**PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN WALK**

Sunday School Lesson 9

*Bible Principles for Daily Living*

Ephesians 4:17-24

8/7/2022

**Introduction:** When the Bible tells us to “walk not as other Gentiles walk,” it is describing the need for believers to walk differently than the walk of the unsaved. Christians are supposed to behave differently because we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Upon our salvation, we are made new creatures in Christ. This is not the results of our works but the loving grace of God. While we are saved and secure in Christ, we know that we are not perfect. We struggle with the flesh. We must intentionally put off some things. If we don’t put those things off, we will continue to walk in the same manner in which we walked before we received the Lord as our Saviour. Previously, we have looked at both the principles for the life of the Christian and principles for being a disciple of Christ. It’s important to make a clear distinction among these topics. For the principles of life, we looked at general principles that should govern our outlook on life itself and what we are expected to do with the life we have been given. For the principles of being a disciple, we looked at the principles of what it takes to be a disciple or follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Regarding the principles of the Christian walk, these are principles that should guide our overall behavior or how we live in this world. These principles ought to form the basis or foundation of our decision making when it comes to our daily choices. If we will follow them, I believe that we will walk a walk where the Lord is truly ordering our steps.

1. **THE CHRISTIAN WALK SHOULDN’T REGARD THE VAIN THINKING OF MAN.**
2. **Notice that we do not walk according to our own thoughts and reasoning because the ways of man are shallow and fruitless (Psalm 119:59; Prov. 2:13; 3:5 14:12; Ephesians 4:17; Colossians 2:18).** The mind of man is essential to his very being. Our mind houses our individual thoughts and processes the feelings of the heart. To walk the Christian walk does not mean that you just go through life without ever thinking. Frankly, we know that it’s simply not possible to do so. We have to use the mind. What’s important to understand, though, is that the mind we are to use is the mind of Christ. We are to let the Word and Spirit of God change our thinking. The Bible speaks here in Ephesians about the vanity of the mind. This is reiterated again in Colossians 2:18. The vanity of the mind refers to the emptiness of man’s reasoning and thinking. There is just so much that we do not know. In our carnal minds, we are processing information from a very weak position. The Lord knows so much more than we do, as He is all-knowing. He can see our way much better than we can see it. He is seeing it from a much better vantage point. Thus, we must not walk after our own reasoning. We ask the Lord to lead us in all things.
3. **Notice that we do not walk according to our own thoughts and reasoning because the way of man inclines itself to self-justification (Deut. 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:25; Prov. 12:15; 21:2; Galatians 6:3).** The Bible tells us that every way of a man is right in his own eyes. Our minds are really good at convincing us that we are right. The carnal mind can justify terrible things. Knowing this, we can see a real danger for any Christian who walks after his own thinking. As you go through life and strive to walk in the way of the Lord, you will very likely run across situations where you simply do not understand why something is happening, or you may have times where you are inclined to question in your heart and mind why the Lord commands you to handle a situation in a particular way. In the vanity of your mind, you might think that there is an easier or better way to go. Just remember that there is safety in walking in the counsel of the Lord. We need to walk in singleness of mind. Our mind must be renewed through our faith. Otherwise, we might find that we are unstable as the double-minded man. Faith may not lead to what man might think is the most logical decision, but we must trust that God knows best.
4. **THE CHRISTIAN WALK REQUIRES A CLOSENESS TO THE LORD.**

