

The Walk of a Lifetime

As you open your final study in this quarter, you will want to bring out that the experience of salvation produces decisive results in the life of a new believer. It takes him abruptly away from his former course of life, and he finds that all things have indeed “become new.” This transformation, though sudden and immediate, should be followed by a progressive and continuous relationship with God. There should be a deepening assimilation of the “mind of Christ” and an ever-closer communion and involvement with Him and His mission. This is, in fact, the ongoing walk of the Christian.

Your students should understand that we are called to walk as Christ walked. This spirit of humility, submission, and self-renunciation—one in which Christ, and not self, occupies the center of our being—is an essential condition of all spiritual progress. You might wish to use this thought as a wrap-up for the lesson and for this quarter of materials.

Response 1— Your students’ definitions of the phrase “the Christian walk” will likely revolve around the concept of appropriate conduct for one who bears the Name of Christ. The verses in Colossians and 1 John bring out that we are to walk in Him, to walk as He walked, and to walk worthy of the Lord. In comparing the Christian walk to the physical act of walking, you might wish to offer the dictionary definition for the word *walk*: “to advance or travel on foot at a moderate speed or pace.” Your students might bring out that the physical act of walking exercises our muscles and requires the expenditure of energy. The Christian walk exercises our “spiritual” muscles, and it, too, requires energy. Walking in the physical also implies progress from one point to another, and in our Christian walk, we are progressing from earth to Glory. Extended periods of walking require stamina, and staying with this Christian walk will re-

Objective

The students will be able to explain what is meant by the phrase “the Christian walk.” They will also be able to describe what is required to maintain a Christian walk that aligns with God’s Word.

Key Texts

Nehemiah 5:9; Psalms 86:11; 101:2; 119:1; Isaiah 30:21; 57:15; 66:2; Ezekiel 11:20; Micah 6:8; Matthew 16:24; Mark 10:43-45; John 8:12; Romans 6:4; 8:1; 2 Corinthians 12:9,10; Galatians 2:20; 5:25; Ephesians 2:10; 5:2,8,15; Philippians 2:3,12,13; Colossians 1:10; 2:6; 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:7; 1 Peter 5:5; 1 John 1:7; 2:6; Revelation 3:4

Other Scriptures Used in This Study

Psalms 138:8; Romans 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5; Ephesians 4:1-3,25-31; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 12:22-29; 1 Peter 4:12,13; 1 John 3:2

Suggested Verse for Memorization

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. — Isaiah 30:21

quire spiritual endurance. In the physical realm, there are obstacles to maneuver around and hills to climb. We will encounter hard spots and trials in our Christian walk also. To maintain physical comfort and to properly support our feet, it is best to equip ourselves with the right shoes for walking. Just so, in our Christian walk, we should equip ourselves with whatever provisions God has made available for us.

Response 2 — Your students’ responses might include personal examples illustrating such truths as: God supplies our needs, God is our defender, God promises divine protection, the importance of faith, and God’s power to heal. Be prepared with an example or two from your own life to stimulate their thinking. Summarize their comments by bringing out one of the most comforting thoughts in the Bible: that someday “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”

(1 John 3:2). God's promise is to perfect that which concerns us (Psalm 138:8) and to someday present us "holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" (Colossians 1:22). The lessons we learn in our Christian walk are bringing us closer to that day.

Response 3 — Your students' responses should bring out the following points:

Nehemiah 5:9 — in the fear of God
Psalm 86:11 — in truth
Psalm 101:2 — with a perfect heart
Psalm 119:1 — in the law of the Lord
Galatians 5:25 — in the Spirit
Ephesians 2:10 — in good works
Ephesians 5:2 — in love
Ephesians 5:8 — as children of Light
Ephesians 5:15 — circumspectly
Colossians 4:5 — in wisdom

Response 4 — Your students should come up with the thought that we must depend on the indwelling Christ to accomplish what we are unable to do in our own strength. Just as Christ was our substitute in death, He is willing to be our substitute in life. In order to avail ourselves of this substitutionary life, we need to acknowledge His presence and power and allow Him to control our lives—even in circumstances we might be tempted to try to handle on our own.

