

It is Time You Start Walking With God

Touched By The Light Publishing

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

TOUCHED BY THE LIGHT PUBLISHING

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Your best friend or a family member will appreciate a copy of this book. It is important that we continue to encourage ourselves in our walk with God. It is important that we continue to read, study, and mediate (Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) so that in times of trouble we will not falter but gird our loins (2 Timothy 2:3 Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus) and stand for right, not evil. I shall be a farmer for life, planting seeds of hope wherever I go.

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

This book was written so that you can immerse yourself in the word to lead you to a relationship with God, causing your salvation and a successful walk through life. There is power in the word.

This book contains extremely sensitive information; our apologies and condolences to the reader if this information is regarding a relative, loved one, and/or friend. Although this book contains in certain areas explicit descriptions of violence, extreme care was taken to allow the victims as much dignity as possible. As you read, you will realize that these descriptions were made to expand our understanding of violence and to prevent violence against women and children and violence in our communities.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

READING HELPS TO SHAPE A MAN'S THOUGHTS

And God said, "Son, pay attention to what I say. Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart. They will give life and health to anyone who understands them. Be careful what you think, your life is shaped by your thoughts."

Proverbs 4:20-23

Since you are reading this page you are trying to make up your mind whether or not you want to purchase this book. The cover has attracted you, so you have decided to open the book and browse. You are asking yourself the question: "Do I want to purchase this book?" My answer to you is "Yes!" It is a resounding "Yes!" Yes, you want to purchase this book because reading this book will change your life. Reading is an activity like none other. The consequences of reading are extraordinary just as the consequences of not reading are extraordinary. Without reading you will live your life in darkness. You can sit before an orchestra where the music will thrill you to passion and for a while your spirit will soar. You can turn the radio on in your car and the music will carry you away but there is nothing like reading. Reading will not only transport you to another place and time, it will change the circumstances of your life forever. Reading will carry you to the future where you will see possibilities. Reading will send you to the past where you will see potential.

Music provides a temporary high to relieve you from your surroundings, whereas reading can lead you to a permanent relief from everything around you. Reading can change your reality, transforming you into a new person. You can read one paragraph and say "Why not?" or "Of course!" You can read one

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

book and say “I never thought of that!” and read a second book and say “If only I had known this before!” You can see one word on the page and say to yourself “That could be me. I have possibilities in my life.” Once you begin reading in earnest you will realize that you can learn from reading about how a man failed in his life just as well as from how a man succeeded in his life. In fact, learning how a person failed is a good road map for success, because failure always provides you with an alternative point of view.

Think of the man who decided to construct the street light, or to design the fire hydrant, or to design the light bulb. Where did these ideas come from? What was the source of their inspiration? One source of these inventions was reading. Reading allows for the accumulation of information. When this information is assimilated in the human brain an idea is born. One invention sparks another invention that sparks another great idea until finally man is raised to an enhanced state of existence. Reading provides the recipe for originality.

A man says to himself there must be a better way. He goes to a library trying to find that better way. He reads and reads and reads, assimilating information looking for that “better way.” If he does not find that “better way” in the books he has read, he has still learned something. He has learned that he has to invent the better way. This time he begins to read books looking for ideas to help him as he invents. In the book Father Hunt, by Rex Stout (1886-1975), who wrote over 70 detective novels, the character, Nero Wolfe, makes a brilliant point that I will never forget regarding how an idea is born. Rex Stout wrote Father Hunt in 1968. I read the book in 1976 and I still remember Nero Wolfe’s preoccupation of how his sidekick, Archie Goodman, came up with the idea of a silver abacus being owned by Paul Revere. Archie Goodman told Nero Wolfe that he used the possible existence of a silver abacus owned by Paul Revere to gain an interview with a wealthy businessman. Paul Revere

never owned a silver abacus but the possibilities of such an item triggered the imagination that allowed for the interview.

During the publication of this book I spoke to three men. Each man made a negative comment regarding reading. One man said that no one would read each individual name on the list in the book. The second man said no one would purchase the books because people were too busy worrying about money to read or to purchase a book. In hard times no one buys books. What American woman would be interested in what I had to say to purchase a book? The third man said some of the books were too large that no woman would take the time to read the books. He said the number of pages in each book would immediately turn women off. No woman or man would purchase a book consisting of four hundred to five hundred pages. Needless to say I was disheartened for a second. Then I sat and thought about their comments. Their words were not complimentary to women or to people in general. They believe that there is nothing to life during hard times but meat and potatoes. Grayness had descended on the earth. Life was so brutal that reading could be ignored. I decided to persevere. These men had to be wrong. I continued to believe that reading, regardless of the number of pages in a book, is seen as an activity that enriches the soul and enlightens the mind. It leads men and women to greater and greater heights and inventions. The fate of America will be decided by how well we nourish our minds and assimilate information to continue our growth. I shall continue to believe that people will see that reading leads to a better life.

Then you read you can learn to eat healthy and to better manage your money and life. Reading allows you to quickly prepare for a dinner party or help you impress a friend. When you read you are open to adventure and confidence bathes your spirit. Reading is the commencement of light and the cessation of darkness. Reading is the activity that puts the soul to flight.

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

If you desire a change in the status and wealth of your life, then reading is an activity that you can ill afford not to do.

Knowledge is Your Best Weapon Against Evil

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

“Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Preface

Psalms 34:13-15, 17-22

*“Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and **none of those who trust** in Him shall be condemned.”*

There is always a path we walk in life. Some paths cause us to walk with the world. Other paths cause us to walk with God. The paths we walk with the world are supposed to take us to knowledge, fame, and fortune. Sometimes the world’s paths take us where we want to go and other times these paths lead us to exactly what we do not want. Parallel to the paths we walk with the world are the paths set before us by God. There is no mystery associated with these paths. When we walk with God, we are led to the purpose of our lives. God identifies these paths in verses such as Psalms 34:13-14. If we follow the advice in these promises, we should meet with prosperity and fortune; yet when we begin our walk with God, our interests and desires influence us so that we take little short detours, seeking a faster resolution to our situation. Often these short little detours lead us to temporary wealth and fleeting happiness.

What all of us have to face in life is that there comes a time when we must decide that we must walk with God regardless because our destiny lies within the path God sets us upon as He did Paul. If we give our situation some thought, we realize that there are so many unknowns in our lives that we do not have that much time to take the number of detours that we want to

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

take: “Oh if only I had steered the course I would still be married, I would still be in school, I would still have custody of my child, my son would not be in prison, I would still have a job.” Instead of your saying “if only” for the rest of your life, make up your mind once and for all to walk with God.

