

Walking with God

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General Introduction

1. Walking is the most common metaphor for Christian living in the Bible. (2 Jn 6; Gal 5:25; 2 Cor 5:7)

2. We will look at three aspects:

- Walking in the Spirit (Rom 6:1-11)
- Walking in the Body (Rom 6:12-23)
- Walking in Heaven (Selected passages)

3. Why do Christians still struggle with sin?

- Is there a sinless perfection? No.
- Is it all a work of the flesh? No.
- Is sanctification possible? Yes.

4. There are common errors in sanctification.

- Legalism: justification is in sanctification.
- License: sanctification is in justification.
- Higher Life: a passive faith.
- Free Grace: Relax, don't struggle.

5. Three traditional divisions of sanctification.

- Positional: freedom from the penalty of sin (Heb 10:10).
- Progressive: freedom from the power of sin (Heb 10:14).
- Final: freedom from the presence of sin (1 Thes 5:23).

6. Our walk with God, sanctification, is of utmost importance today!

- This is a day of unbelief and immorality.
- Our churches are enamored with success and fame.
- Christians of all walks are falling into sin.
- Hypocrisy is the world's first accusation of the church.

“The subject of sanctification is one that many, I fear, dislike exceedingly. Some even turn from it with scorn and disdain. The very last thing they would like is to be a ‘saint,’ or a ‘sanctified’ man. Yet the subject does not deserve to be treated in this way. It is not an enemy, but a friend.” J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, p. 45 (1877).

2 John 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight.)

Jerry Bridges: “The call to a holy life is based on the fact that God Himself is holy. Because God is holy, He requires that we be holy. Many Christians have what we might call a ‘cultural holiness.’ They adapt to the character and behavior pattern of Christians around them. As the Christian culture around them is more or less holy, so these Christians are more or less holy.” *The Pursuit of Holiness*, p. 22

Kevin DeYoung: “The hole in our holiness is that we don’t really care much about it. Passionate exhortation to pursue gospel-driven holiness is barely heard in most of our churches. . . There are a hundred good things you may be called to pursue as a Christian. All I’m saying is that, according to the Bible, holiness, for every single Christian, should be right at the top of that list.” *A Hole in Our Holiness*, p. 10, 20

R. Kent Hughes: “A worldly church cannot and will not reach the world. The church must be distinct from the world to reach the world. We must set ourselves apart to God if we hope to reach the world. In a word, the only hope for us and a lost world is a holy church.” *Set Apart*, p. 17.

Hebrews 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Per. Pass. Part.). NKJV

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (Pres. Pass. Part.). NKJV

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming (lit. “at the coming”) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Erwin Lutzer: “Even among non-Christians a generation ago, there was more agreement regarding right and wrong, or, at least, between what was *considered* right or wrong. Today, many of these views are being questioned and even rejected, and the black and white of yesterday has dissolved into the blurred gray of today . . . Someone has observed that time is the great sanctifier. The ‘sin’ of today becomes acceptable tomorrow.” *How in This World Can I Be Holy?*, p. 15

1. Walking in the Spirit

Romans 6:1-11

Introduction

Paul finished writing about justification in chapter 5. Now he takes up the correlation, sanctification, in chapter 6.

Many have divided this chapter in various ways:

- Two questions: vs 1 & vs 15.
- Three commands: Know, Reckon, Yield

We will look at the chapter in two sections. Vss. 1-11 have to do with walking in the Spirit i.e., our position in Christ. Vss. 12-23 have to do with walking in the body i.e., our ongoing relationship with Christ.

I. We are dead (by salvation) to sin (1-2)

A. The logical question (1).

“If justification is true, why can’t we sin with impunity?”

(Gal. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:20)

B. The shocking answer (2)

“May it not be. You can’t go on sinning (pres. tense) if you are dead (aor. tense) to sin.” Note: as we were dead to righteousness, now we are dead to sin (Eph. 2:1, 3).

