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## WALKING WITH GOD

*Barry O'Dell*

*Walk* is used for the first time in God's word in Genesis 3:8 – "And they heard the voice of the Lord God *walking* in the garden in the cool of the day..." The second time *walk* is used in Scripture is in Genesis 5:22 – "And Enoch *walked* with God..." Barnes' Notes on Genesis 5:22 says, "Walking with God implies community with Him in thought, word, and deed, and is opposed in Scripture to walking contrary to Him." To *walk* with God means that a person not only knows what God's word teaches, but also lives according to it. Both the Old and New Testaments speak of God's people *walking* with Him. This article will, from the pages of the New Testament, examine what it means to *walk* with God.

On his first missionary journey Paul healed a man who had been crippled from birth and those who witnessed it began calling him and Barnabas "gods" (Acts 14:8-11). Upon refusing this response and telling the people that they were only men like them, Paul stated that God had permitted men to "*walk* in their own ways" (Acts 14:15). God will not force anyone to *walk* with Him. There have always been those who refuse to *walk* with God, even within the church. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and *walk* as men" (1 Cor. 3:3)? Before obeying the gospel the Ephesians had, "...*walked* according to the course of this world..." (Eph. 2:2). Man can choose not to *walk* with God. But, what does it mean to *walk* with God and how do we do it?

Paul wrote that after a person is baptized into the death of Christ he should "...*walk* in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). That can only be accomplished when a person crucifies himself (Rom. 6:6), dies to the lifestyle of sin (Rom. 6:11), and determines to be a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:18). Later in the same letter we are told that the Christian is free from the condemnation of sin because he *walks* in the Spirit (Rom. 8:1, 4). Here is what all this means...

***"Walking with God is equated by the Holy Spirit to pleasing God and...without faith we cannot please Him."***

The person who *walks* in the Spirit will not "fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16, 25). The child of God, who has died to sin, will "*walk* worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called" (Eph. 4:1). Those who desire to *walk* with God will have the right attitude (Eph. 4:1-3) and will abide in the right teachings of God's word (Eph. 4:4-6). Children of God will "*walk* in love" because they are followers of God and His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:2). The child of God will *walk* "circumspectly" (Eph. 5:15). The word translated *circumspectly* comes from a Greek word (*akribos*) meaning, "accurately, carefully, or rightly." In other words, in our *walk* with God we must be very careful that we conduct ourselves according to His teaching. Along this same line of thought, Paul wrote, "...let us *walk* by

the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3:16). Paul spoke of mature Christians in verse 15 and commanded them to *walk* by the same standard or measure. That can only be a reference to the word of God because that is the standard for

*walking* the Christian life in this world. The Christian is told to "*Walk* in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5). This thought is similar to the teaching of Jesus that we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). John wrote, "But if we *walk* in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). He also wrote, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children *walk* in truth" (3 Jn. 4).

How is your *walk* with God? In the opening paragraph it was noted that Enoch "*walked* with God" (Gen. 5:22-24). Of this man we later read, "By faith Enoch was translated (literally, put in another place) that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he *pleased* God" (Heb. 11:5). *Walking* with God is equated by the Holy Spirit to *pleasing* God in Hebrews 11:5 and we know that without faith we cannot please Him (Heb. 11:6). The only way we can *walk* with God, that is, please Him, is by walking in the standard of His holy word (Phil. 3:16).

## **GOSSIP AND THE CHILD OF GOD**

*Johnny O. Trail*

Gossip is defined as “conversation about the personal details of other people's lives, whether rumor or fact, especially when malicious.” For the most part, people do not want the intimate details of their lives revealed to every person around them. Things told in confidence—perhaps as a cry for help—should never be shared with other people.

How does one know if he should repeat something or not? Here are a few tests to aid in determining if something is worthy of sharing with another person. One good test regarding shared communication might be, “Would I want it said about me?” Another test might be, “Would this information be helpful or harmful if repeated?” A person might also ask, “Will it edify others if it is commonly known?” Finally, one might ask, “Does this information really need to be repeated?” Gossiping can be serious problem in the church. As God’s people, we must seek to control our tongues. The Bible contains many passages about the manner in which we use our tongues. David wrote, “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Ps. 34:13). He also wrote, “I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me” (Ps. 39:1).

Oftentimes gossip has content that is uncertain or completely false. Psalm 52:2-4 tells us, “Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.” Gossip is often used to stir up controversy or create sensationalism. All lying, which can include some forms of gossip, needs to be done away with in our Christian walk. Solomon wrote, “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood” (Pro. 6:16-17). Gossip does not have to be about things that are contrived or embellished. Gossip can be sensational talk about things that are completely true. Even when we are repeating things that are true, we need to be careful about the manner in which we use our tongues. We should heed the inspired advice of Solomon, “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles” (Pro. 21:23).

Gossip oftentimes circumvents the appropriate method of dealing with conflict in the Lord’s church.

The first thing we are to do is approach the person who has done something to offend us. Matthew records that Jesus told us to contact our brother directly: “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Matt. 18:15). Instead of doing this, some want to talk about a person behind their back while sensationalizing the story to make them seem like the person who is at fault. Such behavior can create division in the Lord’s church.

One does not know the complete story regarding the conflict that existed between Euodias and Syntyche, but their problems had reached the ears of the Apostle Paul. He wrote of the situation, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:2-3). He urged the Philippian brethren to help those two women out of their conflicts. We need to understand that division, doctrinal or otherwise, creates problems in the church. It was important to the Apostle Paul and it should be important to us as well.

