In the middle of this brush pile was a dark rectangle, the right size and shape for the entrance to a cave or tunnel. Instantly from deep within the chills began to radiate through my body. I came to my feet frantically searching for an invisible rifle that should have been in my hands. From deep within the beginning of an almost primal cry of S N I p e r--- gurgled forth to warn my invisible comrades as I threw myself to the ground. At that moment, reality returned and I realized it was forty years later and the jungle was now just a faint memory.

Our family spent the last week touring Washington DC. Part of that visit included a visit to the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial. As I walked past all the black marble tablets with so many names I became more somber with each step and found myself in a time long past. I am sure I knew hundreds of the men whose names were now on those cold stone tablets but in fact only lost two really close friends during that war. How from over 50,000 names in what appeared to be in no particular order one name could stand out so clearly as if illuminated I do not know, but there was the name of one of the two who were friends and comrades, members of my former special forces team. Raw emotions reigned supreme and as I exited the far end with as much control as I had left I was visibly shaken.

The Apostle Paul tells us that there is a war within us as our spirit wars against the Holy Spirit leading us away from what we were and into the glorious light of a new person in Christ. (1 Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.)

I have always prided myself that it was I and not emotions in control. I do not get shaken or pushed off center by anything. This ability to remain focused and take care of whatever was before me is one of the reasons I lived through those years in the jungle. I have so very often explained to clients that they were in control and not their emotions. I considered this the normal way of life and to be sought after.

While that opinion has not changed I have come to realize that these soul memories for lack of a better term because they are so deep within yet so near the surface can at least for a brief period take control. The war Paul spoke of dealt with our former ways as unbelievers and thus sinners before God but apply here too.

This ability to control our emotions and thus our lives is a promise of God and we find this promise in several places in the Bible. Yet at times this inner war will surface and we find ourselves echoing Paul's words that at times we do not do what we should, but the opposite in that we do that which we hate.

In a sense we are constantly in a war and must guard against the control these memories can have that will cause actions we will later regret. We are new creatures in Christ and we can live here in this present, but it takes prayer and vigilance.