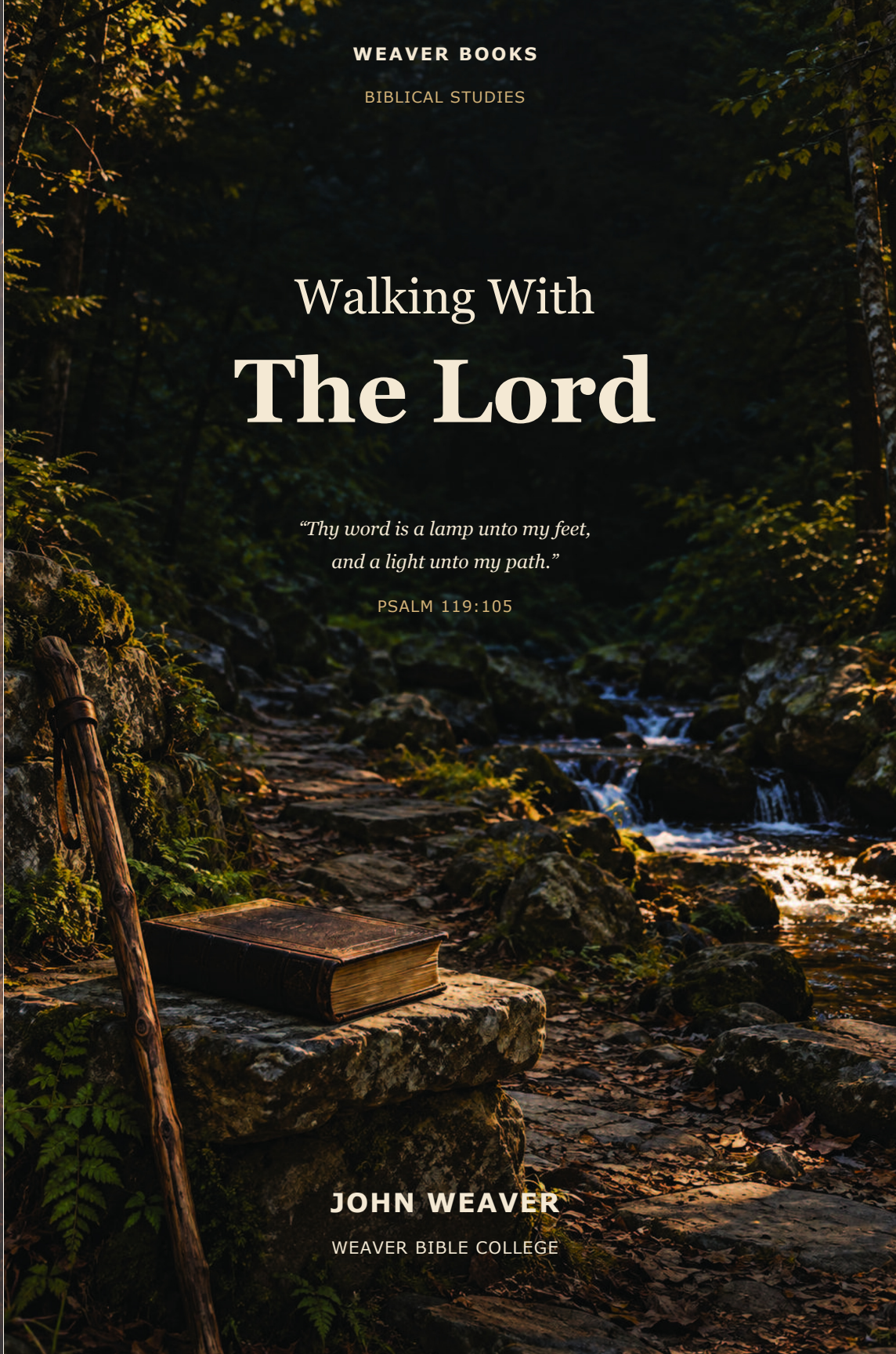
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Walking With
The Lord

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



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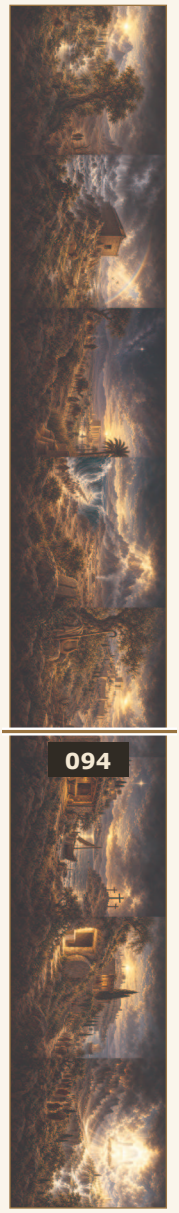
Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth.

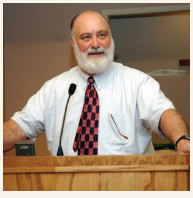
PSALM 86:11, EXCERPT

A faithful walk with the Lord is shaped by the teaching of Scripture. This collection gathers John Weaver's messages on the believer's course, responsibilities, and continued dependence. Readers are invited to consider how agreement with God's Word is reflected in conduct through changing circumstances.

"Walking with the Lord is the duty, obligation, and privilege of every child of God."

JOHN WEAVER





John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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Contents

Chapter 1: Walking With The Lord 7

Introduction: The Call to Walk with the Lord 7

Sin Separates from Fellowship 7

Walking Before the Lord: The Prerequisite 8

The Fear of God and National Apostasy 10

Examples of Walking with God: Noah and Enoch 13

Five Implications of Walking with the Lord 15

Conclusion: A Consistent Lifestyle 21

Chapter 2: Walking With The Lord - Part Two 23

Introduction and Review 23

The Meaning of Walking 'Before' the Lord 24

The Central Question: How Do We Know We Are Walking with the Lord? . . 25

Walking by Faith Pleases God 26

Faith in the Person of God 27

Faith in the Promises of God 31

Faith in the Providence of God 37

Application and Conclusion 39

Chapter 3: Walking With The Lord - Part Three 41

Introduction and Review 41

The New Walk in Christ 45

Walking Worthy of Our Calling 46

The Meaning of Our Calling 47

Walking in Lowliness 51

Paul's Example of Lowliness 53

Remembering Our Past to Foster Humility 55

Thanksgiving and Conclusion 56

Chapter 4: Walking With The Lord - Part Four 59

Introduction and Review 59

Meekness Is Not Weakness 62
Defining Biblical Meekness 63
Meekness as a Fruit of the Spirit 65
Meekness in Restoring the Fallen 67
Meekness in Teaching and Being Taught 69
The Yoke of Christ as an Illustration of Meekness 72
Applications and Conclusion 73
Chapter 5: Walking With The Lord - Part Five 77
Introduction and Review 77
Walking with Longsuffering 79
Walking with Forbearance 83
Endeavoring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit 86
The Basis of Unity: One Body, Spirit, Hope, Lord, Faith, Baptism, God 88
Grace and Gifts for Mutual Functioning 91
Conclusion and Application 92
Chapter 6: Walking With The Lord - Part Six 95
Introduction and Review of the Series 95
The Command to Walk Differently (Ephesians 4:17) 96
The Meaning of 'Vanity of Their Mind' 98
The Darkened Understanding (Ephesians 4:18a) 100
Alienation from the Life of God Through Ignorance (Ephesians 4:18b) 102
The Inexcusable Nature of Ignorance 106
Blindness of Heart and Its Manifestation (Ephesians 4:18c-19) 108
The Difference Between the Saved and the Unsaved 110
Conclusion and Preview of Future Messages 111
Chapter 7: Walking With The Lord - Part Ten 113
Walking in Light 113
Introduction to Walking in Light 113
Believers Were Once Darkness 114
Christ as the Light of the World 116

Walking as Children of Light 119
Proving What is Acceptable to the Lord 123
No Fellowship with Unfruitful Works of Darkness 123
Reproving by the Light 124
Awake and Arise 126
Applications: Scripture as Light and Believers as Reflectors 127
Topical Index 131
Scripture Index 135
Study Guide Link 143

CHAPTER 1

Walking With The Lord

Introduction: The Call to Walk with the Lord

In Genesis chapter 5, beginning with verse 22, the Bible says, "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah 300 years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were 365 years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

Walking with the Lord is the duty, obligation, and privilege of every child of God. The question that you have to ask is, Are you walking with the Lord? You also have to ask, Do you know what it means to walk with the Lord? And do you have any idea what is entailed in the activity of walking with the Lord?

Sin Separates from Fellowship

Many individuals disregard and despise the privilege of walking with the Lord and communing with Him. How in the world do they despise it? The answer is by sin, because sin separates, sin divides, and sin makes it impossible to commune and fellowship with the Lord.

Evidently Adam and Eve walked with the Lord and had fellowship with Him. But in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 8, it was their sin that separated them: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." God came to walk with them, and they heard Him and hid themselves. Sin is that which separates and divides and causes a loss of fellowship.

The scripture says in Isaiah 59, verses 1 and 2, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear." David said it plainly in Psalm 66 and verse 18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Walking Before the Lord: The Prerequisite

I hope you've already gathered, just from reading about Adam and Eve and even reading about Enoch, that if you are going to walk with the Lord, you must walk away from and separately from anything and everything that is contrary to the Lord. It's impossible to walk with the Lord unless you learn to walk before the Lord.

Let me explain that. In Genesis chapter 17, verse 1, we find a phrase that occurs repeatedly in the Bible. We will come back to Genesis chapter 5 in just a little bit, but this phrase occurs over and over in the Bible, and in every one of these passages the Hebrew word is exactly the same. It is the word panim. “And when Abram was 90 years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, ‘I am the Almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect.’”

Notice that He said, “Walk before me and be thou perfect.” He did not say, “Walk with me”; He said, “Walk before me.” This is why you cannot walk with God unless you walk before the Lord. The Hebrew word here literally means “walk before my face” or “walk in my presence.” In other words, walking before the Lord means that we are walking as if He is there; we are in His presence. Very obviously, we are to walk before Him. It means, therefore, that Abram was to walk consciously before the Lord, pleasing before the Lord. He was

to abstain from anything and everything that would be displeasing to the Lord. So, when Abram was to walk before Him, Abram was to walk uprightly.

Walking before the Lord involves holiness, obedience, and righteousness. In 1 Samuel chapter 2 and verse 30, God reproves Eli. Eli had sinned against the Lord, had allowed his sons to sin against the Lord, and was himself a priest. God says, “Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me forever.” That is, in His presence forever. “But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me will I honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

Eli was sinning against God and allowing his sons to sin against God. God had said that if they walked before Him, He would bless them; but they were not walking before Him. Therefore, God was going to remove Eli from the priesthood. Since Eli was a priest, walking before the Lord not only meant walking in His presence; it also meant serving Him. It meant keeping His commands and His judgments. Walking before the Lord, then, entails obedience.

Now look at 1 Kings chapter 2 and verse 4. David explains to Solomon exactly what it means to walk before the Lord. The same Hebrew word is used repeatedly. Beginning with verse 1, we read: “Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me.”

Then David says, “If thy children take heed to their way to walk before me”—that is, in His presence—“in truth, with all their heart, with all their soul, there shall not fail thee,” said he, “a man on the throne of Israel.”

David is saying, “Look, I want you to walk before the Lord.” Part and parcel of walking before the Lord is explained in verse 3:

walking in his ways, keeping his statutes, his commandments, his judgments, and his testimonies, and doing so with all the heart. If you look in 1 Kings chapter 9 and verse 4, you will find that God confirms David's interpretation because God is now speaking to Solomon. He said in verse 4, "If thou wilt walk before me"—there is that same word—"if you will walk in my presence, if you will walk before my face as David thy father walked in integrity of heart and in uprightness to do according to all that I have commanded thee and will keep my statutes and my judgments, then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, Thou shalt not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel." The promise, then, was conditioned upon walking before the Lord. Again, you have the same exact statement in 2 Chronicles 7 and verse 17; it is the same exact word.

The Fear of God and National Apostasy

Walking before the Lord means to walk and to live as if you were in the presence of God, as if you were before his face. Why is there so much meanness, sin, wickedness, and rebellion in the world today? The answer is that people do not walk before the Lord. Since they do not walk before the Lord, there is no fear of God before their eyes or in their heart. David said it like this in Psalm 36 and verse 1: "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes." Paul said it in Romans 3 and verse 18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes." If one does not fear God, then obviously he is not going to walk as in the presence of God. There will be a multitude of sins. Think back to when you were children. That's a

You remember when you were children, how you would do things away from the presence of your father and mother that you would never do in their presence. If you had been walking in the presence of your father and mother at that time, you would never have done some of those things.

There was a drunk by the name of Mel Trotter. He was such a drunk that he had actually stolen the shoes off his baby and was taking them down the street to pawn them so he could get a sip of whiskey. As Mel Trotter was going to pawn his baby's shoes, he

passed a gospel meeting in a rented building downtown. It was cold outside and warm inside, and they were singing. The singing caught his ear, so he went in, sat down, and listened.

Then there was preaching. As the preaching went on, God opened his eyes and saved him. Mel Trotter began a rescue mission, I think it was in Chicago, where he reached an awful lot of drunks and other people. But he became concerned about a place nearby called Lovers' Lane, where everybody would go out and commit fornication, and he went there to preach.

Some would leave, some would laugh, and some would ignore him. He thought, "How in the world can I stop this?" So Mel Trotter had a neon sign made. It was a giant flashing eyeball, and as it flashed, it displayed this Scripture: "Thou God seest me. Thou God seest me." They said that within a month you could never find anyone on Lovers' Lane; it was all gone.

You have to understand that walking in the presence of God means, of course, that we are doing that which He approves of.

Amos 3:3 says, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Every positive has a negative. If two walk together, they are agreed. The negative is that, if they disagree, they are not going to walk together. So you have to walk as in the presence of God.

Look at what the Bible says about Jeroboam in 1 Kings chapter 15. Jeroboam was a wicked king. He was the first king of Israel, and he was the one who made the two golden calves. First Kings 15:3 says, “And he”—that is, Jeroboam—“walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him. And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father.” Understand that this is a civil ruler that we are talking about in 1 Kings chapter 15. Jeroboam walked in all the sins of his father, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God.

It is not only individuals who can sin, rebel against God, and refuse to walk in His presence. It can be an entire nation. It can be an entire society. It can be an entire people. Second Kings 17:7 says, “For so it was that the children of Israel”—all of them, generally speaking, though there were some exceptions—“had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of

Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against Him, the Lord their God."

They also "built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchman to the fenced cities. And they set up images in groves in every high hill, and under every green tree." Read the rest of the passage and you will see how they actually turned from God and began to serve and obey the laws of these heathenistic kings. They had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt, and they had feared other gods. They walked in the statutes of the heathen and did secretly those things that were not right against Him, the Lord their God.

In 1 Kings 11, we see how an entire nation can follow a civil ruler into wickedness and idolatry. We are reading about Jeroboam again and how God was going to take the kingdom out of the hand of Rehoboam because of the sins of Solomon. Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him and rent it in twelve pieces. He said to Jeroboam, "Take thee ten pieces. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. But he"—whether Jeroboam or Solomon—"shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel."

The reason was that they—practically, the whole people—had forsaken the Lord and worshipped Ashtaroth the goddess of the Zidonians; Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon. They had not walked in His ways, "which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments as did David his father." In other words, they were not walking before the Lord.

In 2 Kings 17:18-19, we read, "Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. There was none left, but the tribe of Judah only." God removed the ten northern tribes first. But Judah also kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, "but walked in the statutes of Israel which they had made."

What Judah did was the same thing that Israel had done. They were very obviously not walking before the Lord.

So when we ask, “Why do we have so much sin and wickedness and rebellion?” the answer is that people are not walking before the Lord. We do not want to walk contrary to God. We do not want to walk against God. We want to walk with Him. Go back to Genesis chapter 6, where there are a number of men in the Bible who did so.

Examples of Walking with God: Noah and Enoch

We are told that Noah walked with God. We have to observe the lives of these people, and we will be looking at many of them before getting to the New Testament. Look at Genesis chapter 6 and verse 9: “These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Isn’t that amazing? Noah walked with God. The Bible says that Noah was a just man and perfect, or upright, in his generations.

Do you want to know what it means to be just and perfect, or upright? Look at Genesis 7:1: “And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.” Notice the word “before.” It is the same exact Hebrew word. “Thee have I seen righteous.” The word “righteous” simply means that which is lawful, that which is just, that which is right. When God says to Noah, “For thee have I seen righteous before me,” all He is saying is, “You are the one who has been obeying me. You are the one who has been walking as in my presence. You are the one who has been doing that which is right.”

Now go back to our text in Genesis chapter 5, beginning with verse 21: “And Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah 300 years, and begat sons and daughters.” What relevance is there in telling us that Enoch begat Methuselah and sons and daughters and walked with God 300 years? Why not simply read, “And Enoch walked with God”? The answer is that God is telling us Enoch was a family man. He had a wife, sons, and daughters; Enoch was the father of Methuselah and the great-grandfather of Noah.

As a family man, Enoch had to do everything every husband and father had to do. He had to work, make a living, educate and train his children, and teach them. Yet, in light of all those family responsibilities, he walked with God. He never used the excuse, "I'm too busy. I just don't have enough time. I've got to make a living." The Bible says he was a family man, and he walked with God.

The Bible says that Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years. Three hundred years is a long time—almost as old as Pat. None of us is going to make it three hundred years, I can assure you. But why does the Bible tell us that Enoch walked with God for three hundred years? Because it is telling us that Enoch was consistent and constant. You never read in the Bible about any lapses or failures.

It was not up and down with him, and it was not off and on. It was absolutely consistent. He began a walk with God, and he continued his walk with God. There was not a failure.

Yes, he was human, and yes, he was sinful. But the amazing thing is that here was a man who walked consistently with our Lord for three hundred years, while most of us cannot walk consistently for a week, sometimes even a day. He had all the obligations that each one of us has, and yet he walked before the Lord. He had a wife and children. He had to work, educate, and train. I can assure you that he had already learned the principle of 1 Corinthians 10:31, although that verse had not yet been written: "Whatsoever you eat, or whatever you drink, or whatever you do, do all to the honor and glory of God." That is basically how he walked with God. Everything he did was accompanied by the thought, "I'm walking and working in the presence of God."

Now look at verse 24; interestingly, let us read verse 23 too: "And all the days of Enoch were 365 years." Note that back in verse 21, Enoch was sixty-five when he begat Methuselah. After Methuselah, verse 24 says, "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." He had walked with Him for three hundred years.

Here is the picture in my mind: Enoch was walking with the Lord one day, communing and fellowshipping, and suddenly realized, "Lord, I'm tired." The Lord said, "I understand, but we're closer to

my house than yours, so you just come home and spend a few days with me." He said, "That's a good idea." When he got there, he found that one day with the Lord is a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day. So he has been spending those days with Him ever since.

Five Implications of Walking with the Lord

But I can assure you, he would much rather be where he is than where he was. He did not want to be in a world of sin and misery. The Bible said he was not, for God took him. Does it say he died? It simply says God took him. Isn't it amazing that a man could please God so well that God wanted him for Himself? Wow.

I want to show you how the word "walk" is used in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The word "walk" is used to describe one's course of action and life, his habitual manner of life. Thus, the word "walk" is synonymous with the word "lifestyle." I could say, "Let's examine David's lifestyle." That would be the same as saying, "Let's examine David's walk"—how he is living, how he is acting, what he is doing, and what he is saying.

Today, I want to give you four or five thoughts by way of introduction to this brief series. The first is this: Walking implies communion and fellowship. Husbands and wives often walk daily. Fathers and sons, fathers and daughters, mothers and children simply go for a walk. It is not necessarily just for exercise; often it is for pure fellowship and communion. Certainly, walking with the Lord is a godly exercise, but more than that, it is for fellowship and communion.

Sometimes you are joined on your walks. Alice and I used to walk regularly, though we have not done so in a while. When we would walk and talk, we always had company. Our dogs followed us. Some of you remember Penelope, the little Vietnamese pot-bellied pig we had; she always went with us. We had a pony that went with us. It seemed that every creature under the sun joined us when we took a walk.

There is always fellowship. In 1 John 1:3, John writes, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father,

and with his Son Jesus Christ." Pause and think about that: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Have you ever considered that everything we lost in Adam is restored in Jesus Christ? Adam was our first federal head and federal representative. What he did, we did. Adam was created with original righteousness, holiness, and knowledge; but when he sinned against God, he lost all of that.

Jesus Christ, in 1 Corinthians 15, is called the second man, or the second Adam, and the last man. He is the second one to sustain a federal headship and a federal relationship with the people. What we lost in Adam, we now have back in Jesus Christ, and more so. In Adam we were on mutable footing—that is, we could fall. We did fall because Adam fell. But in Jesus Christ we have an immutable footing; we can never fail because Jesus Christ is God.

Consider 1 John 3:1–3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Now are we the sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. This is basically the same truth Philippians 1:6 declares: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." It is an immutable footing. What God starts, God is going to finish.

John has said that our fellowship is with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. First John 1:6 says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk"—there is that lifestyle—"and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth."

