

In Which Direction Are We Looking?

Introduction

1. While driving a car, wisdom says to keep your eyes fixed on where you're going?
 - a. This is not just good advice.
 - b. It's a matter of safety and life.
 - c. Sadly, many tragic accidents happen, and lives lost, because a driver takes their eyes off the road failing to look in the right direction.
2. Or, maybe you been on the receiving end of that sharp rebuke: "Watch where you're going!"
 - a. Most of us have heard that at some point.
 - b. Maybe from a parent, a driving instructor, or even someone walking on a busy street.
 - c. Typically, it is said in a moment where we were distracted, heading the wrong way, or on the verge of a collision.
 - d. And usually the warning came because we weren't looking where we should have been.
4. This same principle applies to our spiritual lives and even more caution is needed as Christians.
5. So let's examine some Biblical examples and draw some practical lesson to better understand the importance of spiritually looking in the right direction.

I. Biblical Examples of Those Looking in the Wrong Direction

A. Lot's Wife (Genesis 19:15-26)

1. Prior to destroying the city of Sodom, the angels led Lot his family safely outside the city (15-16)
2. They were explicitly told not to look back. (17)
3. After reasoning with the angels they begin to make their escape to safety.
4. We are not told why, but Lot's wife disobeyed.
 - a. She looked back and became a pillar of salt. (26)
 - b. She looked in the direction she was not supposed to and suffered for her disobedience.
5. Later Jesus used her sin as an example to motivate others not to look back (Luke 17:32).
6. He revealed the condition of some in the kingdom (Luke 9:62)

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

1. Moses had led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt - who became a people that loved to complain (vs.1)
2. They complained about the food reminiscing - looking back - on that which they once enjoyed.
3. Similarly, are we looking back and yearning for things of the world.
 - a. Demas was guilty of this sin (2 Tim. 4:10)
 - b. Christians are warned not to love the world (1 John 2:15-17)

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 backwards.

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 for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10 NASB).

C. Moses. (Heb. 11:24-26)

1. Moses was raised as a son of Pharaoh's daughter.
2. Many, in his situation, would have seen only earthly wealth, fame and honour. Read vs.25-26
3. Lit. "Turning his eyes away from other considerations, he fixed them on the (eternal) recompense" (JFB).
4. Is our respect for the "reward" of heaven enough to 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, was a lot to boast of (5-6)
 - a. By worldly standards his was a success story
 - b. He counted these things as worthless; he gave them up and counted them as loss (7-8)
 - c. His incentive - in order to "gain Christ and be found in Him." (9-10)
2. Also, he talks about not dwelling on past achievements as somehow sufficient for reward; rather he constantly looked forward and pressed ahead (12-15a).

III. Our Direction

A. In which direction are we looking - where is our focus?

B. The direction in which we ought to be looking is above. (Col. 3:1-4)

1. Paul tells that the direction of our focus is to be heaven and that the focus of our direction is heavenward.
2. The right direction for us to be looking is not back to or around at the world; but our heavenly goal.
3. This is not about ignoring our different responsibilities as Paul goes on to list and exhort them of us.

C. The incentive to look above.

1. The promise of eternal life and the glory to come (Col. 3:1-3)
 - a. It is an exceedingly great promise; a promise of a future to be 'physically' with God (2 Pet. 1:4)
 - b. It should be incentive enough to keep us looking forward and never backward.
2. The promise of life is not only an incentive to look above but also a source of strength in times of adversity
 - a. It 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)
 - b. By looking in right direction...we find the incentive and means to grow and withstand adversity.

Conclusion

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