

HOW TO WALK WITH GOD



Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

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“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ So he arose and followed him.” (Matthew 9:9)

The most important thing for any person ever to do is to enter into a real, life-long relationship with God. The Bible describes this type of relationship as, “walking with God.” The phrase "walking with God" wonderfully captures what a relationship with God is supposed to look like; it simply means we go through life with God as a part of everything.

The Prophet Micah summed up our entire duty to God by saying, *“He has told you, o man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* One of the first men we know of to have this type of relationship with God was named Enoch. We are told in Genesis that Enoch, *“Walked with God three hundred years.”* When God called Abraham, who is later referred to as "the Father of the faith," to have a relationship with Him, He told him to, *“Walk before Me and be blameless.”* God is still calling men and women to walk with Him. If you are reading this book then you can be sure He is calling you to do so as well.

How do we walk with God? Thankfully, we have many examples in the Bible of what this means. For instance, we can look at the life of Matthew, one of Jesus' first disciples. Matthew was a man who, upon hearing the call to follow Jesus, left everything and literally walked with God. We are going to examine what a life looks like when you walk with God by looking at the account Matthew wrote of his life with Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew in the Bible.

Turn Toward God and Walk His Path

“From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17)

When Jesus began his ministry here on earth almost 2000 years ago, he did so by going out and stating plainly that you must repent before you can begin to walk with God and move toward the kingdom of Heaven. Repentance was the foundation of His message

then, and it is still his message to you today. Repentance must be the foundation of any genuine walk with the Lord!

The definition of repentance is, “to feel so contrite over your sins as to change your mind about them and to decide to change your ways.” In other words, to turn toward God and walk on this path for your life, rather than living just to please yourself. Repentance means to look squarely at sin itself and to say “no” to it.

“Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” (Matthew 7:13-20)

Jesus said that we would know who was truly his by the fruit of their lives! You can say you love Jesus, but is your life showing proof of it? It's not that you've started saying “Hallelujah” now and are going to Church, but that you are beginning to stop sinning are becoming more and more like Christ.

Don't Let Anything Keep You Out of Heaven

“While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.” (Matthew 4:18 - 22)

God is not necessarily going to call you to walk away from your job like he did these brothers, but the principle is the same. If you want to walk with God, then He must be number one in your life. There cannot be anyone, or anything, that you put above Him. Just like Matthew and all the other disciples did, Peter and his brother Andrew walked

away from everything when they heard Jesus call. You must put your walk with Jesus before everything else in your life.

Jesus said, *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:37)”* This does not mean we are not to love our family members; it means that we are not to love anything, or anyone, more than God Himself. We must be willing to walk away from careers, friends, or anything else if our walk with God is hindered by them. Jesus knew that this world and its "rewards" would have a strong pull to try to draw his disciples away from following him whole-heartedly, so he made it very clear that we would have to choose. He said, *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (Matthew 6:24)."*

The Bible Makes Your Spirit Strong and Healthy

“Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them...” (Matthew 5:1-2)

The disciples had the incredible privilege of hearing Jesus explain the kingdom of God to them in person. He told them, *“It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 13:11). But, to hear these mysteries they had to be there each time Jesus preached. They never chose to do something else; they sat under Jesus’ teaching every opportunity they had.

Jesus also had put himself in a position to learn the scripture from the teachers in his hometown when he was young. When he was only twelve, he got so caught up in study of scripture that he did not leave the temple in Jerusalem when the rest of his family did. That would be like us today devoting ourselves so much to Sunday School and the sermon that we forgot to leave church and go home! The Bible tells us, *“that after three*

days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.” (Luke 2:46)

God’s word, the Bible, is spiritual food to nourish your spiritual life, and you cannot grow and stay strong spiritually without it. Be warned that many times you won’t “feel like” reading your Bible, or going to church to listen to another sermon. We don’t always want to do what is best for us, but we need to do it anyway because of the good results it will give in the future. Also, the devil will resist your attempts to get into God’s word because it exposes the tricks that he uses against you. Make reading your Bible a daily discipline, and don’t allow other things to crowd out what is most important. Job said, *“I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.”* (Job 23:12)

Jesus spent time explaining scripture and the mysteries of the kingdom of God to those who would listen. One of the greatest things that you can do in your walk with God is to learn to listen. Sit under the preaching of the Word of God and apply yourself to learning scripture just as Jesus, and all of his disciples, did.

Learn to Pray

“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

Walking with God is all about developing a relationship with Him. One of the main ways for you to do that is to pray. How can you have a relationship with someone unless you can talk to them? This is true of God as well. God wants you to draw near Him in prayer and to open your heart to Him. Most of all He wants you to show faith by always asking Him for the things that you need and learning to listen to Him as He talks to you.

“And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone” (Matthew 14:23). Jesus sought out God, his Father in prayer. He told his disciples, *“For I have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent me gave me a command, what I should say and what I should*

speak." He knew what his Father wanted because he spent time with Him. Prayer is the power center of our walk with God.

One important way of learning to pray is to have a dedicated time every day, preferably the morning, when you spend time with God. When you begin your day by prayer and reading the Bible, you get the strength you need to resist the many temptations that are sure to come your way each day. It is also a way to focus on Him and to hear His voice so that you can wisdom you need each day to live your life the way He wants.

Learn to Obey What God Tells You to Do

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

It is sobering to consider that, according to Jesus, there will be many who believe they are bound for heaven who will unhappily find out that they were deceived. These are individuals who call Jesus "Lord," and have even done miraculous deeds; but, Jesus says that it's not calling him "Lord" that pleases him, it's obeying him as your Lord.