If we say that we have fellowship with the Father while we are disobedient, riotous, rebellious, and wicked, we are lying and do not the truth. But verse 7 says, "But if we walk in the light"—if our lifestyle is one of obedience and holiness—"if we walk in the light as

he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Fellowship with the Father and the Son naturally leads to fellowship with the brethren. As we walk with Him, we are also walking with all the others who are walking with Him. There is a greater tie and a stronger bond between believing men and women than there is even between fleshly family bonds and ties. That is exactly what he is saying.

The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son." Walking implies fellowship and communion.

Secondly, walking with the Lord implies purpose. Usually, there is a purpose when you take a walk. Sometimes that purpose may be fellowship; sometimes exercise; but often there are other purposes. For instance, many times when you walk, you share secrets with each other and tell each other things you would normally never tell. I have asked people in my lifetime and ministry, when there are many people around, "Would you take a short walk with me?" When they do, I tell them what I want to tell them. Sometimes I may be encouraging them; sometimes I may be admonishing them.

There is a purpose in the walk. You have to understand that there are secrets that the believer has with the Father and that the Father has with the believer. There are things that Christians know that nonbelievers will never know unless they are converted. The Bible says in Psalm 25:14, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." He will explain things to us, teach us, and share with us. Proverbs 3:32 says, "But the froward is an abomination to the Lord: but His secret is with the righteous." Christians know things that the unsaved would never know. If they knew what we know, they would not act the way they act. It is just that simple.

Christians know things that nonbelievers do not know, and Christians know things that angels do not know. In fact, we even know some things that some of the Old Testament prophets did not know. First Peter 1, beginning with verse 10, says, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who

prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." Some of these Old Testament prophets knew that they were prophesying, but they did not understand all that they prophesied. Therefore, they inquired and searched diligently.

Verse 11 says, "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." They did not understand everything. Verse 12 says, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not only themselves, but unto us they did minister things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Angels have never experienced redemption or forgiveness of sins. There are elect angels and nonelect angels, or, plainly, good angels and bad angels. But there was never a redemption for the angels; none of them were ever forgiven. The elect angels desire to look into this, because they have never experienced it. Yet we have. In that sense, we know things that the angels do not know.

If we are going to walk before the Lord, we will be walking not only in fellowship and communion, but with a purpose. We will be learning, which I will explain a little later.

Thirdly, walking implies progress. One of the most notable things about walking is progress: you move from one point to another. The farther you go, you can look back and see where you have come from. Every one of us has progressed in our Christian walk. We may not have progressed the way we should have, or as much as we should have, but we have progressed.

Each of us can say, "Thank God I'm not what I used to be." We have not attained or reached that which we want to reach, but we can still be thankful that we are not what we were in times past. The grace of God has changed us. There has been progress, even if it has been slow. Really and truly, our Christian life should be a continual plane going upward. Unhappily, most of the time it is up and down. But if you are on top of a hill, you have to go down in order to reach the next hill. It is just that simple. Still, our progress should be upward.

The Bible says in Psalm 84 and verse 7, “They go from strength to strength. Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” We should be getting stronger and stronger. In Proverbs 10 and verse 29, the Bible says, “The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.” We should be increasing in strength. In Habakkuk chapter 3 and verse 19, he said, “The Lord God is my strength, He will make my feet like hinds' feet, He will make me to walk in high places.” In the New Testament, Romans chapter 1 and verse 17 says, concerning the Gospel, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

In other words, we are to be going from a small or little faith to a great faith. We are to be progressing because the Lord is indeed the strength of our lives. As we walk with Him, we are to be getting stronger and stronger, going from faith to faith. Walking with the Lord implies progress. Fourthly, walking with the Lord implies agreement.

Amos 3:3 says, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" I would not waste my time walking with someone with whom I absolutely disagreed and had nothing in common, unless I could teach or preach to them and they were willing to listen. But why would I waste my time walking with someone who will not listen, does not want to hear, and, if they heard the truth, would reject and refuse it?

In Micah 4:5, the Bible says, "For all people will walk everyone in the name of his God. But we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." Here you have their god, and here you have our God. People who walk with their god have nothing in common with those of us who walk in the name of the One True and the Living God.

When we walk with the Lord, we agree that He is the One True and the Living God, and beside Him there is none else. Moreover, we agree that His Word is true and that His covenant is true. As we walk with Him, we agree that we should obey Him. We must obey Him. That is why He said in Leviticus 18:4, "You shall do my judgments and keep my commandments to walk therein. I am the Lord."

Deuteronomy 10:12 says, "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul?" If I am going to walk with the Lord, I am going to agree with Him that He is true, His Word is true, and everything He does is right. That is indeed a point of fellowship and a point of communion.

Fifthly, walking with the Lord implies resolution. There are times when friends have disagreements and misunderstandings. They are not enemies; they are friends. Consequently, sometimes one friend will say, “Well, let’s go for a walk.” As they walk, the friend says, “Now, I want to explain the problem. Here’s my understanding. Here’s my perspective. Is there anything that we can do to work this out?” Usually, if there is a problem and both people are willing to do what is right, there will always be a resolution. It will be worked out.

The Lord not only tells us and invites us to reason with Him; He gives us strong incentives to do so. Isaiah chapter 1, verse 18, says, “Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” God is inviting us to reason with Him. He is going to explain things to us. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Here is a blessing, a promise, and a good reason that we should reason with the Lord, because there is forgiveness with Him.

Here is another reason in verse 19: “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.” God says, “If you obey me, I want to bless you.” But now God gives us another incentive to reason with Him in verse 20: “But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

I don’t know about you, but if God comes to me and says, “I want to reason with you. If you’ll confess and repent, I’ll forgive you. And if you obey me, I will bless you. But if you don’t, I’ll just wear your fanny out so you can’t walk,” that is pretty strong and persuasive reasoning in my book. I believe I would rather say, “Lord, I’m willing to be obedient and walk before thee.”

The truth and reality of the matter is that if we have any hesitation or misunderstanding, we need to take a walk with the Lord in His

Word and get everything resolved. Look in Mark chapter 4, verses 33 and 34.

"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them as they were able to hear it." First of all, note that our Lord teaches us as we are able to hear. The reason you did not believe truths thirty years ago that you believe now is that you were not able to receive them then. You were not able to hear them. You remember the passage in Hebrews chapter 5 where the Apostle said that he had many things to say concerning Christ which were hard to be uttered, but he could not say them because they were dull of hearing.

In other words, you shut your ears; you were not listening. He went on to say that he had to feed you with milk and not with meat because you were not able to eat the meat. Paul said exactly the same thing in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 1 and 2: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it." Christ gives us truth as we are able to hear and receive it. Now, what are we going to do about truth that we hear but do not understand?

Conclusion: A Consistent Lifestyle

I have actually had people get mad at me when I preached. Why would they get mad at the truth? Yet they have. If you do not understand something in the Bible, there is no reason to get angry, upset, or mad. Look at verse 34: "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." If you do not understand something, get alone with the Lord. Walk with the Lord. Ask Him to teach you, open your understanding, and give you His truth. Getting mad is useless; getting angry is worthless. Our Lord said, "I'll teach you." It is just that simple. He is the great Teacher. He is the Author, the One who can explain. I could be the greatest preacher in the world and have the best sermon in the world.

I could have the best oratory and the greatest illustrations, but if God does not open your understanding, you are never going to see a thing. The answer is to get along with Him and let Him expound to

you. So here is the question for this message: With whom do you walk? Are you walking with the Lord? What is your lifestyle?

You have to understand that walking with the Lord is not something you do just on Sunday, nor something you do sporadically. It is not up and down, in and out, off and on. If you walk with the Lord, it is something you have to do basically twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days out of the year. It is just that simple.

The Bible says in 1 Timothy 4 and verse 8, “For bodily exercise profiteth little.” It does profit some, but not much. “But bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” The greatest exercise is walking with the Lord. It does not matter if we are family men or family wives or mothers. You may walk with the Lord because Enoch did.

He had the responsibilities and obligations of a husband and father, yet he was faithful, consistent, and constant for 300 years. The Bible teaches us what is involved in walking with the Lord: you need to make up your mind. If you are not walking with Him, you are going to. Once you discover how to walk more fully and completely with Him, you are going to do that. Abram walked with God. Noah walked with God. Enoch walked with God. Multitudes walked with Him, and so should we.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before Thee. We thank You for Your Word, truth, goodness, grace, and mercy. Teach us to walk before Thee in order that we might walk with Thee. May we walk as in Thy presence, before Thy face, as if You are standing by our side. Enable us to do that which is right, holy, godly, and pleasing in Thy sight. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Walking With The Lord

Part Two

Introduction and Review

Genesis 5 and Hebrews 11. This is the second part of walking with the Lord.

Exactly how many messages I do not know. I'm working on number five at the present, and I know there's probably going to be at least three more after that. So this is walking with the Lord, part two.

Genesis 5:22–24 tells us, “And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah 300 years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were 365 years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”

Hebrews 11:5 says, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Please hold Hebrews 11 because we are going to be coming back there.

Last week we began this series on walking with the Lord, and we found out that Enoch walked with God. Abraham walked with God, and a host of others in the Bible as well. I told you the leading question that I had to ask was, Are you walking with the Lord?

I also pointed out last week how it is impossible to walk with the Lord as long as someone is walking in sin and rebellion. One cannot walk contrary to Him and walk with Him at the same time. That is when I quoted Amos 3:3, where the question is asked, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”

The Meaning of Walking 'Before' the Lord

I also pointed out last week how you cannot walk with the Lord unless you already know what it is to walk before the Lord, because God told Abraham in Genesis 17:1, “I am the Almighty God, walk thou before me and be thou perfect.” A number of passages use this word “before” in the Scripture. Literally, what it means is that we are walking in the presence of God, or in the face of God.

But let me show you one good illustration. In 1 Samuel 15, you know the story where God sent King Saul on a mission to destroy all of the Amalekites. In the first four verses, the Bible says in 1 Samuel 15:1, “Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel.”

“Now therefore hearken thou to the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not. But slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass.” God commanded Saul to kill all of these people—man, woman, ox, suckling, and ass.

Saul initially began to obey. The Bible said, “And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. Now watch, and he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. But everything

that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." Saul had refused to obey the Lord. Samuel came and heard the sheep bleating and the oxen lowing, while Saul professed to have obeyed the Lord. Samuel said, "If you've obeyed God, what meaneth the lowing of the ox and the bleating of the sheep in my ear?"

Then he told him that obedience is far more and far greater than sacrifice. The Bible says, "Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal."

The word "before" literally means in the presence of, in the face of. Samuel did to Agag exactly what God would have done to Agag, where Saul had refused. He did it as unto the Lord, before the Lord, in the presence of the Lord, which was an act of obedience and worship as well.

Last week I pointed out five things about walking with the Lord. First of all, if we walk with the Lord, walking implies communion and fellowship. Secondly, walking implies purpose. You have a purpose for a walk. Thirdly, walking implies progress. You go from one place to the other. Fourthly, walking implies agreement. We are in agreement. And then fifthly, walking also implies resolution. In other words, if there is a problem, we certainly work it out. So if we are walking with the Lord, then we are constantly and continually endeavoring to bring our lives in conformity to His Word.

The Central Question: How Do We Know We Are Walking with the Lord?

Now, there is a question that has to be asked: Do we walk with the Lord? In fact, that leads to several other questions. How do I know whether or not I am walking with the Lord? How do I know whether or not Steve is walking with the Lord, or Pat is walking with the Lord, or David is walking with the Lord? How can we tell whether or not the brethren are indeed walking with the Lord? How can we know that our walk is pleasing unto the Lord?

With that in mind, go back in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews chapter 11. I want to try to begin answering those questions, and I am going to answer those questions over the next several weeks. We will just begin to answer today. Notice, if you would, Hebrews 11:5, for the Bible is here speaking about Enoch: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

So, in walking with the Lord, he pleased God. I do not know if you are aware of this or not, but we have been commanded to walk pleasing unto the Lord. I want to just quote the Scripture for you. Next week we are going to look at it in detail. In Colossians 1 and verse 10 the Bible says this: “That you might walk worthy unto the Lord in all pleasing, in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” So if we are walking pleasing unto the Lord, He says we are walking in every good work and we are increasing in knowledge of the Lord.

If we are walking in every good work, it is the Word of God that defines a good work, and not man. So many people say, “Well, I’m doing a good work.” That depends upon who is defining the word good. That depends upon the definition of “is,” as some people would say. Obviously, God is the one who defines what is a good work and what is not. God has indeed commanded us in the Bible to be fruitful and full of good works.

The knowledge of God should be extremely precious to us and with us, because the knowledge of God is the only thing that we are going to take with us out of this life. We are to increase in that knowledge now, in this life, in this present age, while we can increase in knowledge. The Bible tells us that if we are to walk pleasing unto the Lord, it is to be in every good work and increasing in knowledge. We have to be like David, when David was called a man after God’s own heart.

Walking by Faith Pleases God

The Bible in Acts chapter 13, verse 22, says this: “And when he, God, had removed him, this King Saul, he raised up unto them David to be their king, to whom he, God, also gave this testimony, and said, I

found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfill all my will." Obviously, fulfilling the will of God is walking pleasing to the Lord as well.

How do we know what God's will is? There is an answer, though I am not going to get into this very deeply today. In 1 John 3 and verse 22, the Bible says, "And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." What is pleasing in His sight? Keeping His commandments and obeying His Word. We know, then, that God's will is revealed in His Word, and as we obey Him, we are walking pleasing in His sight.

So what is walking with the Lord? How do we walk with the Lord? According to the Bible, I want to cover just one point with three sub-points, going from the simple to the more complex. Today is the simplest: It pleases God when we walk by faith.

Hebrews 11:5 says, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. And he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Verse 6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Here is one thing of which we can be absolutely dogmatically certain: without faith it is impossible to please God, because the Scripture says that flat out.

I have a good pastor friend in Indiana named Andrew Green. Andrew had three daughters and sons. One of his daughters' name is Faith. At Bible college she met the man she was to marry, and his name was James. They were courting, and Alice and I were sitting at dinner while they told us about it. James told me that Faith looked at him and said, "You say the Lord has called you into the ministry. You say that you want to please the Lord. It is going to be impossible for you to do that unless you marry me."

Faith in the Person of God

He said, "How can that be?" She said, "Because the Bible says, 'without faith it is impossible to please Him.' So you have to marry

me." They got married, and we laughed about that. I looked at James and said, "I have one more verse for you now that you are married. The Bible says, Romans 14:23, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' You better stay with Faith."

You have to understand this verse in context. Obviously, Faith Green took it out of context. But notice what he says: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him." We please God when we walk by faith.

Walking by faith, first of all, has reference to the person of God. Verse 6 says, "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is." Faith, then, has reference to the person of God. Obviously, if one does not have faith, he will not believe in God, seek Him, or believe that He rewards the diligent seeker.

This should be the answer as to why anyone without faith cannot please God. Obviously, if he has no faith, he does not believe that God is. He does not believe the promises of God; he does not believe anything about God. Therefore, it is impossible to please God.

But note this: it must be made exceedingly clear and plain that faith is to be exercised in the God of the Bible and in Him alone. Faith is not just in any god. I am sorry, but those who worship Allah do not have faith. Those who worship Hinduism do not have faith. I am sorry, but that is the truth. The only faith that counts is faith in the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, without faith it is impossible to please Him. You cannot believe in His person unless you have faith. That is why the Bible says in Romans 14:23, "Whatsoever not of faith is sin." If anyone tries to come to the one true and living God apart from faith, it is sin.

Someone who tries to be saved by works finds that those works are nothing but sin. As Isaiah says, they are filthy rags. Paul says they are dead and rotting bodies. In other words, it is impossible. Habakkuk 1:13 says concerning God, "Thou art of pure eyes, and behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity." God cannot look approvingly or condoningly upon sin. When someone comes to Him without faith, it is sin. There is no way in the world that God can condone or approve that person or that act.

When I say that faith refers to the person of God, I mean this: by faith we believe that He is. By faith, we believe that He is the great I AM, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Faith believes in His person. Faith believes that He is who He says He is and exactly what He says He is. Faith believes in each of His attributes: that God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal, infinite, immutable, and glorious.

Faith believes everything that God has revealed concerning Himself. One must believe that He is what the Scripture says. He is the Creator, the Lawgiver, the Judge, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He is indeed God. Whatever the Bible says He is, God is.

Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1, two verses that are almost identical, begin like this: “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.” Those verses may be interpreted in two different ways. They could describe a theoretical atheist saying that God does not exist, or someone saying, “No God, no God for me,” picturing rebellion against the one true and living God. In one sense, it does not matter whether the person is a theoretical atheist or a practical atheist. God says both are fools: “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.”

The problem with both the theoretical and practical atheist is that God condemns them in their foolishness. For Psalm 10:4 says, “The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God.

“God is not in all of his thoughts.” If we do not want to be wicked, we must seek after God. If we do not want to be wicked, God should be in all our thoughts. What does that mean? Simply this: whatever we begin to do, or whatever we begin to think about doing, we should say, “Where is the will of God in this? What does the Word of God say about this? How do I order my life here in obedience to God?”

Faith believes that God is the God of Scripture. Faith believes that God has revealed Himself in this book. Let me make it plain: faith does not believe in false gods, foreign gods, or foolish gods. What is a foolish god? A foolish god is someone that you make up out of your own imagination. So many people, instead of worshiping the God of the Bible, worship some god they have made up in their minds. I have had people tell me, “Well, I know God’s not like that, really.”

What they are trying to tell me is, “My God is not like that—the one I have up here in my mind.” The only God that exists is the One who has revealed Himself in Scripture.

And let me tell you, God does not need excusing. God does not need explaining. God does not need anyone to add to or take away from His Word. God is God, and He is God alone.

Isaiah 44:6 says, “Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.” That is pretty plain. Again, in verse 8, God says, “Fear not, neither be afraid. Have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? You are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.” Since God is omniscient—that is, all-knowing—I would suspect that if there were another God, He would know about it. But He says there is no other God. In Isaiah 45:5 He says, “I am the Lord, and there is none else.”

“There is no God besides me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.” The only God who exists is the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible. Faith believes the person of God, who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We serve the triune God: one God revealed in three persons.

Without going into what I have explained in times past, if you deny the Trinity, you are denying salvation. In the Bible, a different aspect of salvation is applied to each divine person. Salvation originated with God the Father, was purchased by God the Son, and is applied by God the Holy Spirit. If you deny the Trinity, you deny salvation, because the only salvation that exists is from the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Scripture.

Since faith relates to the person of God, and we are to walk pleasing to God, we must come to Him in the way He demands. Ephesians 2:18 says, “For through Him,” that is, through Jesus Christ, “we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” How do we get to the Father? Through the Son in the Spirit.

That is why Jesus Christ said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Many preachers say the Jews will have a second chance or a different way of salvation. There is no different way of salvation for them.

Whoever you are or wherever you are, unless you come to God the Father through Jesus Christ, you will die lost. Jesus Christ said, “I am the only way to the Father.”

Hebrews chapter 10, beginning in verse 19, says, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the holiest.” We can have boldness through the blood of Jesus Christ to enter into the holiest.

If we are going to walk with the Lord and walk pleasing unto Him, we must have faith in His person. He is God, and He alone is God. There is no other God. When someone says, “Well, the gods curse thee,” I am sorry, there is only one that can curse and only one that can bless. No one else is going to curse me except the one true and living God. No one else is going to bless me except the one true and living God.

Walking worthy of the Lord and walking with the Lord, we walk first of all by faith, and faith has a reference to His person. Secondly, faith has a reference to His promises. Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.”

Faith in the Promises of God

Why would anyone seek God if they did not believe in His person? And why would anyone diligently seek Him if they did not believe in His promises? The word “diligently” means to seek out, search out, investigate carefully, crave, beseech, and desire. If we are going to come to Him with His promises, we are going to crave those promises, desire them, seek them out, and search them out. There are many promises in the Bible, and God has given us a multitude of illustrations in the Bible where He has been faithful in fulfilling His promises.

Hebrews chapter 11 refers to people to whom God has fulfilled promises. I want to take two of those promises from the life of Abraham and show you the power of God and the faithfulness of God. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 17.

Everyone knows that Abraham and Sarah were childless. It is true that Abraham had a child by Hagar, this Egyptian maid, Ishmael, but that child was rejected by God in the sense that he was not the child of the covenant. Genesis 17, beginning with verse 15, says, "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her. Yea, I will bless her, and she shall be the mother of nations. Kings of people shall be of her."

"Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah that is ninety years old bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time next year."

Who in our lifetime has ever heard of a 100-year-old man and a 90-year-old woman having a baby? It was probably just as true back then. I had a good friend many years ago, John Lee Maddox. I lost track of him, but John Lee was born when his father was 75 and his mother was in her 60s. So it is possible, even later in life, but not at 100 and not at 90.

God had now promised Abraham a son. I cannot imagine the shock when God said, "You have a son and you're gonna have a son with Sarah." After the shock wore off, I want to show you Abraham's attitude. Turn to Romans chapter 4 and watch this carefully. Of course, Abraham had said, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee." And God said, "I've heard that and I'll take care of Ishmael."

