

Psalms 25:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

Analysis

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD. This verse shifts from petition for guidance to plea for forgiveness, recognizing that past sins can obstruct relationship with God and hinder receiving His direction. The structure contrasts what David asks God NOT to remember with what he asks God TO remember.

"Remember not the sins of my youth" (chattot ne'urai, צַדְתָּוֹת נְעַרְיָה) uses chata (אַפְּלָת), meaning to miss the mark, sin, offend. "Sins of my youth" refers to offenses from earlier years—the foolishness, rebellion, and moral failures of immaturity. David doesn't specify particular sins but acknowledges a category of youthful transgression. This includes both known sins and forgotten offenses—the accumulation of a lifetime's failures.

"Nor my transgressions" (pesha'ai, פְּשָׁעָי) uses pesha (פְּשָׁע), meaning rebellion, revolt, willful transgression. This is stronger than chata—not mere missing the mark but deliberate violation, conscious rebellion against known standards. Together, these terms encompass the full range of sin—from weakness to willfulness, from ignorance to rebellion.

The contrast "according to thy mercy remember thou me" (ke'chasdekha zokhreni-attah, כִּי־חָסְדֶּךָ זָקַרְתִּי אֶתְּךָ) is crucial. David appeals not to his worthiness but to God's

chesed (תּוֹךְ)—covenant love, loyal faithfulness, steadfast mercy. "Remember me" means regard me favorably, act toward me in grace, maintain covenant relationship despite my failures.

"For thy goodness' sake" (lema'an tuvekha, לְמַעַן טוֹבָךְ) provides the ultimate basis: not David's merit but God's own character. Tuv (טוֹב) means goodness, kindness, moral excellence. God acts according to His own nature—showing mercy because He IS merciful, forgiving because He IS good. This appeal to God's character rather than human worthiness anticipates New Testament grace theology.

Historical Context

David's confession of youthful sins likely includes specific memories: shepherding years with unrecorded failures, early court life with its temptations, times of presumption or pride. The emphasis on youth doesn't mean David only sinned when young—he committed adultery and murder as king. But awareness of accumulated transgressions over a lifetime weighs on the conscience.

The distinction between remembering and not remembering relates to covenant theology. When God "remembers" His covenant, He acts on behalf of His people (Exodus 2:24, Genesis 9:15-16). When God forgets sins, He chooses not to hold them against us. Jeremiah 31:34 promises: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Hebrews 8:12 and 10:17 cite this, showing Christ's atonement achieves what David pleaded for.

The appeal to God's mercy (chesed) rather than human merit permeates Old Testament faith. Israel's deliverance from Egypt wasn't earned (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). God's patience with rebellious Israel demonstrated loyal love beyond what they deserved. This foundational understanding prepares for New Testament revelation that salvation is entirely by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Paul later wrote: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). David's plea that God remember him according to mercy rather than sin anticipates the gospel—Christ bearing our transgressions so God can remember us in grace.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why does David specifically mention 'sins of my youth' rather than just 'my sins,' and what does this suggest about the lasting impact of early moral choices?
2. How does appealing to God's mercy and goodness rather than our own worthiness change the nature of confession and repentance?
3. What is the difference between God 'remembering' our sins (holding them against us) and God 'remembering' us according to His mercy?
4. How does Christ's atonement accomplish what David prayed for—God choosing not to remember our sins while remembering us in grace?
5. Are there past sins you need to trust God to 'remember not,' and how does understanding His merciful character enable you to let go of guilt?

Interlinear Text

נְעַוֵּן יְהִי חֶטֶט אֶת־
not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions H408 Remember
H2403 H5271 H6588 H2142

לְמִתְּעֵן אֵתֶה לְיִזְכֵּר כְּחַסְדֶּךָ
thou me for thy goodness H4616 H2898
according to thy mercy Remember H0 H859

יְהִי־
sake O LORD
H3068

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:25 (Sin): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Isaiah 38:17 (Sin): Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

Job 13:26 (Parallel theme): For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

Jeremiah 3:25 (Sin): We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

Psalms 51:1 (Grace): Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Psalms 79:8 (Parallel theme): O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

Psalms 31:16 (Parallel theme): Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

Psalms 6:4 (References Lord): Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

Psalms 109:26 (Grace): Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

Job 20:11 (Sin): His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.