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Do not share this book or give this book away, for this is my seed to you and to the Lord. These books represent ten years of my life when I was called and had to decide to serve the Lord and to work on His behalf. Your growth from my seed will carry my spirit into the next generation. This book should be read over and over again until the information is planted into your heart (spirit) and comes out of your mouth as a creative force, signifying your connection with the Lord who created you.

Chapter One	Walking With God.....1
Chapter Two	What is Expected of You59
Chapter Three	The Gift of Obedience63
Chapter Four	The Faith That is Needed.....67
Chapter Five	The Power Promises.....85
Chapter Six	Reaping and Sowing.....91
Chapter Seven	My Pledge for Manifestation.....117
Chapter Eight	The Power Verses.....,121
Chapter Nine	Mending Relationships.....127

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

It is Time to Start Walking With God

The question is: "Will you Trust God and Change?"

xv

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

Introduction

It is Time You Start Walking with God. You cannot take the nourishment of your mind lightly. You cannot assume that the voices you are exposed to every day are feeding you the proper nourishment you need to live a successful life. You must question the conduct of others and separate yourself from any man who does not live by the word of God. The thoughts of your mind come from your spirit. Your spirit leads you to action. So if your actions have led you away from God, you need to consider who it is that is feeding your mind and affecting your soul.

It is the Devil's goal to separate you from God. The Devil will begin with a nudge, then with a pull, and finally with a tug so that you can take a plunge into darkness where you will stay until eternity. To avoid the cistern of darkness, you must take time for reflection. Analyze your conduct and consider what you believe is right and what you believe is wrong. Ask yourself: "Can I walk with God if I commit adultery or fornicate? Can I walk with God if I lie to my coworkers or mistreat my customers?" If you are doing these things, then you are not walking with God. You have pushed Him from your life and you are allowing the Devil and his helpers to entice you into a world of sin and debauchery. Your division from God does not have to be as blatant as adultery or fornication; it can be as small as not caring for your fellow man or purchasing pornography. You must sit down and decide once and for all who you are and what type of life you want to lead. You are the one in control.

Just consider this: walking with God is not difficult. He offers you the same pleasures as the world offers. Only the consequences are different.

John 3:17-19

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

CHAPTER ONE

WALKING WITH GOD



Everything in life boils down to one question: “What are you going to do?” You have to make up your mind. You have to answer the question, “What am I going to do?” What are you going to do? What are you going to do with the rest of your life? Are you going to continue to struggle every day of your life, or are you going to find a better way to live? Not **try** to find a better way to live, but actually find a better way to live? Deciding what you are going to do with your life is the only decision you have to make in life. You must continuously answer the question, “What am I going to do with my life?” If you focus on this question, all other decisions will be made with respect to your answer. You must realize that all of life’s dramas are based on how you answer the question, “What am I going to do with the rest of my life?”

The way you answer this question will either take the fear, worry, and indecision out of your life, or it will increase the fear, worry, and indecision in your life. If you fail to answer this question altogether, and allow the world to tell you what to do with your life, your destruction is guaranteed. What are you going to do with the mess you have made of your life by following other people? What are you going to do with your children? What are you going to do about the wife whom you tell yourself that you do not love anymore? What are you going to do about the husband whom you say you do not love anymore? All of these questions rest on your answer to “What am I going to do with the rest of my life?” Are you going to run and hide? Are you going to commit adultery, do drugs, or drink yourself to death so that you can make your children ashamed of you? Or are you going to make the decision to follow God? The only right answer to these questions is, “I am going to

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

follow God.” When you answer this question in the affirmative for your life, you are going to gird up your loins and join the rest of us who are fighting to live a better life without being swallowed up by the world. **1 Peter 1:13:** *“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* You are going to allow the word of God found in the Bible to guide you and to help you during times of stress, hurt, and sorrow. The Bible is a guide, describing the doctrine of God and the conduct of man with respect to this doctrine. The Bible will either keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible. Either you are a Christian or you are not. Either you will sin or you will not sin. **1 John 5:12:** *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”* Either you prescribe to the fact that Jehovah is manifested as the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit and the world was made by God speaking the world into existence, or you consider God a useful invention. You must make up your mind. Truly make up your mind once and for all. Are you a Christian, and are you going to follow God?

Consider this for a second: Take a walk through the cemetery and look at the head stones. Read the names. Now ask yourself: How many of these people do you know? Or can you walk for hours and not meet one name that you know? How many of these people are remembered? How many of these people lived aimless lives because they did not answer the question, “What do I want to do with my life?” How many of these people died angry at the circumstances of their life? How many of these people died not knowing the love and power of God? If you do not want to be one of the people whom no one remembers, or the person who lived an aimless life, then you need to answer this question once and for all, and then you need to stand by your answer.

After the authority on earth was given to the Devil by Adam, Jesus had to come to earth to take this authority back and to redeem man, placing the gentiles in line to receive God’s blessing. **Matthew**

12:18: *“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, my Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles.”*

This was not a task man could do for himself. Man was not able to take his authority back. The guiles of the Devil kept leading man further and further into sin, lengthening the gap between man and God. When Adam relinquished his authority, murders began to occur on the earth and robberies began to occur on the earth. Every time a man was born, sin followed that birth. **Romans 5:12-14:** *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.”* Men were filled with jealousy and greed. There were wars and pestilence with no end in sight. Jesus died to free you from the curse of lack in every area of your life, including your body. It is only by living a righteous life, following the example of Jesus, that we can hope to end the cycle of lust and violence created by the Devil.

You must make up your mind to accept two scriptures from the Bible: **2 Timothy 3:16** *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”* and **1 Thessalonians 2:3** *“For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.”* Is there a God or not? If so, are you going to walk with Him? You can resist the Devil once you make up your mind once and for all, that no matter what, you are committed to walking with the Lord. The Bible was written to guide man and help mankind live a happier life.

Philippians 2:1-18: *“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any*

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”

Reread these scriptures. From Philippians 2, we learn that there is some work associated with your choice of being a Christian, following God. There are expectations of both parties in the walk of man and God. God’s word represents the believer’s expectations of God, and entwined in these promises are the tacit or reciprocal

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

promise of man: the vow of obedience. For every promise of God man makes a vow, the same vow: the vow of obedience. Think about it. God says that if you are obedient, He will do such and such. In another promise, God says that if you are obedient, He will do something else. The list goes on and on. God makes a thousand promises and man's only obligation is obedience. We must believe in Him, rely on Him, and follow His commandment of love. That is all that is required of us.