"But that's neither here nor there." He said, "My covenant is going to be with Isaac. And Sarah is going to have that child." So I want you to watch in Romans chapter 4, beginning there with verse 17. This is how Isaac responded to the promise of God:

“As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations before him whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope,” we are talking about Abraham now, “who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be.

“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

Now, I want you to note Abraham’s faith in his promise at this point. I want you to notice this statement because the Bible is very clear. Verse 18 says, “Who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations.”

"According to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be." In other words, his faith was in the person of God, yes, but also in the promise of God: "that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be."

Abraham believed God. Abraham believed the promises of God. He did not consider his body now dead. Scripture says, "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were."

So God quickened Abraham. God quickened Sarah. Abraham believed this. He did not look at his body, now one hundred years old, or at Sarah, now ninety years old and past childbearing age. He did not look at the circumstances, the situation, his own helplessness, or his own hopelessness. He looked at the promise of God and said, "A hundred years old is no obstacle to God. The deadness of Sarah's womb is no obstacle to God. God can raise the dead. God can call things that are not as though they are. God can do it."

God promised this son to Abraham, and Abraham believed. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. What does

that mean? He had faith not only in the person of God but in the promise of God.

Jeremiah 32:27 says, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me?" Abraham did not believe that anything was too hard for God. God promised him a son and He told him that name him Isaac. Genesis 21 shows that God is faithful to His promise: "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him."

Abraham did not have an heir until God gave him Isaac. Abraham said to God, “If I don't have an heir, then one born in mine own house is my heir.” His oldest servant was Eliezer, but God said, “Eliezer is not going to be your heir. You're going to have a child.” Abraham believed God, and God gave him this child.

Isaac was not only a child of old age, which most parents in their older years, if they have a child, spoil rotten. He was not only a child of old age; he was an only child. He was not only an only child; he was the heir. The entire covenant was tied up in Isaac. Everything that God promised was in Isaac. Watch, because here is where Abraham believes God the second time.

Genesis 22, beginning there in verse 1. “And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt,” or test, or try Abraham. “And he said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him therefore a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning.” He did not sleep in. He rose up early in the morning, “and he saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him. And Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide

ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son, and he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and he said, Abraham, Abraham."

"And he said, Here I am. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for I know, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."

Abraham and Isaac are going to worship. Isaac is carrying the wood, while Abraham is carrying the fire and the sword, or the knife. We already see a picture. Here is Christ with the cross, carrying the cross. Here is the fire and the knife, which would symbolize the wrath of the Father.

They are going to worship. Abraham binds Isaac. Evidently Isaac did not fight back; he willingly lay upon the altar. Christ, of course, willingly undertook the cross as well.

Abraham was not going to simply kill Isaac. We can see Abraham with a knife raised, about to plunge it into Isaac's heart. But go back to Genesis 22 and verse 2: "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him therefore a burnt offering." He was to set the wood on fire and utterly consume Isaac.

So where would be his heir? Where would be the promise? Where would be the covenant? Look back at verse 5. When Abraham got to the place, he told his servants, "And Abraham said unto the young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again unto you." Though he knew God had commanded him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, Abraham said, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again unto you."

In verse 7, Isaac said, "My father," and Abraham answered, "Here am I, my son." Isaac said, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Watch Abraham's answer in verse 8: "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." The Bible does not say that Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for himself." There is a difference. "God will provide himself." God will give God for the burnt offering.

Of course, that is exactly what happened, because Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. Abraham told the young men, "Stay here, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and we'll come again." God had already told Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Yet Abraham told them, "We're going to come again."

Here is faith in God's promise. Abraham accounted that if he slew Isaac and burned him as a whole burnt offering unto the Lord, God would sovereignly, powerfully, and miraculously raise him from the dead. That is not speculation; it is what Scripture says: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." Abraham and Isaac were a type of the Father and Christ. Abraham received Isaac as one raised from the dead because he was willing to slay his son and obey God.

God the Father did indeed give His only begotten Son, and He did indeed raise Him from the dead. Isaac, therefore, is a figure of Christ, and Abraham is a figure of God the Father. Abraham was willing to give his only son; God the Father did give His only begotten Son. Isaac was willing to give his life to obey his father, and Jesus Christ did give His life to obey the Father.

Now, we are talking about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. I want to show you something about God's promises, and how faith regards not only the person of God but the promise of God as well. Look in Romans 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Faith in the Providence of God

If God has already given us His best, His greatest and dearest gift, the Lord Jesus Christ, what makes you think that He would not fulfill the rest of His promises? If He has given us the greatest, shall He not also give us the least? Do you think for one moment that God is going to skimp on His promises, hold back, balk, or back out? No.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift," speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. If God the Father was ever going to skimp, balk, or back out on one of His promises, would it not have been when Jesus Christ cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If God was ever going to back out, that would have been the time. But He did not.

He gave His Son, for which Abraham did so only in a figure. God did so in reality. God's promises are true, and that is why Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Thirdly, walking by faith has reference to the providence of God. The providence of God is involved in Hebrews 11:5–6. It is nothing less than God's sovereign rule over time and history, bringing to pass that which He has ordained in eternity.

One of our problems as Christians is that we so often tend to walk by sight and not by faith. The Bible teaches us in 2 Corinthians 5:7 that we walk by faith and not by sight. Unlike Abraham, we regard the circumstances, the situation, and the troublesome times in which we live. Abraham focused on the person and promise of God and said, “God’s going to work it out.” He believed in God’s providence. That is why the Bible says in Romans 8:28, “For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.”

We could sit here and think about all the bad things that have happened to us or are happening. But have you ever thought about why we determine that something is bad? It is because we do not understand and do not know everything. God has never promised that everything that happens to us would be good, but He did promise that He would work everything out for our good. I think of Jacob.

When Jacob's sons went down to Egypt and bought corn from Joseph, Joseph held Simeon in prison and told them, "Unless you bring Benjamin back, you are not going to get any more corn, and you are not going to have Simeon back. You are going to have to bring Benjamin." When they told Jacob, he said, "Why did you even tell the man that you had a younger brother?"

They said, "How did we know that he'd want him down there?" Finally they said, "If you want us to go, we're going to have to take Benjamin. We could have already been back if you hadn't been balking." And here is what Jacob said: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and you're going to take Benjamin away too. All these things are against me."

How many of those things were against him? Not one. Joseph being down in Egypt was intended to preserve the life of the family. Simeon was being held temporarily to get Benjamin down there. Once Benjamin arrived and Joseph revealed himself, the purpose was to bring the entire clan down there and save their lives. What Jacob counted as bad was not really bad.

It was bad, in one sense, to have been lied to for twenty-two years and think that your oldest son—or your only son by your wife—was dead. It was bad to think that Simeon was being held in prison when he really was not. But none of those things were against him. God was working everything out.

The problem is that most of us never look past today. We do not look into the future. You say, "I can't see the future." That may be true, but we can learn to think generationally. We can think in advance and beyond today. We know there is a better day coming. We know that God is faithful and that God is true.

We have to come to the conclusion that God is on the throne, that God is sovereign, and that God is working everything out for our good and for His glory. Our responsibility is to trust Him, have faith in Him, lean upon Him, and have confidence in Him; it is His part to work it out. That is what Abraham did, and God did work it out.

So, if we are going to walk pleasing to the Lord, the first thing we have to do is walk by faith. As we walk by faith, faith regards His person, His promise, and His providence. The simple truth is that faith pleases God. We cannot please Him without faith, and faith relates to the person, promise, and providence of God.

Application and Conclusion

Hebrews 11 and verse 1 describes faith as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Our one true and living God is indeed all of those. He is our substance and all the evidence that we need, because there is no God beside Him.

There are times when it seems dark and dangerous to us, when we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. But even when those dark and dangerous times come, we still have to exercise faith in Him. One of my favorite verses is Isaiah 12:2: “Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also has become my salvation.” Notice what the Bible says: “Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid.”

When our oldest daughter was about three years old, she was afraid of the dark. I taught her this verse, and she memorized it. Occasionally, she would get up during the night and wake Alice and me. We could hear her going to the switch to turn on the light, saying, “I will trust and not be afraid. I will trust and not be afraid.” She was afraid of the dark. When we are in the dark, we need to trust and not be afraid.

Listen to Isaiah 50:10: “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?” Here it is: “Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.” Even when it is dark, when you have no light, trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon your God, because faith

pleases God. Without faith, it is impossible to please Him. If we are going to walk with the Lord, we have to walk in faith. Enoch walked in faith. Abraham walked in faith. Anyone who has ever pleased God has walked by faith. Faith pleases God.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your blessing, help, and grace today. We pray that You would help us to walk pleasing unto Thee, to walk with Thee and before Thee. Help us, Heavenly Father, to trust Thee at all times. We pray for Gary as he goes into surgery this week. Encourage his heart and give him the ability to trust in Thee and rest in Thee, knowing that You are in control and will work everything out for his good and Your glory. The same with Pat: bless him and help him. We pray for little Aubrianna today, asking Your blessing upon her this Thursday and upon her family. We commit each one on the prayer list before Thee and ask that You would help each one. Give us grace now, Lord, that we may walk pleasing unto Thee.

Help us to walk in faith. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Walking With The Lord

Part Three

Introduction and Review

This is the third in the series on walking with the Lord. Ephesians 4:1-7 says:

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of Christ."

We began this series on walking with the Lord, and I pointed out how Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and a host of others walked with the Lord as well. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:5-6, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found

because God had translated him. For before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

"But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Enoch was not only a godly man who walked with the Lord; he was also a family man, as I pointed out. He had a wife and children, and all kinds of responsibilities just like we do, yet he walked with the Lord. Moreover, I want you to understand that Enoch was also a prophet.

The Bible tells us something about Enoch's preaching. Jude, verse 14, says: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Enoch was not only a family man and had responsibilities; he also lived in a very wicked time, just exactly the way we do as well. And yet he walked with God, the Bible tells us.

The word "walking" implies communion and fellowship. It implies purpose. It implies progress. Fourthly, it implies agreement, and fifthly, it implies resolution. So, if we're walking with the Lord, then we're to be fellowshipping with Him and communing with Him, purposefully seeking His will in our life, making progress in our lives, and bringing our lives into conformity to His Word. We're agreeing with Him in whatever He says, acknowledging that He deserves all honor, praise, and glory. Then we're also seeking to resolve any conflicts in our lives in accordance to His Word and His will.

In relationship to Enoch, the very basic principle is that if we're going to please God, we must walk by faith. Hebrews 11, verse 6, says: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must first believe that He is, and He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Walking by faith, walking pleasing to the Lord, first of all has reference to the person of God, secondly to the promises of God, and thirdly to the providence of God. It means that we walk before Him, as unto Him; and as we walk before Him and as unto Him, we end up walking with Him.

One author stated this: "What does it mean to walk with God? It means several things. First, it means that the prevailing power of enmity in a person's heart has been taken away by the Spirit of God." That is, we're no longer enemies; we're no longer fighting against God.

Walking with God does not mean that we're perfect, but we're not shaking our fist in His face. It means that the person has actually been reconciled to God the Father, so we're not enemies again. It means that the person has an abiding communion and fellowship with God, that which Scripture describes as the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Finally, walking with God implies our progress in divine life.

An author asked, "What does it mean to walk with God?" He answered, "To walk with God is to live ever as in His presence. To realize His presence, to abide continually under His eye, to recognize our Father as close by our side is the secret of much peace. We must ever regard Him, not as if He were far away in some inaccessible abode, but nearer to us than our dearest friend."

"In our chamber, by the wayside, at our work, in our recreation, while mingling with others, or all alone, we must see one whom the world sees not, and hear one whom the world hears not."

Another author suggested practical steps for learning to walk with the Lord and live a holy, godly life: "If you really want to walk with the Lord, number one, say nothing that you would not like for God to hear. Do nothing that you would not like for God to see. Write nothing that you would not like for God to read. Go no place where you would not like God to find you. Read no book of which you would not like God to say, 'Show me what you're reading.'" He then says, "Never spend your time in such a way that makes God ask, 'What are you doing?'" I laugh at that last one because I remember talking to our kids when I'd see them doing something wrong or strange.

That would be the first thing that came out of my mouth: “What are you doing?” So do not ever do anything that would make God ask, “What are you doing?” Really, as simple as these things are, they would help us to live consciously as in the presence of God. So the question that I have to ask is this: How do we begin to walk with the Lord, and how do we maintain and continue a walk with the Lord?

The truth of the matter is this: there is far more to life for the child of God than just living and dying. Have you ever stopped to think that the great and wondrous activity of the first Adam was to walk with God? The first Adam failed, and we sin in him. And yet Jesus Christ, the second Adam, in John 10, verse 10, said, “I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.”

In 1 Corinthians 15, the Bible says very clearly that Adam was our first head, federal head and representative. Now we have a second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our federal head and representative. What we had in Adam, the first Adam, we lost. Adam was created with original righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, but he was placed on a mutable footing. He could fall, and he did fall. He could sin, and he did sin. So God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam. In Psalm 69, he said it like this: “Then I restored that which I took not away.” Everything that we lost in the first Adam, we got back in the second Adam, plus more. Besides, in the second Adam, we are now placed on an immutable footing, one that absolutely cannot change.

Remember, the first Adam was created with original righteousness, holiness, and knowledge. In Ephesians 4, verses 23 and 24, the Bible says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." There are two of the things that Adam lost that we already have back. Colossians 3, verse 10, says, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Right now, we have gotten back all three things that we lost in Adam. Besides, we have gotten more, not counting the fact that we are now on an immutable footing. It will not change because Christ is God.

The Apostle Paul teaches us how to begin and maintain a walk with God. When we are talking about walking with God, we are

talking about walking pleasing unto Him. Before God took Enoch, the Bible says in Hebrews 11, verse 5, he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Colossians 1, verse 10, says, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing means that we are fruitful in every good work, that which God describes as a good work. Besides, we are continually increasing in the knowledge of God.

If we are genuinely Christian, we will have a new walk. If we are Christians, we must have a new walk. It is absolutely needed and necessary. Things will change when God saves you.

Years ago, I had a pastor friend who was very concerned about a brother who was lost. The pastor had witnessed to him innumerable times, but the Lord had never saved him, and he expressed no real interest in being saved. I went to that country church and preached a meeting, and God was very gracious and saved that brother that week. I believe it was a real, genuine salvation.

The New Walk in Christ

After the service, everyone was excited, and we went to a little restaurant for coffee and pie. As we sat talking, the pastor's brother, who had just been converted, suddenly started laughing. No one had said anything funny, so I asked, "What's so funny?" He replied, "I just sat here thinking, I might have to retrain my bird dogs. They won't understand a word I'm saying to them."

That was true. He had to start a new walk. The Bible says in Romans 6:4, "Therefore being buried with him by baptism into death, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so or equally as we should walk in newness of life."

Just as the glory of God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and gave Him new life, likewise we are to walk in newness of life. If we are going to walk in newness of life, we have to know how to walk. In Ephesians 4:1, the Apostle Paul says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called." If we are going to walk worthy, the very first thing we

must observe is that we must walk worthy of our calling. That is what he said: "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called." The Apostle Paul was a prisoner at the time he wrote Ephesians.

Walking Worthy of Our Calling

His imprisonment might have been that which many would have supposed caused him to be despised. And yet his imprisonment is here a pendant, a confirmation of his authority. It was the seal of approval with which he had been honored. Whatever belongs to Jesus Christ, though it is despised in the eyes of men, should be viewed as an honor and held in the highest regard by the people of God.

The Apostle's prison cell was more glorious than the most beautiful palatial estate of any king or emperor. Now note what Paul does. He says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Paul is confined to his prison cell, beseeching the Ephesians to walk worthy. In essence, he is saying: You have your liberty; you may walk. I am deprived of my liberty and cannot walk. All I can do is sit in this cell. If anyone could demonstrate obedience more fully, it is you who have your liberty. The only thing I can do is sit in this prison cell in bondage, and therefore the only thing I can do is exhort you to obedience.

Paul demonstrated his obedience by patient suffering. He is therefore beseeching the Ephesians to demonstrate their obedience by the practical, everyday application of the Word of God to their lives.

Look in Colossians 1, verse 10 again. Walking worthily means that we walk pleasing to the Lord. He said in verse 10, "that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." That is the same thing the apostle says when he writes, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy." However, walking worthy and pleasing, in verse 10 of Colossians 1, means being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. That is true.

First, compare some of the words in Colossians 1, verse 10, with the words in Ephesians 4, verse 1. Consider the word "worthy,"

because in each passage we are told to walk worthy. The Greek word is axios in Colossians 1, verse 10, and it is the same Greek word in Ephesians 4, verse 1. When He tells us to walk worthy, He is telling us that we are to walk after a godly sort, in a suitable manner, in a worthy manner. We are to walk as new men, evidencing and manifesting the grace of God in our lives.

Second, we are told in Colossians 1, verse 10, and in Ephesians 4, verse 1, to walk worthy. The Greek word for "walk" is peripateo, and it literally means to walk around or to walk about. But it means more than that. It means to regulate one's life, to conduct one's life, to make use of all one's opportunities, and to progress. When the Bible speaks of walking, it is speaking of living your life. You live your life in a worthy, or suitable, manner. Third, the Bible tells us in Colossians 1, verse 10, that we are to walk worthy as unto all pleasing.

The word "pleasing" means not only to please, but also to have a desire to please. So I could ask you: Is everything you do, think, or say pleasing unto the Lord? The answer is no. But that does not preclude a desire to please Him. I have a desire to please Him, but I am still a sinner and fail miserably many times. That does not mean I do not have a desire to please Him. Only Jesus Christ could say in John chapter 8, "For I do always those things that please Him." He tells us that we are to walk worthy, and as we walk worthy, we are walking in a pleasing manner.

The Meaning of Our Calling

In Ephesians 4:1, he says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." What is the vocation? When we hear the word "vocation," we think of a job, of what we do for a living. We could say Ron's vocation is a farmer, or Pat's vocation is a military man. That is what we normally mean, but it is not what the word means in this instance.

When the Bible tells us to walk worthy of our vocation, the Greek word is klesis, translated as "calling" ten times in our Bible. Literally, he says that we are to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. "You are called" is the verb form kaleo, which means "I call." Literally, he is saying, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech

you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye were called." You must determine what your calling really is.

Romans 11:29 says, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. God does not call us by accident, make mistakes, call us in error, or call us ineffectually. He does not call us and change His mind; He does not say, "Oops, I didn't mean to save you." God's gifts and God's callings are without repentance. Once God gives you His gift, and once He calls you, He does not change His mind.

This is why I am saying we are placed on an immutable footing in Jesus Christ. The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. Now we have to understand what the calling is. Paul writes to the Roman Christians, “Among whom also you are the called of Jesus Christ.” Then, in verse 7: “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

One of the names for a Christian, or Christians, in the Bible is simply “the called ones.” In verse 6, he says, “among whom you are the called,” or “the called ones of Jesus Christ.” Then in verse 7, he says, “to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.” A saint is not someone who is dead. A saint is a living, breathing individual, someone who has been saved by grace. You do not become a saint when you die. If you are not a saint while you are alive, you never will be a saint when you are dead. That is for sure.

So, when you look at Romans 1:6-7, obviously the calling here refers to salvation. Consider how this word is translated and used in 1 Corinthians 1. Paul is beseeching us to walk worthy of the vocation, or calling, wherewith we are called. Verse 23 says: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” Here it is: “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

“For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and

God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." Notice again: to the unsaved, Christ is a stumbling block and foolishness; but unto them which are called, Christ is the power and wisdom of God.

This refers to salvation. In Ephesians 1, beginning with verse 15, Paul writes: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." He continues: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

Look at Ephesians 4:4: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling." This shows how the calling is translated. In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul says: "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." Notice the high calling of God.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, Paul writes: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

In 2 Timothy 1, Paul, still in prison, or in prison again, tells Timothy, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of

Paul says, "our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who

has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." He has saved us and called us—one and the same. He has saved us and called us.

Hebrews 3:1-2 says, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house." Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. We are holy brethren, and we are partakers of the heavenly calling.

Second Peter 1:10 says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you shall never fall." Look what he tells you. You may think this is impossible, but it is not. How do you make your calling and your election sure? You say, "Well, I can understand making my calling sure, but how can I make my election sure? I can't climb into heaven and look in the Lamb's Book of Life." No, but if you can make sure that you are savingly called unto Jesus Christ, you may be assured of your election, because only the elect are savingly called to Jesus Christ. You make your election sure by making your calling sure.

Every one of these passages, actually, calling refers to our salvation. If you combine all of these passages, you understand that our calling is a heavenly calling, it is a holy calling, it is a high calling, it is an effectual calling, it is an individual calling, it is a saintly calling, and it is a practical calling.

God is the author—God the Father, He is the author. The call is always through the person and work of Jesus Christ, and of course it comes to us in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as well. Therefore, when He calls us to walk worthy of our calling, He is saying, walk worthy of our salvation; walk worthy of our sainthood; walk worthy of the newness of life that we have in Jesus Christ.

We've been called to obedience and to glorify our Heavenly Father. God has singled us out; He called us. What did our Lord say in John chapter 10? "My sheep hear my voice." He calls us by name.

We hear His voice, and we follow Him. So we're called unto obedience.

In order to walk worthy of our calling, we must first recognize what our calling is, which I just shared with you. But second, we must understand how we are to walk worthy of that calling. Look at Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation or the calling wherewith you are called." How do you do that? How do you walk worthy unto the Lord?

