

Articles and Sermons :: How to walk with God G , Whithfield**How to walk with God G , Whithfield - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/6/2 13:18**

"And Enoch walked with God." Gen. 5:24

What does it mean to "walk with God"? It means several things. First, that the prevailing power of enmity in a person's heart has been taken away by the blessed Spirit of God. Secondly, that the person has actually been reconciled to God the Father. Thirdly, that the person has an abiding communion and fellowship with God-what in Scripture is called "the Holy Ghost dwelling in us." Finally, walking with God implies our making progress in the divine life. Walking requires a progressive motion. But how does a Christian maintain such a walk with God?

Step One: Read the Scriptures

To begin with, believers maintain their walk with God by reading his holy Word. "Search the Scriptures," says our blessed Lord, "for these are they that testify of me" (John 5:39). And the royal Psalmist tells us that God's Word was a "light unto his feet, and a lantern unto his paths" (Ps. 119:105). He makes it one characteristic of a good man that "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that he exercises himself therein day and night" (Ps. 1:2). "Give thyself to reading," says Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:13). "And this book of the law," says God to Joshua, "shall not go out of thy mouth" (Josh. 1:8). For "whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). And the word of God is "profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, and every way sufficient to make every true child of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16).

If we ever think we are above our Bibles, we shall soon lie open to all manner of delusion, and be in great danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Our blessed Lord, though he had the Spirit of God without measure, yet always was governed by, and fought the devil with "It is written" (Matt. 4:4,6,7). This the apostle calls the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). We may say of it, as David said of Goliath's sword, "There is none like this."

The Scriptures are called the lively oracles of God: not only because they are generally made use of to beget in us a new life, but also to keep up and increase it in the soul. The apostle Peter, in his second epistle, prefers it even to seeing Christ transfigured upon the mount. For after he had said, "The voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount," he added, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arises in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1: 18,19). That is, till we shake off these bodies, and see Jesus face to face. Till then we must see and converse with him through the glass of his Word. We must make his testimonies our counselors and daily, with Mary, sit at Jesus' feet by faith hearing his word.

Step Two: Personal Prayer

Secondly, believers keep up their walk with God by private, personal prayer. The spirit of grace is always accompanied with the spirit of supplication. It is the very breath of the new creature, the fan of the divine life. By it, the spark of holy fire, kindled in the soul by God, is not only kept in, but raised into a flame. Neglect of private prayer has been frequently an inlet to many spiritual diseases, and has been attended with fatal consequences. Origen observed that on the day a certain Christian offered incense to an idol, "he went out of his closet without making use of private prayer." Prayer is one of the most noble parts of the believer's spiritual armor. "Praying always," says the apostle, "with all manner of supplication" (Eph. 6:18).

"Watch and pray," says our Lord, "that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41). And he spoke a parable, that his disciples should pray, and not faint. Not that our Lord would have us always upon our knees or in our closets, to the neglect of our other relative duties. But he meant that our souls should be kept in a praying frame, so that we might be able to say, as a good man in Scotland once said to his friends on his death-bed, "Could these curtains, or could these walls speak, they would tell you what sweet communion I have had with my God here."

0 prayer! Prayer! It brings and keeps God and man together. It raises man up to God, and brings God down to man. If yo

you would therefore, O believers, keep up your walk with God; pray, pray without ceasing. Be much in private, written prayers. And when you are about the common business of life be much in extemporaneous prayer. Send, from time to time, short letters speedily to heaven upon the wings of faith. They will reach the very heart of God, and return to you again loaded with spiritual blessings.

Step Three: Meditation

Holy and frequent meditation is another blessed means of keeping up a believer's walk with God. "Prayer, reading, temptation, and meditation," says Luther, "makes a minister." And they also make and perfect a Christian. Meditation is to the soul what digestion is to the body. Holy David found it so, and therefore he was frequently employed in meditation, even in the night season. We read also of Isaac's going out into the fields to meditate in the evening; or, as it is in the margin, to pray. For meditation is a kind of silent prayer, whereby the soul is frequently (so to speak) carried out of itself to God. Through meditation, the soul is, in a degree, made like unto those blessed Spirits, who by a kind of intuition always behold the face of our heavenly Father.

