Walking is Living

SCRIPTURE

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

DEVOTIONAL

We often take our basic physical abilities for granted until we lose them. When I was in high school I dislocated my ankle during a basketball game. It tore the muscles, required a trip to the hospital, and left me with the inability to walk for a short period. Laying in bed, completely dependent on others, I realized how deeply debilitating it is to lose the ability to walk.

Not being able to walk severely diminishes a person's quality of life. In fact, in the Bible, the concept of "walking" is entirely synonymous with "living." When the Apostle Paul tells us to "walk in the Spirit," he is talking about the daily, practical reality of how we live our lives.

Tragically, many of us are living in a state of spiritual paralysis. We are confined to a bed of spiritual sickness, unable to move forward in our walk with God. We want to experience the joy and freedom of a vibrant Christian life, but we feel crippled by our habits, our past, and our carnal nature.

God did not call you to a life of spiritual bedrest. He called you to walk. Today, acknowledge your inability to move forward on your own. Do not get comfortable in your spiritual paralysis.

The Great Physician has the power to restore your inability to fully walk the walk of faith. Ultimately, He desires that we should live the fullest life possible by His Spirit.

PRAYER

Lord, I confess that I am often spiritually paralyzed. I feel stuck in my walk with You. Forgive me for becoming comfortable on my bed of affliction. Give me the strength and the desire to truly walk in Your Spirit today. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Galatians 5:16–25
- Romans 8:1–4
- Colossians 2:6–7
- 1 John 2:3–6
- John 15:4–5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does walking in the Spirit look like in daily decisions?

2. Read Galatians 5:16–25. How does this passage deepen today's understanding of God's work in our lives?

3. What would it look like for you to seek the Spirit's guidance before a routine decision?

The Impossible Standard

SCRIPTURE

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2:6 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The Bible sets a standard for the Christian life that seems completely unattainable to the human mind. The Apostle John states plainly that if we claim to abide in Jesus, we ought to walk exactly as He walked.

When confronted with this text, many Christians immediately push back. They argue, "But Jesus was the divine Son of God! I am just a flawed, sinful human being. It is impossible for me to live and walk the way He did". We look at Christ's perfect patience, His selfless love, and His total victory over temptation, and we feel utterly defeated before we even try.

Because we believe it is impossible, we lower the standard. We settle for a mediocre, struggling, defeated Christian experience. We try to force ourselves to be good through sheer willpower, but we constantly fail. We realize that we are spiritually invalid—we do not have the power in our own legs to walk this path.

But John did not make a mistake when he wrote those words. He was not giving us an impossible burden; he was pointing us to a miraculous promise. The command to walk as Jesus walked is the ultimate proof that God intends to supply the power to do it. You cannot do it in your flesh, but Christ can do it in you. Stop staring at your own weakness, and start staring at His strength.

PRAYER

Father, the standard of Your Word often overwhelms me. I know I cannot walk as Jesus walked using my own willpower. I surrender my weakness to You today. Live Your perfect life through my mortal flesh. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 1 John 2:3–6
- John 15:4–5
- Philippians 2:13
- Galatians 5:16–25
- Romans 8:1–4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Christ's example both our standard and a reminder of our dependence on Him?

2. Consider 1 John 2:3–6. What does this passage add to the main lesson of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to ask Christ for strength to imitate one of His qualities?

Looking to the Wrong Source

SCRIPTURE

"The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." John 5:7 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

At the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus encountered a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. Jesus approached him with a penetrating question: "Wilt thou be made whole?".

You would think the man would shout an enthusiastic "Yes!" But instead, he started making excuses. He told Jesus, "I have no man to put me in the water". He was entirely focused on his lack of resources. He was looking for healing in a superstitious pool of water, and he was relying on other human beings to get him there.

How often do we do the exact same thing? We sit in our spiritual sickness, making excuses for why we cannot overcome our sins. We say, "My parents treated me poorly," or "My church doesn't support me," or "I have no one to help me." We look to earthly programs, to psychology, to self-help books, and to other flawed human beings to give us the strength to walk.

As long as you are looking to the "water" or looking to "men," you will remain paralyzed. Jesus is standing right in front of you, asking if you want to be whole. You do not need a better program, and you do not need another person. You need the Creator of the universe. Turn your eyes away from your excuses and fix them entirely on the Savior.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, forgive me for making excuses for my spiritual failures. I have looked to other people and worldly methods to fix my heart, but they have always failed me. I look only to You today. Yes, Lord, I want to be made whole. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- John 5:1–9
- Psalm 146:3–5
- Jeremiah 17:5–8
- 1 John 2:3–6
- John 15:4–5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the man at Bethesda need to look beyond the pool?

2. How does John 5:1–9 help clarify the spiritual principle in today's reading?

3. What would it look like for you to bring a problem to Christ instead of relying solely on human solutions?

Ropes of Sand

SCRIPTURE

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13:23 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever tried to bargain with God when you were in trouble? When I was younger I thought I had a great idea. I decided to smuggled steroids into the country across the Mexico border.

At the border crossing, the agent had us pull over and they searched the vehicle. I thought I was going to get caught so I prayed a desperate prayer: "Lord, if you just get me out of this, I promise I will turn my life around and start going to church!".

God was merciful, and I was released without them finding where I hid the steroids. Within minutes, I completely forgot the promise I had made.

This perfectly illustrates the futility of human willpower and the promises we make. When we feel the guilt of our sins, we try to fix ourselves. We make grand, sweeping promises to God: "I will never lose my temper again. I will never look at that website again. I will pray every morning." But our promises to God are like ropes of sand. They crumble the moment temptation applies pressure.