Walking in Lowliness

Here's how: "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Actually, verses 4, 5, and 6 further explain verses 1, 2, and 3. But let's go back to verse 2. If we're going to walk worthy, we must walk with all lowliness.

What is lowliness? Obviously, the word "lowliness" has nothing to do with poor posture, low self-respect, or low esteem. The word means humility, having a humble opinion of oneself. Another word we could use is modesty. It means having a deep sense of one's own smallness, having lowliness of mind. I want you to understand that pride is a root sin. There are only three or four root sins in the Bible. A root sin is something that sprouts and rises up and produces powerful offspring, each of which happens to be extremely deadly. Pride is one of those root sins.

It is that which produces a host of other sins as well. Unhappily, man by nature is not lowly as our Lord. You remember what the Bible says in Matthew 11:29: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

Look at Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Let us learn to think like Christ. “Who, being in the form of God”—that is, He was God—“thought it not robbery to be equal with God”—in other words, not something to be seized at—“but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found

in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

So the God of glory became a man. The God of glory not only became a man; He became a servant. We have the King of kings, who created the world and everything that was therein, born in a stable. He left heaven in order that He might come and suffer and bleed and die and save His people. He left all of this, took upon Himself the form of a man, became a servant, and humbled Himself even unto death.

So, when Paul says that we are to walk worthy, he begins to explain that by saying we should walk in all lowliness. Lowliness is the opposite of pride, arrogance, haughtiness, and high-mindedness. Listen carefully: it is the opposite of a spirit of control and manipulation. One of the greatest sins of preachers is the sin of pride, because too many seek to control and manipulate and do so in a haughty, arrogant spirit: "You must do what I tell you because I am a preacher."

Peter, of course, is an elder and a pastor. The Bible uses three words that relate to the preacher: elder, shepherd, and bishop. They are one and the same. One describes the man, one describes his work, and the other describes his office.

In 1 Peter 5:1, Peter says, "The elders which are among you I exhort"—so he is talking to preachers—"who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." Then he tells them, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof." That means you see over them, but "not by constraint"—no one has to force you—"but willingly, not for filthy lucre"—not just for money's sake—"but of a ready mind."

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." It is easy for me to say, "Steve, do this." It is more difficult to be an example and say, "Brother, you just need to follow me as I live for the Lord." Do you see the difference? They are God's flock: "Neither as being lords over God's heritage."

No, I am not the master. I might be a shepherd, but I am an under-shepherd. I am under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, just as you are under His authority. Therefore, we must have a lowly attitude. We cannot take a lordly, high, haughty, arrogant, or proud attitude. Pastors may be shepherds, but they are under-shepherds, under the authority and dominion of Jesus Christ.

Paul sent for the pastors of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus. Acts 20:17 says, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, 'You know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I've been with you at all seasons.'" Wait a minute: "After what manner"? What does that mean?

That means he was an example. He says, "You know my example. You know my life. After what manner I've been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews. And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house." Now, if you go back to verse 19, he says, "serving the Lord with all humility," or "lowliness of mind."

Paul's Example of Lowliness

It is the same Greek word: "Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind." Do you think Paul went around with the attitude, "I'm special because God knocked me down on the road to Damascus, struck me with blindness, sent a man to heal me, called me into the ministry, and, moreover, is using me to write the largest portion of the New Testament"? That was not his attitude. He said, "I was serving the Lord with all humility," or "lowliness of mind."

What was the humbling and crushing factor in Paul's spiritual life? Think about this. Here is the answer: it was his constant memory of sin, and of one sin in particular that haunted him throughout his entire life—the sin of persecuting the Church of God.

Did God forgive the Apostle Paul for all of that? Yes. Did God's forgiveness erase the scars and the memories? No. Has God forgiven

you of your sins? Yes. But that does not mean the scars and memories are gone.

It is true that we commit so many sins that we have probably forgotten many of them. But there are some sins that we do not and cannot forget, because they have scarred our souls so deeply. Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul, had that deep scar. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to Acts 22. Notice verse 4: Acts 22, verse 4.

Paul is giving a testimony to people who tried to kill him. In Acts 22:4, he says, "And I persecuted this way"—that is, Christianity—"unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." We know that he was consenting to the death of Stephen. He did not know how many more, but he said, "I persecuted this way unto death," which could mean more than one. He had bound men and women and delivered them into prisons.

In Acts 26:11, again giving his testimony to King Agrippa, he says, "And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." He punished them often in every synagogue, compelled them to blaspheme, and pursued them even to strange cities. How would you forget something like that? In 1 Corinthians 15:9, Paul gives his estimation of himself: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet"—or suitable—"to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Paul was a mighty apostle, one of the greatest, and yet he said, "I'm the least. And I'm not even suitable to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

In Galatians 1:13 he says, "For you have heard of my conversation"—or conduct—"in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it." Four times Paul lists the fact that he persecuted the church of God. He never got over that. He remembered what he had done in the Jews' religion, how he had persecuted the church beyond measure and wasted it.

If you wish to walk worthy and live a lowly life—not a low life, but a lowly life, without so much pride, arrogance, and haughtiness—then remember your depravity, rebellion, sins,

wickedness, and sinful disposition of mind. Remember what you were and who you were before Christ saved you. You have to remember your former life and what you were before salvation.

Remembering Our Past to Foster Humility

Turn to Ephesians 2. He is writing this to believers, to Christians: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." You may have been dead, but you were quite alive. Why? "Wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world." You did everything that the worldlings do. Moreover, you walked according to the prince of the power of the air,

Paul describes the enemy as "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." In verse 3 he says, "Among whom also we all had our conversation"—our conduct, our walk—"in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Paul is telling us what we were in and of ourselves without Jesus Christ. We were children of disobedience, children of the devil. We lusted, coveted, and desired. We did everything that was wicked and ungodly and wrong.

When you think about this and about your sins, you have to remember something else: Neither you nor anyone else deserve to be saved. After Paul tells us how wicked we were in verses 1 through 3, he says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." "But God." A preacher friend of mine preached for years a message titled "But God," about how God sovereignly intervenes.

Now look at Isaiah 51:1. God is speaking to believers: "Hearken to me, you that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord." "Hearken to me" means, listen to me. What does He command us to do? "Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you are digged." In other words, remember where you came from and remember what you were.

When you read Ezekiel chapter 16, that is what God told Israel. He told them exactly what they were when He found them. Let me make some applications and tie this together. We are admonished in the

Bible not to think more highly of ourselves and our gifts than we ought. We have to remember what we were outside of Jesus Christ, and we have to remember what we are inside of Jesus Christ.

Let me put it very bluntly: Everything we have and everything we are is only because of Jesus Christ. We do not deserve any of it. He gave it to us.

Now He tells us that we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. In Romans 12:3, Paul wrote, “For I say, through the grace of God that is given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Whatever gifts I have, God gave me. Whatever grace I have, God gave me. Whatever gifts and grace you have, God gave you. We were nothing when Christ found us, and without Him, we are still nothing. If we think soberly, we will say, “Everything I am, everything I have, it is because of Him.”

Stop and think how many times you could have thoroughly, royally, genuinely messed up your life, and God preserved you. God protected you. Here is the second application: Each time we remember our sins—and they flood my mind like they flood your minds at times, especially if you pray—the reminder of those sins will come back. Certain things will bring things back to your mind. You should take that opportunity to say, “Yes, Lord, those were wicked sins.”

They were transgressions of Your law, dishonoring to You, wicked, and wrong. They deserve the death penalty. I don't deserve a thing, but I'm thankful for Your divine forgiveness and for the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin. This humbles us and forces us not only to confess our sins, but to acknowledge that there is no reason and no room for pride or arrogance, because without Him we'd still be nothing.

Thanksgiving and Conclusion

We've been called out of this world. We are in the world, but we're not of the world. What should you do when you remember your sins, then remember your deliverance from them, and are thankful for the

Lord Jesus Christ? Colossians 1, verse 12: “Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet”—or suitable—“to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” God has made us suitable. How did He do that? “Who has delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

So we thank God for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, for delivering us from the power of darkness, and for translating us into the kingdom of His dear Son. We look at where we came from and what we were, and at what we are now and what we have in Jesus Christ, recognizing that everything is of Him, by grace through faith, and nothing of us. Therefore, we can walk worthily with a lowly mind—not in pride, arrogance, or haughtiness—but with thanksgiving for what He has done for us.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and mercy. Teach us to walk worthy, in lowliness, recognizing what we were and what we are: wicked, ungodly, reprobate sinners, but now forgiven, cleansed, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and seated with Him in the Holy of Holies. We give Thee praise for this. Help us to love Thee, live for Thee, and walk worthily. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Walking With The Lord

Part Four

Introduction and Review

I am going to continue here on walking with the Lord, which will be the fourth part. I do not always preach the same thing here that I preach in Waycross, but during this particular series I am. So they will get the benefit of hearing the same message twice, and anybody from the Pennsylvania or New Jersey area needs to hear it twice. New Yorkers need to hear it three or four times. We were told today about a family that sold out in South Carolina and moved back to Chicago, Illinois. I said that was like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.

In Ephesians chapter 4, Paul says, "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all,

and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

In the first message, I pointed out that we must walk before the Lord in order to walk with the Lord. We studied how Enoch walked with the Lord. When God said to Abram, "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect," it simply meant that we were to walk in His presence, as we were in His face, or He was in our presence. You cannot walk with Him unless you are walking before Him as well.

Through the Bible, the word walk is synonymous with the Christian life, the Christian journey, and the conduct of our daily lives. At least five implications of the word walk may be observed. First of all, a walk implies communion and fellowship. Secondly, it implies agreement: Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Thirdly, it implies purpose. You are walking with a purpose.

Walking with the Lord implies progress: moving from one spot to another, like going from faith to faith. It also implies resolution. We are trying to work out problems and bring our lives into greater conformity to the Word of God.

In relation to Enoch, Hebrews 11:5-6 says, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Then verse 6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Walking by faith is absolutely fundamental, foundational, and basic. Until we learn to do that, we cannot do anything else. Hebrews 11:6 shows that walking by faith has reference to God's person, God's promises, and God's providence.

Ephesians 4:1 tells us that we are to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called. The word vocation is translated in ten places in the Bible as called, and it actually refers to our salvation. To walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called is to walk worthy of our salvation, because we have been called unto the fellowship of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Romans 1:6. Ephesians 4:1 may be compared with Colossians 1:10, where Paul prayed that we might walk worthy unto all pleasing.

As long as we are walking worthy, we are walking pleasing unto the Lord.

We then looked at how to walk worthily. The first thing mentioned in verse 2 is "with all lowliness." Lowliness is a compound word meaning humility, having a humble opinion of oneself, modesty, a deep sense of one's smallness, humility, and lowliness of mind. It is the opposite of pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, as well as a spirit of domination, lordship, and manipulation.

If we desire to maintain a lowly attitude according to Scripture, as God commands us, we must be constantly considering what we were and are by nature. We must also consider the fact that we are depraved—desperately depraved—by nature. Then we looked at Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 1–3, where the Apostle Paul told us what we were before God saved us. We also looked at Isaiah 51 and verse 1, where he said, “Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence you were hewn, and to the pit from which you are digged.” He says we must remember where we came from and what we were.

How can we maintain a lowly attitude and not a proud, arrogant, haughty one? We must constantly consider and remember what we were and who we are. You will remember that the Apostle Paul, in 1 Timothy, chapter 1 and verse 15, said that he was the chief of sinners. If an individual has a truly lowly attitude, he would probably be willing to fight the Apostle Paul for that position, because we recognize the fact that we are sinners and are saved only by the grace of God.

Now we come to the second matter concerning walking worthy: “with all lowliness and meekness.” If we are going to walk with the Lord, we must not only walk in lowliness, but we must walk in meekness as well. When we hear the word meek or meekness, we tend to think according to the terminology of the day and how that word is used. Usually, when we think of meekness, we automatically think of weakness.

Meekness Is Not Weakness

We think of a milksop, one who refuses to stand up for himself or his rights, one who refuses to stand up for anyone else, one who is easily run over and manipulated. Obviously, biblical meekness does not relate to such a twisted, unmanly, unbiblical, and ungodly description.

Our Lord was meek. He claimed meekness as an attitude. In Matthew 11:29 He said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.” Then, in Matthew 21:5, as prophesied by Zechariah, He says, “Tell you the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” There was none so meek and holy, none so mild, as the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet the Bible tells us in John chapter 2 that our meek Lord took a scourge of small cords, drove the money changers from the Temple, and turned over their tables. Now stop and think about that. A scourge would usually be a piece of wood held in the hand, with small cords—pieces of leather—coming out of it. Sometimes there would be a bead or something on the end to make it sting a little more. But when you think about meekness, here is the question: Who is going to run from a ninety-pound weakling, even if he has a scourge of small cords in his hand?

The answer is no one. You have to understand that our Lord was raised in a carpentry shop. You do not get weak by working in carpentry. So when our Lord took that scourge of small cords, He had not only determination behind Him, but muscle as well. Our Lord was indeed a man’s man. When we talk about meekness, we find that our Lord was meek and claimed meekness as an attribute.

What in the world is the use of a Christian profession that leaves us without taking on the character of Christ? In other words, we are to be conformed to His image, made more and more like Jesus Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul uses the meekness and mildness of Christ as an encouragement. He says, “Now I, Paul, myself, beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward

you." Thus he says, "I am beseeching you by the meekness and by the gentleness of Christ."

The point I really want to emphasize is this: do not equate meekness with weakness. Do not equate meekness with being a coward. Do not equate meekness with someone who refuses to stand for that which is right. Back in his day, Moses was called the meekest man on the earth. Numbers 12:3 says, "Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."

So Moses, in his day, was the meekest man upon the earth. And yet it was Moses, the meekest man on earth, who killed an Egyptian while defending his brother. It was Moses, the meekest man on the earth, who faced Pharaoh, his magicians, and the power elite of that day and stood them down. It was Moses, the meekest man on the earth, who pronounced all the plagues against Egypt and upon Pharaoh as well. It was Moses, the meekest man on the earth, who pronounced the death sentence upon Pharaoh as well. It was Moses, the meekest man on the earth, who knelt down and asked God to open up the earth, let a new thing happen, and let Dathan, Abiram, and Korah go down alive into the pit.

It was also Moses, the meekest man on earth, who put up with the irritated and rebellious Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness. Moses may have been meek, but he was certainly not weak. He was certainly not a pushover by any stretch of the imagination. Meekness is not meanness. It is not weakness, a surrender of our rights, or being a coward.

Defining Biblical Meekness

In Ephesians 4 and verse 2, he says, "with all lowliness and meekness." The Greek word for meekness, praotēs, literally is translated as meekness, but it also means gentleness as well. Meekness is that disposition of the soul that makes men unwilling to unnecessarily provoke other people. Meekness is that disposition of soul which is not easily provoked when others rebuke us for our sins, our wrongs, our weaknesses, or our inabilities. Meekness is that disposition which is opposed to being angrily resentful and what you and I would simply call peevishness. It keeps us from having an irritable disposition and attitude, from being angry when others

point out our sins and weaknesses, and enables us to hold our tongues and keep our words in our mouth when we are provoked.

I know that there is a time to speak out. But everyone in this room would confess and acknowledge that there are many times in anger you said things you wish you had never said. That is what meekness does. The Bible says in Proverbs 13 verse 10, "Only by pride cometh contention." Only by pride cometh contention. So if Steve rebukes me or points out something in an area where I am weak, or where I need to strengthen myself, it is only pride that would say, "Ha, ha, better check yourself buddy." No, I would say, "Thank you. I will work on that area. I needed that." That is meekness.

John Gill said it like this: "In the exercise of humility, which shows itself in believers in entertaining and expressing, listen now, the meanest or the lowest thoughts of ourselves and the best thoughts of others, and not envying the gifts and graces of others, but rejoicing at them, and at every increase in them, and in a willingness to receive instruction from the meanest of the lowest saints, in submission to the will of God, etc." He is simply saying this: meekness is an attribute, a characteristic, that is to be found in every child of God.

Turn in your Bibles to Titus and then to Colossians. Go to Titus chapter 3 and then to Colossians chapter 3. The Apostle Paul is telling Titus, who is a preacher, to put the people in remembrance of certain things. He says, “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready for every good work.”

In verse 2 he says, “To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.” Showing all meekness unto all men. God is commanding us to be meek toward everyone. Particularly, if we are going to exercise meekness, it should always be toward the saints of God as well. If we owe meekness to all men, we owe it especially to the saints of God.

Look back in Colossians chapter 3, verses 12 and 13. One of these concepts will be dealt with in the next two or three messages. He says, “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,

long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Notice that he says, "Put on therefore as the elect of God." He tells us what we are to put on, and one of those things happens to be meekness.

No one, no one, is naturally meek by nature. It is just not in us. By nature, we are proud and arrogant. If Pat strikes me, my first impulse is to strike back. If Steve cusses me, my first impulse as a natural man would be to cuss him back. It is to avenge ourselves. Meekness is the opposite of all of that. It is not in us by nature. Turn back to Galatians chapter 5, just a few pages back, and look at verses 22 and 23. You will see where meekness comes from.

Meekness as a Fruit of the Spirit

It is indeed a fruit of the Spirit. It is not something produced in us by nature. In Galatians 5 and verse 22 he says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Notice the fruit of the Spirit, and then in verse 23 is meekness.

Biblical meekness will allow us to rejoice over the blessings and gifts of God in the lives of other people. Not all of us have the same gifts, intellect, or abilities. I used to point out Melvin Stringer and say, "Melvin, you make me so angry," because if his car needed work, he could do it; if he needed to build a house, he could build it; if he needed plumbing or electrical wiring, he could do that too. He could do anything he wanted to do, while I could not do any of those things. I have had several friends during my lifetime who could do whatever needed to be done.

You look at people like that and think, my goodness, look at the preachers who can not only preach and teach but also have beautiful voices and a full head of hair to boot. I am simply saying that you can look at the gifts and abilities God has given other people and rejoice in them, saying, "I'm thankful that God at least gave him that gift. I'm thankful that God gave him that ability."

We have to understand that God is absolutely sovereign when He dispenses our gifts. We do not necessarily get to choose them. God is

free to give one gift to one man and a different gift to another man, and He is absolutely free to withhold any or all of His gifts if He so chooses. That is why the Bible says in James 1 and verse 17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 11, talking about gifts, “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit,” the Holy Spirit is God, “dividing severally to every man as he wills.” So who determines what gifts we get? It is just that simple. I do not guess I ever asked for the gift of preaching and teaching, for that is what I ended up with. God can give, and God cannot give. It is like men I have known with earned PhDs.

I've known preachers who claim to be called of God and couldn't teach their way out of a wet paper bag. I've known preachers who claim to be called of God and could not preach and could not teach. I've known singers who claim to have a gift of singing and couldn't sing either. So I am simply saying that God tells us we are to soberly assess ourselves. But the truth is, every man has a gift. If you look in your Bibles to 1 Peter, chapter 4, and verse 10, the Bible says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Notice that he said, "as every man hath received the gift," so every Christian has a gift. We do not all have the same gifts, that is for sure. But whatever gift you have, minister the same gift that God gave you to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Obviously, whatever gifts we have, God gave them to us so that we can minister to each other.

Because only as we minister to each other are we ministering to Him. Consider Galatians chapter 6 and Job chapter 16. Everyone knows the story of Job. James says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job," and that is true. Yet even Job became irritated with some of his friends because they were saying things that certainly did not apply to him. There were a number of things those three men said to Job that were absolutely true, but what they said did not apply to Job. Job was totally and completely innocent, and they assumed that he

had sinned and that was why God was judging him. He said, "No, that's not the case." Now, look what Job said.

Meekness in Restoring the Fallen

It is only as we have meekness in our lives that we are able to help falling and fallen brethren. One of the reasons there is hardly any restoration of fallen brethren is because there is no real, genuine meekness.

Now I understand and know that often a lot of individuals who fall from the faith were never in the faith to begin with. They were never saved. John said it in 1 John 2:19: “They went out from us, that it might be made manifest that they were not of us; for had they been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us.” The proof that a person is genuinely saved is that he continues.

But there have been real, genuine Christians who have fallen, sinned, and done things they should never have done. Biblical meekness will keep us from having a high and mighty attitude and saying, “Look at him.” It will keep us from saying, “I told you so,” or, “If I had been in your place, I would never have done that.” Really? I am going to show you. Look at what Job said to his friends.

It is easy for you and me to condemn our brethren when we have not really walked in their shoes. I have a dear friend who for years has made this statement: “Christians are about the only group I’ve ever known that attack their own wounded.” It is kind of like a bunch of chickens. One chicken gets down, and what do the others do? They rush to peck him to death and attack him. Unfortunately, that is the way it is.

In Job 16, Job answered his three friends: “I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.” He said, “You are not telling me anything that I do not already know. You are miserable; you are not helping me, you are hurting me.” Then he asked, “Shall vain words have an end? What emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?” Why are you even speaking? You do not know what you are talking about.

In verse 4 he says, “I also could speak as you do: if your soul were in my soul’s stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake

mine head at you." If we traded places, I could say all kinds of things against you while you were hurting and I was not. But that would not resolve anything. Job said that was not the answer. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, that is, he sinned, he's fallen, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work. Then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."

