

completely away from the world of sin. As Christians today, in our materialistic world, are we always looking back and always longing for the sin and the pleasure of this world while trying to move forward with God? As Christians, we cannot make any progress in growing stronger in the Lord as long as we are holding on to the pieces of our old life, always longing to go back to the 'good old days'. Jesus says it best in **Matthew 6:24**: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

Basically what Jesus is saying here is the contrast to heavenly values compared with the earthly values when He explained that as a follower of God and His Son, our first loyalty should be to those things that do not change or fade. Things that cannot be stolen or used up. In other words, we should not be in love with this world or our possessions lest

they possess us. Our attitude as Christians should be like those of Paul in Philippians 3:4-8. Paul considered everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord, for whose sake he had lost all things. Whatever Paul's profit was he considered a loss for the sake of Christ. How about you and I? Are we like the Israelites who left Egypt by the hand of God, only wanting to go back to be a slave all over again? Are we like Lot's wife who had a way to escape death only to look back to die in her sins? These are questions all of us as Christians have to be careful with because in **Hebrews 10:38** it says: *"Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."* So let us walk by faith not by sight; our home as a Christian is in Heaven not in this world. The choice is yours, what direction do you want to go?

By Bill Davis

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Faithful Sayings

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Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez
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Perils of Looking Back

How often, when we are driving around town or on the highway, do we find ourselves behind a driver who will pay more attention to what is in his rear view mirror than what is actually in front of him? How many times do we ourselves find ourselves always looking behind to see what we might have been missing or wondering if we should not have gone a certain direction in our lives? How often do we, as Christians, look back into the world we came out of and wish we could still be involved in the worldly ways around us? Often I will hear Christians say, "I used to do those things of the flesh, but now I don't do

them." The problem is that some of those who will say this will still long for the 'good old days'. They want to go back into the world and follow Christ at the same time. You know this type of attitude is nothing new. There are those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus, God's Son, through baptism, (Rom. 6) and have put on the name of Christ, "Christian", but their faith never really developed. They are still babes in the Lord meaning they can only take the milk of the Gospel and not the meat.

To find some good examples of those who have tasted of God and have seen His mighty

hand at work but never developed their faith as they should have can be found in the Bible. In Exodus 13 and 14 we can read where the Israelites were in captivity in Egypt for 430 years. Moses was sent to them to lead them out of Egypt by the hand of God. The Israelites saw the plagues that God sent on the Egyptians. They saw the results and pain that God inflicted on the Egyptians. The Israelites saw the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire that God sent to guide them out of Egypt. Yet when the Israelites saw the Egyptians they were terrified and cried out to the Lord and to Moses, wanting to return to Egypt to serve the Egyptians. **Exodus 14:10-12: "And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve**

***the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.*"**" The Israelites saw all that God had done for them; the exodus from Egypt, crossing the sea, manna and the quail for the Israelites to eat and the water from the ground. But they still longed to go back.

In Numbers 14, twelve spies were sent into the promised land to spy it out and bring back a report to Moses as to what type of land it was and about the people living there. As usual, the people got scared about the giant people living there and wanted to stone Moses and Aaron because they did not want to follow what God had told them to do as seen in **Numbers 14:1-5. "So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or it only we had died in the wilderness!" Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt? So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Then**

***Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.*"** With many great miracles, God led the Israelites out of bondage and hardship up to the promised land. God protected them, fed them and fulfilled every promise He made to them. Yet when encouraged to take that last step in faith to enter the promised land, the people rebelled and refused to follow God at His word. Why did the Israelites stop trusting God after all the wonders they saw God perform before their very eyes? They kept looking back.

Another good example of those who would not let go of the world and just had to look back is found in Genesis 19. Lot and his family lived in the cities of the plain and Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12-13) and Gomorrah were not far away. Now Sodom was a very wicked and perverted city; the name itself should tell us something about this city. In Genesis 19, Lot was told to take his family and leave this city before God would destroy it and Gomorrah. Lot had a hard time leaving this city but he was persuaded by the two angels who

grabbed him by the arm to leave this wicked city. As Lot and his family were leaving Sodom, they were warned not to look back. But Lot's wife, longing for that way of life, she did look back and was turned into a pillar of salt for disobeying God as seen in **Genesis 19:23-26: "Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."**

As we read about Lot and his family concerning how Lot hesitated to leave the safety of Sodom and to abandon the wealth, position and the comfort he enjoyed at Sodom, we find it is easy to criticize Lot for being complacent by the wealth in Sodom. We find it easy to criticize him when the choice seems clear to us today: follow God. For us to be wiser than Lot we must see that our hesitation in this world to obey stems from false attractions of our cultures and pleasures. Also Lot's wife turned back to look at what used to be home in Sodom. She was clinging to the past because she was unwilling to turn