C. But, we may say, “We do actually sin!” (next message)

- Here we are talking about our union with Christ.
- At salvation we died with Him (Gal 2:20).
- He is now our very life (Col 3:3; Eph 1:6-7).

D. The proper perspective: our location has changed!

- This is “positional truth.”
- See Murray, Bridges, Ironside, McCune

E. We have “exceeding great and precious promises”

- Redemption: we are bought
- Justification: we are forgiven
- Regeneration: we are born anew
- Propitiation: God’s wrath is removed
- Reconciliation: we have fellowship with God
- Sanctification: we have the Holy Spirit within
- Glorification: we have a heavenly home

Chafer: “Walking by means of the Spirit is simply walking by a definite reliance upon the ability and power of the One Who indwells.” p. 96

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Romans 6:15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

1 Cor. 6:20 Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Eph. 2:1, 3 And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Shedd: “The ideas of expiation and license are incongruous. As states of mind they cannot co-exist . . . One excludes the other.” 147

Newell: “It is as if one would say, those who died in New York City, shall they still be walking the streets of New York City?” 202

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Colossians 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Ephesians 1:6-7 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Murray: “If we view sin as a realm or sphere, then the believer no longer lives in that realm or sphere. And just as it is true with reference to life in the sphere of this world that the person who has died ‘passed away, and lo, he was not: I sought him, but he could not be found’ (Psa 37:36), so it is with the sphere of sin; the believer is no longer there because he has died to sin . . . The believer died to sin once and he has been translated to another realm.” 213

Bridges: “Regardless of how decent and moral we were, we lived in the kingdom of sin. But now through our union with Christ in His death to sin, we have been delivered out of the realm of sin and placed in the kingdom and realm of righteousness.” 54.

H.A. Ironside: “I know it is there, but I am dead to it. Faith reckons with God and says, ‘In Christ death I died out of the sphere where sin reigns.’” 88

McCune: “A total transfer has been made from the power realm of sin and death to the power realm of righteousness and life.” 127

II. We are buried (by baptism) to sin (3-5)

Note: An age-old discussion: water or Spirit?

A. Our baptism pictured our death with Christ (3)

- Col 2:12
- In reality, Spirit (1 Cor 12:13)
- In practicality, water (1 Cor 15:29)
- Gill, Newell, Erdman, Cranfield, Baxter

B. Our baptism buried the old man who is dead (4)

- “Buried” (*sunthaptō*, to entomb. *thaptō*, sepulcher)
Your baptism was your tomb.
- “Glory of the Father” (Murray)

C. Our baptism pictured our new life in Christ (4b-5)

- 4b, “even so we should walk” (subj mode)
- Rom 7:6; Col 3:1; 1 Pet 2:24; Gal 2:20
- A spiritual reality of a coming resurrection.
- A symbolic reality of walking in newness of life
 (“likeness” *homoiōmati*, a similar likeness)
- Moule

III. We are risen (by salvation & baptism) to life (6-11)

A. Know it! (6-10)

- Our old man is gone
 “Old man” = the life we had before salvation.
 (Gill, Shedd, Murray, McClain, et al)
- Our “body of sin” destroyed (“rendered inoperative”)
 This is our physical body that is not yet redeemed.
 See Moule
- We are “freed from sin” (7) *dedikaiōtai*, Perf Pass
 Sin is still there, but no longer has power over us.
 We are no longer its servants (*douloi*).
 Sin does not have “dominion” (9) (Haldane)

Colossians 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

Gill: “Such who are thus baptized resemble Christ in his sufferings and death by being immersed in water, but they declare their faith in the death of Christ, and also share in the benefits of his death.” 39

Newell: “Here the apostle turns them back to their own baptism, that initial step in public confession . . . Did they not realize the significance of that baptism? 204

Erdman: “Commonly referred to as immersion, this mode of baptism possibly may have been in the apostle’s mind.” 71

Cranfield: “Paul wishes to convey that the persons concerned have received Christian baptism.” 130

J.S. Baxter: “The putting off of the old man is professed in their baptism.” 92

Murray: “The plenitude of the Father’s glory is manifest in the resurrection of his own Son.” 217