God's word represents His promises and His responsibilities to us as believers. These promises were not solicited or negotiated by us as a contract that God had to fulfill; these promises were freely given to us as a covenant sworn to by God because of our frailties. This covenant was made to Abraham hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years ago, but the covenant is still binding. All of mankind is to benefit from God's promises. We all want something from God. We want freedom from sickness, money to purchase all of the things we desire, a life of leisure, and restoration. But in our search for the fulfillment of our desires, we must remember our promise of obedience to God.

Do you accept that Adam sinned against God by being disobedient? That because of this disobedience, man was separated from God and Jesus had to make the ultimate sacrifice to restore the relationship between man and God?

Do you accept **Psalms 19:8-10** as being true? *“The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.”* Do you truly understand **Galatians 3:13-14** that *“Salvation is the gift of God to man, separate from works and the law, and is made operative by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, producing works acceptable to God”*.

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

When you accept Psalm 19:8-10 and Galatians 3:13-14 and hold fast to these ideas, your walk with God will be easier; it will not be froth with indecision and doubt. Here is a promise God made to man instructing man to help the poor:

Deuteronomy 15:7-11: *“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, But you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,’ and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works, and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor, and your needy, in your land.’”*

When you protect and help the needy, God will bless all of your work. The needy in our country should not be allowed to suffer nor to be ridiculed for their condition or put on display.

In **Mark 11-25-26**, God promises to forgive when we forgive: *“And when ye stand praying. Forgive, If ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”* **11 Chronicles 20:20** is another promise of God: *“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believes his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”* **Luke 6:38** is yet another promise: *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”* Guess what?

Another promise is **Matthew 17:20**: “*Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*” In **John 3:16**, everlasting life is promised: “*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” Another promise is **Romans 10:9**: “*If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*” Jesus promises in **John 16:23**: “*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*” In **Matthew 18:19**, “*If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*” In **Matthew 18:18**, “*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*” **Proverbs 4:20-22** and **1 John 1:9** are two extremely important promises: “*My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings, Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*” **1 John 1:9** “*If you confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

These promises are tools man can use to protect himself from disease, illness, and premature death while living on the earth with the Devil. These promises will help you throughout your life and aid you in preserving your family.

Look at these promises. These promises include forgiveness, prosperity, charity, everlasting life, how to be saved, how to be in health, and the cleansing of unrighteousness. All man has to do to receive the benefit from these promises is one thing: be obedient. The only stipulation to these promises is obedience. God says, *If you obey me, I will provide.* So you see, for a few seconds of getting even with someone for a past injury, you give up the promise of

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

everything. There are over five thousand promises in the Bible available to man. These promises help to build man's confidence in God, and the promises help to build man's confidence as a son of God. These promises are a firm covenant, permanent throughout your lifetime, because these promises were established by God. This covenant is binding for both parties. For as long as you live, you are supposed to be obedient to God and God is supposed to provide for you as long as you live. This is why God says that if you know of Him, and don't follow His commandments, He will not forgive you.

We must truly understand that Adam's actions brought us death. There was no sickness until sin came into the earth through the Devil. The Devil is responsible for all of the pain and suffering on earth. He uses the pain and suffering to cause man to sin again and again. Sin opens the door to death. Sickness is merely a delayed form of death. Death is the eventuality of sickness. Jesus' actions brought us life. His death allowed for the atonement of our sins. Man did absolutely nothing to earn his salvation. It is through grace that we walk with salvation in the days when the Devil is still trying to defeat man for the dominion of the earth.

Do you truly understand? **Romans 3: 21-26:** *“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”*

The salvation of your child lies with the decision you make today. The quality of your child's life rests with the decision you make

today. The length of your child's life rests with the decision you make today. Look at Abraham, for example. Look at the number of sons he had. Look at the number of sons his sons had. Look at their lives: though smitten with strife and disappointment, all of his sons survived and died of old age as did Abraham. Can you do less for your child? The decision you make today will determine if your child finds the world attractive or God attractive. **Ephesians 2:8-10**: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

Your life was not created for you to live meaninglessly. God created you with a purpose in mind. You can find the purpose for your life by spending time with God, asking Him for His leadership. God is available 24 hours a day. He does not have a time schedule. He is available for consultation any time you desire, to give you instructions and guidance whenever you feel the need for these things.

Ephesians 2:19-22: *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."*

When you are raising children, there are two passages that should stay in your mouth and be continuously on your mind. These passages are **Matthew 18:19**: *"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven"* and **1 John 5:14-15**: *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God; that if we ask anything*

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us... whatever we ask... we know that we have what we asked of him." These two passages assure you that God will help you in your task as a parent. You are not helpless. There is always God's word.

You cannot afford to begin your day in unbelief or end your day in unbelief. If you spend your time studying, searching, and seeking God, this unbelief will leave you. When you find yourself suffering under doubt, put yourself to sleep with God's word on your lips. And when you wake in the morning, put God's word on your lips.

2 Timothy 2:15-26: *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." 20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. 22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses*

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

and escape from the trap of the Devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”

God’s purpose for your life is not poverty. God’s purpose for your life is for you to have more than enough of what you need in life. Concealed in this purpose is God’s purpose for the world. God wants you to have more than enough so that you can be a blessing to others and so that your life will shine and glorify God. He wants others to see the glory that serving Him brought into your life.

God does not want you living on the edge, worrying about how you are going to make it until the next day, how you are going to pay your light bill, or whether or not you will be able to feed your children. Jesus did not return to the earth to remove sin from our lives so that we could be made righteous only for us to fall back into sin and live lives of desperation. The Devil brought poverty to the earth through sin. The Devil wants pestilence to exist across the world so that poor health and lack will become a burden to man. So man will be weighed down with illness, worry, and strife. Once man is burdened down with illness, worry, and strife, man will be more susceptible to sin again and again. Man will seek a girlfriend for solace and relief from his suffering, rather than his wife. The Devil loves adultery.

