

## Don't Look Back

Luke 9:57-62

Would you consider yourself a committed Christian? Realistically, are you a disciple of Christ or merely a follower of Christ? There is a difference. Three men each making a statement regarding his commitment or should I say lack of commitment to following Christ. Each wanted to follow Christ but none wanted to stop looking back. Their commitment to follow Christ can be described as limited, delayed, and insincere.

### **I. The Characteristics of Uncommitted Followers**

#### A. A Commitment of Comfort – limited commitment

1. Luke 9:57-58 “And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.
2. This man’s saw the crowds, and the miracles, and the enthusiasm of the people. It seemed like good thing to be closely associated with this Miracle Worker who was the center of all this action. He wanted to be a part of an exciting movement that appeared to be sweeping the nation. He wanted to be a follower of Jesus. The tragedy is that he failed to understand the sacrifice, the reproaches, the inconveniences that comes with serving Christ.
3. It’s popular today to be a Christian in America – Mega Churches, World-Wide television ministries, comfortable pews, world-class contemporary musicians, the prosperity gospel. No wonder that today in the U.S., about 79.5% of adults (247 million) identify themselves as Christian. It’s popular to be a Christian as long as it’s convenient and doesn’t mean commitment.
4. According to Lewis Loflin in an article entitled “Christianity in America”, “less than 1 percent of adults and teen-agers in conservative bible-believing churches could name the Ten Commandments. What is even more troubling, other surveys show less than 10% of evangelicals have read the Bible at all.”
5. There is a difference between being a Christian in name and being a true disciple. True Christianity is an all-out commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. True Christianity moves one from being a spectator to being a disciple. True Christianity counts the cost and is willing to pay the price, no matter the cost.
6. Christianity is not so popular when we start talking about sacrifice and suffering; when following Christ begins to cost you something.
7. John 6:66 “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”
8. While we sit comfortably in our cushioned pews around the world each year an average of 159,960 Christians worldwide are martyred for their faith.
9. 2 Timothy 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
10. Jesus isn’t looking for admirers. He wants disciples who do more than simply talk the talk. He needs some followers who are willing to walk the walk. – Dr. Carlos Wilton, Committed to Christ, Don't Look Back
11. True discipleship does not look back at what they have given up for Christ. True discipleship

says with Apostle Paul, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,” (Philippians 3:8)

### B. A Commitment of Procrastination – Delayed Commitment

1. Luke 9:59-60 “And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God

2. I will Lord...BUT not now. We need to realize that our first duty is to serve God. Delayed obedience is disobedience.

3. John 9:4 “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”

4. A farm boy accidentally overturned his wagon load of corn in the road. The farmer who lived nearby came to investigate. “Hey, Willis,” he called out, “forget your troubles for a spell and come on in and have dinner with us. Then I’ll help you get the wagon up.” “That’s mighty nice of you,” Willis answered, “but I don’t think Pa would like me to.” “Aw, come on, son!” the farmer insisted. “Well, okay,” the boy finally agreed, “but Pa won’t like it.” After a hearty dinner, Willis thanked his host. “I feel a lot better now, but I just know Pa is going to be real upset.” “Don’t be foolish!” exclaimed the neighbor. “By the way, where is he?” The boy replied, “Under the wagon.” (Source Unknown).

5. We may laugh at this anecdote but the truth is that there are millions laying under a wagonload of sin who need someone to carry the good news of Christ to them. But many who have been called to rescue them are sitting around procrastinating instead of proclaiming.

6. The word “commit” comes from the Latin (committere), and literally means “to put or send.” If a lord has an urgent message to send to someone else, he’s likely to call a servant in, saying, “Here, take this to so-and-so” As soon as he gives that command, the master is committing his message to the servant. If, for any reason, the servant is unable to deliver the message — to fulfill the commission — then, the servant had better say so, right up front. For the master is depending upon him to get the job done. – copied

7. Others are procrastinating in the matter of salvation – putting off for a “more convenient season”.

8. 2 Corinthians 6:2 “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

9. A bright young boy heard and was deeply impressed by the text, “My son, give Me thine heart.” But Satan whispered, “Time enough yet,” and he put it off. Ten years later a brilliant college student heard the same text under the circumstances which seemed to make that the time of his salvation. Again the tempter whispered, “Time enough yet.” Twenty years later a statesman listened to the same text from the lips of an aged preacher, and felt it was a message to him. This time the tempter said, “Visit foreign countries before you decide.” A traveler in Paris was stricken with cholera. But his greatest suffering was agony of soul because he was not

prepared to die. His last words were, "Too late." The boy, the college student, the statesman, the traveler were all one.—Dawn.