Moule: “He places our acceptance through Christ atoning, in organic connexion with our life in Christ risen.” 159

Gill: “The corruption of nature because natural to man.” 39

Shedd: “The sum total of human powers and faculties before regeneration.” 154

Murray: “The unregenerate man in his entirety.” 219

McClain: “The old self, what we were in Adam.” 144

Cranfield: “The whole self in its fallenness.” 134

Hendrickson: “The person we once were.” 197

J.S. Baxter: “The whole human race in Adam” 91

Ironside: “All that I was in my Christless days” 141

McCune: “The pre-salvation person in Adam” 127

Moule: “He died for us for this very end, that our body of sin might be wonderfully in abeyance to the power of temptation upon the soul.” 165

Moule: “Cancelled does not mean annihilated. The body exists, and sin exists, and desires exist. It is for you, O man in Christ, to say to the enemy, ‘Thou shalt not reign; I veto thee in the name of my King.’” 168

J.S. Baxter: “We should cast off the grave clothes of the old, and wear the resurrection raiment of the new in Christ.” 92

Haldane: “Unless we keep in mind that we are dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord, we cannot serve him as we ought.” 252

B. Reckon it! (11)

- *Logizesthe* (Pres. Impv, “to think, reason”)
- An acceptance of the fact. (McCune)
- Now we have a command. (Houghton)
- This is the most difficult of the three commands

Logizomai, 41 times in the NT, 19 in Romans, 11 times in chapter 4 (reckoned to Abraham), and is translated by 10 different words in English (reasoned, numbered, reckoned, counted, thought, conclude, impute, esteemed, laid, suppose).

- Rom 14:14 (to esteem, consider)
- Heb 11:19 (to account)
- My translation:
“Hey, wait a minute! I don’t have to do that.”
(This is a slave’s reaction to his old master)
(see Jerry Bridges)

Conclusion

- Motto at Spurgeon’s College, London



Et teneo Et teneor (“I hold and am held”)

Rom. 6:1-11, “I am held”

Rom. 6:12-23, “I hold”

McCune: “This reckoning is an ongoing conviction and a trusting reliance that sin’s power has been broken once for all and that death to sin ended all its rights and cancelled all obligations to it.” 154

Houghton: “While grace in the form of gospel does not make demands, grace as guidelines for managing a believer’s life does make them.” 120

Romans 14:14 To him that *esteemeth* (NKJ *considers*) any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Hebrews 11:19 *Accounting* that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. (**Note:** Isaac didn’t actually die, but Abraham reckoned it to be a reality!)

Jerry Bridges: “Our dying to sin is a fact whether we realize it or not. Because Christ died to sin, all who are united with Him died to sin. Our dying to sin is not something we do, or something we make come true in our experience by reckoning it to be so. . . We are indeed to reckon—or to count or consider—ourselves dead to sin, but our reckoning does not make it true, even in our experience. . . We died to the dominion of sin, or to the reign of sin.” 53

Spurgeon: “Now, when God’s own Spirit comes to reside within our mortal bodies, we are near kindred to the Most High. As 1 Corinthians 6:19 asks, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” Does this not make a man outstanding? Have you never stood in awe of your own self? Have you thought enough about how this poor body is sanctified, dedicated, and elevated into a sacred condition by being set apart as a temple of the Holy Spirit?” *Holy Spirit Power*, p. 121.

Walking in the Body

Romans 6:12-23

Introduction

The two most common responses to justification (and eternal security) are antinomianism and legalism. The reason for this is that believers realize all too well that they still sin. Some give up on the fight with sin and others struggle with fear over their sin. Another response historically has been to believe that one can live above sin in a deeper life or even a sinless perfection (MacArthur).

