

The Christian Walk

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Besides the examples of physical walking in the Bible, there are many references to two types of spiritual walking:

- Walking which is advancing in the Christian life through the use of divine power, and
- Walking in evil or controlled by the sin nature and using human energy, results in stagnation, retrogression or backsliding.

So, in walking, a Christian is either advancing or retreating. To advance, a believer must walk according to God's plan, stay in fellowship and grow in Christ. To retreat in the spiritual life is to reside in Satan's cosmic system.

Therefore, walking denotes many functions, both pro and con, in the spiritual life.

New Testament Words for Walking

The Greek word (**peripateo**) means to walk or to walk around. It is used for literal walking in Matt. 4:18. But **peripateo** is used primarily for the function of the plan of God in the church age in such passages as:

Rom. 6:4, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk (**peripateo**) in newness of life."

Gal. 5:16, 17, "But I say, walk (**peripateo**) by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

Eph. 4:1, 2, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk (**peripateo**) in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love,"

Eph. 5:1, 2, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk (**peripateo**) in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

The spiritual walk of believers who are out of fellowship is described in the following:

1 Cor. 3:1-3, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not

solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking (**peripatew**) like mere men?"

Phil. 3:17-19, "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk (**peripatew**) according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk (**peripatew**), of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."

The way of life of an unbeliever is also described by the word walk:

Eph. 2:1-3, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked (**peripatew**) according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Col. 3:5-7, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked (**peripatew**), when you were living in them."

The Greek word (**stoichew**) means to march in step; to march in rank; to walk in agreement with; to function in a system; to follow a leader from the ranks. It is used in the New Testament primarily for functioning under God's plan and advancing in that plan to spiritual maturity.

Gal. 5:25, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk (**stoichew**) by the Spirit."

Stoichew is used for the pattern of salvation by faith in Christ also called walking by faith.

Rom. 4:11, 12, "and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps (**stoichew**) of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised."

Stoichew is used for following the rules of the new spiritual life in

Gal. 6:16, "And those who will walk (**stoichew**) by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."

Phil. 3:16, "however, let us keep living by that same standard (**stoichew**) to which we have attained."

The word (**poreuomai**) means to go; to proceed; to travel; to conduct oneself in a certain manner; to live; to walk. It is used for national degeneration:

Acts 14:16, "And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go (**poreuomai**) their own ways;"

It is used for the carnal life pattern of the unbeliever:

1 Pet. 4:3, "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued (**poreuomai**) a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries."

Jude 16-18, "These are grumblers, finding fault, following after (**poreuomai**) their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after (**poreuomai**) their own ungodly lusts:""

See also 2 Pet. 2:10

It is used for occupation with the person of Jesus Christ on the part of believers:

Acts 9:31, "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on (**poreuomai**) in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."

The Greek (**anastrephw**) originally meant in the Attic Greek to upset; to overrun; to associate. Its figurative meaning was to behave or to function in terms of human conduct. It was also used for the practice of principles.

In the Bible, **anastrephw** is used for the conduct and the lifestyle of the unbeliever in **Eph. 2:3**.

It is used for motivation for Christian integrity.

Heb. 13:18, “Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct (**anastrephw**) ourselves honorably in all things.”

It is used for the operation of the sin nature.

Eph. 4:22, “that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside (**anastrephw**) the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,”

It is used for life and conduct in Christian way of life.

2 Pet. 3:11, 12, “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct (**anastrephw**) and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!”

The Greek word (**orthopedew**) means to walk straight. It is used for legalistic *modus operandi* and resultant hypocrisy in Gal. 2:14; in other words, they were not walking straight.

Walking in the Light vs. Walking in Darkness

Walking in the light is a term used specifically for the believer’s execution of God’s will, plan and purpose for the church age. The concept of walking in the light is found in Eph. 5:8, “You were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Begin walking (**peripatew**) as children of light.”

This command is a reference to experiential sanctification. Walking in the light is synonymous for the Christian way of life.

Just as walking in the darkness is incompatible with walking in light, so Christian degeneracy is incompatible with the plan of God.

Walking in the light is compatible with the status of being in the light. Walking in darkness is not compatible with the status of being in the light. A Christian walking in darkness is degenerate, whether moral, immoral or both.