God intended for man to be happy while living on the earth. He told Adam to be fruitful and to multiply. He gave Adam dominion over the earth. God had to have increase on his mind when He presented Eve to Adam. He made Eve with the capacity to have children, which means that He wanted Adam and Eve to multiply. Multiplication means increase. It means to improve one’s status on earth. God wanted Adam and Eve to live in a permanent state of happiness, not to be burdened down with illnesses, quarrels, and contentions. There was no death until Adam’s sin. Once he sinned, the negativity began. His son Cain was a negative thinker. Cain slew his brother because of his jealousy. Instead of being enthusiastic about life, Cain became obsessed with his brother, making Cain

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

look shallow and cheap. When Abel gave the Lord the best of everything he had, this gift showed that Cain withheld the best he had for himself. After the offering, Cain learned that God was not happy with his offering, Cain compared himself to Abel. This comparison led Cain to kill Abel.

We must see the connection between sin, lack, and jealousy, not just in Cain's life but in our lives. Take a look at your life. Now look at the moments when you sinned. Now, think of the consequences of your actions. Your secrets weren't really secrets, were they? You sin was not actually concealed. When the Devil was ready, he let the sin explode in your face. You let an argument you had with your boyfriend overcome you, so that in his anger, your boyfriend told your friends everything: all of your secrets, all of your sexual fantasies. Your mother learned of the films you made. Your father learned how you danced in the club. Your behavior caused your parents great grief and sorrow. You became the laughingstock of your neighborhood. Eventually, all the women at work found out about your little sexual parties after work. The source of their knowledge was your boyfriend, who worked on the docks. He was too happy to tell everyone in his anger how repulsed he was that you engaged in such acts. When the Devil has you engaged in what you think is a little sin, the Devil has a backup plan ready to destroy you. The Devil is always contemplating his next move to get you closer and closer to your next act of self-betrayal until finally he has snared your soul. The Devil is a master at baiting and switching. What you think is a little sin that no one could possibly find out about will turn out to be just the sin that will destroy you and your family, the sin that will set your children on a life of destruction.

If you are living a sin-filled life, then you are not living the life God wants for you. The only way to solve this situation is for you to try God.

Examine some of the conversations God had with the men in the Bible. Almost all of his conversations were to stop men from

sinning and for encourage men to increase in their life. When God spoke to Abraham, He told Abraham that He wanted Abraham to multiply; He deemed that the earth would be filled with Abraham's descendants. Is this not increasing? God had the same plan for Abraham that He had for Adam. Adam failed God. He sinned, so God's purpose was not fulfilled in Adam's lifetime. Abraham held onto his faith and God's purpose was fulfilled in his lifetime.

God called Abraham when Abraham was 75 years old. God waited 75 years before He told Abraham his purpose in life. God waited 75 years to call Abraham to his purpose of being the father of many nations, the same purpose as Adam. God promised Abraham an heir. Abraham ignored the fact that his body and his wife's body were aging and left his family for the land God promised to him. Abraham believed that if God said something, then it would come to pass: *"Thy seed and all the nations of the world shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice."* (Genesis 22:18) Read **Genesis 22:18** again: *"Thy seed and all nations of the world shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice."* God had the same purpose for Adam: to bless Adam's descendants and make Adam the father of many nations.

At age 75, Abraham's hands should have been gnarled, his back bent, and his shoulders drooping, yet God called Abraham to move with his wife and all of his possessions to Canaan. Imagine what Abraham's family said when he told them he was moving. They must have thought Abraham a fool for moving to another land to start life all over again at the age of 75. Abraham endured the controversy and hardship of moving to a new land, and after arriving, he had to endure a famine. God told Abraham that He would give him an heir and that he would prosper. Abraham had to believe God for eleven years before he had Ishmael. After the birth of Ishmael, God told Abraham that Ishmael was not the seed God had promised Abraham. Abraham had Ishmael, but Ishmael was not the right son to continue Abraham's line. God told Abraham

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

that he would give his wife, Sarah, a child. Again Abraham had to wait.

Abraham had to believe God for thirteen more years (4,745 days) until Isaac was born.

Romans 4:18-20: *“Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver, at the promise of God through unbelief, but as strengthened faith, giving glory to God.”*

Remember: the most important thing to Abraham was having a child. For years, he endured the humiliation of not having a male heir. Without a male heir, all of Abraham’s labor was for nothing. Abraham would not exist in the next generation of men populating the earth. Abraham wanted his seed to continue, but by age 75 he knew there was no reason to hope that his prayers would be answered because in the natural world men and women did not have children at the age of 75. Yet God spoke to Abraham. **Romans 4:21:** *“Being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”*

Picture Abraham at the age of 35. He and Sarah were probably married about ten years with no children. He had gone to her tent often at night, expecting soon to hear her tell him she was with a child. This did not happen. Day in and day out he prayed, but nothing happened. Not one word from God did he hear. We know Abraham prayed to God because Abraham was definitely a religious man and he did believe in God. For the next five decades (18,615 days), Abraham had to endure the indignities of not having a child, not even a female child where at least there would be conversations of a suitor, a wedding, and possible grandchildren. Everyone else

around him was having children, yet Abraham suffered. Did he not think that maybe if he had married someone else he could have had children? How hard it must have been for Abraham to get up each morning (18,615 days) and work hard, knowing he had no one to leave the fruits of his labor to. Imagine the pain Abraham and Sarah experienced, believing that God had forgotten them, that God had no purpose for them except to be shepherds with no heirs. God brought Abraham to the age of 75 before He began manipulating Abraham's life.

Abraham was 175 years old when he died. Between the ages of 75 and 175, Abraham had eight sons.

Abraham was 86 years old when he had his first son, Ishmael (who lived 137 years), from his union with Hagar. Abraham was one hundred years old when he had his second son, Isaac. Abraham had to wait thirteen more years before Isaac was born. He had to believe in God for thirteen more years for his dream. Abraham was 128 years old when he married Keturah. Their union produced six sons: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Go through the scripture yourself and see with your own eyes just how many sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons Abraham had.

Abraham believed and hoped, even when there was no reason for hoping, and so became "the father of many nations." Just as the scripture says, "Your descendants will be as many as the stars." He was then almost one hundred years old, but his faith did not weaken when he thought of his body, which was already practically dead, or of the fact that Sarah could not have children. His faith did not leave him, and he did not doubt God's promise; his faith filled him with power and he gave praise to God. He was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what He had promised. That is why Abraham, through faith, "was accepted as righteous by God." (**Romans 4:18-23**) God spoke a blessing over Abraham and his seed, all because Abraham was obedient to God and lived God's purpose for his life.

