

## LET'S GO FOR A WALK! (3)

Joe Slater

Scripture refers to your manner of life as your walk. When you became a Christian, your manner of life (i.e. your walk) should have changed dramatically. Did it?

Fortunately, God's grace and Christ's blood can forgive even the worst of sinners. But that doesn't mean you "*continue in sin, that grace may abound*" (Romans 6:1). When you were baptized into Christ, you died to sin. Now, rather than keeping on living in sin, you must "*walk in newness of life*" (6:3-4).

That requires a sweeping change in your behavior! "*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts*" (6:12). Indeed, as you came to Christ, your "*old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin*" (6:6).

Ceasing the practice of sin, however, does not exhaust your obligation. An old saying goes, "Nature abhors a vacuum," and nowhere is that more true than in dealing with human behavior. Removing sinful conduct is a good beginning, but unless you fill the void with righteous deeds, sinful ones will return. In fact, replacing evil acts with good ones is one reason why God saved you in the first place. "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*" (Ephesians 2:10).

Walking in newness of life, then, includes both positive and negative elements. Negatively, you must not continue sinful behavior. Positively, your life must be characterized by good works (i.e. you must walk in them). Does this describe your life?

## Body Members Or Customers?

*"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another"* (Romans 12:4-5, ESV).

The church is the body of Christ; each Christian is a member of that body (1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:24). But in our overly commercialized society, people have come to think of the church not as the body of Christ but as a business trying to attract customers. There is a huge difference between these two concepts.

When I go to the hardware store, I am a customer. I take what I want (after paying for it, of course); I leave all that I do not want. I have never gone to any kind of store and taken even half of what they had to offer. Normally I choose a few items and leave all the rest. The store owner has no problem with this. That is the nature of our relationship. He is a merchant; I am a customer. The customer is in charge of this relationship. The merchant responds to the customer's desires or soon goes out of business.

But that is not the nature of our relationship with Christ. He is the head; we are parts of his body. We respond to Him; we do our job as He directs, or we are not acting as part of His body and may well be removed from it.

Years ago I had a tooth that was no longer serving its purpose. I could not chew on the right side of my mouth because this tooth had become infected and was giving me pain. I paid to have it repaired more than once, but it only became worse. Eventually, I had it removed. I really had no choice. If I had not removed it, my whole body would have suffered.

Are we trying to be Christ's customers instead of members of His body? Are we trying to get Him to do

what we want, instead of obeying what He commands? A part of the body that does not fulfill its proper function, and which causes distress to the rest of the body is amputated. A branch that is dead is pruned from the tree so that the tree can bear fruit. What will happen to church members who act like church customers? I have no opinion on the subject. I do not need to have an opinion; Jesus has already answered the question.

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit"* (John 15:1-2, ESV).

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)

# # # # # # #

## DO I? (PHILEMON 4-7)

For One To Say Of Me What Paul Said Of Philemon...  
I MUST ASK:

**--Do I love the Lord and all His saints (5)?**

**--Do I have faith toward the Lord and all His saints (5)?**

**--Do I share my faith (6)?**

**--Do others derive joy and comfort from my love (7)?**

**--Are the hearts of the saints refreshed through me (7)?**

--Neal Pollard (Denver, CO)