

How Have Most Set Their Minds?

International Bible Lessons

Mark 8:27-9:1

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“But turning and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things’” (Mark 8:33—NRSV).

“But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s’” (Mark 8:33—NASB-U).

“But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men” (Mark 8:33—KJV).

Peter made the mistake that too many people make, and the followers of Jesus are prone to make; that is, setting our minds on human things instead of divine things. When we “set our minds,” we “firmly resolve to achieve a purpose.” Our supreme purpose can be achieving our goals or God’s goals for us. After Peter rebuked Jesus in the presence of His disciples, Jesus had to rebuke Peter in their hearing to avoid misunderstandings. Their rebukes provide guidance for us.

First, learn this about Satan. Ages ago, Satan set his mind on serving himself instead of God. He will try to use human beings to achieve his goals. He tried using Peter to turn Jesus away from dying on the cross, because Jesus’ death and resurrection would save believers from sin and Satan’s grasp.

Second, if we set our minds on human things, we cannot set our minds supremely on fulfilling God’s will at the same time. If we set our minds on achieving our human aspirations while disregarding God’s will, we will open our lives to the hidden influences of Satan. Satan tries to lead people away from what God wants and he will tempt us to focus instead on achieving what we want. As we learn from Peter’s experience, Satan can misuse people who know the truth about God but whose minds are wrongly set.

Third, Peter seemed to mean well; however, apparently well-meaning people can become a type of Satan to us if they have set their minds on human things when giving us advice.

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Thinking Further

1. Jesus knew what people were saying about Him, and what His disciples were thinking about Him, so why do you think He asked them His question in Mark 8:27?
2. Today, who do people say Jesus is (or was)? What differences do their various beliefs make in the way they live and act, the way they treat others, and their futures?
3. Why do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to keep some truths secret for awhile? Jesus told us not to throw our pearls before swine or give what is holy to dogs. Relate that advice or command to keeping some truths secret from others from time to time.
4. Why might it be spiritually dangerous to trust in so-called secret beliefs about Jesus or secret teachings of Jesus that are not recorded in the Bible, but revealed in other books or revealed in other ways?
5. Give some examples of how people deny themselves and take up their crosses and follow Jesus today where you live and in other parts of the world.