

WALKING WITH GOD

Fred, a second year theology major, struggled. He wanted to be right with God. He determined that he would become a perfect Christian. He prayed, struggled, and seemed to have a real breakthrough. He was excited as he told one of his classmates, “I have made a list of all the things I need to overcome. I am going to take one of the items on my list every day and work and pray over it till I have mastered it.” He was very sincere. But the list was too long, the temptations too great, the struggle too hard. Fred left college in total discouragement. Later he gave up his faith completely.

Many Christians struggle over how to live in a way that pleases God. Fred had it wrong. He sought to win God’s love by what he would do for God. He

Faith and Good Works

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”

-Ephesians: 2:10

failed to realize that we cannot win God’s love. Fred failed to see that the only way that he as a sinner could be saved is by accepting Jesus’ perfect life in place of his own imperfect life. (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:8-9)

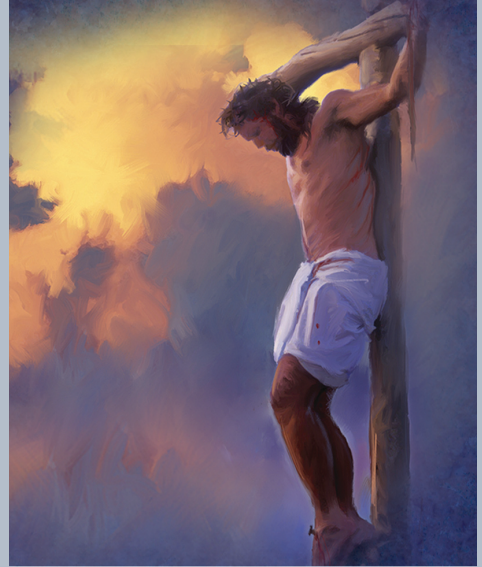
KEY POINTS

Doesn’t a true Christian seek to do everything possible to please God? Paul, shows how our faith makes good works possible, not as a means of salvation, but as a result of Jesus living in us. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians: 2: 10).

The key to living the Christian life is to allow Him to live out His life in us.

Jesus set an example for us. Of His Father He said, “I always do what pleases him” (John 8:29). He indicated that doing what pleases God was better to Him than His daily food, “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4: 34).

Let’s consider some of the things God asks of us. As we look at them carefully we see that in them God has placed a blessing that brings joy. That in doing them we will enjoy a closer walk with Him and in the process will bring Him honor and glory.



A person is saved by accepting Jesus’ perfect life in place of his own imperfect life.



- **The Sabbath:** We are called to the joy of keeping holy the Sabbath day. We do this by not treating it like an ordinary day. (Ex. 20:8-11). On the Sabbath we are not to do our common work. We are to focus on spiritual matters and stay away from the secular. We are not to do as “we please,” but as He pleases! (Is. 58:13-14) It’s a time for worship. A time to spend with family and in nature. A time to do works of ministry, just like Jesus (Mark 1:21:31)



- **Stewardship:** The Bible teaches that everything belongs to God and we are merely the stewards of what belongs to Him. (Ps. 14:1). To help us remember this fact and to live a life of faith in His providence, God asks us to return tithe, 10% of our “increase.” (Malachi 3:10). The tithe belongs to God. We are merely returning it to Him for the use of the ministry of His church. Beyond that, He invites us to give offerings, cheerfully. (2 Cor. 9:7) Offerings are a response to our love for God.



- **Spiritual Life:** In order to be strong physically we must eat, breath and exercise! How does all this apply to our spiritual life? Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6: 35). To be strong spiritually we must feed on God’s word on a daily basis. We need to read and meditate on His Word, the Bible. Someone has said, “Prayer is the breath of the soul.” To maintain a strong relationship with God we need to talk to Him as to a friend. Also, exercise is doing God’s will, acting out our faith in obedience. The best spiritual exercise is sharing the joy you have in walking with God with those around you. Exercise is also becoming active in the church by using the gifts and talents God has given you through His Holy Spirit.



- **Physical Health:** God cares for our bodily health, because He created them! We know God cares about health because Jesus spent so much time healing people. God gives us guidelines to help us optimize our health. Why? Because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:19-20). He counsels us to abstain from things that harm our bodies such as illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco. (Prov. 20:1) Research has shown how important diet is to our health. In Scriptures there are three diets:
 - The recommended diet – vegetarian one given to Adam and Eve. (Gen. 1:29)
 - The permitted diet – given to Noah after the flood, which included clean meats
 - The forbidden diet – the one that excluded eating unclean meats (Lev. 11) – most of which are scavenger animals and fish.



- **Our Dress:** Jesus is our example of humility. God knows the dangers of prideful adornment. Before entering the Promised Land, He ordered His people to take off their adornments. The Bible teaches us not to imitate the immodest styles and proud adornments of the world. “Do not let your adornment be merely outward as in the arranging of the hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of fine apparel, rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God...” (1 Peter 3:3-5). Peter even links our spiritual witness to the way we dress.



TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

The question is, do we really love God? Do we really want to do what God asks us to do? If so, God has given us some basic principles about how to show our love for Him. All of these are expressions of loving God. To walk with God means that we love Him and are deeply committed to Him and seek to be like Him. It is impossible not to imitate those we love. And the wonderful thing is that we ourselves are blessed when we do them.

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

May the Lord open your heart and give you the desire to follow God in all the ways He wants to lead you. The Christian life is a journey of faith; a journey that we don’t take alone. Every step along the way we walk it with Jesus. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy...Amen.” (Jude 24-25).