

DON'T LOOK BACK

I. Luke 9:62 (NIV) *"Jesus replied, No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

A. In the same way that a farmer can't plow a straight line if he looks backward.

1. A Christian can't move forward in his faith if he is constantly looking backward into his past.

a. **The more you look backward the less you are able to see forward.**

b. Let me ask you some questions.

Do your yesterdays imprison your today's?
Do you allow yesterdays pains into today's problems?
Is your life imprisoned by yesterdays hurts?

2. This verse says that looking back makes you unfit for God's Kingdom

a. **"Fit = Eutletos" - ready for use, well adapted, well placed.**

b. Looking back into your past makes you useless for the future.

c. **Clinging to the old, keeps you from being adapted to the new.**

d. Looking back will cause you to be out of place - Looking ahead will cause you to be well placed. (The prize of the High Calling)

B. Philippians 3:13 (TLB) *"No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead."*

1. This verse says, that "wholeness, completeness, or becoming what you should be," is in front of you and not behind you.

2. **Trying to resolve your past keeps you from reaching into your future.**

3. The past never wants to stay the past, it wants to stay in the present in order to keep the present in the past.

a. **Either to trap us in the turmoil of the past.**

b. Or to trap us in the tradition of the past.

c. **Yesterdays problems or prosperities always want to stretch their tentacles into today's potentials for the purpose of disrupting or distorting.**

4. Not only do you need to forget the hurts but also the successes.

a. Yesterdays's successes will trap you in the old and keep you from the new.

Isaiah 43:18-19 - "But the LORD says, Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already--you can see it now! I will make a path through the wilderness and give you streams of water there." TEV

1) The old was to provide dry land in the midst of the waters.

2) The new was to provide water in the midst of the dry land.

b. 2 Chronicles 20:12 - The Old was using a sword, the new was using a song.

c. Isaiah 33:21 - What God did yesterday becomes an oar when we try to use it today.

d. "But I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing."

1) It is a battle to quit looking backward and start looking forward.

2) And it is a daily battle.

C. What do you do when your past begins to chase you? God answered that question for the Children of Israel - Exodus 14:10-15

Verses 13-16 tells us four things we need to do in order to break free from our past: "But Moses said to the people, Do not fear! Stand your ground and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent. Then the LORD said to Moses, Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward."

1. Stand your ground and don't fear.

a. The Hebrew word is "yatsab." It is used of those who set themselves against something or someone. It means "to oppose."

b. 1 Chronicles 11:12-14 - Don't lose the ground that God has given you.

c. The NT equivalent is James 4:7 - "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

2. Staring at the Lord.

a. The Hebrew word is "ra-ah." It means to give attention to, to observe, to learn from, to behold, and to look intently at.

b. The NT equivalent is Hebrews 12:2 - *“Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end.”* TEV

1) **The Greek word for fix is “*aforaoo*.” Which means to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something else.**

2) It means to:

- **quit looking at your hurts and start looking at the Healer**
- quit looking at what you don't have and start looking at Whom you do have
- **quit looking at the mistakes and start looking at the Messiah**

c. It means to quit sowing to the flesh and start sowing to the Spirit - Galatians 6:8

1) **The Greek word for corruption is “*phthora*,” which means to decompose or decay. It is a gradual breaking down of life.**

2) Sowing to the flesh is anything that we do to protect or promote ourselves.

- **Example of my father**
- I could be right or I could be reconciled, but I can't be both
- **I couldn't allow how my father was as a dad determine how I was going to be as a son.**

3) The problem isn't that my feelings got hurt, the problem is that I have feelings that always get hurt.

- **God doesn't want to heal my flesh, He wants to crucify it. If it hurts, it's not dead yet. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**
- A lot of the therapeutic counseling is an attempt to heal what God is trying to kill.

4) **Sowing to the Spirit means to have an “opposite Spirit.” Matthew 5:39-48**

- It means to sow good seed while you eat bitter fruit of the seed you had sown before.
- **From it you will reap a “bringing of life in all its fulness.”**
- Seeing the Lord in this way will keep you from ever seeing your enemies again.

3. Shut up and God will fight for you.

- a. When you quit talking, complaining, accusing, blaming, gossiping, then God starts fighting.
- b. **Isaiah 30:15-16** - *“The Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says, ‘Only in returning to me and waiting for me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it. You said, ‘No, we will get our help from Egypt. They will give us swift horses for riding into battle.’ But the only swiftness you are going to see is the swiftness of your enemies chasing you!’”* NLT

4. Stop crying and start moving forward.

- a. **It means why are you crying out to me to do things that I am in the process of doing or have already done.**
- b. God doesn't want to resolve your past, He was to reconcile your life.
 - 1) **Colossians 1:20** states, *“God through Jesus will reconcile all things to Himself.”*
 - 2) The Greek word for reconcile is *“apokatallasso”* which means to change from one condition to another.
 - **God wants to change hurts into health**
 - God wants to change problems into potentials
 - **God wants to change stumbling blocks into stepping stones.**
- c. Moving forward will bring you into those things that will deal with what is behind you.
 - 1) **Moving forward will not resolve your past but it will reconcile (change) your life.**
 - 2) Looking back makes you unfit for the Kingdom of God.
 - 3) **Moving forward will cause you to attain the prize of the High Calling.**

Christian maturity happens when we move out of our past into a breathtaking future.

The past cannot be changed, but our response to it can be.

The past is valuable as a guidepost, but dangerous if used as a hitching post.

The past is a dead issue and we can't gain any momentum moving toward tomorrow if we're dragging the past behind us.