The command to walk in the light means that God intends for a Christian to be filled with the Spirit and to learn the word of God under the filling of the Spirit.

The Lord Jesus is our precedent for walking in the light:

1 John 2:6, “The person who says he abides in Him, he himself ought to keep walking in the same manner as He walked.”

Our example for the Christian walk is the Lord Jesus Christ during the His life on earth, not the walk of Old Testament believers.

Walking as children of light means we are to become spiritually mature believers.

The power for walking comes from using the power of the Holy Spirit on the inside, Gal. 5:16, walk by means of the Spirit. This is a command to remain in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. Being in fellowship is the only way we can execute God’s plan.

Walking describes the purpose of living in the operational will of God to glorify God in the church age.

We are commanded in 1 Thess. 2:12, “so that you may walk in a manner worthy of God who elected you into His kingdom and glory.” This is a general reference to the fulfillment of the plan of God.

If we are going to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord after we believe in Christ, then we must be filled with the Spirit, and continually expose ourselves to the teaching of the word of God.

If we do all of this, then we fulfill 1 John 1:7, “If we keep walking in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

The challenge of walking in the light is found in Rom. 6:4, “Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism, in order that as Christ has been raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so that we too might walk in newness of life.”

- Walking in newness of life means we walk in the light of the word of God.
- We walk in newness of life because we are in union with Christ.
- Walking in newness of life means using all of the assets God has provided for us: the availability of divine power; the indwelling of the Trinity; our portfolio of spiritual blessings; our universal priesthood and ambassadorship, etc.

The faith rest principle is also a mandate for walking. Faith rest exercise provides the poise of the

Christian life. Applying faith rest you control your own life under God's plan for your life.

2 Cor. 5:7, "For we walk by faith and not by sight."

Col. 2:6, "As you have received Christ Jesus to yourselves, so keep walking by means of Him."

The concept of walking is used for the function of problem solving in the Christian way of life.

Eph. 5:1, 2, "Become imitators of your God as beloved posterity, and begin walking in the sphere of love..."

Learning and using the problem solving devices moves you along in executing the plan of God, which is walking in the light.

Eph. 4:1, 2, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, encourage you to walk in a manner worthy of your station in life into which you have been called with all humility and true sensitivity with perseverance, tolerate one another by means of love."

All of these commands to keep walking are commands to keep learning doctrine, to keep advancing spiritually in the Christian way of life.

Walking in Darkness is Related to Satan's Strategy of Evil

Walking is used as a warning against the cosmic system. John 8:12 is the prophecy of this.

Living in Satan's system is called walking.

Phil. 3:18, 19, "For many keep walking, concerning whom I have often told you, even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose termination is destruction, whose God is their emotions, whose fame comes by means of dishonor, who keep on thinking about earthly things."

1 John 1:6, "If we contend that we have fellowship with Him and keep walking in darkness, we lie and do not live the truth."

1 Cor. 3:3, "For you are still carnal, since there is jealousy and strife. And you keep walking in accordance with men."

Life in the cosmic system also called evil is called walking in darkness.

John 11:9, 10, "Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

Eph. 4:17-19, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;"

Walking is Related to Executing God's Plan.

Eph. 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared in advance that we should be walking by means of them."

- At salvation we became His creation, a new spiritual species.
- We are to walk by means of the things prepared by God for us in eternity past, such as the problem solving devices. The result is divine good: gold, silver, precious stones

Col. 1:9, 10, "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

This is the point at which you fulfill all the commands for walking.

Walking is used for a mandate to advance to the objective of spiritual maturity.

1 Thess. 4:1, "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more."

More References to Walking

Walking by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit:

Rom. 8:1-4, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Basic Christian living: we received Christ by faith, so now we walk by faith.

2 Cor. 5:7, “For we walk by faith and not by sight.”

Col. 2:6, “As you have received Christ Jesus to yourselves, so keep walking in Him.”

Building up momentum in spiritual things:

3 John 4, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

Eph. 5:16-17, “making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is”

Col. 1:9, 10, “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

Walking related to the application of doctrine:

Col. 4:5, 6, “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.”

Eph. 5:1-2, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

Testing as part of the Christian walk:

Read Rom. 13:13-14; Eph. 4:17; Phil. 3:17-19