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

As stated before, we are so busy discussing the life of Jacob and Joseph that we do not pay more attention to the end of Abraham's life. Abraham lived to be 175 years old. He not only lived to see Isaac to manhood, he married a second time and had his third male child at the age of 129. Abraham continued to live and have children until his death. Abraham was called by God at the age of 75 and died at the age of 175; God gave Abraham one hundred more years to live in his service. That is a magnificent achievement. Remember the promise Jacob made to God in **Genesis 28: 20?** *"If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on...and of all that you give me I will surely give a tenth to You."*

This vow was made while Abraham was alive. By the age of 75, Abraham had given God a lifetime of obedience and faith.

Abraham had the life he had because of his obedience to God and his belief in God. If you decide to walk with God, you must be prepared for change. Abraham did not remain the same when he was called into God's service, when he was called to step into the purpose of his life. At this very moment you may be contemplating walking with God and you are probably questioning all of the ramifications of taking this step. You may be wondering: "What will I have to do? What will I have to become? Will I be much different than I am now? Will I like walking with God?" One thing you must realize when you take the leap of faith is that you will be required to change. There is no way around it; walking with God is like no other experience in your life. You will be required to stretch and become a new person (remember Paul's transformation). You cannot continue to respond to your environment the way you used to do. As you seriously contemplate making this change, ask yourself this question: "Am I satisfied with the way I am living now?" If you are satisfied with the way you are living, then continue as you were. But if you are not satisfied with your circumstances and surroundings, then maybe you need to try Jesus. Consider this passage in the Bible:

Mark 3:1-6: *“Again Jesus went into a synagogue, and a man was there who had one withered hand (as a result of an accident or disease). And the Pharisees kept watching Jesus closely to see whether He would cure him on the Sabbath, so that they might get a charge to bring against Him. And He said to the man who had the withered hand. Get up and stand here in the midst. And He said to them, ‘Is it lawful and right on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil to save life or to take it?’ But they kept silence. And he glanced around at them with vexation and anger, grieved at the hardening of their hearts, and said to the man. ‘Hold out your hand.’ He held it out, and his hand was restored. Then the Pharisees went out and immediately held a consultation with the Herodians against Him, how they might devise some means to put Him to death.”*

Here we see two dramas taking place. The Pharisees are waiting and plotting, looking for any excuse to take Jesus' life. They would not be standing near Jesus watching him if they did not believe that he could heal people. Yet their envy and jealousy override their good sense. If you were in the presence of a man who could heal you and any sick person in your family, would you not allow this person to heal you, and would you not go get all of your family members and have him do the same for them? Yet the minds of these men are so clouded with hatred that they cannot see. They have the same sight and spirit as Cain. Not only are they full of hate, but two rival factions of Jews have joined together to come up with a solution to the “Jesus Question.” The Pharisees and the Herodians were at odds until it came to Jesus. They were united against him. Look at their thinking: they turned away from Jesus based on religious rhetoric and procedure. They could not see the forest for the trees.

Jesus was doing well by his neighbors and friends and was helping the community as a whole. Was the welfare of Jerusalem and the outlying area not important to the Pharisees? Did they not

want the people to live healthy lives? A healthy person can contribute much more to his or her community than a sick person. A sick person is a burden on the family and the community. Is not a thief or murderer more of a burden than a person who is healed mentally? The Pharisees did not care about any of this: they wanted Jesus dead. They had had enough of him.

The Herodians and the Pharisees did not care about any of these factors. All they were concerned about was catching Jesus doing something wrong so that they could kill him. Is that not wicked? Is that not hateful and evil? These two factions put their needs and desires above the needs and desires of their community. As far as they knew, Jesus could have continued to heal people far into the future, thereby changing the face of Jerusalem drastically. But their egos had to be satisfied; their lust for power and influence had to be quenched. The only way to satisfy their lust was to devise a way to kill Jesus. Read the book of Matthew carefully. You will see that everywhere Jesus went, the Pharisees were lurking in the background, noting any infraction they could see Jesus and his disciples committing. They even noted that Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands on one occasion. Is that not obsessive behavior? These were men of stature in the community, but they were reduced to behaving like common spies, all for the purpose of finding justification to kill a man. Act these scenes out in your own mind. Do you see the evilness that had to exist inside these men for them to maintain a constant vigil over the meetings of Jesus and his ministry? Their evilness was a sickness spreading throughout their organization: men of intellect consumed with murdering one man. For years the story of Jesus has been told, but it has never been told from the point of view of the men who hounded Jesus from campsite to campsite. No one has ever examined their minds. The overriding act was the crucifixion, but the evil deeds that led up to Jesus dying on the cross were nothing but pure evil: evil living in the heart of men. Ask yourself how long have you ever held anger against a person: a month, a year, or two years? Imagine yourself in the Pharisees' place. How long could you keep watching and

plotting against someone? How much of your life would you be willing to invest to destroy your enemy, a person who has not injured you but who you feared because you disagreed with Him?

The second thing that is going on in Mark 3:1-6 is that there is a man who has presented himself before Jesus to be healed. The circumstances of his life are such that he needs Jesus to come into his life to change it. He has a withered hand, which means he cannot labor as other men do to earn a living. He has limited prospects in life. What woman will want to marry him? How can he support a wife even if he did find a woman who would marry him? What would become of the children from such a union? This man stands before Jesus anonymously. His name is never mentioned, just the fact that his circumstances are such that Jesus is the only person who can heal his life.

What is Jesus to do? Is Jesus to run and hide, or act boldly before God? And what is this man going to do? He has asked Jesus to heal him on the Sabbath. The man does not care that it is Saturday. The only thing he wants done in his life at that very moment is to be healed. He does not care what anyone thinks. He does not care what the Pharisees think. He does not think of what his neighbors will think of him violating the Sabbath with his request. All he wants is to be healed of his affliction so that he can go on with his life, so that his life will be improved. He can see around the corner. He can see the future. He can see himself walking and talking with a new arm. He can see himself working, earning a living, getting married, and having children. He can see the wedding celebration. Oh, the joy of having a healed arm. Not once did he give thought to the fact that if Jesus healed him Jesus would be in violation of the Sabbath, church law. God said honor the Sabbath, but he did not say *in all things* honor the Sabbath. If a man is breaking into your home on the Sabbath, what are you to do? There must be reasonableness to the law. No law should be held above the mercy of man. There are several passages in the Bible in which God speaks of the importance of mercy. **Matthew 14:14**

shows that Jesus was a compassionate man: *“Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.”* This is why Jesus was so angry with the Pharisees for not showing more compassion toward the man with the withered hand. **Matthew 8:16-17** shows that Jesus worked well into the evening on many occasions, healing people. This passage demonstrates Jesus’ conviction and dedication toward healing men: *“When the evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with Devils; and he cast out the spirits with his words, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which Isaiah, the prophet, saying. Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”* The Pharisees had to have surmised that healing men was a very important part of Jesus’ ministry. How could Jesus refuse to heal a man on a Saturday since healing man’s mind and body was the cornerstone of Jesus’ beliefs? **Matthew 12:15:** *“and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.”*

Jesus knew the Pharisees were watching and waiting for their moment to strike. This is why he turned to them and asked, *“Is it lawful and right on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to take it?”* He already knew their answer, but he wanted to expose their hearts. Jesus knew these men had no love in their hearts. Their hearts were hardened by their selfishness and self-aggrandizement. These men assumed that they were the cream of the crop, the best men in Jerusalem, able to judge any man. Jesus was angry with these men because he knew they had no empathy for their neighbor, that they had no love, and that their spirits were sullied.