Gossip is an inappropriate means of using our tongues. The Bible gives us instructions regarding the appropriate way of leading a godly life. Peter wrote, "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Pet. 3:10-11). Gossiping can lead to egregious evils that injure many people. The simple fact of the matter is we must keep our tongues from evil communications and motives. One is not truly religious until he is able to control his tongue. James said, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain” (Jas. 1:26). When we engage in gossip it makes us less trustworthy in the eyes of other people. Sometimes a person might reason, “If they would say such things about that person, what might they say about me?” People who strive to be leaders in the Lord’s church need to be careful about the manner in which they communicate. By the same token, we all need to be careful about how we use our tongue.

*Johnny preaches for the Sycamore Chapel church of Christ in Ashland City, TN*

***“The Bible contains many passages about the manner in which we use our tongues.”***

## **BROTHERLY LOVE**

*Victor M. Eskew*

The church is described in the Bible as the family or “household” of God (Eph. 2:19). In this household, God is the Father, Jesus Christ is the elder brother, and Christians are the children of God. We have experienced the new birth (Jn. 3:3-5). Upon our obedience to the gospel, God adopted us into this heavenly family (Eph. 1:5). To be in this family is a blessing that springs from the love of God (I Jn. 3:1). In this family, Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ. This relationship is supposed to be a loving relationship. Consider Peter’s words: “Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22). The English phrase “love of the brethren” is one word in the Greek language (*philadelphos*) and is the word from which we get the word “Philadelphia” which means *brotherly love*.

Most of the time when we discuss love, we talk about *agape* love. *Agape* love is the supreme form of love that one can demonstrate for another. It is the love that God demonstrated toward us (I Jn. 4:19). We, however, do not discuss the subject of brotherly love very often. Brotherly love is mentioned seven times in the New Testament: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love” (Rom. 2:10). “But as touching brotherly love ye have no need that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thes. 4:9). “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22). “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pet. 3:8). “And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet. 1:7). “Let brotherly love continue” (Heb. 13:1). With this many exhortations for us to show brotherly love among ourselves, it is imperative for us to understand it and practice it. Let’s examine this type of love in the remainder of this article.

Brotherly love is simply defined as “fraternal love.” Thayer says that it is the “love of brothers and sisters.” He also says: “...in the NT love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren.” What unites Christians as a family is the precious blood of Christ. The bond that they share should be closer than the ties of human blood. The bond should be closer than the blood that binds races and cultures together. It is a spiritual relationship that excels all others. In this relationship, there is a deep fondness that brothers and sisters share with each other.

The words of First Peter 1:22 set forth three elements of brotherly love. He tells us that brotherly love should be *unfeigned*. Unfeigned means “undissembled, without hypocrisy, sincere.” An unfeigned love is the same at all times. It does not display itself one way to a person’s face and another way behind the person’s back. It does not wish a person well outwardly when in the background one is plotting and scheming the individual’s demise.

Second, brotherly love is *pure*. Strong defines the word as “clean.” Some people love others out of corrupt motives. They love in order to see what they can get out of another. Their love appears to be genuine, but the heart displaying the actions is corrupt. When the corrupt heart gets what it wants, the love ceases.

Third, brotherly love is *fervent*. The word “fervently” means “intently.” It is love that is “on fire.” Its warmth and caring can be easily felt by the one loved. The person who is loved will almost think that this love is too much. The one who loves fervently can never love enough and their love just keeps giving and giving and giving.

***“The one who loves  
fervently can never love  
enough...”***

Brotherly love is also a love that involves man’s affections. In other words, the feelings of man are contained in this love. “Be ye kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love” (Rom. 12:10). This love hurts for others. This love rejoices with others. This love has compassion on others. It is a love that will pour out tears on behalf of another. It is not a love that is cold and stand-offish. The person who is loved is drawn toward the deep affections expressed by his brother or sister in Christ.

The importance of brotherly love is found in Second Peter 1. Peter lists brotherly love as one of the Christian graces. “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Read Peter’s words several times. The blessings of the Christian graces, including brotherly love, are enormous and astounding. The Hebrew penman wrote: “Let brotherly love continue” (Heb. 13:1). Amen! Brotherly love among Christians will help us to heal our divisions. Brotherly love will give us a support system that will always be available to us. Brotherly love will draw those in the world to the body of Christ. The world will truly say: “Look at how they love one another!” Yes, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE!

*Victor preaches for the Oceanside church of Christ  
in Jacksonville, FL*

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 PM Worship - 6:00  
 Wednesday Night Class - 7:00

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***Biblical Worship***  
***-Colossians 3:17-***

- Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-24)
- Prayer (Acts 12:5; Phil. 4:6-7)
- Vocal music only (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15)
- Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7-8)
- Preaching (Acts 2:42; 20:7)

***The Churches of Christ***

- Bible only (Rom. 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:3)
- Name (Rom. 16:16)
- Began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4)
- Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)
- Purchased with blood (Acts 20:28)
- Established in 1st century (Acts 2:47)
- Body of Christ and Christ alone is the Head and Savior (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23)
- Added to the church today just as in the 1st century (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13)

***Salvation***

- Belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16)
- Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38)
- Belief, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:37-38)
- Hear, belief, baptism (Acts 18:8)
- Faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)
- Baptism does save us (1 Pet. 3:21)

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