

Walking the Walk #1

Seven questions that will help us live a better life

Intro: We've been reading this week the book of Ephesians. Ephesians explores some wonderful things. Paul shows us that the plan of salvation began in the mind of God in eternity past and reaches into eternity future. He shows us that God purposed in Christ to bring into existence a group of people, who by God's power working in them would be a display of His manifold wisdom. People would look at us and glorify God. But how is all of that to be accomplished?

The answer is by how we as Christians "walk". Seven times in the book of Ephesians Paul talks about walking the walk. Each of these exhortations points to an important dimension to our lifestyle. Based on these exhortations let's consider "seven questions that will help us live a better life".

Is there a real difference between me and the worldly people around me?

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

(Ephesians 2:1-2)

In this passage Paul describes the former walk of the believer who "walked according to the course of this world". And he describes that course:

Lost people follow the path marked out by Satan.

Lost people have a spirit or attitude of disobedience toward God.

Lost people follow their own desires of flesh and mind because Satan appeals to them to get us to disobey God.

Consequently, lost people are children of wrath.

This description of the former "walk" of a believer suggests the kind of change that ought to take place when we are saved.

So we need to ask ourselves this question: "Is there a real difference between me and the worldly people around me?" Or to put it another way, "Has there been a real change in the way of live now as opposed to the way I used to live before becoming a Christian?"

Do I have a different set of goals?

Do I have a higher morals and values?

One indication that we are "walking the walk" is that we can see, and others can see, a noticeable difference in our lifestyle from the typical worldly person.

Are my decisions informed by my own selfish desires or made out of sensitivity to God's revelation?

This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the

ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (Ephesians 4:17-19)

Paul urges Christian to “no longer walk as Gentiles walk” and then describes that walk:

“In the futility of their mind”—based on their own thinking leading to futility or vanity

“Darkened in understanding”—without the light of God’s truth

“with hardness of heart”—with an insensitive conscience

“resulting in sensuality and greed”—manifesting itself in sexual immorality

In contrast here’s how Paul describes the Christian’s life:

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (Ephesians 4:20-24)

The Christian life:

Is lived in the meaningful purpose of God's revelation

Is based on knowing the truth in Christ as it is revealed in the example of Jesus

Results in a renewal in the image of God

Manifests itself in a “new self”

Which way do we walk?

Do I radiate God's love in all that I do?

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

Paul urges Christians to “walk in love”

The Christian walks in love because he has been loved by God—“as beloved children”. He models His behavior after the heavenly Father who loved him.

The Christian walks in love because he has been loved by Jesus Christ.

His love was gracious

His love was sacrificial

Paul applies the message of living with love by contrasting it with what is often confused as love, i.e. “lust”.

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. (Ephesians 5:3-4)

The media often confuses the two. Lust is never love. Look at some expressions: fornication, impurity, sexual greed, filthiness, silly talk, coarse jesting. From the most repulsive to the seemingly harmless sensual remark, all is condemned and none is love!

And so Paul's exhortation to walk in love calls upon us to evaluate every action and think about what motivates our behavior. Is it the love that God and Christ has bestowed upon us and which is flowing through us to others?

Conclusion: Paul will go on to talk about other aspects of the Christian's walk, which we'll consider in our next lesson. But certainly these three questions will enable us to live a better life