

Church Growth: Looking Backward

- Introduction:
1. Church growth is an important subject that should demand a good deal of our time and meditation.
 2. However, as we discuss the growth of the church today, let us remember that church growth is not an “end.”
 3. Rather, it is a means to an end.
 4. Our mission is to glorify God in the church (Ephesians 3:20).
 5. Each lesson today will examine the topic of church growth from a peculiar direction.
 6. The direction that has been assigned to me is “looking backward.”
 7. How can looking backward help the church to move forward?
 - a. Ills. of missing turn off and having to turn around.
 8. Sometimes, in order to move forward, we must look backward.

I. Looking Backward Will Remind Us Of God’s Faithfulness

- A. (1 Samuel 17:32-37) David killing lion and bear.
- B. (Psalm 63:6-7).
- C. (Psalm 77:10-11).
- D. (Psalm 78:40-55).
- E. (Daniel 3:16-18; 24-26) Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego.

II. Looking Backward Will Guard Us From Repeating Mistakes.

- A. Edmund Burke said that “Those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it.”
- B. (1 Corinthians 10:11).
- C. Ills. of Christian Church.
 1. 1859 - L.L. Pinkerton at Midway, KY.
 1. We lost most of our buildings (retained 2,600 and lost 8,600).
 2. We lost most of our colleges.
 3. We lost over 85% of our members (retained 159,000 and lost 1.3 million).
 4. How? A rejection of authority and a pattern.
- D. What is happening today?
 1. Ills. of Sermon on Baptism.
 2. Ills. of Instrumental music.

III. Looking Backward Will Take Us To The Answers We Seek

- A. (Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:16).
- B. (2 Kings 22: 8,11,13) King Josiah.
- C. The answers to our problems aren’t in new innovations, but rather in the old paths of God.

IV. Looking Backward Will Keep Us From Despairing

- A. Noah (Genesis 6-8).
- B. Elijah (1 Kings 19:18).
- C. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:7-12).
- D. Jesus (Matthew 7:13-14).