

How To Walk With God

Moses is one of my favorite Old Testament saints. He may be my favorite because I have learned some incredibly valuable lessons from him. One of the lessons I have learned comes from Exodus 3 where Moses was walking one day and saw a burning bush. God was in that bush as a theophany. When Moses approached the bush, God told him to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. Now Moses did not approach the bush because he wanted a new ministry, to speak with God or to know God. He was just curious.

The conversation that followed was rough. God asked Moses to serve Him, but Moses was not interested. He had excuses. He did not want to have to speak to the Pharaoh of Egypt and eventually Moses lost part of the joy of his ministry to his older brother Aaron. But he did not completely refuse to serve God, or we would not be talking about him this morning! I learned an important lesson from that event. If we refuse to serve God as He desires, we will not realize the full joy of what God has for us.

Another event that is very meaningful to me, personally, is the time when Moses was on Mount Sinai and asked God for a favor! Please turn in your Bibles to Exodus 33:7. In verses 7-11 we are told that Moses was visited by God at a tent that Moses called the "Tent of Meeting." Here are verses 7-11,

good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. Exodus 33:7-11 (NASB)



Here we are told that it was the custom of God and Moses to meet at a tent that was outside the camp of the Israelites. After Moses entered the tent God would appear in a pillar of cloud outside the tent. Then they would talk as a man speaks with his

friend. Now does that send goosebumps through you? They spent time together. Moses was a friend of God; and this they did time after time after time!

When we come to verse 12, Moses is on Mount Sinai and he is not happy. Now watch carefully.

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a

Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up

this people!' But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people." And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here." Exodus 33:12-15 (NASB)

Moses makes two statements that we must not miss. I want to take them in reverse order. The first one is found in verse 14. God tells Moses that He will go with Moses. Then Moses says, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here." What Moses means is that He does not want to be alone without God. It is important to know that the word "go" that both God and Moses used is a very common Hebrew word that is also translated as "to walk." Both Moses and God wanted to walk together! Now remember this for later. This is important!

The second important point is found in verse 13 when Moses said, "Please show me now Your ways, that I may know You!" This means that he was not happy just being the leader of Israel. He was not happy with just talking with God at the tent, He wanted to know God! Verse 13 says,

Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You . . .

But what did Moses mean by Your ways? This is an important question and Moses does not explain. The answer is found in Psalm 103:7. Here is the verse.

He made known His ways to Moses,
His acts to the sons of Israel.
Psalm 103:7 (NASB)

This verse contrasts Moses to the sons of Israel. It says that God revealed His ways to Moses, but the Israelites only knew the acts of God. The Hebrew word that is translated as "acts" can also be translated as "deeds." That is, the Israelites saw what

God did such as the ten plagues in Egypt, the pillar of cloud during the day, the pillar of fire at night, the parting of the Red Sea, the bitter water of Marah turned sweet, the manna in the desert, the water flowing from a rock in the Wilderness of Sin, the defeat of the Amalekites and Moses on Mount Sinai with all the fire and lightning. They saw the acts of God—the things God did, but Moses discovered the ways of God. The "ways of God" refers to understanding the character of God. Moses wanted to understand God's character and why He did what He did. Moses wanted to see more than just the stories about Adam & Eve, Cain killing Abel, Noah's flood, the Tower of Babel, Abraham and Sarah, Sodom and Gomorrah and Joseph in Egypt. Moses wanted to know why God did what He did and to walk together with God! He wanted to understand and know God. And Psalm 103:7 says that God answered His request.

IF YOU WILL SEEK FOR ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART. Now, why did God do this for Moses and not for Israel? We must be careful how we answer this important question! We must be careful that we are not like an Old West gun fighter who draws his gun too fast. If we turn to Jeremiah 29:13-14 we find the answer to the question. There we are told,

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 'I will be found by you,' declares the LORD . . . Jeremiah 29:13-14 (NASB)

Now what does this verse tell us? Does it tell us that if we will seek the Lord and search for Him, God will let us find Him? Let me repeat the question. Does it tell us that if we will seek the Lord and search for Him, God will let us find Him? The answer is no! The answer is no because I left out the words "with all your heart." You see, if you search for God with all your heart, then He will let you find Him! God's point is are you serious? Moses was not happy with conversations with God at tent meetings, he wanted something more! Now, frankly I think I might have been happy with that. But not Moses. He wanted to know "the ways of God" so that he could know God at a deeper level.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD. Enoch is another Old Testament saint who touches me emotionally. Listen to Genesis

5:22-24.

Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. Genesis 5:22-24 (NASB)

Here we are told that Enoch walked with God for three hundred years before God just took him. He never died. The Hebrew word for “not” means “not.” He was gone! Why was he gone? He was walking with God. Now do you remember that God said He would go with Moses? Do you remember that the Hebrew word God used for “go” also means “walk”? The Hebrew word that God used is the same word that occurs here. This means that Enoch walked with God and Moses and God walked together. Hebrews 11:5 gives us more to think about. The passage says,

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:5-6 (NASB)

Here we are told Enoch’s faith is the reason he was taken up. We are also told that Enoch believed God rewarded those who seek Him. It is also important to know that when the Greek word for “seek” is a present participle. A present participle refers to ongoing activity. This means Enoch believed God rewards those who are actively seeking Him. Stop to think. Why do two friends seek one another? The answer is they believe there is a reward for being together. So, if we combine everything together, Enoch’s walk with God included actively seeking Him and faith was the glue. You see, one who is walking with God is also seeking the Lord. Walking with God includes seeking God.

ABRAHAM WAS A FRIEND OF GOD. Another great saint is Abraham who was called the friend of God three times in Scripture. I am amazed that two of those times God tells us

that Abraham was His friend (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). Imagine God telling everyone that Abraham was your friend? Now, why did God do that? He did it to motivate us!

DAVID SOUGHT AFTER GOD. David is another favorite saint. In Psalm 27:7-8 he wrote,

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice,
And be gracious to me and answer me.
When You said, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You,
“Your face, O LORD, I shall seek.”
Psalm 27:7-8 (NASB)

Now David was not a new believer when he wrote this Psalm. Yet, he says, “I cry . . . I shall seek your face.” In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David said to Solomon,

. . . serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him . . . 1 Chronicles 28:9 (NASB)

David says that God knows if we are really seeking Him. He is no fool. In Psalm 119:10, David said,

With my whole heart I seek You . . . Psalm 119:10 (ESV)

Remember Jeremiah 29:13-14 says, if you will seek Me with all your heart, I will let you find Me. And these verses say that was true of David. He sought God with his whole heart. The great saints in the Old Testament are great because they wanted to know more than facts about God. They wanted to know God as a friend knows a friend—and God rewarded them.

THE APOSTLE PAUL WANTED TO KNOW GOD. The apostle Paul is another man who wanted to know God. Listen to what he wrote in Philippians 3:7-8,

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count

them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ . . . Philippians 3:7-8
(NASB)

Paul says that he counted everything as loss—as rubbish, as excrement, as refuse or as cow dung for the surpassing knowledge of Christ. Now when Paul says this, he is already a believer like Moses, Enoch, Abraham and David. He was not wanting to be saved. He was saying that his greatest desire was to know Christ.

Remember that Jeremiah 29:13-14 says God has promised,

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 'I will be found by you,' declares the LORD . . . Jeremiah 29:13-14 (NASB)

God says, “If you seek Me and search for Me with all your heart, I will let you find Me.” I realized that God is a rewarder of those who seriously seek Him! God is a Rewarder! He wants us to seek to know Him, and this truth is repeated throughout Scripture and will reward us. When we become a Christian, our seeking should not end. It has only started! Listen to God’s great desire in Jeremiah 9:23-24.

Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NASB)

God says that of all the things a man can desire, His greatest desire is that we would want to know Him. When I read that my heart cried out, Lord I want to know and understand you! Can I ask, is that your desire?

OVERVIEW OF 1 JOHN 2:12-14. Now how can we know God? How can we know God’s ways? The answer is found in 1 John 2:12-14. This passage uses an illustration of physical growth to teach us a spiritual truth.