It is popular today to stress a *laissez faire* attitude toward sanctification. Paul encountered this at Corinth, “All things are lawful unto me.” Though this might be true in the narrow sense that no sin can “unsave” us, it is not true in the broader sense because we can disobey God. Sanctification involves struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is an ongoing war. This is Paul’s subject in the second half of Romans 6. (Bridges, Ryle)

Review:

1. Justification changed our “location” from sin to Christ.
2. Our “old man,” who we used to be, is dead and gone.
3. Our mortal body still operates until death.
4. The old master, our flesh, still roams the halls of our new house.
5. We “Know,” and “Reckon,” and now we learn not to “Yield.”

I. Our Sin (in our “mortal body”)

Note: “Holiness” (19, 22) is the word *hagiosmos* which is usually translated “sanctification” and “holiness” (Heb 12:14; 1 Thes 4:3). This is the first usage of the word in Romans.

A. Our “mortal body” (12) (Shedd)

- Our body is “mortal”
- It is subject to “lusts”
- Sin wants to “reign” in our body (Jones)
- It is possible to “obey” sin

B. An “instrument of unrighteousness” (13)

- Yet sin does not have “dominion” (14) (Murray)
- But sin can “reign” (12)
- We are not sin’s “servants” (16, 17, 19)
- We have ample weapons against sin (13, 19)

MacArthur: “Like the [Hannah Whitall & Robert Pearsall] Smiths’ higher life concept, Keswick doctrine stressed a totally passive approach to sanctification, promising an easy, instant pathway to victory over all known sin. The movement’s message was often summed up with the slogan ‘let go and let God.’” Forward to J.C. Ryle, *Holiness* (Moody Classics) 10.

Bridges: “The experience of holiness is not a gift we receive like justification, but something we are clearly exhorted to work at.” 52.

J.C. Ryle: “By conflict I mean a struggle within the heart between the old nature and the new, the flesh and the spirit, which are to be found together in every believer (Gal. 5:17). A deep sense of that struggle, and a vast amount of mental discomfort from it, are no proof that a man is not sanctified.” 55

Ironside: “The very pith and marrow of the apostle’s teaching is that though it remains in my mortal body, I am not to let it reign there.” 88

J.S. Baxter: “Being made free ‘legally’ from sin does *not* free my body or its members in an experiential way from indwelling sin-activities, any more than it freed Paul’s ‘wretched man’ who (after coming through Romans 6:6) was still wailing ‘Sin which is *in my members*’ (7:23).” 103

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord:

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your *sanctification*, that ye should abstain from fornication:

Shedd: “[Paul] having shown the natural and homogeneous connection between justification and sanctification, he now proceeds to urge believers, by motives drawn from their justification, to resist their remaining corruption.” 158

Martin Lloyd-Jones: “Though sin cannot reign in us, in our essential personality, it can, if left unchecked, reign in our mortal bodies.” In Bridges, 56

Chafer: “The believer . . . Still possesses the Adamic nature over which he, of himself, has no sufficient control.” 109

Murray: “Death to sin and life to God, deliverance from the dominion of sin, will demonstrate their reality in the tangible and visible by denying to the lusts of the body the gratification they demand.” 227

McCune: “Once in Christ, stop allowing sin to reign in your body and begin presenting yourselves to God.” 154

Col. 3:9-10 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

C. An “instrument of righteousness” (13, 18)

- We are risen with Christ and “alive” unto God (Gill)
- We are under “grace” not “law” (14) (Haldane)
- Sin “shall not” (fut. Ind.) have dominion over us

D. We owe no wages to sin (23)

- “wages” (*opsōnia*, a military stipend), soldier’s wage (Shedd, Murray)
- Shall we go on sinning? No! Those wages are death.

Gill: “For though they are entirely dead to sin as justified persons, yet not perfectly as to sanctified. They are indeed dead to sin, but sin is not dead to them.” 41

Haldane: “If a man voluntarily sins on the pretext that he is not under law but under grace, it is proof that the grace of God is not in him.” 258

Shedd: “Sin personified pays wages for military service.” 172

Murray: “This is the triumphant conclusion to chapter 6 and should be compared in this respect to 5:21 as the triumphant conclusion to chapter 5.” 237

1 Corinthians 12:14-18 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Jas. 3:6 So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Rom. 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.