John 12:42: *“Even then, many Jewish authorities believed in Jesus; but because of the Pharisees they did not talk about it openly, so as not to be expelled from the synagogue. They loved human approval rather than the approval of God.”*

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

The Pharisees cared nothing for the man with the withered arm. What did it matter to them whether or not this man was healed? What did it matter to them that this man was suffering and in need of Jesus' help? The only thing that mattered to them was the use of the law to bind people, to hold people hostage to the law, and inevitably to do what they believed right and what they believed wrong. To hell with a man's need of being healed on the Sabbath. The law must be followed to the letter; compassion be damned. Bow to the law. The man with the withered hand had no power to control or influence the outcome of his life. His situation was put in the balance because the Pharisees, in their lust for power, decided that Jesus needed to die. So they plotted to use the man with the withered hand as the tool for Jesus' destruction.

The Pharisees cared nothing for the fact that the man with the withered hand had pushed his way forward, pushed himself into a position to be near Jesus so that he could be healed. How far did this man travel to find Jesus? How much hardship did he endure to reach Jesus so that his life could be turned around? When you are sick and in need of a breakthrough, you don't care what day it is or where you are. All you want is to be healed. You do not care how Jesus heals you. This man was telling Jesus to do whatever he could, but heal him. The man did not care how Jesus healed him. All he wanted from Jesus was to be healed. Yet the Pharisees inserted themselves into this equation, making their need to kill Jesus greater than the need of the man with the withered hand. Jesus was angry with these men because he knew that when men are left alone with the Devil, they become monsters. Were these men or monsters? They put their desires before the health and welfare of this man: "We do not care how long you have been suffering. We want Jesus dead and you have just provided us with a means to reach our goal. Jesus healed you on the Sabbath. Jesus refuses to follow the law of our fathers."

The man with the withered arm was not satisfied with the life he

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

was leading, so he changed. He sought the mercy of Jesus. He told himself, If I can get within arms length of Jesus my life will be different. When the man with the withered arm made this decision, he changed, and he was willing to go to any length to find Jesus. He believed that his association with Jesus would change his life; in the final analysis, he was right. Jesus did change his life.

In your walk through the graveyard earlier, did you think to yourself, “How many of these people were afraid of friends and family? How many of them were too afraid to live and too afraid to die? How many of these people succumbed to pressure by family and friends, never fulfilling their dreams? Where are their spirits now? Did they get everlasting life? How many of these people died in an accident, not properly prepared for God? Did they put off for tomorrow what they could have done that day? What seeds did they plant in the earth to support their entrance into heaven? How many of these people followed their preacher even when the stirring in their spirit told them the preacher was wrong? Are there mostly dead people in the graveyard that no one remembers, even God?” Do not let anyone take your life with their silly customs and ways of doing things. Since the law says that man should rest on the Sabbath, no man can be healed on this day. If this were true, God would have taken Jesus’ power to heal away from him on the Sabbath. The patient must last the night, *then* the surgeon can operate? Ridiculous. The soldier succumbing to his wounds in battle is not above the Sabbath. He too must wait to be healed.

Now a question for you: Do you stand with the Pharisees and believe that things should remain the same and that everything must be done according to the law? Or, do you stand with the man with the withered hand who wants Jesus to heal him no matter what? Who are you in the grand scheme of things? Do you harden your heart and attitude toward anything that does not agree with your goals? Do you stand with the Pharisees, clamoring for order, or are you like the man with the withered hand in need of healing? You have to decide, because your purpose will be found in your

decision. Do you want to be healed, or do you want to maintain the status quo? Do you want to continue living the way you have been living, or do you want to step out into the water with Jesus?

If you decide to step out of the boat and walk with Jesus, you need to realize that changes will come. Remember Peter? He stepped out of the boat based on Jesus saying, "Come." After walking for a while, he began to sink into the water. Peter began to sink because he lost his confidence. He began to question his ability to walk on water. He felt this way because all of his life he had been told that man cannot fly, nor can man walk on water. Peter did not hold onto his belief in Jesus even though he knew that Jesus was the way. He saw Jesus walking on the water and he knew that it was not an illusion because Jesus said his name. **Matthew 14:25:** *"Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good cheer: it is I. Don't be afraid.' And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is You command me to come to you to the water.'" So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the **wind was boisterous**, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, **why did you doubt?**"*

Peter believed Jesus until he looked at his circumstances. Then he began to doubt his ability to walk on water. He began to lose faith. Although Peter knew that he had been given the power to cast out demons and unclean spirits and to heal the sick, the thought of walking on water overwhelmed him. He did not hold to the words spoken by Jesus: "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Peter asked Jesus to command him to walk on water, but after he was given the command and the way was made possible, Peter faltered because he never really thought about the extent of Jesus' power. What Peter asked Jesus to do was bigger

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

than what Peter had ever conceived of doing. If you can conceive it and believe it, Jesus can do it. If you are going to step out of the boat and follow God, then you must be prepared to see changes in your ability to do things.

When you walk with God, you can expect to experience tremendous change. You will be stretched in all directions. You will have to submit to being changed. God will definitely move you out of your comfort zone as he did Moses when He told Moses to go before the Pharaoh so the Jews could be released from bondage. To put yourself in line with moving in your purpose, you will have to speak and live differently. You must begin to picture yourself moving forward. You must begin to tell yourself every day that you are moving forward, that you will never look back to where you came from, that you are walking toward your healing and your destiny. You must begin to encourage yourself to move forward. You must think of what Paul said, pressing towards the mark.