Biblical meekness will enable us not to become an unnecessary burden upon others. That is what he meant in verse 5: "For every man shall bear his own burden." As much as humanly possible, we carry our own load. If we have problems, the very first thing we do is go to our Heavenly Father.

He also says in verse 2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." If we are able to carry our own load, we may be able to help someone else carry their load as well.

Meekness will also enable us not to become haughty, take a haughty attitude, speak proudly, or indicate that we would never have committed the sin for which we are seeking to help our fallen brethren. He said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

If Steve falls into a certain sin, I cannot say, "If I had been there, I would not have done that." How do I know what I would have done? I may not have been tempted as he has been tempted. If I take that attitude, I will never be able to help him. The Bible says, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." I am flesh and blood just like he is.

We all have the same temptations, the same problems, and the same flesh. We all have the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. If we are going to help and restore one another, it must be in the spirit of meekness, understanding that it is only by the grace of God that we have not fallen ourselves.

Meekness in Teaching and Being Taught

This applies not only to preachers, but also to teachers and parents who are instructing their children or grandchildren. In 2 Timothy 2:24-26, Paul says, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” The servant of the Lord must not strive; that is, he must not have a fighting attitude in this instance. Notice that we are to have meekness, “in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” How do men oppose themselves? The answer is by holding to error and refusing the truth.

Many in pride think that they know when, in reality, they do not know. It is like that verse in Galatians 6:3: “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” Likewise, when a man thinks he knows something when he does not really know it, he is deceiving himself. I could pretend to be an electronics expert. Frank knows better. I could pretend to be an expert in computer sciences. Again, Frank knows better. I can pretend to be all of those things, but I would simply be deceiving myself. I could pretend that I was an excellent singer. I am still deceiving myself; I am not. That is why the Bible tells us that every man is to consider and deal with himself soberly in assessing the gifts that God has given him.

According to the Apostle Paul, meekness will allow us not to become angry when people do not immediately receive the truth. I have preached to people all my life. For some, it has taken a long time for God to open their eyes; some eyes are open right away. One of my favorite illustrations concerns an older brother who has been dead many years now. He was in our church, and I had John Reisinger come and spend a week teaching the biblical doctrine of election. When he finished, old Brother Coulter came up to me, all excited.

He said, “Pastor, this is absolutely wonderful. This is absolutely great. My question is, why haven’t you been preaching this?” I looked at him and said, “My question is, where have you been for the

last fifteen years?" God had just turned the lights on for him at that particular time.

So we cannot get angry or upset. We cannot denounce people, reproach them as heretics, or hold them up to scorn simply because they do not know. The grand difficulty in all of this is that they are ignorant of the truth. How many of you embraced truth the very first time you ever heard it? First, you do not even remember the first time you heard it. Second, most of us never embraced it the very first time. I remember when I got Pink's book The Sovereignty of God. I read through it with a pen in my hand, marking "no, no" and exclamation points. Yet the book was so compelling that, when I got through, I turned around

I read it a second time, marking out the "no" and putting a question mark beside it: "Well, let me consider that." When I read it the second time, I was so convicted that I read it a third time. Then I marked out everything, and my position was, "Why did I ever argue? It's nothing with Scripture to begin with." But it took me three times before I ever saw it. So this is what he is saying: "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

If they are ignorant of the truth, we teach them. If they get angry, we are not to become angry. If they oppose the truth, we calmly and continually keep stating it to them. If they are slow to learn, we do not become impatient; we simply continue to teach them. If they get angry and refuse the truth, we may pity them, but we certainly do not denounce them.

And may I point this out? I do not care what position you hold: if I were to make fun of your position, denounce it, mock it, and hold you up to scorn and ridicule, all it would do is drive you more tightly and deeply into the very position you hold. Whether it is accurate or true is immaterial. That is simply human nature, which says, "I'll show you. You're not going to teach me, and you're not going to make me move."

So he says, "in meekness instructing those." Lowliness and meekness are absolutely essential to being taught and led. A strong-minded, proud, arrogant, and hardy man cannot be taught and led because he already thinks he knows it all. You have heard me

say this before: most young people, when they go to college, do not go to learn; they go there to correct the teachers and show them how much they know. Unhappily, a lot of Christians are like that in church. A man who thinks he knows it all refuses to listen. His mind is made up beforehand. God is not going to teach or lead someone like that.

The Bible says in Psalm 25 and verse 9, “The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way.” You know what a meek man is? A meek man is the man who will come up and say, “I was told to go to the Hilton Hotel.

A meek man is willing to say, "I don't know." I told Alice the last time we were going somewhere, we couldn't find it. I said, "I'll stop. You just run in and ask him which way the business is where we're going or where the road is." And she would go in and ask. But I had to admit that I did not know where we were going.

The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 10 and verse 23 why a meek man can be led and taught. He believes the truth of Jeremiah 10:23: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Man doesn't know which way he is going.

There are issues right now that I'm dealing with for which I am asking the Lord for wisdom and direction. I don't know what to do. I know the principles of Scripture, and I know that He will lead me and guide me, but I have to ask. I don't know. It may surprise you to learn that it is the meek whom our Lord saves and blesses. Let me show you.

In Psalm 76:9, the Bible says, "When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth." Notice: all the meek of the earth. Psalm 147:6 says, "The Lord lifteth up the meek." "He casteth the wicked down to the ground." The wicked is in opposition to the meek. What would the wicked be? Proud, arrogant, haughty, high-minded. The Lord lifteth up the meek.

Psalm 149:4 says, "For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation." He will beautify the meek with salvation. Do you remember the passage in Luke chapter 18? Our Lord tells us about the Pharisee and the publican. The two men

went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood, the Bible says, and prayed thus with himself, "O Lord, I thank Thee that I'm not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

“I fast twice in a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” And he continued to brag upon himself. The old publican would not even so much as lift his eyes toward heaven, but smote himself on the breast and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And our Lord said, “Verily that man went down to his house justified rather than the other one.” That is meekness. That is understanding and recognizing who you are and what you are.

David said it like this in Psalm 51 and verse 17: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise.”

Before giving some applications, consider an illustration that you can remember and that demonstrates biblical meekness. In Matthew 11, beginning at verse 28 and reading through verse 30, our Lord says, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Watch this command: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.” Then He makes this statement: “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” After He commands you to take His yoke in verse 29, He explains that it is an easy yoke.

The Yoke of Christ as an Illustration of Meekness

A yoke is for discipline and training. Servants are said to be under the yoke in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 1, and subjects are said to be under the yoke in 1 Kings 12 and verse 10. When He says, “Take my yoke upon you,” here is the picture of how an ox is trained to plow and to pull. Usually, they would take a young, inexperienced ox and yoke him up. It was a double yoke: they would yoke him with an older, experienced ox.

The interesting thing is this: a yoke is for discipline and training. Most of you have seen General Forrest, a 3,000-pound bull. Have you ever wondered about the strength in his neck? His father, General Beauregard, took his head and rubbed it on a

thousand-pound harrow, then flipped it over like it was absolutely nothing.

Forrest is generous, gracious, and kind. He allows me to pet him and love him, but I have never put a yoke on him, and I do not think I want to at this stage in life. Can you imagine what he could pull with a yoke on him? He could pull a car out of the bog, a tractor, logs, or wagons. That yoke is for discipline and training.

They would take a young, inexperienced ox and yoke him with an older, experienced ox. The yoke would be loose around the young ox's neck and shoulders but tight around the older ox. The young ox would simply walk beside the older ox. It would look as if the young ox were pulling and plowing, but he was not; the heavy, older ox bore all the burden and did all the work.

How can our Lord say, "For my yoke is easy"? Because He has already done all the work. He has earned salvation and a perfect righteousness. What He calls us to do is yoke up with Him for discipline and training. Our part is to submit, be trained, and be disciplined. We are to be His servants and His subjects.

Meekness is nothing less than disciplined strength under the direction and authority of Jesus Christ. We are to move at His command. Our lives and attitudes are to be controlled by Him. In Him we live, move, and have our being; He is to be our all in all. If I become angry, it should be righteous anger, not unrighteous anger, at His command and according to His Word. If I am submissive, it should be biblical submissiveness according to His Word and direction. If I defend, it should be at His direction and under His authority. If I am yoked with Him, I am under His control and command; I bear and wear His yoke. Therefore, when we walk worthy of our calling, we are walking not only in lowliness but also in meekness.

Applications and Conclusion

It means that we are broken to the yoke and plow at His pleasure. Those of you who have horses ride them at your pleasure. We saw two horses pulling a wagon. They pulled it at the pleasure of their owner, who was in control. That is exactly what the Word of God

teaches about biblical meekness: we are to be under the control of Jesus Christ.

Meekness and lowliness are perfectly tempered in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our life, model, and example. We must bear His yoke and plow the path He plowed. The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:23, speaking of Christ, “Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” There is the meekness of Jesus Christ. He was not vindictive, hateful, or unkind.

He just did what pleased the Father.

Biblical lowliness and meekness bring joy into one's life. The Bible says in Psalm 22:26, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: your heart shall live forever." Then in Isaiah 29:19, "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord." It is biblical meekness that gives us joy and satisfaction.

Biblical meekness is an attribute produced by the Holy Spirit, but it is also an attribute that we are commanded to seek. We are to develop this in our lives. In Zephaniah 2:3, the Bible says, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness." God commands us to seek it. We are to bring our lives into conformity to His Word.

In 1 Peter 5, when the Bible speaks about a beautiful wife, God says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel." It is not all the ornaments. He goes on to say, "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." It is not how beautiful the clothes are, how decked out you are in jewelry, or how beautiful your hair is; it is whether there is a meek and quiet spirit. That is of great price in the sight of God.

Meekness is disciplined strength under Christ. Meekness is not weakness, cowardice, or refusing to stand. Meekness means that you have been yoked to Jesus Christ. You bear His yoke, wear His yoke, and move at His command. He has absolute authority and control over your life. If we are going to walk worthy and pleasing unto the

Lord, the way to walk worthy of our calling is to walk in lowliness and meekness. Meekness is disciplined strength under God.

Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we again thank you for your infinite grace and mercy.

Father, we ask for biblical meekness in our lives. Enable us to bear the yoke of Jesus Christ, move under His authority and under His command, and do that which pleases and glorifies Him, for He is God of gods, King of kings, and Lord of lords. And we give thee all the praise and the honor and the glory. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Walking With The Lord

Part Five

Introduction and Review

In Ephesians chapter 4, verses 1 through 7, we are now at part 5 of Walking with the Lord. The Apostle Paul says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you're called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." He continues, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

I began this series by pointing out how walking with the Lord necessitates walking before the Lord, for He told Abram in Genesis 17, "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect." Walking before the Lord means that we are to walk as if we are in His presence; we literally walk before His face. Walking signifies fellowship and

communion, purpose, progress, agreement, and resolution as well. God commands us to walk before Him and to walk pleasing in His sight.

Then we went to Hebrews 5, Hebrews 11, verses 5 and 6, where the Bible talked about Enoch. Before his translation, he had this testimony: he pleased God. The Scripture says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must first believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Walking in faith is absolutely fundamental and foundational. Walking in faith refers, first of all, to the person of God: we must believe that He is. Secondly, it refers to the promises of God—that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Thirdly, it refers to the providence of God, because that is what brings everything together in our lives for our good and for God's glory.

In the third message on Ephesians chapter 4, we began with the Apostle Paul's command that we must walk worthy. We looked at Ephesians 4:1 and Colossians 1:10, comparing these verses in which God commands us to walk worthy unto Him, unto all pleasing. We returned particularly to verse 1, where Paul says that we are to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. The word vocation occurs ten times in Scripture; that is, it is translated ten times from the Greek word kleisis. The verb is kleo. In fact, that verb is used in verse 1 in the last word, called. Obviously, this refers in Scripture to our salvation. The Apostle Paul is telling us that we are to walk worthy of our calling unto salvation.

Then he begins to tell us how: with all lowliness. I spent an entire message discussing walking in lowliness. The Greek word literally means to walk humility, or to walk in the lowliness of one's mind, or modesty—that is, to understand one's own smallness and humility. Lowliness is the opposite of pride, arrogance, and haughtiness. It is also the opposite of what we would call a spirit of domination, lordship, and manipulation. If we desire to live a lowly life, with an attitude of lowliness, we need to look at where and what we were when God saved us. I pointed that out clearly in Ephesians 2:1-3.

In Isaiah 51:1, God says, "Hearken unto Me, you that follow after righteousness, you that seek the Lord, look unto the rock from which you were hewn, and from the pit from which you were digged." He says that we must remember where we are. Once we understand our depravity, our sinnerhood, there is certainly no reason for pride or arrogance in our lives.

Then we looked at meekness. We are to walk with all lowliness and meekness. Meekness is not weakness, poor posture, or a denial of our rights. Our Lord was the meekest individual, yet He took a scourge of small cords and drove the money changers from the Temple. He was certainly not a 90-pound weakling. Moses, during his lifetime, was the meekest man on earth, despite all his accomplishments as the man of God. According to Scripture, meekness refers to those who are broken to yoke. Meekness is disciplined strength under Jesus Christ. Thus, when He says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me,"

He is saying, once you are yoked up with Me, then you're under My control. You're under My command. You move at My command. So it's just like when I was a boy, we plowed mules. We would holler "gee" and "haw," and those mules knew exactly what to do. We're deterred when we'd holler that same thing if we're yoked up with Christ; when He commands, we know exactly what to do because we have our disciplined strength under Him.

Walking with Longsuffering

He intends to finish verses 2 through 7. Although he could take a longer period of time and deal with each verse, having another three or four messages, we are getting the idea of what it means to walk worthy. The Apostle Paul has given us four or five other points that must also be covered. He is still teaching us how to walk worthy of our calling, and in verse 2 he says that we are to walk "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering and forbearing one another in love." Thirdly, if we are to walk worthy of our calling, we must walk with longsuffering.

Longsuffering is a unique Greek word, makrothumia. Literally, it is translated in our Bibles as longsuffering twelve times and as patience two times. The word relates to patience, endurance,

constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, and forbearance. Let me put it to you like this: slowness in avenging oneself.

Here is what longsuffering is. Longsuffering is a self-restraint which we are enabled to exercise by the grace of God, which does not hastily, easily, quickly, and readily retaliate when one is wrong. In other words, if we have longsuffering in our lives, we do not immediately turn to wrath, anger, and revenge. Longsuffering literally means that we never permit a trial or a provocation to bring us to the end of our patience. We are suffering long with it.

John Gill said it like this: "with longsuffering, bearing much and long with the infirmities of each other, without being easily provoked to anger by any ill usage and not immediately meditating and seeking revenge for every affront given or injury done." To walk is to walk worthy of the grace of the calling, or agreeable to it, and to God who calls us by His grace, who is longsuffering both with wicked men and His own people. Thus, longsuffering means that we bear long with each other's infirmities, are not easily provoked, and do not immediately meditate and seek revenge for every affront given.

What does that mean? It means when Steve does me wrong, I don't immediately say, "Now let me see. How can I get him back? How can I return evil for evil?" Of course, we used to do that as children, you remember. When something happened to us, we immediately started trying to plan on how to get somebody back for what they had done to us. Well, that's not longsuffering by any stretch of the imagination.

Now, I want you to hold Ephesians 4, but look in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 6. I want you to see what the Apostle Paul is talking about, and we're going to have to begin in verse 3. He says in that verse that we're to give no offense in anything, that the ministry may be blamed or censured. Notice 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 3: "Giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." How do we live a life where we do not provide censure upon our ministries? Here it is: "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned."

One of the ways that we make sure that the ministry is not to be blamed is by longsuffering. So, we are to learn longsuffering. Here are some questions: From where are we to learn longsuffering? How should longsuffering affect us? How do we apply longsuffering in our lives? I can answer those questions for you by asking you a couple of questions myself. Get ready to answer my question in your mind, not out loud: From where do we learn longsuffering? How do we apply it in our lives? These questions are intended to teach you this.

Which one of you in this room would have desired for God to slap you down, run you over, and destroy you for the very first sin that you committed? No takers? How about for the second sin? How about for the third sin? Or the fourth sin? Or the fifth sin? How about for the millionth sin? You see what I'm saying? God did not instantly smite us when we sinned against Him. He did not just simply destroy us, and the Scripture teaches that that is His longsuffering. For He said in Romans 2 and verse 4, "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" So God could have

God could have easily and quickly smote us before we ever found His grace, because we deserved it. But He did not. He was longsuffering. I could spend an hour going through the Bible and showing you how God was longsuffering with Israel. Remember how many times they provoked God in the wilderness? Consider also how He was longsuffering with the heathen. In Genesis chapter 15, He told Abram that the reason Abram's seed was going to go into Egypt for 400 years was because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. So He waited another 400 years before He destroyed them.

Look then at God's longsuffering with us. Let me show you a principle. In Matthew chapter 18, Peter's question is tied to a rather lengthy answer. Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, how oft shall I forgive my brother? Or how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?” Peter thought that putting up with him seven times was pretty good, since seven is the number of perfection. Jesus answered, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven,” which would be 490 times.

But that does not mean that the 491st time you forgive, you can slap him down. That is not what He was talking about at all. He was saying that forgiveness is basically to be an unending thing. Peter was asking, “How many times am I to put up with my brother sinning against me?”

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 18:23-31 (KJV)

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents," which is millions. "But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence," which was a few pennies. "And he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and

They told unto their lord all that was done. His lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, “O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?” And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Here is the analogy. Think of all the sins, wickedness, and rebellion that you have cast in the face of God, and God forgave you all of that. I do not care how ugly David gets toward me; he cannot do to me what I have done to God. He really cannot, because I am not God, and I am not holy as He is. Therefore, even if he sinned

greatly against me, it is still not the same as sinning against an infinitely holy God.

Now watch this. If God, against whom we have sinned very greatly, was longsuffering and forgave us, can we not turn around with longsuffering and forgive someone else who sins against us in a minor degree? Here is the principle: freely you have received, freely give. And that is simple: freely you have received, freely give. Now, we are to be longsuffering to each other.

Galatians 6:10 shows how widespread this application should be: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." If I have an obligation to be longsuffering and forgiving to all men, how much more of an obligation do I have to be longsuffering and forgiving to the household of faith, to my brothers? Obviously, we are to walk not only in lowliness and meekness, but also in longsuffering.

Walking with Forbearance

In Ephesians 4:2, he is still telling us how to walk worthy: "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering." Now he says, "forbearing one another in love." To walk worthy, we must not only walk in lowliness, meekness, and longsuffering; we must also walk with forbearance. Longsuffering and forbearance are intimately connected.

The Greek word for forbearance here is anechomai, which literally means to suffer, to bear with, to put up with, to forbear, endure, to hold up, and to sustain. This word comes into play when we read Romans chapter 14 and 1 Corinthians chapter 8, where the Lord speaks about weak brethren and strong brethren. If there are weak brethren and strong brethren, obviously there are some in between as they progress toward being strong. Moreover, in 1 John chapter 2, the Lord divides Christians into three groups: babes, young men, and fathers.

Everybody understands that a babe does not have the characteristic of a young man, and a young man does not have the characteristic of a father. There are certain things about each one that we admire. We admire a baby because he is cute, cuddly, loving,

and what we would call innocent. We admire a young man because of his strength, agility, and ability. We admire our father because of his wisdom, gravity, and that kind of thing. There are differences.

The interesting thing is that, when you look at Romans chapter 14, there is a tendency for a weak brother to judge a strong brother. The weak brother looks at the strong brother and asks, "How can you do that? What are you doing? I could never do something like that. That's got to be sinful." Why? Not because it is contrary to Scripture, but because he is weak and does not understand Christian liberty. The strong brother, in turn, has a tendency to look at the weak brother and disdain him, despising him for his weakness, his lack of understanding, and his lack of what we would call knowledge of Scripture and principle. Thus, there is a tendency in each one.

Teaching is one thing. Arguing, disdaining, and cutting off are quite distinct from teaching. I could patiently teach someone, and that is no problem. But if I take the attitude, "Look, I'm just tired of this. You're whining, you're complaining, it's driving me up a wall. Don't ask me any more questions," is that forbearance? No, that is not forbearance. That is cutting him off and telling him, "I don't want to mess with you anymore."

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” There is not to be any arguing, fussing, or fighting. “For one believeth that he may eat all things,” that is the strong brother, “another who is weak eateth herbs.” God says, “Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not.” That is the strong despising the weak. “And let not him which eateth not,” that is the weak, “judge him that eateth,” that is the strong, “for God hath received him.”

The tendency of the weak is to judge the strong, and the tendency of the strong is to despise the weak. Forbearing one another in love means putting up with each other’s weaknesses, with our infantile thinking, and sometimes with our zeal without knowledge.

Ephesians 4:1-2 says, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.”

Matthew Henry says, “Forbearing one another in love signifies bearing their infirmities out of a principle of love, so as not to cease to love them on account of these, that is those infirmities. The best Christians have need to bear one with another and to make the best one of another, to provoke one another’s graces and not their passions. We find much in ourselves which it is hard to forgive ourselves; therefore we must not think it much if we find that in others which we think hard to forgive them, and yet we must forgive them even as we forgive ourselves.”