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake. I am writing to you, fathers,

because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. 1 John 2:12-14 (NASB)

There are two illustrations of physical growth in these verses. Both illustrations are about a little child who becomes a young man and eventually a father. But the real message is about spiritual growth. The first illustration starts with verse 12 and ends in the middle of verse 13. The second illustration begins in the middle of verse 13 and ends with verse 14. I will combine them together.

LITTLE CHILDREN. Notice that we are told in verse 12 that “little children” symbolizes those “whose sins are forgiven.” Then in verse 13, we are told that they know God. That is, little children are new believers. They know their sins are forgiven and they have some elementary knowledge of God. Then they begin to grow spiritually.

THE YOUNG MAN. The next stage of spiritual growth is symbolized by a young man or we could say a young woman. If we combine these verses together, we discover the young man represents Christians who are overcoming the evil one (Ephesians 6:10-20). They are strong in the faith (Romans 4:20) and the Word of God abides in them. When we are told that the Word of God abides in the young man, we are wrong if we think this only refers to obedience. We must remember that in order to obey God we must know Scripture. David said that he had hidden God’s Word in his heart so that he would not sin against God. Otherwise we are like the Jews, in Romans 10:2, whom Paul said had zeal, but they did not have knowledge. And if we have knowledge but not zeal, that results in ritualism or cold orthodoxy. The point is we need both knowledge and zeal to obey.

HEBREWS 5:11-14. Now I want to illustrate this principle by looking at Hebrew 5:11-14 and then returning to 1 John 2:12-14. There are two important points we want to learn from Hebrews 5:11-14.

If we were to read the verses before verse 11, we would dis-

cover that the writer of Hebrews wants to discuss Melchizedek, but he cannot because he says,

Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. Hebrews 5:11 (NASB)

He says these believers are dull of hearing. The Greek word that is translated as “dull” is *nothros*. This word occurs again in Hebrews 6:12. There the word is translated as “sluggish.” This means the Greek word has the sense of lazy. This is the reason the author of Hebrews was having trouble teaching them about Melchizedek. They were too lazy to study Scripture. So, they had difficulty understanding the deeper truths. Notice what the author says,

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. Hebrews 5:12-13 (NASB)

The most important word in these two verses is the word “again.” It reveals these believers needed someone to teach them the basic truths of the Word of God again. He said again! When the author says they should be teachers, he does not mean that every Christian should have the spiritual gift of teaching and be teaching. He is saying that they should know enough to be able to teach others. Why were they not able to do that? Because they had been living on a diet of milk. He does not mean goat’s milk or cow’s milk. He means that they were living on the simple truths of the Bible and as a result—they had slipped backward in their spiritual growth. The point is the Christian life is like climbing up an escalator that is going down from an upper level to a lower level. If you stop climbing, you will slide backward.

Next, He says everyone who is living on a spiritual diet of milk is unskilled in the Word of Righteousness. He combines two thoughts. He is referring to the fact that they knew very little about the Word of God, and implies they were not living a righteous life. He said word of Righteousness. You see, a

diet of the simple truths and Bible stories will miss the deeper truths of Scripture and result in immature and disobedient Christians.

Then in verse 14 we are told,

But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Hebrews 5:14 (NASB)

I think we understand the illustration. Adults eat steak and potatoes, but babies do not. So, he is saying that those believers who are on a diet of the solid meat of the Word of God will be able to discern good from evil. This gives us the first important principle in this passage is that — serious study of Scripture is necessary to know good from evil—zeal to obey!

Let me introduce the second principle by saying, that I have to admit that in my younger years if someone had announced that they would be teaching about Melchizedek, I would not have been interested. I thought it was a waste of time. Discussions about Melchizedek always resulted in controversy, speculation and, frankly, were boring. Then later when I read the book of Hebrews, I discovered that the author of Hebrews starts teaching these immature believers about Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 in order to help them grow and teach them an important truth about Jesus—He is an eternal high priest. Then I realized that I was wrong, and I needed to chew on the steak called Melchizedek. This gives us the second principle. Serious Bible study is necessary to know God AND to discern good from evil.

