

Alpha Counseling Service

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Dear Friends,

I always come back the phrase 'The dog days of summer' as we enter August.

My mother was always so fearful of rabid dogs and especially in August she would remind us kids to never go near a strange dog in case it was 'mad'! She had seen the movie To Kill a Mockingbird years before and had never gotten over watching Atticus shooting a mad dog as the kids looked on. You can find it on You Tube!

According to Wikipedia the 'Dog Days of Summer' are connected with heat, drought, sudden thunderstorms, lethargy, fever, mad dogs, and bad luck. They are taken to be the hottest, most uncomfortable part of summer. Which for me means August!

I hear people say "That happened so long ago, leave the past in the past." Personally I believe the past can certainly affect our present. We react often without even being aware of why we acted that way.

Scripture shows how our childhood can affect our future as in Proverbs 22:6: "*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*" And II Timothy 3:15:..."*As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*"

So, in a positive sense, the Scripture declares that the past has a huge influence on our present behavior.

In my years of counseling I have seen the same early influence have strong negative effects as well. Years ago, a woman came for counseling because of acute depression that always began in August and deepened in September. She was at a loss as to why this repeated and how to stop it. As a Christian she was usually upbeat most of the year.

In talking about her early years she revealed that her family was poor and the only clothes she had to start a new school year were hand me downs from older siblings or from bag sales on the last day of church rummage sales. She hated the comments other kids made about her clothes and said as a kid she 'wished she could die' from the embarrassment she felt.

Here is just one example of how the past was having a powerful negative effect on her present. As we talked, she was able to remember some of the comments that others had said so many years before. As she learned to apply Biblical forgiveness to these memories the depression began to fade.

So when you are tempted to say or when you hear others say "Oh, leave the past in the past" ask yourself: "is God is giving me a red flag?"

Thank you for your faithfulness in prayer. Thank you for your love gifts during the hot dry days of summer!

God Bless,
Richard

