

Don't Look Back

By

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“But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.” Genesis 19:26

A man notices a beautiful woman walk across the restaurant, and though he is engaged in a deep, spiritual conversation with another man, he can't take his eyes off her. His stare follows her across the room, and his mind quickly wanders to unsafe places. The man is happily married, but for some reason, this place of lust is somewhere he allows himself to go. In his mind, it is all innocent, merely a selfish fantasy. The man having lunch with him sees it all going on, and he doesn't say anything. I'm sure none of you are familiar with a scene like this, and this is not a devotional about lust for other women, so you can relax for a second.

When we become followers of Christ, we don't just join a club. We are entering into an intimate fellowship with Him. It is like a marriage relationship. The Bible refers to us believers as “the bride” and Christ as “the bridegroom.” I know this is particularly hard for us men to even contemplate. That is because we generally deal with EVERYTHING from a fleshly perspective. When we hear “intimate”, we think sex. However, I'm writing to Journey brothers, who have discovered this intimate connection with Christ, so I'm trusting that some of you, at least, have a sense of what I'm describing. There is a spiritual bond between us and Christ, no matter if we are male or female, that is SO close that we become One. When Christ says He sent the Holy Spirit to come and make His home in us, I would say you can't get any closer than that.

But think of how many times we, who are married to Christ, let our eyes and our desires wander off to the things of this world. We know that we are all born with original sin, which means we all have a fleshly propensity toward sinful behavior. Most of us have a keen awareness of our sin trouble spots. We know those areas of weakness, where Satan can easily tempt us. Actually, Satan doesn't have to do much. James 1:14-15 describes the problem, ***“Each one is tempted when by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”*** Our own evil desires take us down those paths of temptation. Convicting, isn't it? Paul also talks about this tension in Romans 7:21-24, ***“So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”***

God was willing to rescue Lot's wife from the horrible, perverted city of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the angels warned them not to look back. Somewhere, deep within her evil desires, she longed for that city of destruction over the city of hope and refuge. She looked back and was destroyed. Before we throw her under the bus, let's examine ourselves. If we are honest, many times we long to go back to the life we had before Christ. Life seemed so much easier when we lived for ourselves. We could do what we wanted without any guilt or shame. We had more time on our hands because we weren't spending so much time serving. We had more money because we weren't giving so much away. We think, perhaps, we had more pleasure, too. We stare at our former life with a lustful, discontented heart.

All I can say is, "STOP!!!!" These are lies from the enemy. "Don't Look Back!" You have been rescued, and you do not want to go back. It may look attractive on the surface, but it will destroy you and the life God prepared for you. This is a test. This is the time to put on the armor of God and stand firm in your faith. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Focus on His love and His provision. Let His love permeate your being so that your evil desires will be drowned out. Jesus sits with us in those moments, watching our attention being turned away from Him, and He says nothing. He allows us to make the choice. He silently prays to the Father that He won't destroy us. He remembers the Father's words to the Israelites, portraying the consequences of choosing the world over Him:

"Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods- gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life." Deuteronomy 28:64-66

What a depiction of a life divorced from God, a dark, dreadful place to be! My pastor has a saying which is worth quoting here, "Sin will take you places you never intended to go, keep you longer than you expected to stay and cost you more than you wanted to pay." Men, you don't want to go back. I want to encourage you to a life of faithfulness. God loves you, and He alone can truly satisfy you and bring you abundant life.

Paul, in his wrestling thoughts on the topic, gives us the key:

"For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the NEW WAY of the SPIRIT, and not in the old way of the written code." Romans 7:5-6

We have to remind ourselves that once we chose Christ, we chose death. We died to our old ways. Now, nothing will truly satisfy us apart from Him. This new life takes us into eternity where Christ waits for us. When we arrive, we will hear these words:

“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” Revelation 19:7-8

Guys, no matter what life or the enemy or your inner thoughts throw your way, don't turn back! Keep your eyes on the prize and keep moving forward. His Spirit will carry you.