Do not be like Peter in the water. First, you are impressed with God and believe in Him; then, when adversity strikes, you lose your countenance. You must speak yourself forward into the future and you cannot retreat. You cannot return to your old haunts, participating in your old bad habits. Stay focused on the man with the withered hand. What was of utmost importance to him was being healed. He did not want to go back to being crippled and unable to care for himself or his family. He presented himself to Jesus in faith and he was staying in faith to get his healing. You will stay in faith to have your circumstances changed. Then you must begin sowing seeds for your new life and new circumstances. Do just what the man with the withered hand did: present yourself to Jesus for modification. You want your withered body healed, you want your withered finances healed, and you want your withered life healed.

The reason why God will support this change in you is because He wants people to see His glory on you. He wants everyone in your

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

proximity to notice the difference in you. He wants the world to know that the difference in you is because of Him. He wants people to know He brought joy into your life. He brought purpose into your life and He brought prosperity into your life. He wants people to know that you look forward to going to work in the morning because of Him. You look forward to your relationship with your husband because of Him. He wants people to know that you tried all of the systems of the world but you were only satisfied once you learned of the wonderfulness of the Lord. He wants people to know that you enjoy your purpose in life; that you will be a Christian Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. You will be a Christian when people are looking at you, and you will be a Christian when people are not looking at you. He wants people to know that you care about the church and the gospel of Jesus Christ and that you are willing to talk to your neighbors about the wonderfulness of God. You will talk to the poor at heart about Jesus. Their status in life does not bother you. You realize that Jesus was sent to the poor and to the desperate.

Once you decide to walk with God, there are some things that you need to do immediately. Later, these habits should be reinforced each day. The immediate changes are:

1. Always bless your food before eating and have your children observe this custom.
2. Take communion at church and at home.
3. Make an offering in church and pay alms to the poor.
4. Wear a cross.
5. Make it a point in your life to do things right.
6. Observe the Sabbath.

These habits may seem symbolic in nature, but once adopted, they will become significantly important as you draw closer and closer to the Lord.

If you read **Ephesians 4:23-32**, you will see that there are

other expectations from God for our conduct: *“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind....put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. “Be angry, and do not sin”, do not let the sun go down on your wrath, Nor give place to the Devil (confess your sins), Let him who stole, steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impact grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*

When you begin to walk in your purpose, you will make great strides. **Ephesians 3:20:** *“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”* God is placing good things inside of you. He is building you up so that you can withstand the storms that will come tomorrow. You will receive a visit from several soothsayers and naysayers. Their speech will contradict everything that you say you are receiving from the Lord. Someone will tell you, “How can a baptism remove the sin from your life? How can taking a communion benefit your life?” They noticed you when you were praying over your food.

Their goal will be to humiliate you and to make you feel ridiculous. If they can see you backing up on your stance, they will be satisfied and they will continue their assault. They will question your observing the Sabbath. Giving one day out of seven to the Lord is a great source of controversy to the unbeliever. Who wants to sit in church all day or spend all day with other Christians talking about God? Do not try and justify your behavior. You have selected

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

the lifestyle that you think is best for you and your children, and your associates will have to accept you as you are. They have to accept your spiritual rebirth or they no longer have to be a friend. You must realize that your friends have a problem. Why is your spirituality affecting them? How is your behavior affecting your friends when you pray over your food, take communion, observe the Sabbath, and give alms to the poor? Why do they feel it is their job to get you straight, that you are wasting your time going to church? Do they call you and say that you could save your gas and stay home playing cards on a summer Sunday, instead of getting dressed just to go to church? The root of their behavior is jealousy. People do not like contrasts and differences.

You must press forward. As you continue to press forward, remember **Psalms 1:1-4**: *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.”* When you accept walking with God, you are walking into your future. You are pressing forward, establishing a better life for yourself and your children. You have an implied covenant with your children to act always in the interest of their welfare and safety. What better way to see after their welfare and their safety than to place yourself under the protection of the Almighty? (Psalms 91).

Your past has nothing good for you, whereas your future holds much promise (**Psalms 37:4**: *“Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart”*). When you walk with the Lord, you are working on something. You are not just spending idle time at Bible study. You are bathing your mind in the word so that the word will comfort you and steady you when you need help for the days to come. This is why you must be extremely

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

Careful in your selection of friends and associates. You want to associate with people who will support you when you decide to change your behavior. Suppose you receive a diagnosis of cancer. You tell your friend and she asks you, "What are you going to do?" You answer her by saying, "I am going to pray and seek guidance from the Lord. I am going to ask Him to tell me what to do or to show me which doctor He wants me to see regarding this problem." She answers you by saying, "Girl, you could be dead by the time God answers you." How has this friend helped you in your walk in life? You must realize when you are dealing with an evil thing. You must be able to recognize people in your life who do not belong there.

People move in and out of our lives. We meet people through associates. We meet people at work, at the club, at the movies, on the playground, and at the park. Our tree of friends grows through one meeting after another. We must be mindful of the moments when friends move in and out of our lives. We must be mindful when we allow someone into our lives and when someone leaves our lives. The exits are just as important as the entrances. Sometimes the movements are a wave. We decide that we are going to have a fun-filled summer, and we let a single man into our lives. He comes in on a wave and soon we discover that we should have left him on the beach. We should have never allowed him into our lives. His presence sends a shock throughout our lives. We don't quite know what is wrong. We know he is lazy and slothful, but what we do not realize is that he is evil. He is possessed with the spirit of deceitfulness. His behavior is accompanied by a spirit. He gets up in the morning and opens the refrigerator without washing his hands. He smokes a joint before he leaves for work in the morning, or he does not go to work but watches cartoons all day. This tidal wave is wreaking havoc on your life and you pray for him to leave. The more he becomes involved in your life, the more destruction you face. He will be one of the people who question your going to church every Sunday and spending time at Bible study. He cannot see why you cannot stay at home drinking beer

and watching television, his favorite job.

Sometimes you can have so many friends that you cannot remember all of their names. In this situation, your motive was just to appear popular. Most of these people added nothing to your life. But you liked the idea of inviting a house full of people to your birthday party to appear popular and important. Then finally this group leaves, and you are left alone. One day you may find that you have only one friend, and she is the woman who brings you your breakfast tray in the morning in the hospital. She makes certain you get two cups of apple juice instead of one cup.