None but those happy souls that have been accustomed to this divine practice can tell what a blessed promoter of the divine life meditation is. "While I was musing," says David, "the fire kindled" (Ps. 39:3). And while the believer is musing on the works and word of God, he frequently feels the fire of divine love kindle, so that he is obliged to speak with his tongue and tell of the loving kindness of the Lord to his soul. Especially when we meditate on that work of works, that wonder of wonders, that mystery of godliness: "God manifest in the flesh," the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world! Be frequent therefore in meditation, all you who desire to maintain a close and uniform walk with the most high God.

Step Four: Noting God's Providence

Believers keep up their walk with God also by watching and noting His providential dealings with them. If we believe the Scriptures, we must believe what our Lord hath declared therein, "that the very hairs of his disciples' heads are numbered; and that a sparrow does not fall to the ground, (either to pick up a grain of corn, or when shot by a fowler,) without the knowledge of our heavenly Father" (Matt. 10:29). Every cross has a call in it. And every particular dispensation of divine providence has some particular end to answer in those to whom it is sent. If it be of an afflictive nature, God does thereby say, "My son, keep thyself from idols." If prosperous, he does, as it were by a small still voice, say, "My son, give me thy heart."

If, therefore, believers are to maintain their walks with God, they must from time to time hear what the Lord has to say concerning them in the voice of his providence. Thus we find Abraham's servant, when he went to fetch a wife for his master Isaac, eyed and watched the providence of God. By that means, he found out the person that was destined for his master's wife. "A little hint from providence," says pious Bishop Hall, "is enough for faith to feed upon." I believe that it will be one part of our happiness in heaven to look back upon the various links of the golden chain which drew us there. So that those who enjoy most of heaven below, I believe, will be the most diligent in noting God's various dealings with them, in respect to his providential dispensations here on earth.

Step Five: Seek the Guidance of the Spirit

In order to walk closely with God, his children must not only watch the motions of God's providence around them, but they must also take note of the moving of his blessed Spirit within their hearts. "As many as are the sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God" (Rom. 8: 14). They give up themselves to be guided by the Holy Ghost, just as a little child gives its hand to be led by a nurse or parent. It is no doubt in this sense that we are to be converted, and become like little children. However, it is the quintessence of enthusiasm* to pretend to be guided by the Spirit without the written Word. Yet, it is every Christian's bounden duty to be guided by the Spirit in conjunction with the written word of God.

Therefore, I pray you, O believers, to watch the movements of God's blessed Spirit in your souls. Yet, you must always test the suggestions or impressions that you may at any time feel, by the unerring rule of God's most holy Word. And if they are not found to be agreeable to that, reject them as diabolical and delusive. By observing this caution, you will steer a middle course between the two dangerous extremes many of this generation are in danger of running into: I mean, enthusiasm, on the one hand, and deism and downright infidelity on the other.

Step Six: Obedience

Those who would maintain a holy walk with God must walk with him in His commandments as well as in His providences

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Step Seven: Godly Association

Finally, if you would walk with God, you will associate and keep company with others who walk with Him. "My delight," says holy David, "is in them that do excel in virtue" (Ps. 16:3). They were, in his sight, the excellent ones of the earth. And the primitive Christians, no doubt, kept up their vigor and first love by continuing in fellowship one with another. The apostle Paul knew this full well, and therefore exhorts the Christians to see to it that they did not forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25). For how can one be warm alone? And has not the wisest of men told us that, "As iron sharpens iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend"? (Prov. 27:17). If we look, therefore, into church history, or make a just observation of our own times, I believe we shall find that as the power of God prevails, Christian societies and fellowship meetings prevail proportionably. And as one decays, the other decays and dwindles away also. So it is necessary for those who would walk with God to meet together when they can, in order to provoke one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24).

"And Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:24). If those same words can truly be said of you and me after our deaths, we shall have no reason to ever think that we have lived in vain.

* The word enthusiasm literally means "to be possessed by God or gods." Whitefield uses the term to refer to zealous, unbalanced believers who falsely claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit, while casting aside the teachings of Scripture.

** Deism, which was rampant in the 1700's, taught that God was the cosmic Clock Maker, who set the universe in order, but now lets it run on its own without any involvement or intervention from Him.

Re: How to walk with God G , Whithfield, on: 2009/6/3 15:46

Partial Quote:

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Good stuff, as they say. Thank you Brother.