James 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Corinthians 6:15-20 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (NKJ) Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

II. Our Weapons (within our mortal bodies)

A. Definitions

- “Members” (*melē*) refers to the parts of our body (1 Cor. 12:14-18; Jas. 3:6)
- “Instruments” (*hopla*) or “armor” (Eph 6:11)
- “Weapons” (*hopla*) and “warfare” (*strateias*) (2 Cor. 10:4-5)
- We are in a “war” (Rom. 7:23; Jas 4:1; 1 Pet 2:11)

B. An aside: “In short, believers must avoid the two poles of the self-esteem issue: ‘Worm theology’ (e.g., ‘I’m nothing,’ ‘a zero,’) and ‘ego theology’ (‘God loves me just the way I am’). Both are nonsense. The biblical picture knows nothing of either.” McCune, 155

C. Our “Body of sin” (vs. 6, 12)

- It first belongs to Christ (1 Cor 6:15-20)
- It also belongs to one’s spouse (1 Cor 7:3-5)

- You and God have authority (*exousia*, power) over your body. However, God shares His authority over us with our spouse. He/She alone has this shared “authority” over their husband’s/wife’s body. When we lust after another person, we are giving that person unwarranted “authority” over our body. In addition, by being provocative (or immodest) toward anyone else you create three sins and two of them are yours. 1) you cause the other person to sin, 2) you have offended that person, and 3) you are immodest (i.e., at least partly naked). Lust, therefore is the idolatry of giving something else God’s authority over you.

R. Kent Hughes: Pornography is “a sin against one’s wife and demeans her” 82.

- It also can be disciplined (“destroyed”) by God

1 Cor 3:17, *pheirō*, to morally corrupt

(God will morally set you aside)

1 Cor 5:5, *olethros*, to dispose of, to perish

(God will let Satan dispose of your body)

III. Our Warfare (about our mortal bodies)

A. Human weapons we use

- “Casting down imaginations” (2 Cor 10:4-5)

- “Keeping under our body” (1 Cor 9:27)

- “Mortifying the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13)

- “Looking straight ahead” (Prov. 4:25, Job 31:1)

- “Abstaining from evil” (1 Thes 5:22)

“Abstain” (*apechō*) is to be estranged.

1 Pet 2:11

- The “Soliloquy” (Baxter)

- Also: discipline, example, death

B. Divine help in our warfare (Ryle)

- Christ is us (Col 1:27)

- The Holy Spirit (Rom 8:2)

- The Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17)

- The Local Church (Eph 4:16)

- Prayer & Confession (1 John 1:9)

1 Corinthians 3:17 If any man *defile* the temple of God, him shall God *destroy*

1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the *destruction* of the flesh

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJ) But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Proverbs 4:25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Richard Baxter: “By soliloquy, or a pleading the case with thyself, thou must in thy meditation quicken thy own heart. Enter into a serious debate with it. Plead with it in the most moving and effecting language, and urge it with the most powerful and weighty arguments. It is what holy men of God have practiced in all ages. Thus David, ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? . . . It is a preaching to one’s self; for as every good master or father of a family is a good preacher to his own family, so every good Christian is a good preacher to his own soul.’ 351

Ryle: “Sanctification is, again, a thing that depends greatly on a diligent use of scriptural means. When I speak of ‘means,’ I have in view Bible reading, private prayer, regular attendance on public worship, regular hearing of God’s Word, and regular reception of the Lords’ Supper. I lay it down as a simple matter of fact, that no one who is careless about such things must ever expect to make much progress in sanctification.” 55

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Walking in Heaven

Introduction

We have been talking about “walking with God.” Of the early patriarchs, Adam, Enoch, and Noah were said to have walked with God. Enoch especially was the one who anticipated heaven so much that God took him straight to heaven early in life (at 365 years old!). We are encouraged in Hebrews 11 to have the same faith. Too often we think of dying as a defeat and old age as the “evil days.” Well, old age and death are not enjoyable to the flesh, but they are the threshold to the greatest existence we can imagine—in heaven!