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1. **Notice that the Christian walk has to align with the place of fellowship with the Lord (1 John 1:6-7; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; Colossians 2:6; Ephesians 5:8; Galatians 5:26).** This seems like such an obvious thought, but I fear that there are many Christians who fail to grasp it. We cannot separate out our Christian walk from our relationship with the Lord. The Christian walk is walking with the Lord. If we are going to walk with Him, we have to walk where He is at. We walk in the light because He is in the light. The Bible tells us that if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. If you are not walking in the place where Christ would walk, then you are not walking the walk that the Lord desires for you to walk. He wants us to walk as He walked. We ought to consider this principle in our daily decision making. It ought to govern every action. Where would Christ go? What would Christ do? This is important when it comes to separation. We are not just separated from the world. We are separated unto the Lord. We are to walk a separated walk.
2. **Notice that before salvation we could not walk with Christ because we were alienated from Him as a result of our ignorance of Him (Ephesians 4:18; John 12:35; Colossians 1:10).** Going back to Ephesians 4, we find a reminder that the walk of the unbeliever is a walk of alienation from God. He is not only alienated in fellowship, but he is also alienated in knowledge. Of course, that happens first as a rejection of the Lord as their Saviour. When the unbeliever rejects that basic truth, they alienate themselves from knowing God. They cannot walk the way of God because they do not know the God of the way. For the believer, we ought not to walk as an unbeliever. Thus, we must walk in the knowledge of God. Upon salvation, that knowledge may still be somewhat limited, but as you continue to walk with Him, you continue to grow in the knowledge of our Lord. Just as there are believers who choose to fellowship in the place of darkness while thinking they can have a Godly walk, there are also believers who walk in close proximity of the Lord, but they do not take the time to get to know Him more.
3. **THE CHRISTIAN WALK RELIES UPON THE CONVICTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**
4. **Notice that the walk of the unbeliever has no genuine regard for the way of the Lord and cares only for the lusts of the flesh (Eph. 2:2; 4:19; Jn. 8:9; 16:8; Acts 2:37; 24:16; 1 Tim. 4:2; Jude 16).** We find in verse 19 that the unbelieving Gentiles had given themselves over to lasciviousness. The Bible says that they were past feeling. This means that they had a hard heart to their offenses against God. Frankly, they cared very little for His way, as their consciences may have already become seared. The only thing they were concerned with was walking after their own flesh. They wanted to feed the flesh. They wanted to give in to every whim of the flesh. Such were the members of the church at Ephesus before someone preached to them the Gospel, and they fell under the conviction of their sins. If this is the way that the unbeliever walks, then obviously it is not the way that the believer should walk. How often do we make daily decisions based upon our flesh though? Are we being led by the Spirit or led by the flesh. We must remember that flesh cannot please God. We must serve Him in spirit.
5. **Notice that the Holy Spirit has been given to the believer to help us walk in the way of the Lord. We ought not to grieve Him with our walk (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Cor. 2:13; Acts 18:25; John 16:13).** The believer has wonderful liberty in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, most believers choose to acknowledge that liberty for the purpose of justifying walking in our own way. Galatians 5 references the Christian’s liberty for the purpose of reminding us not to walk in the way of bondage that we were in before we came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Isn’t it amazing to think that God has literally empowered us with His Spirit? Have we allowed that to become just a trivial thing to us? Look at the mighty miracles performed through the work of the Holy Spirit all throughout the Bible. This same Spirit dwells within us and wants to teach us how we ought to walk. It’s true that the Bible does not have a “thou shalt not” or a “thou shalt” for every miniscule issue in the world. The Bible does have clear tenets that should guide us. Combine those with the help of the Spirit, and we have what we need in our walk.
6. **THE CHRISTIAN WALK MUST ALWAYS REMAIN A WALK IN TRUTH.**
7. **Notice that the believer must walk honestly for the primary benefit of those who are lost (Galatians 2:14; Romans 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:12; Colossians 4:5).** As believers, it ought to be important to us that the unbelievers see an honest walk in us. The Bible gives this command to the church on several occasions. I believe the honesty here refers to a need for sincerity in our walk. While we want our walk to be seen by others for the purpose of pointing them to Christ, their approval ought not to be the reason why we walk. We walk for approval and pleasing of our Lord. Remembering this truth is vital to ensuring that our walk stays honest. Another thing to consider about an honest walk is that if we walk one way around the unbelievers and another way privately or among believers, then we are not walking honestly. Our walk ought to be consistent in every setting because we are walking the walk of the One who is always faithful and consistent. Let us shine the light of the Gospel bright by walking in the Way.
8. **Notice that the believer must always walk in truth. We should not be deceived into walking in the way of error (Ephesians 4:21; 2 John 1:4; 3 John 1:3-4).** If we follow the other principles in this lesson, then this last principle should follow. We ought to make sure that our Christian walk is a walk in Truth. In order for this to happen, we have to know what the Truth is. We cannot let it be a subjective thing. We cannot let it be a relative thing. Truth is Truth. If we do not walk in Truth, then we have no expectation of walking in consistency. If it was true in the Word of God yesterday, it should still be true today. After all, God never changes. We ought to never present our decision making as the leading of the Holy Spirit if that decision is not consistent with the Truth. We ought to search the Scriptures daily and meditate upon them to ensure that we are following the Truth in our walk. Let’s not allow anyone to turn us aside out of a Godly walk by leading us down a path of deception or error.