

No Looking Back

"And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:61-62).

When we become a Christian and we begin our new life as followers of Jesus, we must realize that there is no turning back. This man that Jesus is speaking to in Luke 9 wanted to follow Jesus, but he wanted to go first and bid those who were at his house farewell. Jesus showed him that if he wished to follow Him, he was to leave it all behind. This would include those at his house to whom he wanted to bid farewell.

In Jesus' illustration in Luke 9:62, He uses the idea of a man putting his hand to the plow. This, of course, would represent someone beginning to follow Christ. He then says that if he looks back after putting his hand to the plow, he is not fit for the kingdom of God. Jesus is basically showing us here that when we begin to follow Christ, if we look back and dwell on what we were in the past, we are not worthy of being a follower of Christ. A person who dwells upon who he was, instead of who he has become, has become weak and will sooner or later fall back into his past. Let's think for a moment that you are plowing your garden. At some point in time you look back at what you have already plowed, and when this happens, you will most likely find yourself plowing a crooked row. When we look back and dwell upon what we were in the past, sooner or later we will stray from the straight and narrow path we need to be on. This is why we must stay focused on our goal and never look back.

Jesus illustrates this another way in Luke 17:32, when He says, "*Remember Lot's wife.*" There have been many thoughts as to why she looked back. Maybe it was because of the friends that she had made in Sodom, or maybe it was because of the pleasures of sin that she had experienced there. Whatever the reason was, she looked back and disobeyed God's command not to look back. God wanted Lot and his family to forget the wicked city of Sodom and move on, not looking back. When Lot's wife looked back, she looked upon the wickedness that God was to destroy. For whatever the reason, she was still somewhat attached to the wicked city, because she looked back. God turned her into a pillar of salt. We cannot remain attached to the world and follow Christ at the same time. If we are to follow Christ, we must detach ourselves from who we were and press on!

Paul had a wicked past, one that he was ashamed of; but instead of dwelling upon who he was, he says in Philippians 3:13-14, "*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*" We, like Paul, may have a wicked past that we are ashamed of, or we may be like Lot's wife -- too attached to our past to follow God. Since the way to Heaven is a straight and narrow path. We cannot risk looking back at who we were. When we do, we put ourselves at great risk of losing sight of our goal and missing an eternity spent with God in heaven. Don't look back!

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