

# STAY FOCUSED

Pastor Joseph Hovsepien

Luke 9:57-62

We, as born again believers have been called to follow Christ. Following Christ is a life time journey. We must not let anything or anyone come between us and our commitment to follow Christ. We “Must stay focused”. Nothing should hinder our walk with Christ.

There is a cost. The cost of following Christ may be different from person to person.

It may be family or relationship ties.

“*Let me bury my father*”, Luke 9 - did not mean that his father was dead and all he wanted was to go home and bury his father. But rather, he wanted to wait until after his father’s death, which might have been years away.

Another said: “*I will follow you Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family*”. Although the request was reasonable and proper, Jesus saw his reluctance to follow Christ by looking back.

Jesus answered and said to them: “*No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*” (v.62)

If “looking back” was to evaluate progress, from the time we have decided to follow Christ, that would be good and acceptable, but if “looking back” is a longing to return to things left behind, then Jesus says: The person who looks back with a longing of the past or things that will hinder his or her walk, “*is not fit for service in the kingdom of God*”.

- Looking back hinders forward progress
- Looking back may be making you depressed
- Looking back may be bringing you defeat

Do you remember Lot’s wife? Longing to return to the way of life she had left behind, she looked back, and instead of being saved “*she became a pillar of fire*”. (Genesis 19:26)

Jesus many years later reminds people what happened to Lot’s wife when she looked back.

“*Remember Lot’s wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.*” Luke 17:32-33

There are 5 things you must not look back at:

## 1) **Don’t Look Back at Sins That Have Been Forgiven**

The Bible guarantees forgiveness of **all** sins - “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our*

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*sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*  
1 John 1:7-9

God really does put away our sins. *“Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases”*  
*“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”* Psalm  
103:3 & 13

You must believe and accept that God has forgiven and put away all your sins.

## 2) Don't Look Back at Defeats that Get You Down

We all have some defeats in our past. Only those who never attempt anything are free from failing.

God lifts up those who fall. *“If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.”* Psalm 37:23-24

## 3) Don't Look Back at The Past and See it Better Then it Was

In Ecclesiastes 7:10 we read: *“Do not say ‘Why were the old days better than these? For it is not wise to ask such questions.’”*

The Israelites did just that. They looked back to Egypt and complained, they said: *“We were better off in Egypt, why did we ever leave Egypt?”* Numbers 11:17-20

Nostalgia is never quite honest. We think that: The present is not as good as it used to be.

But the truth of the matter is that, it is not always true and we often lose our joy and peace by looking back.

## 4) Don't Look Back at Old Conflicts That Make You Bitter

Every time we relive old conflicts the hurt and pain returns and opens old wound.

Even forgiven and closed conflicts will become dangerous again if you keep going over them.

We must forget the past and get on with living and growing.

The Bible says: *“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”*

1 Peter 2:1-2

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## 5) Don't Look at Old Victories That May Cause You to Think You Have Made it

Apostle Paul puts it this way: *"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*  
Philippians 3:13-14

I have heard comments like:

"Oh, I serves God with all my heart ... Once."

"I was a soul winner .... Once."

"I was full of Christ's joy .... Once."

But now, it seems that there is something wrong, and I don't know ...

What is happening and why? ....

Well, Look to Jesus, Focus on Him.

In Hebrew 12:2 we read: *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."*

**LET'S LOOK AHEAD, THE BEST IS YET TO COME!!!**