The classic book from this perspective is Richard Baxter’s (1615-1691) *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest*. It is a difficult read for today’s Cliffs Note generation, but it presents a point of view that sorely needs to be refreshed. The godly man’s mind will be in heaven, because heaven is holy, and there is no greater contemplation of holiness than that. Another classic book is William Law’s (1686-1761) *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Why do you pray in the manner that you do? Isn’t it because that is the appropriate way to approach heaven? Perhaps we should be like that in more of our life. (Law)

Our generation has become convinced that we must not act too heavenly. This will turn off religious seekers or bore the saints who are already struggling with sin. Many contemporary arguments could be given from this point of view:

- It hinders growth and turns people off
- It is for old people, not the younger generation
- Piety is not what seekers are looking for
- This might cause us to be too separated from our world
- This is an older doctrine that has outlived its time
- But see John 12:25 and similar Scriptures

Several godly men in the Bible were allowed to see heaven and it changed their ministries completely. Consider Isaiah’s vision of the throne of God, or Ezekiel’s view of the Cherubim and the wheel in the middle of the wheel, or Paul’s being taken up to the third heaven and then brought back to begin his missionary journeys, or John on the Isle of Patmos. No one could remain the same after seeing what these men saw. But shouldn’t we all walk by faith in those things rather than by sight?

Paul wrote, “For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20). The word “conversation” is *politeuma*, from which we get our word “politics.” The believer’s real political party is the one in heaven. John wrote, “and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). Do we as believers really have this hope within us? (Ryrie)

Matthew Henry: “To walk with God is to set God always before us, and to act as those that are always under his eye. It is to live a life of communion with God both in ordinances and providences. It is to make God’s word our rule and his glory our end in all our actions. It is to make it our constant care and endeavor in every thing to please God, and in nothing to offend him. It is to comply with his will, to concur with his designs, and to be workers together with him.”
Commentary on Gen. 5:21-24.

Richard Baxter: “If, by being diligent in godliness, you could grow rich, get honor or preferment in the world, be recovered from sickness, or live for ever in prosperity on earth, what lives would you lead, and what pains would you take in the service of God? And is not the saints’ rest a more excellent happiness than all this?” 164

Richard Baxter: “A heart in heaven is the highest excellence of Christian temper. . . As the noblest of creatures, so the noblest of Christians are they whose faces are set most direct for heaven. . . The most famous mountains and trees are those that reach nearest to heaven, and he is the choicest Christian whose heart is most frequently and most delightfully there. . . For my part, I value this man before the noblest, the richest, the most learned in the world.” 259

Richard Baxter: “Thy body is a useful servant if thou give it its due, and no more than its due; but it is a most devouring tyrant, if thou suffer it to have what it unreasonably desires; and it is a blunted knife, if thou unjustly deny what is necessary to its support. When we consider how frequently men offend on both extremes, and how few use their bodies aright, we can not wonder if they be much hindered in their converse with heaven.” 310

William Law: “Now let any one but find out the reason why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same a strong reason to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the least shadow of a reason why we should make God the rule and measure of our prayers; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look wholly unto God, and make Him the rule and measure of all the other actions of our life.” 1

William Law: “Turn you eyes toward Heaven, and fancy that you saw what is going on there; that you saw cherubims and seraphims, and all the glorious inhabitants of that place, all united in one work; not seeking glory from one another, not laboring their own advancement, not contemplating their own perfections, not singing their own praises, not valuing themselves, and despising others, but all employed in one and the same work, all happy in one and the same joy; ‘casting down their crowns before the throne of god’; giving glory, and honour, and power to Him alone.” 213

John 12:25 “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.”

Charles Ryrie (on 2 Cor. 4:16-18) “[Paul] simply placed his afflictions in comparison with what awaits all Christians in the future. And that is an eternal weight of glory. . . Someone once said we will need to have glorified bodies to be able to carry that weight of glory. That person may not have been totally serious when he said that, but I rather like that suggestion.” *Transformed by His Glory*, 83.

