

Walking Before, After, & With God

Joe Slater

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless’” (Genesis 17:1). God had great plans for Abram. He would make a great nation of his descendants and give them the promised land of milk and honey. Eventually the Savior of mankind would appear through the lineage of Abram.

With such great promises came great expectations. The Lord wanted Abram’s faithful, obedient behavior. Since Christ is the fulfillment of the promise, and Christians are heirs of the promise (Hebrews 6:17), God also expects us to walk before Him and be blameless. The Lord sees all that we do and knows all we say or think. Knowledge of His presence should encourage us to be confident and motivate us to refrain from sin, knowing we cannot hide from Him.

Walking “after” God emphasizes faithful obedience a bit differently. God, through Moses, told Israel: *“You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him”* (Deuteronomy 13:4). They were to follow God’s leading, not that of the false prophets in the previous verse. Likewise, we must walk after God, rejecting the false ideas of men.

None of this is new! People who love God have always endeavored to do His will. Scripture gives credit to two men who *“walked with God”* – Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Noah (Genesis 6:9). They lived in harmony with God’s will and enjoyed close fellowship with Him.

Walk before God! Let the knowledge of His presence encourage and motivate you. Walk after God! Follow the leading of His word. Walk with God! Live in harmony with His will and enjoy His fellowship!

Don’t Cover It Up; Fix It!

Every time I work on a wall of my house, I get nervous. What might look like a perfectly good wall on the outside often has serious problems on the inside. I have removed wallpaper only to find improperly installed sheetrock or covered up holes. Behind the sheetrock I have found poorly placed studs, bad wiring, lack of insulation, and even tools – sealed up and forgotten. The outward finishing might make things look pretty for a time, but eventually the underlying problems will show through.

Many of us live our lives this way. On the surface we put up really pretty wallpaper, but underneath we are unfinished and messed up. For a while this might work, but over time it becomes hard to put on a smile and present a pretty front for all to see. Our pretty exterior can hold up only so long before the problems underneath begin to show. Trying to live this way is exhausting and will end only in heartache and pain.

Each and every one of us has messed up our lives in some way. All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). Fortunately, we don’t have to go around pretending everything is OK. We can actually fix our problems and move on. You see, there is a really good repairman. He is a carpenter, a shepherd, and a great physician. Most importantly, He is our Savior. His name is Jesus the Christ, and He is the only one capable of putting our lives back together.

So, next time you realize you’ve made a mess of things, don’t try to hide it. Instead, call the only one you know who can fix it – and turn your life over to Him!

--Luke Bowers (Abilene, TX) via *Old Paths*

Love Demonstrated

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

God didn’t just tell us He loved us and then leave it at that. As the preceding verse states, God demonstrated, revealed, and validated His love for mankind by allowing Jesus to be crucified, thus bearing the sins of all undeserving people.

After showing us the greatest act of love, He now commands us to love others (1 John 4:11).. As we comply with this second-greatest command, “love your neighbor” (Mark 12:29-31), it’s so easy to shake the hand or hug the neck of a fellow Christian and say, “I love you.” However, the love that the Lord requires of us is much more than a verbal acknowledgment. The love which God demands is not a love spoken, but a love shown.

Notice how we are to demonstrate love:

- Doing good & showing mercy for our enemies (Luke 6:35-36)
- Giving preference to each other (Romans 12:10)
- Serving one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Putting up with each other’s imperfections (Ephesians 4:2)
- Sacrificing ourselves for our family (Ephesians 5:25)
- Being ready to meet urgent needs of others (Titus 3:14)
- Encourage one another to do good works (Hebrews 10:24)
- Enthusiastically expressing love for each other (1 Peter 1:22)
- Showing compassion for each other (1 Peter 3:8)

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

The razor blade is sharp, but it can't chop down a tree.

The axe is strong, but it can't cut hair

Everyone is important according to his/her unique purpose. Never look down on anyone unless you are admiring their shoes.