THE SPIRITUAL FATHER. Now let’s return to 1 John 2:12-14. So, we have discovered that a young man (or young woman) symbolizes a believer who is having victory over the evil one, has strong faith and is growing because he/she is seriously studying Scripture. That is how we learn the deeper truths about God, and, as a result, we pursue holiness. That is the Word of God abides in them—in their hearts and it is reflected in their behavior. He knows the Bible verses that explain the gospel. He knows the doctrines of the Bible. He knows the Bible verses that explain believers are eternally secure, Jesus is God, God is a trinity, how to walk in the Spirit and God’s prophetic future, for example. He or she is learning each book of the Bible. As a result, he is growing in the knowl-

edge of God and is obeying it. The Word of God abides in him.

Now let's look at the father. The only thing that is ever said about the father is that he "knows him who is from the beginning." He is like Moses, Enoch, Abraham, David, and Paul who wanted to know God the Father. He knows more than facts about God. The spiritual father is interested in facts about God, but he wants to go deeper.

I have found that some believers are bored with the attributes of God. They know the fact that God is eternal, but they miss that this means Jesus can keep His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. It is great to know the fact that God is immutable—never changes, because this means God will never change the rules for going to heaven at the moment you die. Isn't it great to know the fact that God is holy? This means that He is not an evil God like the gods of the Romans and Greeks. The spiritual father knows more than the obvious facts about God. He knows and understands God.

There are three important truths we should not miss from 1 John 2:12-14. The first truth is that you ask yourself, where are you in your spiritual growth? Are you more like the little child, the young man or the father of the faith? This is an important step. You need to be honest with yourself. The second truth is that a person can be a Christian a long time and still be a spiritual child. A person's age is never mentioned. Therefore, may I ask, which are you? A spiritual child, a young man or a father of the faith?

The third truth is that there are some saints who want to skip serious Bible study and just know God. So, they eagerly read A.W. Tozer's book on the *Knowledge of the Holy*, or J. I. Packer's book *Knowing God* or Arthur Pink's book *The Attributes of God*. They want to take a shortcut to knowing God because the solid food of the Bible study is difficult to digest. But the apostle John teaches us that a believer must become a spiritual young man before he or she can become a spiritual father who knows Him who has been from the beginning.

Also, some Christians think that knowing the Bible is the goal in the Christian life, but this passage teaches that the study of the Word of God is not the goal in the Christian life. The goal in the Christian life is to know Him who has been from the beginning; and, the only way to know the Father who has been from the beginning, is to become a young man

first and then, Lord willing, someday become a father of the faith.

Do see that the father of the faith seeks to learn the ways of God in the pages of the Bible and as he digs down deep, he knows and understands God more and more and that results in him sinning less and his faith increasing. Then one day he becomes a father of the faith. God promised that if you will seek and search for me with all your heart, I will let you find Me.

CONCLUSION. I want to close by asking, if you remember Mary and Martha? Some of us are like Martha who was preparing lunch for Jesus and the disciples because they were hungry. That was Martha's ministry! She was great in the kitchen. Her pizzas, tacos, and milkshakes were great. But Mary was just sitting at Jesus' feet. Martha became irritated because Mary was not helping with her important ministry. So, Martha pleaded with Jesus to send her sister to the kitchen to help her. But what did Jesus say? Luke 10:41-42 gives Jesus' reply,

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke 10:41-42 (NASB)

Jesus said Mary had chosen the good part. Jesus was more important to Mary than preparing food. May I ask, is there something better than Jesus in your life, such as a ministry in the church, a job, children, a hobby, or your health? Today, some believers are seeking and searching for God but NOT with all their heart! They have just added Jesus to their life. Some believers do not read the Bible regularly because it is not as thrilling as it once was! Seeking to find God by digging in Scripture to become a young man and eventually a father who knows Him Who is from the beginning is not as important as it used to be. They want a shortcut to spiritual growth. Some would never attend a study about the book of Jeremiah because believe there is probably nothing really interesting in that book or about God. The truth is the Bible has not changed since we became a Christian, but some of us have changed. Some have graduated to something better than seeking and desiring to walk with God! If this describes you, I want to encourage you

to confess this sin to God and tell Him that you want to seek Him with all your heart and to know Him.

The father of the faith wants to walk with God, because he is seeking to know and understand God with all his heart, and the more he knows and understands God, the greater his joy and the more he becomes like Jesus. This is how we walk with God. This is God's great desire!