

**DO NOT LOOK BACK**  
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In today's world, if you disagree with me, then you hate me. In some cases, this is both true and wrong. Many, many Christians have been martyred because of their belief and faith in God and have been obedient to scripture. "But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:62)

Christians must remember these words from Jesus: "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," (Matthew 5:44) "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (Romans 12:20) It's difficult to hate someone when you're praying for them. Following Jesus' words is what you should do. It's not easy, but the Holy Spirit will help you in this endeavor.

James and John were mad at the Samaritans because they would not receive Jesus. <sup>51</sup> "When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; <sup>52</sup> and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. <sup>53</sup> But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51-53)

The need for hospitality and preparation was a common cultural practice in the ancient Near East. Hospitality was a significant aspect of Jewish and Samaritan culture. The Samaritans did not receive Jesus. They did not provide a place for Jesus because He was going to Jerusalem to worship and not Mt. Gerizim, their preferred place of worship.

It is possible that Jesus sent James and John to make the arrangements. James and John had been named the "Sons of Thunder." They had quick tempers and wanted to punish the Samaritans for their lack of hospitality. "When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?'" (Luke 9:54). This is not the right attitude, is it? How did Jesus respond to their request to bring down fire from heaven? <sup>55</sup> "But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; <sup>56</sup> for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' And they went on to another village" (Luke 55-56)

Why look at this scripture? It gives you a clear direction on the attitude a Christian should have towards people who do not agree with them about Jesus and His saving grace for mankind. Christians also have this to remember. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:36-40)

As Jesus and the apostles continue their journey to another city, Jesus is approached by a man who says this. "As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, 'I will follow You wherever You go.'" (Luke 9:57). As they walked, another came up and said this. "And He said to another, 'Follow Me.'" But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." (Luke 9:59) In other words, when I am ready, I will follow you. He put himself before Jesus' invitation. Jesus is always first. Not putting Jesus first is a mistake. <sup>60</sup> But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." <sup>61</sup> Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:60-62)

Following Jesus requires a total commitment. Just as a farmer must focus on plowing straight lines, a disciple must focus on Christ without distraction. Looking back signifies a divided heart. True discipleship demands that we leave our past behind and fully embrace the new life in Christ.

Jesus calls us to count the cost of following Him. This involves prioritizing the kingdom of God above all else, even when it requires sacrifice. Just as a plowman must keep his eyes forward to plow effectively, Christians must keep their eyes on Jesus to live effectively for the kingdom. Spiritual fitness involves readiness and willingness to follow Jesus without hesitation or regret, demonstrating a heart fully aligned with God's purposes.

Jesus makes it abundantly clear that He must be a priority in your life. Looking back is not something you want to do. By looking back, you are showing that you are not truly committed to Jesus and He is not the center of your life; you cannot truly follow by looking back. Your focus must be on Jesus and His word.

Looking back is a tool Satan uses to take your focus off Jesus. It starts with a lack of trust and faith in Jesus. All of a sudden, other things get in the way of following Jesus, like the examples we saw in these passages from Luke 9.

Please remember God's encouragement to Joshua: ["Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."](#) (Joshua 1:9) As Joshua began leading the Jewish nation, God gave him a command. That encouragement is applicable today to your walk with Jesus.

As you serve the risen Savior, do not look back. Always look forward, seeking His guidance for your life and completing the mission He has given you. Why do I write this? Here is why. ["Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."](#) (Colossians 3:24) Have a blessed week and don't look back. Rather, move forward in service and obedience.

[Brandon Heath - No Turning Back \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)