Many Christians go to Church, know the Bible, and say all the right things, but their lives are not submitted to Christ. In other words, they live exactly how they please. If you want to know you are right with God, then obey Him. You must come under His authority and the authority of scripture or you are not truly walking with God.

One aspect of learning to obey Jesus is to learn to submit to the human authorities he places over you. For example, a child is obeying God when he honors his parents, an employee is obeying God when he honors his employer, and so forth. Rebellion is the opposite of walking with God. Jesus told us to put his yoke on (Matthew 11:29), which means that we are not free to do just whatever we please. One of the best things you can do for your walk with God is to go to church, submit to a pastor, and respect the authority

of scripture. You cannot live your life just to please yourself if you want to be pleasing to Christ.

God Has Work for You to Do

"And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction." (Matthew 10:1)

Once you have given control of your life to Jesus, your priorities begin to change to become more like his priorities. What this means is that the most important thing in your life now is to see the kingdom of God come to earth just as it is in Heaven. God has made you a co-worker along with Him to see that this work gets done (see 2 Corinthians 6:1).

Jesus gave his disciples authority to do his work, and you have now been called to be one of his disciples. He did not save you to sit, he saved you to serve. He wants you to learn to impact the lives of people around you with the kingdom of Heaven. When he sent his disciples out in his name and with his authority, he told them, *"Proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay'" (Matthew 10:7-8).*

His last command was to tell the disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).* If you truly understand that you have been saved from Hell and that Hell is what you really deserved for your sins, then you will desperately want to see others saved as well. We must be messengers telling others the good news of God's forgiveness and doing all we can to see those around us healed and set free from the power of the devil.

Walking With God is Better When Done Together

"Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:19-20)

When you read the gospel accounts of the ministry of Jesus, you will see that he and his disciples did everything together. An evidence of being born again is a love for other believers (see 1 John 3:14). You are now one part of a whole, of a body, the body of Christ, and are not made to function independently without relationship with the rest of the body (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). The hand is the part of the body that brings food to the mouth, but the mouth is the part of the body that, along with the stomach, nourishes the hand. All of the parts of the body of Christ, that is, his disciples here on earth, need each other.

What this means is that it is God's desire for you to be a part of a local Church. You must prayerfully decide where to put down roots and have church membership. Some of the things to consider when choosing a church are: Do you sense the Lord's presence? Does the Church emphasize holiness? Does the Pastor try to live what he preaches (remember he still has faults like everyone else)? Do they preach the bible? Can you be real and honest there and not feel like you have to act like a different person than you really are before you will feel accepted?

You Are the Least Important Person in Your Life

"The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:11)

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:40)

Remember that Jesus gave himself to serve the "underserving" and those that others looked down upon. We are called to do the same. We must give our life, not so that others will call us great, but so that we can make others great. In the kingdom of God, there is no task so small as to be worthless to him. And, there is no task so low or menial that any true servant of God should not jump at the opportunity to perform it in order to please Jesus.

Persist Until The End

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13)

Walking with the Lord is not always easy. The disciples knew inconvenience, misunderstanding, discomfort and outright persecution on a regular basis. Not only that, their own personal ideas of what walking with Jesus meant many times were very disappointed.

"Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.”(Matthew 13:18 - 22)

Jesus spoke in this parable of those who “fall away” because of trouble or persecution. In fact, one of the disciples, Judas, eventually decided to walk away from Jesus and even betrayed him to his enemies. We must come into the kingdom with the understanding that Jesus did not die on the cross so that we could have the life we wanted. He died to save us from our sin and from its eternal consequences. God is not our servant, here to bring us all that we desire when we desire it. He is the Almighty God and Judge of the world, and we do His bidding, not the other way around. This does not mean that He does not have many good things for you or that He will ever let you down. It simply means that what He does is for your eternal good, not your present comfort.

Good Habits that Will Help You Walk With God

1) Keep Short Accounts (learn to quickly forgive and ask forgiveness)

Forgiveness is so important that the Bible even ties together our forgiveness from God with our willingness to forgive others. *"If you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly*

Father will forgive you, but if you don't forgive men for their offenses, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses" (Matthew 5:23-24). In the Bible we are told to quickly forgive and release others from the ways they have hurt and offended us. The Apostle Paul said to, "Let not the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). In short, God calls you to quickly forgive "whoever," "whenever," for "whatever," just like Christ forgave you.

2) Read Your Bible

The Apostle Paul tells us, *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Romans 12:2) *If all we do is listen to what the world has to say to us through television, movies, music, and popular culture, we will continue to think just like the world. To understand the ways of God and to actually begin to think more and more like He does, we must spend time every day reading and studying His word. What we hear through the media may or may not be true (and probably isn't!), but God's Word is pure truth. Feasting on it daily makes us more like Him.*

3) Open Your Life to Accountable Relationships

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). Pride and self-sufficiency lose their grip when you begin to vulnerably share your life and struggles with others. One reason many believers are so troubled today is because of their refusal to really submit to older, more experienced believers.

4) Maintain A Disciplined Prayer Life

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying..." (Ephesians 6:18). Another essential spiritual discipline is to "lock in" a daily quiet-time. The morning hours before you start the rest of your busy day is undoubtedly the best time to spend with God. If you want power to fight the spiritual battles you will face during the day or to have any kind of overcoming walk with Jesus Christ, you must be willing to pay the price. Sometimes it is even good to consider doing some type of fasting to help you overcome the enticements of the flesh, but at the very least you must have a commitment to prayer.

Conclusion

As you walk with Jesus, remember his promise, “*I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20). Jesus is a part of your life now, and you can expect it to be an adventure you share with him. He is a friend who is always faithful and a leader who always knows the right way to go!

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