

Walking the Walk #2 Seven questions that will lead us to a better life

Intro: The purpose of the first four chapters of Ephesians is to explore the plans and provisions God has made for the accomplishment of His purpose; but from 4:17 to the end of the book Paul talks about how those plans and provisions affect us, His people, the church. If we "walk" as He purposed that we walk, then we will indeed display His glory to everyone around us. Ephesians then is a six-chapter elaboration on Mt. 5:16:

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Last week we considered three questions based on Paul's "walk the walk" exhortations:

*Is there a real difference between me and the worldly people around me?
Are my decisions informed by my own selfish desires or out of sensitivity to God's revelation?
Do I radiate God's love in all that I do?*

Now let's consider four more questions:

Can people see the light of Christ in me?

This question is based on Paul's walk-the-walk observations in Ephesians 5:

for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." (Ephesians 5:8-14)

Notice Paul's walk-the-walk exhortation: "Walk as children of light"

Paul uses some fascinating figures of speech.

He takes us to the maternity ward. We are children of light.

We are to act like sons conceived by light, not darkness.

He takes us to the garden. We are to bear the fruit of the light which shines upon us! Just as plants take the light of the sun and make use of it to produce fruit, so we also photosynthesize the words of God into a spiritual life.

He takes us to the cemetery. We are to be raised from spiritual death to life, to come out of the grave clothes and put on the grace clothes, letting the light of Christ shine upon us so that we may reflect His glory to others!

The result of these actions is a lifestyle of goodness, righteousness, and truth.

But also the result of these actions is an active opposition to evil. Just as the light exposes the darkness, so we as light are to expose the evil in sin. We do this first by how we live; then by what we say! A visiting friend of mine recently commented on the degrading moral state of our country. He asked, "Is this in part because we as Christians have failed to speak out against the evil around us?"

If the people around us had no NT, would they know how Jesus lived by looking at us, His followers? A sobering question; but one that will help us live a better life!

What good works show that I've been saved by grace?

Let's go back to Paul's declaration section and hear an observation he made about the results of our salvation:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Notice here Paul's walk-the-walk exhortation: we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works...that we should walk in them".

Paul in this verse takes us back to the beginning of all things reminding us of the time when God first spoke the world into existence and created man in perfection to love and serve Him for His glory.

That wonderful relationship was marred by sin.

But now God has begun a new creation.

By the power of His word He has saved us by His grace.

Paul's point is first that we are not saved by good works; but that we are saved by the grace of God!

But as God's workmanship we are saved "unto good works".

These "good works" are simply all of the commands of God which He has revealed to us in the Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

These good works refer not only the moral lives that we will, but also the active love and good will we show to the people around us. Paul defines these good works in terms of our human relationships to our spouses, our parents and children, our bosses and workers, and in terms of our actions toward unbelievers.

Good works cannot be claimed vicariously. We cannot see what others are doing and say, "Look at what we're doing".

For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one shall bear his own load. (Galatians 6:3-5)

We don't get credit for what others do; each of us has the obligation to be active in obeying God's commands to love and serve others.

Does the life I live fit the name I wear?

Paul begins the exhortation section of Ephesians by referring to the calling we've experienced.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Notice Paul's walk-the-walk exhortation: "walk worthily of the calling with which you have been called"

It might be helpful to remember just a few of the things we have been "called to be." We have been called to be:

Saints

Disciples

Christians

Now Paul says walk worthily of this calling, that is, our whole life seems compatible with the call we have received. The name fits the person.

We walk worthy of the calling to be saints, when we live a holy life.

We walk worthy of the calling to be disciples, when we give attention to the word of the teacher.

We walk worthy of the calling to be Christians, when we follow the example of Jesus.

Or, we might consider the phrases that follow Paul's exhortation to fill out what he means by walking worthily...

Walking with humility and gentleness

Walking with patience

Walking with forbearance

Walking in unity

Am I wasting time or investing it?

One of the distinctive traits of our walk in Christ is the way we see time:

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Notice Paul's walk the walk exhortation: "walk circumspectly" (KJV) or "be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise"

Our English word "circumspectly" means "looking around". The Greek word conveys more the idea of precision or strictness. Our walk is governed by the wisdom we get from understanding God's will and the preciousness of time.

Christians don't spend time; we invest it. We realize that every opportunity lost only hastens the end of all things, because the days are evil.

“Do we make our days count for Christ? Do we choose activities that reveal our sense of the preciousness of the time God has given us?”

Conclusion: If we are to bring God glory as we were created to do, then we must pay attention to “walking the walk” daily. I hope we will all think again day by day on these seven principles of godly living. Asking them constantly will transform us into people who truly glorify God.