Everybody has infirmities, problems, and idiosyncrasies. If they are a brother, we have to bear them and put up with them. I have known one woman who was good and godly, but she had a sharp, penetrating voice. Every time she spoke, everybody thought she was angry. She was not angry; that was simply the voice God gave her. I also had a preacher friend, now with the Lord, who had a high-pitched voice, and it would drive me up a wall.

He would visit with me, and I would sit down and listen to him. When he would leave, I would quietly say, "Lord, thank You for the fellowship, and Lord, thank You that the fellowship is over." He could not change his high-pitched voice. All of us have our infirmities.

When you see a young Christian who is headstrong and proud, thinking he has the world by the tail and impressing you as a know-it-all, stop and think back. You used to be exactly the same way, because you progress from a babe to a young man to a father. We have to understand that there were times when we were just as immature, just as ignorant, and just as impulsive as others, with a zeal that far exceeded our knowledge.

Isn't that what he is saying? Forbearing one another in love. In other words, forbearance enables you to put up with each other without writing each other off. "I'm not going to have anything else to do with Francis. I'm not going to have anything else to do with Gary." No. Forbearance enables us to say, "They're human. They're sinners. So am I. We'll put up with this because they're infirm, just as I am infirm." That's what forbearance is.

Endeavoring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit

Now, watch the connection. He says, if we are going to walk worthy, we are to walk with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is important to understand that he says endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, not endeavoring to make the unity of the Spirit. Only God can give unity. Only God can produce unity. The unity that He gives, however, is based upon our common salvation, which each saint possesses. Therefore, it is our duty, obligation, responsibility, and privilege to do whatever is necessary to maintain this unity in the bond of peace. The Greek word for "endeavoring" is spoudazo, which literally means to endeavor, be diligent, labor, and exert oneself.

When you look at this, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, let me give you an idea that might really impress you. Here is what it means: breaking your neck to keep the unity of the Spirit—in other words, doing everything within your power. You are exerting yourself. So God has given us this unity, but He is telling us that it is our responsibility to keep the unity.

We do not keep unity by fussing and fighting. We do not keep the unity by breaking up into parties, factions, and cliques. We are not to be like the Corinthian church, which was full of divisions and discord. Many times they divided over preachers. Some said, "I like Apollos." Others said, "Well, I like Paul." Some said, "Well, I like Cephas," or the Apostle Peter. And some tried to be more spiritual and said, "We just like Jesus."

What does Paul say? "Come on. It's God who gave each one of them. One sows, one waters, but God gave the increase." Here were all these divisions and cliques over preachers, and sometimes over other things as well.

What He is telling us is this: there are differences, and we have to understand these differences. There is always the danger of discord among the brethren because we are different. We come from different sections of the country. People up in Michigan have different culture and habits than I have down in South Georgia. Certainly in New York, that is for sure.

Occasionally Alice and I will be invited out to dinner, and I always do this purposefully. I will say, "Thank you for the invitation. We'll be glad to accept it. Now, do you want us there about 11 or 11:30 in the day?" You can see the shock on their face. I say, "Now, what you meant is supper. Because in Georgia, it's breakfast, dinner, supper. And in a lot of the northern states, it happens to be breakfast, lunch, and dinner." So I have to correct all of that. In fact, one of our ladies after church, I use this illustration.

She said, "Let me tell you something. We bought six dinner tickets, but when we arrived about five o'clock, they were cleaning up. Their dinner had been at noon."

That is the way it goes. There are differences, including cultural and personality differences. Every one of you will say, and has said at times, "I don't like that person." The reason may not be that the person's character is bad, but that there is something about him—perhaps his culture, his speech, or something else—that you do not particularly like.

This is what God is saying: "No, we can't divide like that." We have to endeavor, to break our neck, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Now, look at the word bond. It is a very wonderful word. It is the Greek word sundesmos, and it literally means a bond or a band that binds us together. It refers to a bundle, as well as to the ligaments by which our muscles are held together. He says, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond," or in the ligaments, "of peace."

How many of you have ever had a torn ligament? It is painful. It hurts. If you have a torn ligament, it basically renders that member useless until it heals. So here is what God is saying: unless you want to be useless, and unless you want to make everybody else useless, you do everything you can to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. God has given us that unity. We must keep it.

Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” God expects us, if it is possible and as much as lies within us, to live peaceably with everybody. He understands there are some with whom we probably cannot live peaceably; that is why He said, “as much as in you.” But if God requires us, as much as

in us, to live peaceably with all men, how much more does He require us to live peaceably with each other?

Matthew Henry says, “Now without these lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance unity cannot be preserved. The first step towards unity is humility. Without this there will be no meekness, no patience, or forbearance, and without these no unity. Pride and passion break the peace and make all mischief. Humility and meekness restore the peace and keep it. Only by pride comes contention. Only by humility comes love. The more lowly-mindedness, the more like-mindedness.

“We do not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, if we be not meek and lowly of heart. For He by whom we are called, and He to whom we are called, was eminent for meekness and lowliness of heart, and has commanded us therein to learn of Him.”

There is a song titled “Bind Us Together”: “Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken. Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, bind us together with love. There’s only one God. There’s only one King. There’s only one body. That is why we sing.” The truth is this: He has bound us together. We must endeavor to keep the unity by not tearing the ligaments of lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance. Now look at verses 4 through 6.

The Basis of Unity: One Body, Spirit, Hope, Lord, Faith, Baptism, God

I told you in the first message dealing with Ephesians 4 that verses 4–7 relate to the first three verses, though you would not think so simply by reading them. In verse 4 he says, “There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” What does that have to do particularly with verses 2 and 3?

We must consider how Paul emphasizes this unity, and how it is evidenced and encouraged. Verses 4, 5, and 6 go together. Verse 4 presents a threefold unity evidenced internally: “For there is one

body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

Paul illustrates this in 1 Corinthians 12 by showing that we have one body with many different members: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." Just as our physical body has many members—toes, fingers, arms, and legs—yet remains one body, so there are many different members in the body of Christ, and yet it is still one body.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the ear says, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? God has set the members, every one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him. If they were all one member, where would be the body? There are many members, yet but one body, and the eye cannot say unto the hand, "I have no need of thee."

Paul continues the illustration of the body: "Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor. And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need. But God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked, that there should be no schism or division in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. One member rejoice or be honored, all the other members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

If you do not believe that when one member of your body suffers, the rest suffers with it, lay your hand flat on a table and, with the other hand, pick up a hammer and hit your fingers. You will quickly

discover how the entire body hurts. That hand will usually go to your mouth or somewhere in the other hand, because your body is suffering.

Notice that he speaks of one body, one Spirit, and one calling. In verse 11 he says, “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” Verse 18 says, “But now God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.” Thus there is one body, one Spirit, and one calling. Romans 1:6 says, “among whom also ye are the called of Jesus Christ.”

In Ephesians 4:4, Paul is presenting an external evidence of our unity. The members of your body function together; if they do not, something is wrong. After church last week, a very thin man told a larger believer, who wanted to lose weight, “If you really want to lose weight, just drink your pint of Jack Daniels before dinner.” The bigger man asked, “How will that help me lose weight?”

Your members have to function together for the better part of the body. If your members do not function together, then the whole body suffers. That is exactly what he is saying.

Now look, if you would please, in verse 5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Verse 4 is internal; verse 5 is external. We acknowledge and confess that there is one Lord, and consequently there is one faith and one baptism. The word Lord is kurios in the Greek, which means boss, owner, master, sovereign. There can only be one ultimate. There can only be one absolute. There can only be one sovereign. If there is one Lord, that means by necessity there is only one faith. They are not two faiths; there is one faith because there is one Lord. And there is only one baptism.

If you look in your Bibles to Romans chapter 6, you will find that mentioned again, as it was also mentioned in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Romans 6, beginning at verse 3, says: “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, so shall we be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin

might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." So there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

That is an external evidence of our unity. It does not matter if believers are in Michigan, Timbuktu, or Georgia. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you acknowledge that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

Verse 6 presents a circle of unity that grows even wider with a heavenly application: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Every believer, whoever they are and wherever they may be, acknowledges the one God who is the Father of us all. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." It is that one Lord who is our Father. In 1 Corinthians 8:6, our Lord says, "But to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."

There is one God and Father of all, who is above all—He is sovereign—and through all—providentially, He rules and reigns—and in you all—that is, by grace through faith. We have a unity that is evidenced internally, externally, and heavenly. Therefore, that unity is to be maintained.

Grace and Gifts for Mutual Functioning

Verse 7 ties it together: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Paul now describes the manner in which God establishes and preserves us in a mutual relationship. There is no member in the body of Christ endowed with such perfection that he is enabled to stand alone. Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The weakest believer is just as much a believer as the strongest believer. Consider the thief who died on the cross. He said to our Lord, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Our Lord responded, "Verily I say unto you today, thou shalt be with Me in paradise." How long did that dying thief have to live for our Lord—an hour? Two hours? Maybe three, until they came along and broke his legs. And that was it. Was he saved? Yes.

You can be the newest saint and the weakest saint, but you are still a saint, and God has given you gifts. You can be a young saint or a mature saint. God has given us gifts. The answer that I want you to see is this: we need each

Pat can do things I can't do. He understands things I don't understand. Steve understands things I don't understand. I understand some things that you don't understand. But if we work with each other and work together, we combine the gifts and the knowledge that God gives us, and we function as one body. We move as one body. After benediction, when we get up to leave, the whole body functions together. You push back; your hands move, your legs move, and you stand up. You all work, and your body works together.

So here's what he's saying: No matter how weak or insignificant the childish saint is, he's needed in the body of Christ. No matter what your position in the body of Christ, you're needed there. God put you there and gave you the gifts that He gave you, as it has pleased Him to do so. He has given each one of us the ability to function in the body. If we're going to walk worthy unto the Lord, our responsibility is to function the way we're to function and to walk in lowliness and meekness, longsuffering, forbearing each other in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We use those gifts, graces, and attributes to hold that unity together, live for our Lord, and honor Him.

Conclusion and Application

Can you imagine what it would be like if all the Christians in Suwannee County came together and said, “We’re gonna work together”? Can you imagine what it would be like if the pastors came together and said, “We are going to work together”? Something you hardly ever see. The reason is that everybody wants to be the chief and nobody wants to be the Indians.

But if you have lowliness and meekness and longsuffering and forbearance, you can do that. Without those things, you cannot. The reason we are so divided is because we have never learned to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called. We need to walk pleasing unto the Lord, and the way to do that is by learning to

walk worthy. You cannot please Him unless you walk in faith, walk worthy, and walk differently.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We ask for Thy grace and mercy, that Thou would teach us. Help us, Lord, to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Help us to walk in lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance, enabling us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 6

Walking With The Lord

Part Six

Introduction and Review of the Series

Ephesians 4:17-19 says: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

This is part six in the series of walking with the Lord. The next several messages are vitally important. I believe they will help us as individuals and also help us to help other people.

In the first message, I pointed out how God told Abram, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." You cannot walk with the Lord until you learn to walk before the Lord—that is, as you are walking in His presence or walking in His face. We found that Enoch walked with

God, Abram walked with God, Noah walked with God, and most of the others in Scripture also walked with the Lord.

We looked particularly at Enoch in Hebrews 11:5-6. The Bible tells us that Enoch was translated that he should not see death, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. If we are going to please Him, we must walk by faith, because the next verse says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him." Walking by faith refers to the person of God, the promises of God, and the providence of God.

Then we began to look in Ephesians chapter 4, because the Apostle Paul teaches us that we are to walk worthy. In Ephesians 4:1-3, Paul tells us that we are to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. Our vocation is our salvation; we have been called unto salvation. That word is used ten times in the New Testament. He then tells us how to walk worthily.

Paul says, “With all lowliness and meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Meekness is not weakness, cowardice, or letting someone trample all over you or your rights. No, meekness is nothing less than disciplined strength under God. It is being yoked with the Lord Jesus Christ, and you move when He tells you to move. Then he tells us, “With longsuffering, forbearing one another in love,” and “endeavoring to keep”—not to make, but endeavoring to keep—“the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” He gives us the evidence in verses 4 through 6, and in verse 7 he tells us that each one of us has our gift and our place. We have been given grace that we might function the way God has ordained that we should function. When you get to verses 17 through 19, remember that this passage actually goes through verse 32, which we will look at later.

The Command to Walk Differently (Ephesians 4:17)

Paul is telling us that we are not only to walk worthily, but also to walk differently. In other words, we are to be different from the ungodly, the heathen, and the pagans. Just stop and think: if we have been redeemed, reconciled, justified, and sanctified, there should indeed be a vast difference in our lives. Paul emphasizes that

we are to walk differently. In verse 17 he says, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.” The Greek word for “testify” is martureo. It is from the root word martus, from which we get our English word “martyr.” When you hear the English word “martyr” today, you think of someone who has died for his faith. That is only a more recent connotation, arising within the last four or five hundred years.

Originally, the word simply meant “witness.” Jesus Christ is called the faithful and true witness, or the faithful and true martyr. Jesus Christ did not die for His faith; He died for the sins of His people. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 1:9, said, “God is my witness,” and the word “witness” is martus. He was not saying that God is dead. He said, “God is my martyr. God is my witness.”

So here is this word “testify,” which actually refers to a witness. In the context of Ephesians 4:17, when Paul says, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord,” the word means to take to record, to cite as a witness, to conjure, to beseech in God’s name, and to testify solemnly. Paul is witnessing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His authority. He is testifying to them. Stop and think about this: if these Ephesians disobeyed, then Paul would be testifying against them.

A witness may testify for a defendant or against a defendant. Paul was saying, “I want to testify to you and I want to be a witness to you.” If he was a witness to them, it would be for their benefit and blessing; but if he testified against them, that would not be for their benefit or blessing.

Let me give you an illustration. You do not have to turn there, but in 2 Corinthians 13:2, the Apostle Paul wrote, “I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all others, that if I come, I will not spare.” He had already written, testified, and witnessed to them. If he had to come back, he would not spare them; he would be a witness against them. In 2 Corinthians 13:10 he said, “I write these things being absent, lest being present”—

Paul says, “I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord has given me to edification, and not to destruction.” He is saying, “I want to be a witness to you and not necessarily witness against you.” Then, in verse 17, he says, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk.” The word “Gentiles” is the Greek word ethnos, which literally means nations, pagans, or what we would call the heathen. He is telling us to walk differently from the heathen and from the unsaved. We are not like them; we are unlike them in every way. Therefore, our walk should be different, totally and completely different.

How do the heathen walk? How do unsaved men walk? Paul tells us first of all in verse 17 in a very general way, and then breaks that general term down into specifics. He gives a broad expression and then delineates and explains it. He says, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other pagans walk, or as the heathen walk,” and adds, “in the vanity of their mind.”

The Meaning of 'Vanity of Their Mind'

The unsaved walk in the vanity of their mind. When we hear the word “vanity” or “vain,” we think of something useless or worthless, something of no account. But “vanity” here means far more than that. It means that which is devoid of truth; it means that which is perverse, depraved, and inappropriate.

There are a number of Hebrew and Greek words translated as “vanity” and “vain” in our Bibles. The very first time the Hebrew word is translated as “vanity” occurs in 2 Kings 17:15. There, speaking of Israel and how they treated God, the Bible says: “And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them.” What does it mean when it says they followed vanity? It means they followed idols.

They followed the heathen in their worship of idolatrous gods. He said, “and they became vain,” that is, they became idolaters. They not only became idolaters, they became perverse and depraved and devoid of truth, just like the heathen that were around them. So

obviously in this passage the word “vanity” refers not only to idolatry, but it refers to perverseness and depravity as well. They were devoid of the truth, and consequently they were indeed useless and worthless.

In 2 Peter 2:18, the same word is used, but this time the emphasis is upon perverseness and depravity: “For when they”—and we are talking about ungodly men—“for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.” Notice that he talks about “words of vanity.” What does that include? Alluring through the lusts of the flesh and through much wantonness.

Paul is telling us how we should walk differently. You would think that the Apostle Paul would not have to explain how the heathen walks to us. Why? Because we were once heathen ourselves. Ephesians 2:1-3 says: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation”—our conduct—“in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Paul said you should know how the unsaved think and move and act because you were once one of them. You were there. What made the difference? “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together by Christ.” Since our Lord has loved us and quickened us in His grace and mercy, there should be a lot of difference in our lives.

We are not like them. We should know what it is to walk in the vanity of their minds because we have walked in the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. We have been rebellious, worldly, and ungodly. The truth of the matter is this: if you are honest before God, even as a saint, even as a saved individual, you still have too many bad memories of those times when you did walk as an unsaved man and as a heathen. So, he is telling us that we are to be different.

Paul says, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." When you talk about the vain mind, it is not just that which is useless and worthless. It refers to that which is idolatrous, devoid of truth, perverse, and depraved.

The Darkened Understanding (Ephesians 4:18a)

Paul begins to explain what he means by the vanity of the mind: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." In this passage alone, he speaks of a darkened understanding, alienation from the life of God, ignorance of the mind, and blindness of heart. These must be considered one at a time. What is a darkened understanding? From whence do we derive a darkened understanding?

The answer is threefold. There is a judicial darkening of the mind. The word “judicial” is a term of the law court; it refers to the judge. When I say there is a judicial darkening of the mind, it means that God has sovereignly, as a judge, imposed blindness upon a people for rejecting Him, His Son, or His truth. In other words, God has said, “Look, here it is. You do not want it. I am going to judge you. I am going to condemn you.”

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 69. Psalm 69 is a Messianic Psalm, and I suppose we could truthfully say that all the Psalms are Messianic Psalms. But Psalm 69 particularly speaks of Jesus Christ. Everyone understands the passage where the Bible tells us, in verse 21, “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,” which refers to Christ.

Verse 9 says, “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” All of these passages are applied to Christ in the New Testament.

Now watch this. Here is a psalm about the rejection of the Messiah. In verse 22, here is the judicial curse that comes upon those who reject Jesus Christ: “Let their table become a snare before

them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold upon them." So, "Let their eyes be darkened. Pour out your indignation upon them. Let my wrathful anger take hold of them." This is a judicial sentence.

Turn to Romans 1, and then we will go to Romans 11. This is still the judicial darkening of the mind. Romans 1:21 says, "Because that"—note "because that"—"when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." God judicially blinded them.

In Romans 11, Paul quotes from Psalm 69, still talking about judicial blindness to Israel. Romans 11, beginning in verse 7, says, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written"—now he is quoting Psalm 69—"God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David said, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."

Here is a judicial darkening where God, as the sovereign Judge of all the earth, says, "Look, you don't want Me. You don't want My Son. You don't want My truth. That's it. You're blinded."

Secondly, there is a retributive darkening of the mind. By "retributive," I am talking about retribution. That is where God makes the punishment fit the crime. Isaiah 9:19 says, "Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother." Through the wrath of the Lord, the land is darkened. The people have sinned against God, and God is judging them. The people, they're ever going to be fuel for the fire. Thus, He is making the punishment fit the crime.

The same thing appears in Isaiah 24:11: "There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone." God

said, "You don't obey Me. You don't rejoice in Me. Fine. Those things that you rejoice in will be taken away from you." The same thing is found in Ezekiel 30:18. So there is not only a judicial darkening; there is a retributive darkening. Thirdly, there is a natural darkening that comes in response to sin.

We reap that which we sow. The more one indulges in sin, the darker his understanding becomes. Sin blinds the understanding. Albert Barnes says: "A man who is intemperate has no just views of the government of the appetites. A man who is unchaste has no perceptions of the loveliness of purity. A man who is avaricious or covetous has no just views of the beauty of benevolence. A man who indulges in vices will weaken his mental powers and render himself incapable of intellectual effort. Indulgence in vice or sin destroys the intellect as well as the body, and unfits a man to appreciate the truth of a proposition in morals or in mathematics, or the beauty of a poem, as well as the truth and beauty of religion or Christianity. Nothing is more obvious than that indulgence in sin weakens the mental powers and renders them unfit for high intellectual effort."

This is seen all over the heathen world now in the stolid, stupid mind, the perverted moral sense, the incapacity of profound or protracted mental effort, as really as it was among the heathens to whom Paul preached. Consider a lovely young man or young girl who has made all A's in school and appears brilliant. Let them get on dope or alcohol, and within a year they may be as dumb and stupid as they can be. They cannot think, function, or do anything. That is exactly what Barnes is talking about: we reap that which we sow. Darkened understandings are evidence of spiritual blindness.

Alienation from the Life of God Through Ignorance (Ephesians 4:18b)

In Ephesians 4, walking in the vanity of the mind is explained as having the understanding darkened. It also means being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them. It is bad enough to be alienated from the life of God; it is even worse when one is alienated from the life of God through ignorance. The Greek word for "alienation" means more than simple alienation and

estrangement. It also includes being shut out of intimacy and fellowship.

Alienation means more than being shut out or estranged. Here is a man and woman who have been married for twenty years. They get into a serious argument, become angry, and separate. We say that he is estranged from his wife, or that he is alienated from her. But is there any intimacy between them? No. They do not even speak to each other. The Bible is saying that we are alienated from the life of God through ignorance.

