

"Walking With God"

As the queen of France, Marie Antoinette came to symbolize the glamour, the extravagance, and the decadence of French society before the French Revolution. In her biography, *To The Scaffold: The Life of Marie Antoinette*, Carolly Erickson points out that in a time when the subjects of France were overtaxed, Marie's spending habits were elaborate and excessive. Marie was noted among the people for seeking pleasure in costly entertainments, and for her flamboyant means of dress. She would take the blame for France's plight, and was accused of every imaginable vice. She was tried, convicted of treason, and executed by guillotine. However, as Erickson searched for the positive qualities of Marie's life, she uncovered an interesting observation. When the queen attended parties, dances, and balls, she always attempted to disguise herself. Even though she went incognito, her distinct walk always stood out in the crowd and seemed to give her away. Erickson writes, "When she walked, she strode like a man. Her swift, purposeful gait was her trademark. It was said that she could never successfully disguise her identity at masked balls, for no matter how she dressed, she still walked like an Empress."

Have you ever given much thought to how much the Bible says about our walk? In Genesis 5: 19-24, we are given the limited biography of Enoch, who was one of the heroes of faith. In the small details provided, we are not told Enoch had a perfect record of church attendance, or that he wrote songs and sang in the choir. However, we are told twice in this brief summary of his life, "And Enoch walked with God..." The word "walked" in the Hebrew pictures someone in a constant lifestyle, and Scripturally the word is used as a synonym for our life. In other words, what is seen outwardly in our walk is a display of what we truly possess inwardly. David was known for walking in his integrity. Solomon was noted for walking in the statutes of his father. Paul was acknowledged for walking by faith and not by sight. But, Judas was exposed as walking in darkness. F.B. Meyer said, "Life is a walk from the cradle to the grave..." A walk is made up of steps. Though a man circle the globe, yet he must do it by one step at a time; and the character of the steps will determine the character of the walk." A crooked walk will inevitably find a bend in the road that cannot be negotiated. It is neither the sum, the stride, nor the spring of our steps that matter as much as the substance, the sincerity, and the stability of our walk. Whether we recognize it or not, how we walk says a lot about our life. Just what does your walk say about you?

Walking with God speak of **a life that is marked with purpose**. In Galatians 5:25, Paul writes, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." The word "walk" here is a military term picturing a soldier receiving his orders, and then falling in line as he prepares to march into battle. Staying in step with the Lord is dependent upon the heart lining up obediently in the direction we are being led. As the prophet said in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" To march to the beat of a different drum is to guarantee the missing of many golden opportunities of life. It was as the daughter of Pharaoh "walked along by the river's side" that she found baby Moses. It was "as they walked" that two disciples met the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus. It was "looking upon Jesus as He walked" that John discerned He was the Lamb of God. Author Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing it is not fish they are after." We may learn to walk with others after the day we are born, but not until we learn to walk intimately with the Lord do we find out why we were born.

Walking with God speaks of **a life that is mastered in patience**. In Ephesians 5:16, Paul writes, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." The word "circumspectly" comes from two Latin words which mean "looking around," with the idea in the Greek of walking "exactly and accurately." When my children experienced their first snow, they were so small they could not walk in the depth of the snow without falling over. They patiently stood still while I made a path with my feet that made walking in the snow easier for them. Vance Havner said, "He who waits on God loses no time." Job exhibited this patience when he said, "...by His light I walked through darkness." Peter demonstrated this patience when amidst a raging storm, "...he walked on the water to go to Jesus." Patience is simply the ability to control your impulse to act until the Lord makes His move first. One moment of impatience can take a lifetime to correct. Perhaps that is why the Bible often pictures our journey as a walk and never as a sprint. The steps we take are never more accurate and wise than when we tread where the fresh footprints of the Lord have gone on before us.

Walking with God speaks of **a life that is measured by progress**. In John 5, Jesus encounters a lame man who has layed stationary for thirty-eight years waiting for a miracle. After a brief discussion, Jesus says to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The word "walk" means "to make progress." Far too many have chosen to sit or stand in their journey, but a life that is walking is one that is steadily moving forward. After countless bumps and bruises from learning to ride a bicycle as a child, I finally discovered the secret to not falling over is to keep the bicycle moving forward. However, I would also learn the difference between activity and progress. Riding in circles would mean success, but not necessarily progress. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it - but we must sail, not drift, nor lie at anchor." The further a man walks with God the greater momentum his life will gain. In John 15, Jesus points out that the cultivated life will produce fruit, more fruit, then much fruit. Jairus' daughter went from sleeping, to standing, to walking. The healed lame man in Acts 3 went from standing, to walking, to leaping, then to praising God. Like looking at our old grammar school pictures, a life that is progressing is always marked by recognizable changes.

In Ephesians 4:1, Paul writes, "I...beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." The word "worthy" means "appropriately or suitably." The day we recognize we are preaching everywhere we walk is the day the value of our lives is greatly increased. In 1 John 2:6, John realized that the great task of our lives is "...to walk, even as He walked." When we walk with the Lord, the manner of our walking will resemble the Lord, and that will be a trademark which will always give us away!

Your Most Proud Pastor,
© 2010 Alan Stewart