I. The Missing Doctrine

Much of our knowledge of heaven was acquired in systematic theology's eschatology or in prophetic conferences. The emphasis here, however, is to live our current lives with a greater desire for heaven, even a greater desire for this life to end and to be transported immediately to that place. The following verses were easily collected and they show, in order, the New Testament emphasis on looking forward to heaven.

Matt 6:33; Mk 8:35-38; Lk 12:34-40; Jn 14:1-3; Acts 26:6-8; Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 15:19; 2 Cor 5:8; Gal 1:4; Eph 2:6-7; Phil 3:14; Col 3:2; 1 Th 4:17; 2 Th 1:7; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:8; Tit 3:7; Phile 15; Heb 11:16; Jas 2:6; 1 Pet 1:8-9; 2 Pet 3:13; 1 Jn 3:2; 2 Jn 8; 3 Jn 2; Jude 24; Rev 22:20.

A. Some common misconceptions

- We are too heavenly minded to be any earthly good
- We sing too much of the sweet by and by but we live in the nasty now and now.
- Why does God allow the suffering to continue now?

B. Some vanishing doctrines

- Heaven and hell as eternal abodes
- The rapture as a motivation
- The kingdom of God as millennial joy
- The Father's house as our heavenly abode
- The Bema Seat as our accounting

II. Looking, Waiting, and Growing

Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt 6:21). Richard Baxter said, "A heavenly mind is the freest from sin, because it has truer and livelier apprehensions of spiritual things" (p. 262). We are constantly exhorted to look forward to heaven because it is the great motivator for spiritual life and work, whether pressing toward the mark, or looking unto Jesus, or letting our heart not be troubled.

A. Looking

- For the Savior (Phil 3:20)
- For the Blessed Hope (Tit 2:13)
- For the kingdom of God (1 Thes 2:12)
- For the Father's house (John 14:1-3)
- For the mercy of God (Jude 21)
- For a Father-land (Heb 11:14-16)
- For a new heaven & earth (2 Peter 3:13)

Richard Baxter: "I entreat thee, reader, in the name of the Lord, and as thou valuest the life of constant joy, and that good conscience which is a continual feast, to enter upon this work seriously, and learn the art of heavenly-mindedness, and thou shalt find the increase a hundred-fold, and the benefit abundantly exceed thy labor." 261

J.C. Ryle: "I believe that far more is done for Christ's kingdom by the holy living of believers than we are at all aware of. There is a reality about such living that makes men feel, and obliges them to think. It carries a weight and influence with it that nothing else can give. It makes religion beautiful, and draws men to consider it, like a lighthouse seen afar off." 94

William Law: "The greatness of those things which follow death makes all that goes before it sink into nothing." 28

Martin Lloyd-Jones: "We are never told in the Scriptures that we should look forward to death: but we are told very frequently that we should look forward to heaven." *The Sacred Anointing*, p. 145.

Martin Lloyd-Jones: "It is going home, it is entering into harbour . . . not a setting out onto an uncharted ocean, not going vaguely into some dim, uncharted world. Not at all, but an entrance into the haven . . . therefore he faces death and says I am going home." *The Sacred Anointing*, 146.

Augustine: "For sooner or later every man must die, and we groan, and pray, and travail in pain, and cry to God, that we may die a little later. How much more ought we to cry to him that we may come to that place where we shall never die!" "Discourse on the Lord's Prayer," *Orations*, 1189.

John Newton: "In vain my fancy strives to paint, the moment after death; the glories that surround the saints, when yielding up their breath. That much (and this is all) we know, they are completely blest; have done with sin, and care, and woe, and with their Savior rest." *365 Days with Newton*, 5-14.

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

1 Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Hebrews 11:14-16 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

MacArthur: "Our greatest desire should be to see the Lord reigning as King in His Kingdom, having the honor and authority that have always been His but that He has not yet come to claim." *Alone With God*, p. 68.

