
HOW IS YOUR WALK?

All of us are faced with the challenge of living out the Christian life. Probably all of us have seen at some point people whose lives did not match up with how they talked. And likely all of us have come to a realization that in our own lives, we have not always been consistent in how our lives match our talk. The Bible has much to say about how we should walk. For an interesting study, look up the word **walk** and notice what God has to say about how we should live our lives.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is the support, the foundation under us when everything else collapses. Faith is the evidence, the "proof" of what we cannot see. Faith brings to reality those things that are not seen. When we are taken through the fiery trials of affliction, faith clings to the promises of God, and realizes that although we may not be able to sense the presence of God at this very moment, yet He is there. Jesus told Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Blessed are those who, in their trying circumstances, when they cannot sense the presence of God, yet believe that He is there. Without faith, our lives would be limited to a very narrow world comprehended only by our senses. We could only grasp what we can see, hear, touch, etc. Walking by faith will allow us to treat the future as a present reality. Therefore, all of the circumstances we face, all of the decisions we need to make, will be evaluated in light of eternity.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (Eph. 5:15). Circumspectly means that we walk carefully or accurately, and we are to walk as wise people. We are to walk by the rule which God has given in His Word. Today we see church groups who are accepting homosexuals and all kinds of deviant behaviors into the church. many groups who once embraced the Bible as the final authority for life are now saying that there are other ways to enter heaven. Bringing this a little closer to home; what about our personal life of holiness before God? Am I satisfied to be a nominal Christian or do I have a heart that pants after God and wants His perfect will? We like to claim the promises of God but we must also live by the precepts of God. To walk circumspectly is to walk carefully even in the small matters that we may not give a second thought to.

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5). Why is it important that we walk in wisdom toward them that are without? One reason is that people of the world judge us not by what we say, but by how we live. many a testimony has been ruined by those who live a holy life on Sunday and a materialistic life on Monday. Time is one of the most important things that God has given us.

When people see that we don't have time to talk to them, when they see that I want to do my thing with my time, then we are not redeeming the time. Someone has said it this way, "Let time be your chief commodity, deal in that alone; buy it all up, use every portion of it yourselves. Time is that on which eternity depends; in time you are to get a preparation for

the kingdom of God; if you get not this in time, your ruin is inevitable; therefore, buy up the time."

Why is it that we so quickly lose sight of what is most important in life? We are in this world and we need to meet our needs and obligations. However, many times we tend to confuse our needs and obligations with things that we really don't need. So we spend much time and energy on things that have no lasting value. Redeeming the time means that we turn our focus onto things that have eternal value. And that may mean we forgo taking on that opportunity to make more money or to advance our career. God help us to walk in wisdom toward all men.

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2). One of the most effective characteristics of the people of God is a love for one another. The actions of those from the world is characterized by a self-love, self-interest that takes no thought for the other person. So when the child of God shows a love and concern for his fellow man, it can speak even louder than anything we might say.

Love is not just some abstract concept that we cannot see. True love is an action word. Jesus giving Himself an offering for us on the cross was love in action. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." How was this a new commandment? The Old Testament law was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." but Jesus went beyond that in that He loved us more than Himself. It was also a new commandment in that never before was there a group of people in which this was the distinguishing characteristic. The Christian church is known by the love which its members have for each other. The Mennonite church is often known for its divisions.

How did Christ love us? He loved us enough to give up His life. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." How is it with us? What is our response when we rub shoulders with that person who has a way of rubbing us the wrong way? How do we react when we have a disagreement with our brethren within the church? What is our response when someone doesn't return something that he borrowed or returns something in worse shape than when he took it? Love is not only saying that we love the church, but also loving the people that make up the church. Love is learning to surrender our rights and being willing to suffer wrong when taken advantage of, even in matters that are not issues of right and wrong. but Jesus went beyond even that. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us..." One of the great truths of God's love is that before we loved Him, He reached down in His mercy and offered His love to us. Since we are the recipients of that love, we ought to extend it not only to our brethren, but also to those who are openly hostile to us.

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying" (Rom. 13:13). To walk honestly here has the thought of living in a decent or becoming manner. As Christians we have a duty to live an open, transparent life. Those who have something to hide prefer the darkness of night so that their lives remain hidden. Too often we are content to throw up a facade and as long as no one looks too deeply everything is fine. Human nature wants to be left alone. We become

satisfied with the outward form without knowing the inner life that drives the outward form. How is it that within the church there can be deep rooted problems for years and no one knows about it? Would our church life be any different if we would all live with nothing to hide?

We would likely say that our lives are not characterized by the first vices mentioned in this verse. but envying and strife come closer home than we would like to admit. As you look around us, it seems that envying and strife are rampant among those who are called the people of God. envy is a vice that is so subtle and yet finds root in our heart, sometimes without us realizing it. Proverbs says that envy is the rottenness of the bones. envy will eat away at us until we are in a condition that cannot long sustain life. envy keeps us from enjoying life, and wishes evil on others.

Strife is a problem that the Bible makes very clear should not be named among God's people, and it is something God hates. Yet it seems everywhere you turn, there are divisions and church problems. "Only by pride cometh contention, but with the well advised is wisdom" (Prov. 13:10). At the root of much of the problems that we face today is pride. Pride can be such a subtle thing. It can take root in our heart and yet we are not aware of it. Someone has said that pride is a mask for our own faults. Pride allows us to see the faults of our brother, but keeps us from seeing our own. Pride keeps us from forgiveness and holds a grudge against others. A wonderful example of humility is Joseph. If anyone had reason to hold a grudge, it was Joseph. but instead, he chose to focus on the hand of God in his circumstances. What a difference one person can make who refuses to hold a grudge against his brother! God help us to keep the sin of pride out of our lives.

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). When we come to know the Lord, our responsibility is to walk appropriately. Here are two areas in which we can walk worthy of the Lord. One of the results of the Christian's walk with God is to bear fruit. Jesus made it very clear that it is by the fruits of one's life that we know our fellow man. Are we producing the fruit of the Spirit? Is my life giving evidence that Jesus is Lord of my life by the fruit which I produce?

The child of God will also have an intense desire to grow in the knowledge of God. God is pleased when His people have a desire to become better acquainted with His true character. As we become better acquainted with God's character, it will have a cleansing, purifying effect on our lives. Someone has said that the end of all knowledge is conduct. As we grow in our knowledge of God, our conduct bears witness to the fact that we have been with Jesus. God help us to walk worthy of Him!

~Keith Gingerich