

In Which Direction Are You Looking?

Introduction

1. While driving a car, it is the better part of wisdom to look sharply in the direction you wish to go because serious wrecks have occurred and lives have been lost because the driver of a car was not looking in the proper direction.
2. Did anyone ever say to you, “Why don’t you look where you are going?” You were being rebuked for walking or bumping into something or someone you could have avoided if you had been looking in the right direction.
3. This same principle is involved and like caution is to be exercised in our lives as Christians—and even more so.
4. With that in mind, it will be profitable for us to examine and apply a few Biblical examples to see the importance, as Christians, of looking in the right direction.

I. Biblical Examples of Those Looking in the Wrong Direction

A. Lot’s wife. (Gen. 19:15-26)

1. Just before God destroyed the city of Sodom, Lot, his wife and two of their daughters were set outside of the city by angels. (15-16)
2. They were instructed not to look back. (17)
3. We do not know what prompted Lot’s wife to disobey.
 - a. She looked back and became a pillar of salt. (26)
 - b. Jesus:
 - 1) Used her sin as an example to motivate others to not look back. (Luke 17:32)
 - 2) Revealed the condition of one who looks back today. (Luke 9:62)

B. The children of Israel. (Num. 11:4-6)

1. Moses was leading them from their bondage in Egypt.
2. They complained about their food, even remembering—looking back—with pleasure to things they once loathed while in Egypt.
3. Occasionally we find someone in the church today who looks back and desires the things of the world.
 - a. Demas was guilty of this sin. (2 Tim. 4:10)
 - b. Christians are not to love the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
 - c. Christians are to come out of the world and be separate from those who are worldly (2 Cor. 6:17-18)

II. Biblical Examples of Those Looking in the Right Direction

- A. Great heroes of the Bible were always looking forward.
 - 1. That for which they were striving always occupied their full attention.
 - 2. The goal before them was the incentive which kept them always looking to the future, never backward.
- B. Abraham. (Heb. 11:8-10)
 - 1. He considered himself a pilgrim, sojourner, in this world.
 - 2. He dwelt in tents in the land of promise as if in a strange country.
 - 3. His incentive: "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb. 11:10 - NIV)
- C. Moses. (Heb. 11:24-26)
 - 1. Moses was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
 - 2. Many, in his situation, would have seen only earthly wealth, fame and honor.
 - 3. His respect for the future was enough to turn him in the right direction.
 - 4. Is our respect for the "reward" of heaven great enough that we will fix our eyes in that direction and never look back?
- D. The apostle Paul. (Phil. 3:4-15)
 - 1. In the text, Paul lists things which, in the eyes of men, would have made him great.
 - a. He counted these things as worthless.
 - b. He gave them up in order to "gain Christ and be found in Him." (9-10)
 - 2. Additionally, he states he did not rest on his past sacrifices thinking they were sufficient to receive his reward, rather he was constantly looking and going forward. (12-15a)

III. Our Direction

- A. As Christians, we must ask ourselves in which direction are we looking.
- B. The direction in which we ought to be looking is above. (Col. 3:1-3)
- C. The incentive to look above.
 - 1. The promise of eternal life. (Col. 3:1-3)
 - a. It is an exceedingly great promise. (2 Pet. 1:4)
 - b. It should be incentive enough to keep us looking forward and never backward.
 - 2. Such an incentive:
 - a. Makes it so much easier to endure temptations, trials and afflictions.

- b. Allows one to say with the apostle Paul, "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair... For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:8, 17-18)

Conclusion

1. In which direction are you looking?
2. Are you looking forward or backward?
3. Are you focusing on things temporal or eternal?
4. Determine to look forward to the eternal reward.