When the Bible speaks of being alienated from the life of God through ignorance, it is speaking of a special type of ignorance. One may acknowledge God, confess God, and believe in Him intellectually, yet be shut out from intimacy and fellowship with God.

How can I say that? Look in your Bibles—not Ephesians chapter 4, but Acts chapter 17. Paul the Apostle is preaching on Mars Hill. If you asked these Athenians whether they believed in God, they would say yes. In verse 29, although Paul is attacking their philosophical ignorance, he says: "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God"—that is, we are the creation of God—"we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

Why would supposedly brilliant philosophers, who thought they had so much intellect, think that God was like a silver idol, a golden idol, or something carved in stone? If we are the offspring of God, we are not like that. Obviously, God would not be like that at all. So, did the Athenians believe in God? Yes. They believed not only in a God; they believed in a multitude of gods.

In Acts 17:22, Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill and said, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." These Athenians believed not only in a god, but in gods. In case they had left one out, or there was one of whom they were totally ignorant, they made an

altar to the unknown god. They believed in God in a very general and vague sort of way, and yet they were absolutely, totally cut off from the life of God through their ignorance.

I have no idea how many times in fifty years of preaching people have told me that they believe in God. Do not throw your shoes at me; listen: believing in God does not make you a Christian. You can believe intellectually all you want to, and confess intellectually all you want to, but that does not make you a Christian. James said in James 2:19, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” Even the devil believes in God. In fact, most of them are better believers than most professing people, because at least they tremble at God, and I do not see too many unsaved people trembling at God. You can believe in God and not be a Christian.

Look again at Ephesians 4:18: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.” If the knowledge of God is life to the soul, then ignorance is death to the soul. Moreover, it is not just any knowledge that is life. Intellectual knowledge is not life. Many people have memorized Scriptures, attended Bible schools, or received theological degrees, and can argue rationally and intellectually concerning the existence and attributes of God. Such intellectual knowledge is fine and wonderful, but it is not the same as saving knowledge. The devil can quote Scripture too; he did so in Matthew 4. So, just because you can quote Scripture, attend a Bible school, or possess a theological degree, does not

Knowledge does not necessarily mean that you are a Christian. Just because you think you have knowledge does not mean that it is a saving knowledge. In John 17, our Lord's high priestly prayer, He says: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh"—now watch—"that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

Eternal life is not merely living forever. If you think eternal life is just living forever, then you would have to confess that the unsaved have it too, because they will live forever in judgment, unto death

and destruction. No. Eternal life is more than living forever. If you do not have eternal life now, you are not going to get it when you die. I can assure you.

Our Lord tells us in verse 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." So, "that they might know thee"—here is a special kind of knowledge. It is personal, intimate fellowship with the one true and living God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, the unsaved are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them. They do not have this saving knowledge. They may have intellectual knowledge, but they do not have saving knowledge. An unsaved man may confess and acknowledge these truths, but that does not mean that he has eternal life. Eternal life is defined by our Lord as a personal, intimate relationship with the Father through Him. Now the question has to be asked: How does one get this knowledge?

Matthew 11:27 gives us the answer: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father. And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”

Put that together. No man knows the Father but the Son, and no man knows the Son but the Father. How do you get to know the Father? The Son reveals Him. How do you get to know the Son? The Father reveals Him.

Remember Matthew 16, where our Lord asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” They answered, “Some say you’re Elijah, or Elias, or one of the prophets.” He asked, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter responded, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Do you remember our Lord’s answer? He said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for thou art surely smarter than everyone else, for thou hast figured it out when no one else could.”

Is that what He said? No. He said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Peter knew who Christ was because the Father revealed it to him.

The saving knowledge our Lord speaks of in John 17:3 is a divine revelation that God has made in Jesus Christ. Man by nature is ignorant of God and of this saving knowledge. Our alienation, ignorance, and blindness all hark back to original sin. We sinned in Adam, fell in Adam, and were cursed in Adam. Through the first Adam we were deprived of this light and knowledge, and with their absence there is nothing left but fearful darkness.

Original sin is easy to prove. Romans 5:12 says, “Wherefore, as by one man”—that is, Adam—“sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” When you come to the words “for that all have sinned,” it is an aorist passive. An aorist passive means

That it happened once and forever, for all times, never to be repeated. When did all men sin at one time together? The answer is in Adam. You say, “Well, Pastor, I just don't believe in original sin.” Hang on. You will sooner or later. If you live long enough till you die, you'll believe in it, because the wages of sin is death. The very fact that you're going to die, and that everybody else dies, proves original sin. You will believe in original sin when you die. That is for sure.

Now, here's the thing: our ignorance is inexcusable. You've heard the old adage, “Ignorance of the law is no excuse.” Ignorance of the law is an excuse if you're talking about man's law, because there are so many federal, state, county, and city laws that everybody violates them, often without knowing them. But that expression harks back to the time when the Bible was the law of the land, everyone had a Bible, and everybody could read that Bible. There was no excuse for ignorance.

The Inexcusable Nature of Ignorance

There are not going to be any excuses on Judgment Day. The very fact that we have a duty and an obligation to know God's law tells us that we have a duty and an obligation to know God. We're His creatures. He created us, and by virtue of the fact that we are His creation, we owe Him honor and glory. But we've also sinned against Him and rebelled; therefore, we owe Him repentance. When God in His mercy and grace saves us, we now doubly owe Him, because we're not only His creatures, we are now His children.

So how in the world can our ignorance be excusable? The answer is very simple: our ignorance is inexcusable because God has spoken. How has God spoken? First of all, God has spoken in creation. All you have to do is read Psalm 19 and Romans 1.

Psalm 19 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” Romans chapter 1 says that even creation declares His eternal power and Godhead. Very obviously, God has spoken in creation.

Secondly, God has spoken in conscience. Romans 2:13–16 says, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles”—that is, the heathen—“which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

Your conscience can be improperly taught, but there is still an innate knowledge of right and wrong. Even the most wicked heathen knows that murder is wrong. You can go to the darkest part of Africa, and if a man walks up to another man and runs his spear into him, they will take the murderer, tie him to an anthill, pour honey on him, and let the ants eat him. They know that is wrong. But let that same man defend his life and kill his neighbor, and they do nothing to him. They excuse him. That is conscience.

God has spoken in creation, in conscience, and, thirdly, in commandments. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. Everything in this Book is God's command. He is a King; He commands.

Fourthly, God has spoken through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:1 says that God spoke in sundry times and in divers manners in times past through the prophets. Verse 2 says, “But in these last days he hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”

There will not be one excuse accepted on Judgment Day. You lived in God's creation and ignored it. You had your conscience and refused to listen to it and seared it. You had a Bible and refused to read it.

You heard the preaching of Christ and rejected it, so you are basically without excuse. In fact, Paul says that very clearly in Romans 1:20: “so that they are without excuse.” Look at Ephesians 4:18: “Having the understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

Blindness of Heart and Its Manifestation (Ephesians 4:18c-19)

Our ignorance, alienation, and darkened understanding all flow from one corrupt fountain: a blinded heart. Here is another truth that is not easily or readily perceived, or even liked: Unless God opens the understanding, unless God opens the heart, we are never going to see truth. No one is going to see truth. We do not realize how blind we really are.

In 2 Corinthians 3, the Apostle Paul contrasts the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. He says, “And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament.” How is that veil destroyed? “Which vail is done away in Christ.” He continues, “But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.” They are still blind. “Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.” And, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Where the Spirit of God is not, there is no liberty.

The only thing there is blindness. The heart cannot turn to Christ without the Spirit of God. Man cannot see without the Spirit of God. Moreover, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 says, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

How do blindness, alienation, ignorance, and a darkened understanding manifest and evidence themselves in the unsaved?

The answer is given in verse 19: “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” These individuals are “past feeling.” The Greek word literally means to cease to feel pain or grief, to become insensible, or to be calloused. When you do hard work, calluses build up on your hand. What was sensitive at first is no longer sensitive because the hide has toughened.

This is exactly what God is saying. These people are past feeling. It does not grieve them that they have no fellowship with the one true and living God. How many unsaved men by nature do you see going around weeping and crying, saying, “Oh, I need fellowship with God. I need intimacy with Him”? You do not see that. They do not think about it. They could care less. When you try to reach them and reason with them, it is like water over a duck’s back. They are insensitive and callous to truth. It does not hurt them, convict them, or trouble them, because they are callous to it. They have thrown off all sense of shame and remorse.

What happens when you become past feeling? They have given themselves over unto lasciviousness. The word refers to unbridled lusts, excess, licentiousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, and insolence. That is exactly where we are today. People are not ashamed because they are sodomites; they are proud of it. They are not ashamed because they are perverts; they are proud of it. They are insolent in the face of God.

Calvin said, “Having destroyed the sensibilities of the heart and laid aside the stings of remorse, they abandoned themselves to all manner of iniquity. And we are by nature corrupt and prone to evil. Nay, we are wholly inclined to evil. Those who are destitute of the Spirit of Christ give loose reins to self-indulgence, till fresh offenses, producing others in constant succession, bring down upon them the wrath of God. The voice of God proclaimed by an accusing conscience still continues to be heard, but instead of producing its proper effects, appears rather to harden them against all admonition. On account of such obstinacy they deserve altogether to be forsaken by God.” Thus, those who are past feeling give

themselves over to all kinds of excess and wickedness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

The latter part of this verse shows the voluntary nature of their sinning, the power of sin over them, their willingness to be the slaves of sin, and their continuance in it. It shows how much they desire sin. The Bible says, “to work all uncleanness with greediness.” They actually work at this. They are like a covetous man: they can never, ever be satisfied. It is like the old rich farmer who said he did not want to own the whole world; he only wanted to own all the land next to his. What did he mean? He wanted the whole world. This is what I try to tell people about pornography. They say, “Well, there’s soft pornography. There’s hard pornography.” No, no, no, no.

By the way, "porneia" is the Greek word for fornication, and "graphe" is the Greek word for writing. Pornography literally means fornication writing. So here is what happens when he says they work all uncleanness with greediness. You start with soft porn, but pretty soon that does not satisfy you. Then you go to a little more moderate porn, and that hangs on for a while. Then that does not satisfy, so you go to hard porn; and then that does not satisfy. You go here and here and here, and you never get enough. That is what he is saying: they work all uncleanness with greediness. That is what happens. The Apostle Paul says we are not to walk like that; we are not to be that way.

The Bible says in Romans 1:24 that God gave them up to uncleanness. Here it says they work all uncleanness with greediness. So did God give them up, or did they give themselves up? The answer is both. God gave them up by withholding His grace, and now they give themselves over to it. Their sin was made their punishment. They gave themselves up of their own accord and gave themselves into slavery. God gave them up, not necessarily against their will. God gave them what they wanted, and they continued to want it.

The Difference Between the Saved and the Unsaved

Here is the fundamental fault in the latter part of verse 19: the unsaved acknowledge no restraints. They insolently act out all their capricious lusts and desires at their own will, gladly and willingly.

There are no limits placed upon them, and they place none upon themselves. Paul is saying in Ephesians chapter 4 that we must walk differently. We cannot walk, act, talk, or even think the way the ungodly do. If we are to please our Heavenly Father, we must walk differently. We cannot be lawless, and we cannot please our flesh.

You say, "But, Pastor, I'm not perfect." Really? Tell me about it. Neither am I. There is no one on this earth that is perfect. Each of us are sinners, and each of us sin. Each of us fall short and do many things that not only grieve the Lord, they grieve us. But there is a difference between someone who is saved and someone who is not saved. We don't enjoy our sins. They grieve us. They hurt us. We hate them. We mourn over them. We confess them. We acknowledge them. We turn from them. We repent of them, and we ask God to help us not to do those things any longer. Do you see there's a difference there? There's a difference between just charging headlong into sin and rebellion and saying, "Who gives a flip? I'll do my own thing," and you acknowledging God and His love, remaining in fellowship with Him, and endeavoring to bring your life into conformity to the Word of God. When you do stumble and when you do sin, it upsets you, grieves you, and hurts you. In other words, you are more sensitive to sin.

Conclusion and Preview of Future Messages

As Christians, we never ever want to return to our old ways, our old sins, and our old lives. We always want to live differently. Now, here's my question: How do we live differently? How do we change our lives? If you look at verse 20, he says, "But ye have not so learned Christ." Has it ever dawned upon you that you have to learn Christ? Wow. How do you learn Christ? There are answers, and then he tells us exactly how to do so.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank you for your love, your grace, and your mercy. We thank you, Lord, that you've saved us, that you've translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of thy dear Son. You've redeemed us and reconciled us and justified us and sanctified us, and we're different. And we should be, and we want to be. We ask that you make us more different by making us more holy, more godly, more obedient, more submissive,

and more conformed to your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Walking With The Lord

Part Ten

Walking in Light

Introduction to Walking in Light

In Ephesians 5:8-14, Paul writes: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

We have been talking about walking with the Lord and walking before the Lord, walking in faith, walking worthily, walking differently, and walking in love. Now we come to walking in light.

In verses 3-7, Paul has just warned these Ephesian believers not to be like unbelievers or partake in the sins mentioned there. He also tells us not to think that those who engage in such sins are saved; anyone who thinks that way is certainly deceived. Then he tells us to walk in love. Remember, walking in love has nothing to do with feelings, emotions, or sentiments. It has to do with obedience, because the Bible says that love is the fulfilling of the law. Obedience will always be distinguishable from disobedience.

When Paul comes to verse 8, he says, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” Before explaining what it means to walk in the light, he reminds these Ephesians that they were once darkness. This reminder was given to stir up their thankfulness, gratitude, love, and remembrance of what God had done for them.

Believers Were Once Darkness

The Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” God has called us out of darkness.

The Greek word for darkness here is the word skotos, and it literally refers to darkness, obscurity, and blindness. This word is used metaphorically to describe our ignorance of divine truth, ignorance of morality, and even salvation. It is translated as darkness thirty-two times in our Bibles. The word darkness in this text describes what we were before God regenerated us and God saved us. The same word also describes people today who are unregenerate and unconverted.

The Apostle says in verse 8, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” Note this very closely. In other words, we were not just in darkness; we were darkness. Do you understand that? Darkness itself cannot dispel darkness. If we are darkness, only light can dispel darkness, and the light must be from a source outside of darkness.

In Psalm 18 and verse 28, David said it like this: “For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.” David said God is a source of light, and God will lighten his darkness. In describing the wicked, God says in Psalm 82 and verse 5, “They know not, neither do they understand; they walk on in darkness.” “All the foundations of the earth are out of course.” They walk on in darkness because they do not know, neither do they understand.

Proverbs 4 and verse 19 says, “The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.” The way of the wicked is darkness. In 2 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 14, where God demands separation, He says, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” “For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

He is setting the stage and saying that there is a light, and there is a darkness as well. Walking in the light demonstrates and evidences that we are not in darkness. When one refuses to walk in the light, he is still in darkness. As has been pointed out, darkness is only dispelled by light.

Turn first to 1 John chapter 1, while holding your place in Ephesians chapter 5. We will come back to 1 John later. Look at 1 John 1:6: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him,” that is, with God, “and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.” Anyone who says that he has fellowship with God while walking in darkness, God says, is a liar and does not do the truth.

Look at 1 John chapter 2, verses 8 and 9. He says again, “A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you.” Now notice: “Because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now.” Again, God says that if there is no obedience, you are still in darkness. Verse 11 says, “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

Here is something to consider. According to Scripture, men either walk in darkness or they walk in light. Men are either darkness or light. There is no in-between. You are either in the dark or in the

light; you are either saved or unsaved. I used to tell people that being saved is like a woman being pregnant: you are or you are not. There is no in-between. It is just that simple. Light and darkness symbolize this: you are either saved or lost.

Now, consider Ephesians 5:8 again: “For ye were sometimes darkness,” that is past tense, “but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” You are light in the Lord. We are not light in and of ourselves; we cannot be. If we were in darkness, there is absolutely no way that darkness can light itself. We must be lighted by another, and the Apostle Paul makes clear that this other is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ as the Light of the World

Matthew 4 presents a prophecy concerning Christ: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Isaiah was prophesying concerning Jesus Christ and this great light, and Jesus Christ came preaching. The prophecy concerns the fulfillment of what Isaiah spoke, and Matthew directs us to that fulfillment in Christ’s preaching.

Matthew 4:14 says, “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet.” Where did Isaiah say that? The answer is Isaiah chapter 9 verse 2, where he said, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Thus the great light spoken of by Isaiah is connected with Jesus Christ and His coming to preach the kingdom of heaven.

What we are being taught by this prophecy, and what the Apostle Paul is teaching us in Ephesians 5, is indeed that salvation is of the Lord. He is the light of the world. He must lighten our eyes, illuminate our minds, release our wills from the bondage of sin, and enable us to come to Him in repentance and faith. This is what the

Apostle Paul is enunciating when he says that you are a light in the Lord and should walk as children of light.

In John 8:12, consider the claim that Jesus Christ makes: "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Christ says He is the light of the world. The light in which believers walk is therefore found in Him, and those who follow Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

If we follow Him, we are not going to be walking in darkness. We are not going to be doing the deeds of darkness. But we are going to have the light of life.

In John 12:46, Jesus Christ says, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." Notice: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

Now, turn back to John chapter 1. Here is an interesting passage. John the Apostle is writing about John the Baptist. In John 1:6, he says, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Now notice what is said of the forerunner of Jesus Christ: "The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light," and notice that the word light is capitalized.

"The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He," that is, John the Baptist, "was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." As we continue, we find that we are speaking here of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is called the Light.

In the Old Testament, God is likened unto the sun for brightness. We have to remember that God created the sun. When you and I think of the sun, we think of light, because it is the sun that gives light. It is the sun that illuminates. But since God created the sun, God is the source of all light, and He Himself is the Sun.

So look in your Bibles to Psalm 84, and then we are going to go back to 1 John. Look at verse 11. Watch carefully: "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory."

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Note, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield." God is likened unto the sun, the giver of light.

We did not read 1 John 1:5 earlier; we read verse 6. Notice what the Bible says concerning God. John writes, "This then is the message that we've heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Now, let me show you what I am trying to do. Look in your Bibles to the book of Malachi, chapter 4, the last book in the Old Testament. I want you to understand that this is a messianic title, and you can understand from this, I am sure, how Jesus Christ is claiming to be the light of the world.

Watch Malachi 4 and verse 2: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Now go back and look at verse 2: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Jesus Christ is claiming to be the light of the world. Since, in the Old Testament, the sun was a representative of God Himself, the true Giver of Light, we read about the Sun of righteousness arising. I want you to understand that Jesus Christ is not only claiming this Messianic title when He claims to be the Light of the world; He is also saying, "I am God."

There is a passage in the Bible, 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16. It says this: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." But note what he said: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

Jesus Christ claimed to be God over and over in the Scripture. Look in John chapter 10; the Jews understood the implication of Christ's claim in this passage. In John 10 and verse 30, our Lord

says, “I and my Father are one.” Jesus Christ was calling God His Father. Moreover, He says, “I and my Father are one.” So He is identifying Himself with God the Father. We know that there is one God—one God who has revealed Himself in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But He said, “I and my Father are one.” Now look what happens because the Jews understand this implication. Look in verse 31: “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

Every time I get to this passage and read it, I always smile. The reason I smile is because of the stupidity, the ignorance, and the blindness of unsaved men. They got it backwards. Note what they said in verse 33: “The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” No, no, no. God made Himself man.

That's the way it is. That's why the Bible says in Philippians 2, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It was not man making himself God; God had made himself man. Jesus Christ is saying, "I am the light of the world." The Apostle Paul says that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. If Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and we are His children, we are indeed children of light.

Walking as Children of Light

Look back in your Bibles to Ephesians 5 and verse 8: "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light." We have a duty, a responsibility, and an obligation to walk as children of the light. We're not to walk in darkness. Walking in darkness is not only foolish; it is dangerous.

Probably everyone in this room has gotten up out of bed during the night without a flashlight or without turning a light on, and

either stumbled and fallen, stubbed a toe, or run into something. I have known of people who actually stumbled and fell and killed themselves. In fact, it happened to two recently. I'm simply pointing out the fact that we're to walk in the light. First Thessalonians 5:5 says, "You are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." If we're in Christ, we're children of light. We're children of the day.

We are not of the night; we are not of darkness. What does it mean to be children of light and children of the day? “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” Notice the vast difference between children of the light and children of the night.

Our Lord says, “Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.” He said, “I’m here with you, and as long as I’m here with you, you walk in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”

The Apostle says, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” What is involved in casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light? He tells you: “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Over and over it is repeated that we are children of the light. If we are following our Lord, we are walking in the light.

Now, go back if you would please to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 8. I want you to put all of these thoughts together because I'm going to show you how they mesh in this passage. So, you have to ask yourself this question. Verse 8 tells us, "For you were sometimes darkness, but now you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light." What then is the implications of walking in the light? Well, he says, "Walk as children of light." Now, I want you to note verse 9 and

verse 10. He says in verse 9, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." Now, I hope that you have noticed that verse 9 is in a parenthesis. I hope you've also noticed at the end of verse 8 there is a colon which means hold on, wait a minute, something else is coming which is important. And then in verse 9 there is a semicolon which means that verses 9 and 10 go together.

