

Developing Our Walk With God

Howard Hendricks

Introduction.

- A. I thank you for the privilege of teaching here these days.
- B. The greatest form of learning is self-discovery.
- C. Today I want to point you to a self study for which you will never be the same.

I. Developing our walk with God

A. Chad Walsh *Early Christians of The Twentieth century* said that millions of Christians live in a sentimental piety of stained glass windows divorced from the will and intellect, demanding little but lip service to a few doctrines. Satan has probably called off his attempt to make one an agnostic; it is easier to vaccinate a man with a mild case of Christianity than to infect him with the real disease.

1. Somewhere in our Christian experience we get a case of the blasés.
2. Faith becomes routine and we're not excited by truth, we're embalmed by it.
3. Why is this true?
4. Many are in arrested infancy.
5. They have never learned to walk by faith.
6. This problem is endemic to the ages.
7. The early church was not a collection of perfect people.

B. Some Christians suffer from hearing loss. (Hebrews 5:11)

1. Though they should be teachers they need elementary principles.
2. Many need mild instead of solid truth.
3. Solid food is for the mature,
 - a. Those who know much Bible
 - b. Those who can argue theology?
 - c. Those with the fattest notebook?
 - d. Those who have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

4. Maturity comes by using what they understand.

- a. An elder in my church had the same testimony of the Lord as his shepherd quoting Psalm 24 every year, year after year.
- b. Many Christians remain in the same place all their lives.
- c. I have been studying Proverbs that shows the conflict between the upward and downward pressure.
- d. Faith is the aerodynamic force that lifts you up in spite of the downward forces.

C. I want to introduce you to something that may blow your head off.

1. Ephesians divides into two halves. (Ephesians 1-3 and 4-6)

a. The first half is a theological treatise.

- 1. Doctrine is important.
- 2. Right doctrine drives right behavior.
- 3. Paul lays down a foundation for a skyscraper here.
- 4. It is truth affecting life here and now.
- 5. The doctrine in chapters 1-3 drives the duty of 4-6.
- 6. Your position in Christ determines your practice in Church.

b. The second half is God's orthopedic, instructing us how to walk.

- 1. This section deals with the realities of life.
- 2. Some are turned off by Evangelicalism because it's not practical, but Paul is very practical here in the second half of Ephesians.
- 3. Some put a mask on because they can't walk in reality.

2. Chapters 4-6 there are five commands that relate to your walk.

a. First know what God has designated. (Ephesians 4:1)

- 1. "Walk worthy to your calling," means to have equal weight.
- 2. Be humble and gentle.
 - i. Many can be humble until they're offended.
 - ii. Our place in Christ must be lived in the sphere of life.

3. Be patient, forbearing with one another.

4. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.

i. Union is external, which Christ accomplishes for us.

ii. Unity is external, to which we are called.

iii. The unity Christ attained we must maintain.

iv. We can always find points of disagreement but must find points of agreement.

v. What is my calling and what's the gap between my calling and my walk?

5. When I feel I'm making progress with God I come back to study the word.

1. I used to feel disappointed when the word shows my disparity.

2. Now I praise God for showing me what needs to be done.

b. Second, don't walk as Gentiles, in the futility of thinking. (Ephesians 4:17)

1. What's the difference between a pagan's lifestyle and mine?

i. Is it church attendance?

ii. Is it prayer before meals?

iii. Is it not wearing makeup?

iv. I grew up in a legalistic church and I didn't do anything, but one day I realized those in a cemetery don't do anything either.

v. Our lives need to be punctuated by positive things, not negative.

2. What is different about you since you came to Christ?

i. A Christian lives for a time as does a non-Christian.

ii. If we have hope in this life only we are the most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15)

iii. Young people are looking for adults that are playing a better game than they are talking.

iv. I watched a neighbor polishing his boat who told me he plans to spend his eternity in hell.

v. Those making a difference for Christ don't live like the Gentiles, they live like Christ.

3. Non-Christians are darkened in their understanding. (Ephesians 4:18)

i. Businesses are unscrupulous.

ii. People are given to sensuality.

iii. A girl I know works in an office where all the women are divorced.

iv. People that walk with Christ are a phenomenon.

4. Be imitators of God as dearly beloved children and walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. (Ephesians 5:1)

i. God never asks us to do anything until he does it.

ii. God so loved the world that he gave his son. (John 3:16)

iii. Non-Christians live for number one, self. A best selling book is called *Number One*.

iv. Are you committed to learning to give as God gives?

v. We need to be delivered from self.

vi. The number one problem in the Lord's work is following Jesus.

c. Third, servanthood is another way we grow.

1. Jesus washes the disciples' feet as a servant. (John 13)

2. Jesus knew that all power was his, and that he had come from God and was returning to God.

3. We will not serve until we are convinced that we have been given all things.

4. A friend invited me to dinner where we met a senator who is a true servant and for that reason he has influence with people.

d. Fourth, we were once darkness but are now light in the Lord, so we need to find out what pleases the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8)

1. Reality is how sees things.

2. God is light and if we claim to have fellowship with him we need to walk in the light. (1 John 1:5)

3. The God we are related to determines the kind of walk we have.
 4. I have tried to impress God with my knowledge, yet he impresses me about how little I'm like his son.
 5. I resembled my dad in many ways and one day noticed my son walking like me; like father like son.
- e. Fifth, walk carefully, circumspectly, with eyes wide open. (Ephesians 5:15)
1. In Philadelphia row houses have postage stamp size back yards.
 - i. We'd walk along fences and make noise.
 - ii. One lady put up concrete fences with cut glass across the top.
 - iii. We learn to walk with eyes wide open.
 - iv. Satan is cunning and will trip you up if he can.
 2. Make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil.
 - i. Be sensitive to the use of time.
 - ii. Young people measure life from birth; old people measure it till death.
 - iii. We don't have forever to obey God - obey him now.
 - v. We need to number our days that we might get a heart of wisdom, living life skillfully. (Psalm 90)

D. Why did God teach us to walk in this way?

1. How do kids learn to walk?
 - a. One step at a time. When they fall they get up and try again.
2. We need to teach new converts to walk.
 - a. One young believer had a problem with language.
 - b. Young children mess their pants.
 - c. This guy messed up with his mouth, yet he's learning to walk.
 - d. He avoided me because he thought I'd be disappointed, yet I embraced him.
 - e. I had the same problem myself and took him to a Scripture. (1 John 1:9)
 - f. I still need to crawl because I still fall.