You must be cognizant of the fact that sometimes you can bring a person in your life who is evil. You must recognize a person who is evil and try to keep that person out of your life. **Luke 6:45:** “*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*” If your association with a person is enveloped in hardship, dissension, and disharmony, then you need to question your association with this person. **Proverbs 22:24:** “*Do not make friends with people who have hot, violent tempers. You might learn their habits and not be able to change.*” You must recognize people who possess the spirit of haughtiness, the spirit of whoredom, and the lying and deceitful spirit. Evil spirits do exist. Jesus spent a great deal of his time casting out spirits from people. For example, in **Mark 9:25**, when Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Read **Mark 1:23-26:** “*Now there was a man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, ‘Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who You are the Holy One of God!, But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet, and come out of him!’ And when*

the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.”

Mark 5:2-8: *“And when he came out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’ For He said to him, ‘Come out of the man, unclean spirit!’ Then he asked him, ‘What is your name?’ And he answered, saying, ‘My name is Legion, for we are many.’*

The reaction of the possessing spirits lets us know that evil spirits can be fearful. They are not all-powerful. Nowhere in the Bible do we see Jesus afraid to deal with the demons and spirits. Look at the next example of Jesus approaching a child who is possessed with an evil spirit controlling her life.

Mark 7:25-30: *“For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, ‘Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs’. And she answered and said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.’ The He said to her, ‘For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.’ And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out and her daughter lying on the bed.”*

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

Jesus shows no hesitation in approaching the child. He is self-assured, knowing that he can deal with the possessing spirit. He is not concerned that he may not be able to help the mother reclaim her daughter's life. He speaks positively. The child has a problem, and he will solve the problem. He counsels the mother on her concern. He says that the child is in no great danger and tries to allay the mother's fears. In the next verse, Jesus tells a father who is concerned about his child that "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Belief is the foundation of man's power on earth. This is why the Devil tries to make circumstances appear so awful that a man's mind becomes so disturbed that the man forgets that he has a way out of his dilemma by believing. Notice the man's response when Jesus asks, "Do you believe?"

Matthew 9: 17-18,22-25: *"Then one of the crowd answered and said, 'Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.' Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!' When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!'"*

Jesus was telling the father: You need faith in your life for your bad marriage. You need faith in your life for your bad finances. You need faith in your life for your sick body. With faith, you can resurrect your business, resurrect your relationship with your children, and resurrect your body. The outcome of our life is entwined in our beliefs.

The last act of God while Jesus was on the earth was the demonstration of His resurrection powers. He brought Jesus back

from the dead. He allowed man to kill Jesus so there was no doubt that the flesh was dead. He then resurrected the body and had Jesus speak to his disciples: proof of God's restorative powers. You must believe that all you need to be restored is yourself and God's word. When you are in need of help from the Lord, you must put God first; plant a seed and name your seed, then read **Matthew 16:19**: *"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."*

When Jesus called the spirits out of the men, the evil spirits recognized Jesus and were afraid of Jesus, because the spirits knew they had no power over Jesus. The spirits had power over the men they possessed because they was using all of their power making men miserable; but the spirits had no power over Jesus, the son of the creator. The spirits knew they not only did not have power over Jesus, but they had to do what Jesus told them to do. They had to be obedient to the word of Jesus. They had to submit. There was no contest to be had. There would be no battle of good and evil: just submission to the word of Jesus. The spirits did not threaten Jesus; they did not say they would call upon Beelzebub to help them. Jesus had already demonstrated his will power and prowess over the Devil because Jesus resisted the Devil when He was at His weakest, when he fasted for forty days and forty nights.

These passages all discuss Jesus casting out evil and unclean spirits which were possessing men. These spirits were controlling and made the lives of these men and children miserable. In some cases, the person was possessed by several different spirits at once.

Evil spirits have not left the earth just because no one is writing or talking about them. They still inhabit people. What about the woman at work who is always gossiping about people? She is always plotting and planning how she can make people miserable. What about the mother-in-law who destroyed her son's marriage because of her jealousy of his wife? Are these people not possessed by evil? You must face the fact that there is evil in the world, even in the

church. When you recognize this characteristic in people, you are to leave them alone. They have given themselves over to darkness and they will never see the light. **Jonah 2:8:** *“They that observe lying vanities and forsake their own mercy.”*

Was a man not evil who murdered a woman, her two children, and her niece, but left his child alive in a closet? Was this man not filled with evilness? What about the man who got out of prison and within days, murdered a woman and her two children but left his own daughter unscathed? What about the woman who sabotaged her husband’s success by putting him in debt as soon as she learned that he wanted to go into business for himself? Once he failed, she began laughing at her husband because he had a beer belly. She concealed her fear by ridiculing him.

Is a woman not evil when she teaches her children fear because she does not want them to leave her?

Is a woman not evil who uses her children to torment the husband she divorced? She cares nothing about the fact that her children are being denied access to their father because she wants revenge.

Is it not evil for a woman to destroy a man’s marriage by committing adultery with him, then marry him, only to later poison him to death to collect 1.5 million in insurance proceeds?

Is it not evil for a woman to try and destroy her best girlfriend’s marriage by committing adultery with her husband, because she is jealous of all the gifts her best girlfriend receives?

Is it not evil that you are mean to people who serve you in restaurants because you are angry over the circumstances of your life?

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

Evilness is everywhere, and you must recognize it when you see it and not associate with anyone whom you see deliberately hurting another individual. All you want to discern is the presence of evilness in a person. Then you need to leave that person alone. You can neither condone nor accept the abuse of another human being if you are going to walk with God. The hallmark of Jesus' ministry was compassion. People approached Him without fear of reproach. They believed that if they got near Him, they would be healed. People came from miles around because they heard that there was a man in town who would heal them without payment. Now consider this: if an evil spirit can inhabit a man, then a good spirit can inhabit a man. So if you push the evil spirit out of your life, you can invite the Holy Spirit into your life. What you cannot do is be a house divided. You cannot have them both reside inside of you at the same time.

Evil people will be dangerous to you in your walk with God. You must remember: Some people openly say that being a Christian is hard. Walking with God is difficult, and who can keep God's commandments? **Matthew 12:36-7:** *"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."* If you present yourself as a Christian, a person strong enough to walk with God, what does that make your friends? Some people do not like differences, especially if the differences are unflattering. Again, this is why your friends are important. You need friends who will accept your choices and will not use their position in your life to change you. When God removes a person from your life, he is telling you that that person's heart is not right. Be careful in trying to bring that person back into your life.

When God told the prophet Samuel that He was going to select another king for the people of Israel, Samuel thought God was looking at a big, strong man during the selection process. But God corrects Samuel's thinking when He says in **1 Samuel 16:7:** *"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his*

It Is Time You Start Walking With God

physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees: for men looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”