

Looking Back

Joshua 4:1-7 (1811)

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I. Understanding what the Bible really teaches about looking back

a. Perhaps we have heard the horror stories of looking back

Genesis 19:26 NIV ...*Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.*

Numbers 11:4-6, 10 NLT *4 Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. "Oh, for some meat!" they exclaimed. 5 "We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. 6 But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!" ... and the Lord became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated.*

Luke 9:62 NIV *Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

b. Is there biblical precedence for looking back?

Joshua 4:1-7 NLT *When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 "Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. 3 Tell them, 'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.'" 4 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had chosen—one from each of the tribes of Israel. 5 He told them, "Go into the middle of the Jordan, in front of the Ark of the Lord your God. Each of you must pick up one stone and carry it out on your shoulder—twelve stones in all, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. 6 We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7 Then you can tell them, 'They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the Lord's Covenant went across.' These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever."*

Matthew 26:6-13 NIV *Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.*

Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

II. Three important questions every believer needs to ask

a. What can I celebrate as I look back on my faith journey?

b. How does looking back help me to move forward effectively?

c. What will I leave behind that is worthy of looking back on?

Memorial *An object, institution or custom established or founded as a reminder of an important person or event held to be worth remembering in the life of the community.* (Dictionary of Bible Themes)