Paul realized this great truth and explained to the church at Corinth that he could actually glory in his infirmities, because it was then that the power and glory of Christ could be most clearly revealed. We limit God when we try to do in our own strength what should be turned over to Him. Though it might not be a case of willful resistance, when we endeavor to find solutions through our own efforts or willpower, we, in effect, tie His hands. Because God will not violate our will, He waits patiently until the moment we give up and acknowledge that He alone is able. Only then will He begin to work fully. The point should be made that this is not a one-time goal to be attained but, rather, a day-by-day process. Thankfully, if we are committed to learning and to practicing this great truth, God patiently reminds us, "Without me ye can do nothing," and then sends lessons to demonstrate this.

Response 5 — Careful study of these verses should reveal that exemplifying humility toward one another can be done in several distinct ways. 1 Peter 5:5 shows the importance of submitting to one another. These verses do not say that we submit only if the other person is correct, holds a higher position, or has done nothing to hurt us. Rather, they indicate the importance of continu-

ally modeling a Christlike attitude by yielding our "rights" through a humble spirit of submission. Mark 10:43-45 shows the importance of patterning after Christ by serving one another. Philippians 2:3 brings out that "lowliness of mind" is demonstrated by esteeming and honoring one another. Ask your students how the quality of humility fits with Paul's admonition found in Ephesians 4:1-3. Why will a humble attitude help maintain the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"?

Response 6 — Your students' comments should bring out that this view of self can lead to many forms of self love, which oppose the words in Matthew 16:24, "let him deny himself." If we are determined to obey this command, our Christian walk will reflect a turning away from asserting ourselves, indulging ourselves, or viewing with approbation any righteousness of our own. We will not put our own interests ahead of others, we will not justify ourselves when criticized or ridiculed, and we will not pity ourselves when affliction or trial comes our way. These are not easy attitudes to maintain, but they are part of the Christian walk that ties in with daily taking up our cross and following Him.

Response 7 — Your students should see that one of the ways we "work out our own salvation" is by maintaining this sensitivity to the leading of the Spirit. When God brings to our attention something that needs correction, we must respond with "fear and trembling." This is not an attitude of terror but is a compelling desire to rectify the matter so no word or act of ours will hinder God's working in our lives. God works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure," by allowing a desire to follow His admonition to rise in our hearts. Then God will help us to take whatever action He has indicated to us. Your students should see that there are actions that grieve the Spirit and others that demonstrate a sensitivity to the Spirit. Ephesians 4:25-31 is a good reference to bring out at this point. Ask your students to offer Biblical examples of those who heard a definite instruction of God—the "word behind them"—and who either obeyed and received God's blessing or disobeyed and received their recompense. Some possibilities are Abraham, who obeyed in his offering of Isaac; and Jonah, who disobeyed God's command to go to Nineveh and, as a result, spent three days and nights in the belly of a whale. It should be brought out that the Spirit does not operate independent of the Word—the Word is the Voice of the Spirit.

Response 8 — These verses reveal that Christians have a number of benefits, both in this world and in the next. They include:

Ezekiel 11:20 — being God's people

John 8:12 — having Light

Romans 8:1 — freedom from condemnation

1 John 1:7 — fellowship with one another

Revelation 3:4 — eternity with the Lord

The Bible also continually holds forth the glory of Heaven as a motivation for Christian perseverance. See Romans 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5,

Hebrews 12:22-29, and 1 Peter 4:12,13.

Conclude this lesson with the thought that our Christian walk might lead us through valleys; we might need to scale some high mountains; we might face obstacles and obstructions; we might be subject to attacks from the enemy of our souls. We certainly will need to expend energy, determination, watchfulness, and endurance. If we persevere, though, the end of our Christian walk will be worth it all!