

## Walks

### Live Like a Christian

Before His ascension to be with the Father, Jesus taught the disciples that He chose to be His apostles. He had been speaking to Peter about what would happen to him in the future. Then Peter said to Jesus, *"But Lord, what about this man?"* referring to John. But Jesus answered him, *"If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me"* (John 21:21-22 NKJV). The message is clear. Each individual is responsible for following Christ as He commands, using the abilities and talents that make them unique in His Kingdom. Each person can contribute a portion of the whole and make the church, His body, the organization Christ wants. The metaphor Paul uses in his letters for following Christ is "Walk." He also uses it to identify some that do not follow Christ according to the gospel but walk the wrong way *"For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies"* (2 Thessalonians 3:11).

Paul used the word walk 32 times in his letters, including six times to the Ephesians. The Ephesians and the Colossians were facing false teachers. The gnostics were growing strong in their thoughts rather than the Spirit's teaching and causing trouble with *"will worship"* (Colossians 2:23 KJV). The NASV translated it as self-made religion. The letter to Colossae deals with vain philosophies and human error. But the letter to the Ephesians begins with the deity of Christ as head of the church and His authority to direct our steps as we follow Him. The letter explains that God works for His own glory, Jesus works for God's glory, and as followers of Christ, we should also work for God's glory by walking, conducting ourselves in a way that glorifies God. Ephesians Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are an encouragement to walk, live daily, according to Christ's teaching, transformed from worldliness to do His will. (Ephesians 2:10).

Chapter four begins with a discussion on unity, the oneness of God, His work, and the plan of salvation. (Ephesians 4:1-6). Paul explains the reason for **walking in unity**, *"that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"* (Ephesians 4:14-16).

In (Ephesians 4:17-5:21) Paul appeals for a new morality and gives reasons and ways to adapt it into our lives. Paul begs Christians to discard all traces of their past life in sins as they would filthy clothing and surround themselves with the virtues and excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, *"you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"* (Ephesians 4:18-19). Paul enumerates a few things in the following verses: Put away lying and speak only truth. Be angry but do not sin. Remove anger from the heart. Do not give the Devil an opportunity to tempt. Let the one who stole give it up and work to restore and have something to give to the needy. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by your words or actions. Put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. Instead of these, *"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:32).

Paul gives guidance to help accomplish the dos and don'ts on the list. First is "*Be imitators of God, as beloved children; and **walk in love***" (Ephesians 5:1-2). Second, "*You are Light in the Lord; **walk as children of Light** (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:8-10). And third, "***Be careful how you walk**, not as unwise men but **as wise, making the most of your time**, because the days are evil*" (Ephesians 5:15-16).

To carefully walk as wise in Christ means to be filled with what the Holy Spirit teaches. Paul lists three ways to show the effects of the Spirit-filled person. That person speaks to others "*in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:19). That person always gives "*thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God*" (Ephesians 5:20). And That person is "*subject to others in the fear of Christ*" (Ephesians 5:21).

Are we careful of how and where we walk, making sure we follow Christ in the way He directs?