10. Someone has said "Those people who expect to follow Christ at the eleventh hour often die at 10:30."

11. Hebrews 3:15 "While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

### C. An Unfocused Commitment – Insincere commitment

1. Luke 9:61-62 "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

2. Here is a man that really doesn't want to let go of his old life, his old friends, his old habits. He's having trouble leaving family and friends.

3. 'Looking back.' In the Greek text, this verb is a present participle which expresses a continuous action. 'If any man puts his hand to the plow and keeps looking back, this person is not fit for the kingdom.' It is not just an occasional glance at the back. It is constantly looking back.

4. Why does a person constantly look back? Because his heart is still back there. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

5. Luke 14:26-27 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

6. Matthew 6:24 "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other."

7. "Sinner, sinner, let me show thee thy sin. When thou saidst, "But," thou didst contradict thyself. The meaning really is this, "Lord, I will not follow thee." That "but" puts the negative on all the profession that went before it. I wish, my hearers, that...you would either be led by grace to say, "I will believe," or else...to say, "I will not believe in Christ." It is because so many of you are neither this nor that, but halting between two opinions, that you are the hardest characters to deal with." (C. H. Spurgeon, The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Pilgrim Publications, 1986 reprint, volume VII, page 447).

8. We must not look back, longing for the things we left behind.

9. James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

## **II. The Valuation of Uncommitted Followers**

A. Luke 9:62 "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

B. The word 'fit' (euthetos) refers to being 'suitable' or 'usable.' It is found in Luke 14:35, it is

used of salt that has lost its flavor. The Lord uses the picture of salt to teach about discipleship. He compares the Christian to salt. He says that salt that has lost its saltiness is of no value. It is not suitable (euthetos) for anything. – copied

C. A Christian can't move forward in his faith if he is constantly looking backward.

D. Hebrews 10:38 "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him

### **III. True Commitment**

#### **A. Involves Sacrifice**

1. Luke 9:23-25 "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away."

2. Luke 14:25, 33, "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

3. David Livingstone of Africa graduated as a medical doctor from Edinburgh University, but he was determined to do something for God. He wanted to work in some place in the world where there was great need, so he went to Africa. We know from his story that he opened up new roads into what was called 'the dark continent'. He said these words, I'm quoting: 'I am willing to go anywhere provided it be forward' - so he did, he went forward to Africa. Livingstone said early in his missionary career: 'I will place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in its relation to the kingdom of God. Anything I have will be given according as giving or keeping it shall most promote the Kingdom of my Savior'. - copied

4. Mark 10:28 ""Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first"

5. The discipleship to which Christ calls us means a life of surrender to God's will and sacrifice for His cause. - This principle of sacrifice is essential to discipleship: One must be willing to give up everything for Jesus. We must be willing to go the full distance without looking back.

6. C.T. Studd, the famous English cricketer and member of the English XI cricket team, gave away his vast wealth as a disciple of Christ. His slogan was, "If Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him."

#### **B. Involves having the right Priorities**

1. Each of the three men in Luke 9 had conflicting priorities which hindered them from moving from a spectator Christian to a true disciple. Each in their own way kept looking back keeping them from absolute commitment to Christ.

2. Matthew 6:33 “But [continually] seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

### C. Involves a maintaining a Forward Focus

1. To look back indicates a change of mind.

a. It means "O.K. I'm not sure about this."

b. It means "Isn't there something else I could do better?"

c. It means "Other things look more important than this."

d. It means "God picked the wrong person for this

e. It means "This is for somebody else, but not for me." – copied

2. We cannot allow family, friends, finances, business, recreation, or anything else to distract us from being totally committed to Christ.

3. Philippians 3:14-15 “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

4. We have a problem because we are more focused on the things we will lose when we commit to Jesus, rather than the things we will gain.

- If I focus and commit to Jesus I going to lose some friends!

- If I focus or commit to Jesus I am going to lose my reputation!

- If I focus or commit to Jesus I may lose the dreams I have for myself or my child!

- If I focus or commit to Jesus I may lose my time!

Yeah, you may lose some things when you focus and totally commit to Christ. But what you lose doesn't compare with what you will gain. When we totally commit to Christ, we gain His presence, His peace, His power, His promise, His grace, His strength - copied

5. On May 6, 1954, Roger Bannister became the first man in history to run a mile in less than 4 minutes. Within 2 months, John Landy eclipsed the record by 1.4 seconds. On August 7, 1954, the two met together for a historic race. As they moved into the last lap, Landy held the lead. It looked as if he would win, but as he neared the finish he was haunted by the question, "Where is Bannister?" As he turned to look, Bannister took the lead. Landy later told a Time magazine reporter, "If I hadn't looked back, I would have won!"

6. Run the straight race through God's good grace,

Lift up thine eyes and seek His face;

Life with its way before us lies,

Christ is the path and Christ the prize. -- Monsell