B. Waiting

- For our hope (Rom 8:24-25)
- For the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:5)
- For His Son from heaven (1 Thes 1:10)
- For the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23)

C. Growing (things that make us anticipate heaven)

- Seeing Jesus and to be like Him
- Seeing departed loved ones again
- The burden and temptation of sin
- The toils and hardships of life
- The pains and diseases in the body
- Reading Scripture and its pictures of heaven
- Prayer makes us want to talk to God
- The local church gives us a glimpse of fellowship
- Singing makes us desire the praises of heaven
- War, hatred, and strife that make us desire peace

III. The Joy Set Before Us

Jude closed his book saying, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24). Jesus is our great Example of suffering in this life yet looking to the joy of the next (Heb. 12:2). It may seem morbid, but for the Christian there is a definite joy and anticipation in dying. This is not only the martyrs strength but also the dying saints last testimony. There are over twenty analogies in Scripture of the saints passing from this life to the next. Here are a few.

- A Ship about to depart (2 Tim 4:6)
- Being gathered to one’s people (Gen 49:29; 2 Thes 2:1)
- Folding the tent and putting it away (2 Cor 5:1)
- Going to sleep and waking (1 Thes 4:13-14)
- Laying down our burdens (Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 4:16)
- Flying away like a bird (Psa 55:6; 90:10)
- Changing clothes (2 Cor 5:2-4)
- Coming to the finish line (2 Tim 4:6-7; Phil 3:13-14)

Romans 8:24-25 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Romans 8:23 even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Richard Baxter: “In order to this, I most earnestly beseech thee to consider the reasonableness of present afflictions, and the unreasonableness of resting in present enjoyments, as also of our unwillingness to die that we may possess eternal rest. . . Many thousand recovered sinners may cry, ‘Oh, healthful sickness! Oh, comfortable sorrows! Oh, gainful losses! Oh, enriching poverty! Oh, blessed day that ever I was afflicted!’ Not only the ‘green pastures and still waters, but the rod and staff, they comfort us.” 228

George Whitefield: “I soon shall be in a world where time, age, pain, and sorrow are unknown. My body fails, my spirit expands. How willingly would I live for ever to preach Christ! But I die to be with Him.” Harry Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, 279.

Hebrews 12:2-3 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.

Philip Doddridge: “Well then, let me beseech you to learn how you should live, by reflecting how you would die, and what course you would wish to look back upon, when you are just quitting this world, and entering upon another.” 207

Henry Van Dyke: “I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads here white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other. Then someone at my side says: ‘There, she is gone.’ But gone where? Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side and she is just as able to bear here load of living freight to her destined port. Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at the moment when someone at my side says: ‘There, she is gone!’ there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: ‘Here she comes!’ That is dying.”

At the end of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan has Mr. Standfast waiting on the brink of the river of death. He says,

“This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me . . . The waters indeed are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and the convoy that waits for me on the other side, lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am going to see that Head which was crowned with thorns, and that Face which was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearing and faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight, and be with Him in whose company I delight myself.”

Then Christian says, “Now while he was thus in discourse his countenance changed, his strong men bowed under him, and after he had said, ‘Take me, for I come unto thee,’ he ceased to be seen of them.”

Bunyan concludes, “Shall it be my lot to go that way again, I may give those that desire it an account of what I here am silent; Meantime I bid my reader adieu.”

Finally Home, Don Wyrzten

1. When engulfed by the terror of the tempestuous sea,
Unknown waves before you roll;
At the end of doubt and peril is eternity,
Though fear and conflict seize your soul.

2. When surrounded by the blackness of the darkest night,
O how lonely death can be;
At the end of this long tunnel is a shining light,
For death is swallowed up in victory!

Chorus: But just think of stepping on shore—and finding it Heaven!
Of touching a hand—and finding it God's!
Of breathing new air—and finding it celestial!
Of waking up in glory—and finding it home!

Ryle: “He who would be in tune for heaven must know something of love to Christ. He who dies ignorant of that love had better never have been born.” 234

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