We must learn a hard, humiliating lesson: we cannot heal ourselves. We cannot generate righteous obedience from a carnal heart. Making promises to God is a subtle form of legalism; it is relying on your own strength. True Christianity is not about making promises to God; it is about claiming the promises of God. We can't force our will to obey, we can only surrender our will and rely on His promises, not our own.

PRAYER

Father, my own promises are weak and useless. I have broken my word to You countless times. I lay down my willpower today. I stop trying to save myself, and I throw myself completely on Your merciful promises. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Romans 7:18–25
- Ezekiel 36:26–27
- John 5:1–9
- Psalm 146:3–5
- Jeremiah 17:5–8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is human willpower alone insufficient to change the heart?

2. Read Romans 7:18–25. What connection do you see between this passage and today's Scripture?

3. What would it look like for you to confess a persistent weakness and ask for divine help?

The Power is in the Command

SCRIPTURE

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked..." John 5:8-9 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

When Jesus healed the paralyzed man at Bethesda, He didn't offer him physical therapy or a multi-step recovery plan. He simply issued a direct command: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk".

From a human perspective, this command was insulting and absurd. The man’s legs had not worked for nearly four decades. But the man did not argue. He did not ask for a scientific explanation. He chose to exercise faith in the Word of Christ. And the moment he chose to believe the Word, the life-giving power to perform the action was instantly supplied.

This is the great secret of the Christian walk: The power to obey is found inside the command itself. When God commands you to "love your enemies," He is not asking you to muster up feelings of affection from your own dead heart. He is offering you the divine power to do it. You simply have to believe it.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Our problem is a lack of faith. We doubt that God's Word has the creative energy to actually change our behavior. Today, whatever God is commanding you to do, do not analyze your own weakness. Believe the Word, arise and make the first step in faith. As you do so, divine power will give you the ability to walk.

PRAYER

Master, Your commands are not burdensome; they are empowering. Give me the faith of the man at Bethesda. When You tell me to rise, let me not hesitate or look at my weak legs. Let me step forward in the power of Your Word. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Luke 5:4–6
- Philippians 4:13
- Romans 10:17
- Jeremiah 13:23
- Romans 7:18–25

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the healing at Bethesda teach about Christ's enabling word?

2. What encouragement or instruction does Luke 5:4–6 offer in light of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to obey a clear instruction from Scripture in reliance on Christ?

Forgiveness is Power

SCRIPTURE

"For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Matthew 9:5-6 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

In Matthew 9, another paralyzed man is brought to Jesus. But instead of immediately healing his legs, Jesus addresses his deepest need first: "Thy sins be forgiven thee". The religious leaders were furious, accusing Jesus of blasphemy. They believed only God could forgive sins.

To prove His divine authority, Jesus ties the forgiveness of sin directly to physical healing. He asks, "Which is easier?" Then He commands the man to arise and walk.

Many Christians today have a very shallow understanding of forgiveness. They view it merely as a legal pardon—a get-out-of-jail-free card that wipes the slate clean but leaves the sinner unchanged. But Jesus equates the forgiveness of sins with the power to "arise and walk". True, biblical forgiveness does not just excuse you from the penalty of your sin; it literally delivers you from the power of your sin.

When Jesus forgives you, He heals your spiritual paralysis. He gives you the ability to get up, pick up your bed, and walk out of the room a completely new creature. If your religion only gives you peace about your past but no power for your present, you have missed the true Gospel. Claim the full forgiveness of Christ today, and walk in the newness of life.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for not just pardoning my sins, but for healing my soul. I don't want a religion that leaves me paralyzed. Let Your forgiveness wash over me today, granting me the power to rise up and walk in victory. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Matthew 9:1–8
- Psalm 103:1–5
- Titus 2:11–14
- John 5:8–9
- Luke 5:4–6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is Christ's forgiving grace connected to a transformed life?

2. How does Matthew 9:1–8 support or expand the lesson we have considered today?

3. What would it look like for you to receive forgiveness and take a step toward restitution or obedience?

Sabbath Summary & Reflection

SCRIPTURE

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

SABBATH REFLECTION

This week, we have deeply explored the command to "Arise and Walk". We recognized that a failure to walk spiritually means we are not truly living. We faced the high calling of walking exactly as Jesus walked, realizing we can never achieve it through our own empty promises or willpower. We discovered that the power to obey is found entirely through faith in the Word of Christ, and that true forgiveness heals our spiritual paralysis.

Why does God want us to walk so powerfully? It is not just for our own benefit. It is for the world.

When others observe the transformation of life and character in us they will say, "I want what they have". People will not be won over to the truth through complex theological argument; they will be won over by the undeniable witness of a transformed life and the beauty of the character of Christ reproduced in us.

Reflect: As you review this week, are you still trying to heal yourself through willpower, or are you trusting in the command of Christ?

Evaluate: When your family, coworkers, or neighbors look at your daily walk, do they see a life so full of peace and victory that they say, "I want what they have"?

The Invitation: As you enter a new week, the call is to "Be a Witness". Your changed life is the greatest sermon you will ever preach.

Practical Application: Next week, stop trying to argue people into the truth. Focus entirely on abiding in Christ so that your daily walk becomes a living, breathing demonstration of His grace.

PRAYER

Lord of the Sabbath, I thank You for speaking the word of healing over my life. Keep me walking in the Spirit. Let my life radiate such undeniable peace and joy that others are drawn to the Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Matthew 5:14–16
- John 15:8
- Romans 6:4
- Matthew 9:1–8
- Psalm 103:1–5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can our transformed walk bring glory to the Father rather than ourselves?

2. How does Matthew 5:14–16 bring together the spiritual lessons of this week?

3. What would it look like for you to let one quiet act of kindness testify to Christ's work?