So, why is verse 9 in a parenthesis? In fact you will find in the Bible many times there are words or there are clauses or sometimes a whole sentence that happens to be in a parenthesis. Why do you have a parenthesis? Well, let me tell you the use of a parenthesis. When you have something in a parenthesis, usually it is a word, a clause, or a sentence, and it is inserted as an explanation or as an afterthought into a passage that is grammatically complete without it. Now let me explain. Look in verse 8, "For you were sometimes darkness, now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light." That could be grammatically correct right there. That's a sentence. You could understand verse 8 and you could understand verse 10 without verse 9. But the parentheses, here's what it does, the parentheses then puts in an afterthought or at least something else that will further explain the truth that is enunciated. So, verse 9 is put in a parentheses because it further explains what Paul meant by walking in the light.

Now, let me just point out Paul is not giving us a complete description here of what it means to walk in the light. But what he is doing is this. He is giving us a few parts of what walking in the light consists and entails. He's showing us part of a holy and pious and godly life by way of example. So, look in verse 9. He says in verse 8, "For you were sometimes darkness, but now you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Then he says, let me add this, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

Before I explain verse 9, let me remind you of something you have heard today but may not have put together yet: God the Sovereign is light. First John 1:5 says, “God is light, in him there's no darkness at all.” So the Sovereign is light. The Son is light. Jesus Christ said, “I am the light of the world.” The Spirit is light. He is the one who enlightens our minds and impresses us with the truth of God.

We have the Sovereign as light, the Son as light, and the Spirit as light. But may I point out the fact that the Scriptures are light as well? In other words, the Apostle Paul tells us in Acts chapter 26 and verse 18 exactly why God sent him. Here is what he said: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." What was Paul doing? He was preaching. The Scriptures are light because they turn people from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.

The Apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:10, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." How did He bring it to light? Through the gospel. The gospel is light. It reveals the Son who is light. It reveals the Sovereign who is light. And it is the Spirit who is light who gives us understanding.

Now, in 2 Peter 1:19, he says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed."

Peter speaks of the Word of God "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Since the Sovereign is light, the Son is light, the Spirit is light, and the Scriptures are light, go back to verse 8 and 9 of Ephesians chapter 5: "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

What does it mean to walk in the light? Paul says that walking in the light means walking in the Spirit and walking in the truth. In John 14, John 15, and John 16, the Holy Spirit is specifically called the Spirit of Truth. He alone guides us and leads us into goodness, righteousness, and truth. If you are walking in the light, you are walking in the Spirit and in the Scriptures.

Proving What is Acceptable to the Lord

This leads us to verse 10: “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” How do you prove what is acceptable to the Lord? The answer is by living it—by actually doing it. Study, and as you see the Scripture, find out what pleases God. That is how He tells us to walk; we do it, and He blesses us.

I do not know everything. I do not even know everything about the Bible. There is much about the Bible that I do not know. But after more than fifty years of preaching, there are a number of things I have proved in my life. Through obedience, I have proved the Word of God true in numerous ways. You cannot outgive God, out-mercy God, or outdo Him in kindness. Whenever you please God and do that which is right, God will always bless you, and you will prove it in your life.

We are to walk in the light, not be children of darkness. Walking in the light means walking in the Spirit, walking in the Scriptures, and proving that which is acceptable unto God in our lives. Any time you come across a positive in the Scripture, you should always ask about the negative.

Any time you come across a negative in Scripture, you should ask about the positive, because positives and negatives go together. The Apostle Paul has given us all positives; now he is giving us some negatives that will ultimately end up with a positive. If we are walking in the light—that is, walking in the Spirit and in the Scriptures—here is the negative: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” Here is the positive: “But rather reprove them.”

No Fellowship with Unfruitful Works of Darkness

First, he tells us that we are not to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. In all probability, Paul has in mind the mystery religions of the heathen. This would certainly include anything wicked, ungodly, sinful, rebellious, and contrary to the Word of God. The command not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness means that we are not to be partakers

with them, communicate with them, join together with them, or be joined with such unfruitful works in any matter.

They are called unfruitful works not only because they are unbiblical, but because they are absolutely, totally worthless and useless. Many such unfruitful works oblige the initiated, upon the pain of death, to keep secret what they have seen, heard, and done. They are called unspeakable mysteries. Some people take oaths that if they reveal anything they have seen or heard, their tongue is to be torn up by the roots, their guts are to be ripped out and buried for the sea ebbs twice and 24.

Our Lord said in John 18:20, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." Our Lord was open with everything He said and taught. Paul could also be referencing Gnosticism. John clearly preached against Gnosticism in 1 John. Gnosticism was supposed to be a secret way to Heaven through knowledge: one had to be initiated, possess the secret passwords, and know all this secret stuff in order to be accepted by God. Many cults, isms, schisms, and everything else follow the same pattern.

No, he says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." That is negative. But notice verse 11: "But rather reprove them." The word reprove is very interesting. It is from the Greek word elegcho, and it answers to the metaphor of darkness. Literally, it means to drag them to the light. It means to convict them, convince them, expose them to the light, and let them see their error and wickedness. If we are going to reprove them, we are going to drag them to the light. The truth of the matter is this: the wicked always seek to keep their deeds secret.

Reproving by the Light

Many sins are committed in the dark. That is why there are secret initiations, secret passwords, and secret this and secret that. The Bible tells us about these wicked, and God says, "No. We reprove them. We bring them to the light."

Now watch verse 11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Why are we to reprove

them? Verse 12 gives the reason: “For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” There are all kinds of religions and all kinds of initiations. You remember, Corinth had five seaports. There was a huge temple in Corinth where they worshipped through prostitution. I understand there were over a thousand prostitutes at that one temple for the free use of visitors. God says that what they did in secret was a shame. In the Old Testament, you read about Baal worship and Moloch worship, and it is vile. Their lives, actions, and conduct were so shameful that we are not even going to speak of them. Then verse 13 says, “But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light”—things that are rebuked, convicted, and made manifest by the light.

"For whatsoever doth make manifest is light." How do we reprove the wicked? He said, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Convict them. Convince them. Drag them to the truth. The reason is that it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. He says, "But all things that are reproved are made manifest." How? By the light. "For whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

Let me give you an illustration. Let's suppose that Pat has done something wrong. I like to use Pat and pick on him. Suppose Pat has done something wrong, and I become so irritated with what he has done that I cuss him out and tell him off. I rip him up one side and down the other. I chew him up and spit him out, as they say. Now, although I may have relieved a lot of anger in myself, have I helped Pat? No. I have probably made an enemy, made him even madder, and made him more determined. If he found out that it irritated me that much, he would probably keep on irritating me just because he is that big a sinner.

That is the way people are. You try to push me, and I do not want to be pushed; I will just show you. But when he tells us that whatsoever reproves or makes manifest is light, I want you to see what the Apostle Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1. He says, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." Then he says, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

If Pat has done something wrong or is doing something wrong, instead of cussing him out, getting angry, and telling him off, I should say, "Pat, let me show you what the Scripture says about your actions. Here is how God says your conduct is wrong. Here is how God says you are to change that conduct so that you can please him." Then I am making manifest his wickedness and exposing it to the light. I am reproving it by the light. Hopefully, he would repent. But if he does not, he has still been brought to the light. This has nothing to do with feelings per se. Certainly, our emotions often get involved, but it does have to do with doctrine.

Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” If I am going to reprove, rebuke, convince, and bring someone to the truth, I had better be using the truth. I had better be saying, “Here is the light.” The light is none other than the Word of God.

Look at verse 14. After telling us that we are children of light and are to walk as children of light, he gives us a good example of walking in the Spirit and in the Scriptures. Then he tells us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. He tells us why and how to reprove: by the light, the light of Scripture.

Awake and Arise

Verse 14 says, “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” We know that Jesus Christ is the light giver. No one can see anything without Jesus Christ. That is why He told Nicodemus in John 3:3, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.” Unless God turns the lights on, nobody is going to see.

So does verse 14 apply to saints, or does it apply to sinners? “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” There is plenty in the Bible about saints sleeping and arising from the dead. We understand that only God can quicken us.

But sleep, in reality, is a picture of death. The Bible speaks of those who sleep in Jesus. Are we talking about saints, sinners, or both?

Romans 13:11 says, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Obviously, he is talking to Christians. If you look in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 1, he is talking to dear children and speaking about walking in love. Now he is talking about walking in light. In the context of Ephesians chapter 5, he is talking to Christians when he says, "Awake thou that sleepest." In other words, wake up and learn how to walk. Wake up and learn how to live. Arise from the dead, that stupor that you are in, and Christ shall give thee light. Because Christ is the light of the world. He will give us understanding as to how to live and how to conduct our lives. If we are walking in the light, we are not walking in darkness. You cannot walk in the light and walk in darkness at the same time.

Let me make a couple of applications. The first one is this: I hope you understand that for the child of God, the Word of God is our light. David said in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Thy Word. We lighten our way by walking in the Scripture. God's Word is a light and a lamp.

Applications: Scripture as Light and Believers as Reflectors

Let me tell you something else that may shock you. You remember all these verses where Jesus Christ said, "I am the light of the world"? Jesus Christ has said, "I am the light of the world." Now in Matthew 5:14 He says, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Well, now wait a minute. If Jesus Christ is the light of the world, how can we, His disciples and followers, be the light of the world as well? We are the light only because we have been lighted by Him. He is not in the world physically today. He is here spiritually. That is true. He is here in us and through us.

The moon has no light of its own. The light you see on the moon is a reflection of the sun. So we are a reflection of the light of the world, which is Jesus Christ. We are a reflection of the light of the Spirit and of the light of Scripture. He tells us, then, "You are the light of the world."

Our Lord will bring to light every secret of man and every secret sin because He is light, and light exposes darkness. In 1 Corinthians 4:5 the Scripture says, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” He will make manifest the counsels of the heart. Paul said in Romans 2:16, “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” All of these sins that men think have been well hidden will suddenly be brought into full light. That makes me want to make sure that my sins are forgiven and that I walk in the light as He is the light. Paul is teaching us how to walk pleasingly and acceptably to the Lord.

If we are walking in light, we are walking in the Spirit and in the Scriptures, because they are truth and light, just as Jesus Christ is light and truth, and just as God the Father is light and truth. Walk in the light as children of light.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before Thee. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth, and we pray that You would indeed teach us how to walk. May we walk before Thee, in faith, worthily, differently, and in love. May we walk in light and please Thee in all things. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Walking With The Lord
JW01420 | YouTube

Chapter 2: Walking With The Lord - Part 2
JW01421 | YouTube

Chapter 3: Walking With The Lord - Part 3
JW01422 | YouTube

Chapter 4: Walking With The Lord - Part 4
JW01423 | YouTube

Chapter 5: Walking With The Lord - Part 5
JW01424 | YouTube

Chapter 6: Walking With The Lord - Part 6
JW01425 | YouTube

Chapter 7: Walking With The Lord - Part 10
JW01429 | YouTube

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

Alienation from the Life of God Through Ignorance (Ephesians 4:18b) p. 102

Application and Conclusion p. 39

Applications and Conclusion p. 73

Applications: Scripture as Light and Believers as Reflectors p. 127

Awake and Arise p. 126

B

Believers Were Once Darkness p. 114

Blindness of Heart and Its Manifestation (Ephesians 4:18c-19) p. 108

C

Christ as the Light of the World p. 116

Conclusion and Application p. 92

Conclusion and Preview of Future Messages p. 111

Conclusion: A Consistent Lifestyle p. 21

D

Defining Biblical Meekness p. 63

E

Endeavoring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit p. 86

Examples of Walking with God: Noah and Enoch p. 13

F

Faith in the Person of God p. 27

Faith in the Promises of God p. 31

Faith in the Providence of God p. 37

Five Implications of Walking with the Lord p. 15

G

Grace and Gifts for Mutual Functioning p. 91

I

Introduction and Review p. 23, p. 41, p. 59, p. 77
Introduction and Review of the Series p. 95
Introduction to Walking in Light p. 113
Introduction: The Call to Walk with the Lord p. 7

M

Meekness as a Fruit of the Spirit p. 65
Meekness in Restoring the Fallen p. 67
Meekness in Teaching and Being Taught p. 69
Meekness Is Not Weakness p. 62

N

No Fellowship with Unfruitful Works of Darkness p. 123

P

Paul's Example of Lowliness p. 53
Proving What is Acceptable to the Lord p. 123

R

Remembering Our Past to Foster Humility p. 55
Reproving by the Light p. 124

S

Sin Separates from Fellowship p. 7

T

Thanksgiving and Conclusion p. 56
The Basis of Unity: One Body, Spirit, Hope, Lord, Faith, Baptism, God p. 88
The Central Question: How Do We Know We Are Walking with the Lord? p. 25
The Command to Walk Differently (Ephesians 4:17) p. 96
The Darkened Understanding (Ephesians 4:18a) p. 100
The Difference Between the Saved and the Unsaved p. 110
The Fear of God and National Apostasy p. 10
The Inexcusable Nature of Ignorance p. 106
The Meaning of 'Vanity of Their Mind' p. 98
The Meaning of Our Calling p. 47
The Meaning of Walking 'Before' the Lord p. 24

The New Walk in Christ p. 45
The Yoke of Christ as an Illustration of Meekness p. 72

W

Walking as Children of Light p. 119
Walking Before the Lord: The Prerequisite p. 8
Walking by Faith Pleases God p. 26
Walking in Light p. 113
Walking in Lowliness p. 51
Walking with Forbearance p. 83
Walking with Longsuffering p. 79
Walking with the Lord p. 7
Walking With The Lord p. 7
Walking With The Lord - Part 10 p. 113
Walking With The Lord - Part 2 p. 23
Walking With The Lord - Part 3 p. 41
Walking With The Lord - Part 4 p. 59
Walking With The Lord - Part 5 p. 77
Walking With The Lord - Part 6 p. 95
Walking Worthy of Our Calling p. 46

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 5 p. 23

Genesis 5:22-24 p. 23

Genesis 7:1 p. 13

Genesis 17 p. 32, p. 77, p. 78

Genesis 17:1 p. 24

Genesis 21 p. 34

Genesis 22 p. 34, p. 35

Leviticus

Leviticus 18:4 p. 19

Numbers

Numbers 12:3 p. 63

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 6:4 p. 91

Deuteronomy 10:12 p. 20

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 15 p. 24

1 Samuel 15:1 p. 24

1 Kings

1 Kings 11 p. 12

1 Kings 12 p. 72

1 Kings 15:3 p. 11

2 Kings

2 Kings 17:15 p. 98

2 Kings 17:18-19 p. 12, p. 13

2 Kings 17:7 p. 11, p. 12

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 7 p. 9, p. 10

Job

Job 16 p. 67

Psalm

Psalm 10:4 p. 29
Psalm 14:1 p. 29
Psalm 18 p. 115
Psalm 19 p. 107
Psalm 22:26 p. 74
Psalm 25 p. 71
Psalm 25:14 p. 17
Psalm 36 p. 10
Psalm 51 p. 72
Psalm 53:1 p. 29
Psalm 66 p. 8
Psalm 69 p. 44, p. 100, p. 101
Psalm 76:9 p. 71
Psalm 82 p. 115
Psalm 84 p. 19, p. 117
Psalm 119:105 p. 127
Psalm 147:6 p. 71
Psalm 149:4 p. 71, p. 72

Proverbs

Proverbs 3:32 p. 17
Proverbs 4 p. 115
Proverbs 10 p. 19
Proverbs 13 p. 64

Isaiah

Isaiah 9:19 p. 101
Isaiah 12:2 p. 39
Isaiah 24:11 p. 101, p. 102

Isaiah 29:19 p. 74
Isaiah 44:6 p. 30
Isaiah 45:5 p. 30
Isaiah 50:10 p. 39, p. 40
Isaiah 51 p. 61
Isaiah 51:1 p. 55, p. 79
Isaiah 59 p. 8

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 10 p. 71
Jeremiah 10:23 p. 71
Jeremiah 32:27 p. 34

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 30:18 p. 101, p. 102

Amos

Amos 3:3 p. 11, p. 19, p. 24

Micah

Micah 4:5 p. 19

Habakkuk

Habakkuk 1:13 p. 28

Zephaniah

Zephaniah 2:3 p. 74

Malachi

Malachi 4 p. 118

Matthew

Matthew 4 p. 104, p. 116
Matthew 4:14 p. 116
Matthew 5:14 p. 127
Matthew 11 p. 72
Matthew 11:27 p. 105
Matthew 11:29 p. 51, p. 62
Matthew 16 p. 105

Matthew 18:23-31 p. 82
Matthew 21:5 p. 62

John

John 1:6 p. 117
John 3:3 p. 126
John 8:12 p. 117
John 10 p. 44, p. 118, p. 119
John 12:46 p. 117
John 14 p. 122
John 14:6 p. 30, p. 31
John 15 p. 122
John 16 p. 122
John 17 p. 104
John 17:3 p. 106
John 18:20 p. 124

Acts

Acts 17:22 p. 103, p. 104
Acts 20:17 p. 53
Acts 22 p. 54
Acts 22:4 p. 54
Acts 26:11 p. 54

Romans

Romans 1 p. 101, p. 107
Romans 1:20 p. 108
Romans 1:21 p. 101
Romans 1:24 p. 110
Romans 1:6 p. 60, p. 61, p. 90
Romans 1:6-7 p. 48
Romans 1:9 p. 97
Romans 2 p. 81
Romans 2:13-16 p. 107
Romans 2:16 p. 128
Romans 3 p. 10

Romans 5:12 p. 106
Romans 6 p. 90, p. 91
Romans 6:4 p. 45
Romans 8:28 p. 37
Romans 8:32 p. 37
Romans 11 p. 101
Romans 11:29 p. 48
Romans 12:18 p. 87, p. 88
Romans 12:3 p. 56
Romans 13:11 p. 127
Romans 14:23 p. 27, p. 28

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1 p. 48
1 Corinthians 1:9 p. 17
1 Corinthians 4:5 p. 128
1 Corinthians 8:6 p. 91
1 Corinthians 10:31 p. 14
1 Corinthians 12 p. 66, p. 89
1 Corinthians 15 p. 16, p. 44
1 Corinthians 15:9 p. 54

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 3 p. 108
2 Corinthians 4:3-4 p. 108, p. 109
2 Corinthians 5:7 p. 37
2 Corinthians 6 p. 80
2 Corinthians 9:15 p. 37
2 Corinthians 10 p. 62, p. 63
2 Corinthians 13:10 p. 97
2 Corinthians 13:2 p. 97

Galatians

Galatians 1:13 p. 54
Galatians 5 p. 65
Galatians 6:1 p. 67, p. 68

Galatians 6:10 p. 83
Galatians 6:3 p. 69

Ephesians

Ephesians 1 p. 49
Ephesians 2 p. 55
Ephesians 2:1-3 p. 78, p. 99
Ephesians 2:18 p. 30
Ephesians 4 p. 44, p. 46, p. 47, p. 63, p. 64, p. 80, p. 88, p. 102, p. 103
Ephesians 4:1 p. 45, p. 46, p. 47, p. 60, p. 61, p. 78
Ephesians 4:1-2 p. 84
Ephesians 4:1-3 p. 96
Ephesians 4:1-7 p. 41
Ephesians 4:17 p. 96, p. 97
Ephesians 4:17-19 p. 95
Ephesians 4:18 p. 100, p. 102, p. 104, p. 108
Ephesians 4:2 p. 83
Ephesians 4:4 p. 49, p. 90
Ephesians 5 p. 116, p. 117, p. 119
Ephesians 5:8 p. 116
Ephesians 5:8-14 p. 113

Philippians

Philippians 1:6 p. 16
Philippians 2 p. 119
Philippians 2:5 p. 51, p. 52
Philippians 3:13-14 p. 49

Colossians

Colossians 1 p. 26, p. 45, p. 46, p. 47, p. 56, p. 57
Colossians 1:10 p. 60, p. 61, p. 78
Colossians 3 p. 44

1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 5:5 p. 119, p. 120

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 p. 49

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 4 p. 22

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1 p. 49

2 Timothy 1:10 p. 122

2 Timothy 2:24-26 p. 69

2 Timothy 4:1 p. 125

Hebrews

Hebrews 1:1 p. 107

Hebrews 3:1-2 p. 50

Hebrews 4:12 p. 126

Hebrews 5 p. 78

Hebrews 11 p. 23, p. 39, p. 42, p. 44, p. 45, p. 78

Hebrews 11:5 p. 23, p. 26, p. 27

Hebrews 11:5-6 p. 37, p. 41, p. 42, p. 60, p. 96

Hebrews 11:6 p. 31, p. 37, p. 60

James

James 1 p. 65, p. 66

James 2:19 p. 104

1 Peter

1 Peter 1 p. 17, p. 18

1 Peter 2:23 p. 74

1 Peter 2:9 p. 114

1 Peter 5 p. 74

1 Peter 5:1 p. 52

2 Peter

2 Peter 1:10 p. 50

2 Peter 1:19 p. 122

2 Peter 2:18 p. 99

1 John

1 John 1:3 p. 15, p. 16
1 John 1:5 p. 118, p. 121
1 John 1:6 p. 16, p. 115
1 John 2:19 p. 67
1 John 3 p. 27
1 John 3:1-3 p. 16

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