



Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

**SIT
WALK
STAND**

STUDY SIX – WALK AS A NEW MAN IN CHRIST

Read Ephesians 4:17-32

If we go back to the Old Testament, there are several examples of people who walked with God. *Genesis 5:24 "And Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him."* *Genesis 6:9 "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."*

These two men had no scripture to guide them but nevertheless, each of them knew God and was prepared to walk with him. Noah, of course, took a huge step of faith when he obeyed God in building and then entering the ark. If we want to know what God expects of us, *Micah 6:8* tell us: *"He has shown you O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

- What does it mean 'to act justly'?
- What is our understanding of 'loving mercy'?

In some translations, mercy is translated as kindness. This is the Hebrew word *hesed*, which can be used to refer to God's loving kindness towards us. It is interesting to note that God wants us to be drawn to mercy - having compassion for those in need.

- How would you describe 'walking humbly with our God'?
- Do we have compassion towards the needy? There are many in our society today in desperate straits, not always of their own making, who need our help. It's so important that as Christians we are not judgemental.

One writer says walking with God is: *interacting with him throughout the course of a day, feeling His presence and power, and receiving His strength and guidance. Your spiritual growth is directly related to your walk with God. Walking is a step-by-step process, and, similarly, the Christian life is a day-by-day process.*

- How do we personally, interact with God?

In verse 17, Paul talks about no longer living as the Gentiles do. Why? Because they are confused, have minds full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives

because they have closed their minds and hardened hearts against him. But this is not what we have learned about Christ, says verse 20.

We are instructed to: Throw off our old sinful nature, letting the Spirit renew our thoughts and attitudes, and put on our new nature.

- What does this mean and how do we put on God's nature?

It is interesting that verse 25 talks about no longer telling lies but telling our neighbours the truth because we are all parts of the same body.

- If we ask, *who is my neighbour*, what is this verse telling us?

Verse 26 is one of which we need to grasp hold: not letting ourselves be controlled by anger.

- What are the consequences if we do not follow this instruction?

Paul goes on, in verses 28-29, to identify the things we should, and the things we shouldn't, do.

- Do we steal? Do we work hard? Do we give generously? Do we use foul or abusive language?
- In encouraging us to make sure everything we say is good, why does he say that is important?
- What are the things we must get rid of? Do we struggle with some of these?

It's not just about what not to do, but he exhorts us to: *".. be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, **JUST AS GOD THROUGH CHRIST HAS FORGIVEN YOU**"*.

So, what is the start of becoming a new man in Christ? In Acts 16, we read the wonderful account of how Paul and Silas, in prison, begin singing praises to God at midnight! They didn't do it quietly because verse 25 tells us the other prisoners were listening. And so was God. *"Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!"*

The poor jailer assuming the prisoners had escaped ran and drew his sword to kill himself. Paul, however, reassured him that all were present and correct, and the man fell down in front Paul and Silas. *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* Their reply was those wonderful words:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

That is every Christian's starting point. From then onwards we must learn how to walk as the new person we are, in Christ Jesus.

If we look at a baby as it grows and then starts to toddle around, you wouldn't expect it suddenly to be able to take off and run down the garden at breakneck speed. It's a process of learning, usually the hard way of bumps and scrapes.

- Can we remember back to the time when we became a Christian?

- Did we think we could be the next Paul, or Billy Graham (for those of that era)?

Micah talks about walking humbly. When you look at the life of Paul, he more than most, had a great deal he could have boasted about. He does say that he was taught by the best teacher, Gamaliel, and he was clearly well-educated. However, in 1 Corinthians 15:9 he says that he was the least of the apostles, not even worthy to be called that because he persecuted the church of God. This was not the Uriah Heep sort of humility, but an acknowledgement of where he had come from and what God had done in his life.

Billy Graham, the man who probably was the means of bringing more people to Christ than anyone, constantly stressed in his preaching: *"THE BIBLE SAYS"*. In other words, it wasn't what he was saying, but rather what God was saying. He turned everything back to the glory of God.

Charles Colson (or Chuck as he was commonly known), served as [Special Counsel](#) to [President Richard Nixon](#) from 1969 to 1970. Once known as [President Nixon's "hatchet man"](#) he became notorious at the height of the Watergate scandal, being named as one of the *Watergate Seven*, and also for pleading guilty to obstruction of justice for attempting to defame Pentagon Papers defendant, Daniel Ellsberg. In 1974, he served seven months in the federal Maxwell Prison in Alabama. Whilst there, in 1973, he became a Christian, a mid-life religious conversion that sparked a radical life change that led to the founding of his non-profit ministry *Prison Fellowship*, three years later to become *Prison Fellowship International*. I heard him speak in the 1980s, and you would be hard pushed to find a humbler man. The complete antithesis of his former political days.

It's not who you were that counts, it's who you are now in Christ.

- How do we develop from that initial conversion to walk as a new person in Christ?
- What are the steps we must take?
- How do we continue to grow?

[Read 2 Timothy 2:15](#)

"Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth".

The Christian walk is not for the shirker! We must put our back into it. Also, it's not all about the hard work, but the wonderful gains.

- Can you think of other New Testament characters who showed they were walking in Christ?
- Do we make sure we know what the 'word of truth' is?
- Scripture tells us we must always be ready to tell others the good news. We must be prepared as Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:2, to "Preach the word". Not from the pulpit necessarily, but over a cup of coffee, or out walking with a friend.

Again, like a baby, it takes time to develop. We start out hesitantly perhaps, but gradually our walking becomes more confident.

Remember also, the words of the gospel song: "*The world behind me, the cross before me*" – that way we keep the right focus.



Prayer

**Father God, strengthen and encourage us as we walk as new people in you.
Help us to get our priorities in the right order.**

Amen