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For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

Learning to Walk

The most common description of the believer's life in the New Testament is the word "walk." The word appears, in relation to the believer, almost 200 times. It is used in negative connotations such as, "when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelleries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries" (1 Peter 3:3); in descriptions of the enemies of Christ such as, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil 3:18); and in discussing carnality, "For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies" (2 Thes 3:11). But the great majority of the time the word "walk" describes the various positive ways a believer lives his life.

In physical life, learning to walk is one of the first challenges for a child. It doesn't happen all at once (at least not with most kids) but takes small movements until that first step is taken. We all remember watching our children roll over, crawl, and then pull themselves up to a low table. Then it takes a while as the child holds an adult hand and wobbles alongside for short distances. Finally, however, the child must venture on his own and off he goes! For the rest of his life, walking is like breathing. We all do it without thinking. We may have to think about riding a bike, swimming, or jumping a rope, but we walk automatically.

I think God uses the analogy of walking to describe the Christian life because it is something that a believer ought to do automatically. It should not involve ongoing decisions about balance, which foot goes first, or how long each step should be. When we walk, those decisions are done almost without thinking. Such also is the Christian walk.

Walking with God in our Christian life has many admonitions for different circumstances. Just as you walk barefoot or with shoes, fast or slow, casually or purposefully, our believing walk also has many variations. Consider the following: "Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us" (Eph 5:2); "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside" (Col 5:2); "Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Eph 4:1); "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise" (Eph 5:15); "As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4); "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal 5:16); "Let us walk properly, as in the day" (Rom 13:13); "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Col 2:6); "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8); "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10); "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it" (2 John 6). The list could go on and on.

To the new Christian these things may seem like huge challenges, just as taking that first step was a major undertaking to a toddler. But after doing it for a while, even mom can't keep up with where that little one intends to go! So it should be with those who have walked with the Lord for any length of time. Sure, there are those accidents or foolish experiments that impede the walking for a while, but the one with life in his limbs will not be down for long. "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name" (Psalm 86:11).

Dispensationalism Revisited

Kevin Bauder, Bruce Compton, editors

This 2023 publication from Central Seminary Press is the best review and defense of dispensationalism in the last few years. After reading so many opinions and critiques of the subject, this book felt like meeting with an old friend and walking for a while. Yet at the same time it brought new and up-to-date clarification on a number of important and contemporary issues. At various points, the book speaks to the issues of progressive dispensationalism, covenantalism, and progressive covenantalism. Roy Beacham writes, "All three of these methodologies . . . Embrace the pre-understanding that predictive prophecy can be, has been, and is being fulfilled in some other way than literally. In fact, this hermeneutic is intrinsic to each of these systems since none of their theological constructs could exist apart from the idea of partial nonliteral fulfillment" (35).

Ten dispensationalists contributed to the book, seven from five well-known seminaries, one from the University of Minnesota, and two Baptist pastors. The topics were these: 1) The Glory of God and Dispensationalism: Revisiting the *Sine Qua Nons* of Dispensationalism, by Douglas Brown, Faith Baptist Theological Seminary. Doug Brown emphasizes the third *Sine Qua Non* of dispensationalism, the glory of God. "In this author's view dispensationalists have not always given adequate attention to the glory of God in their teaching on dispensationalism" (17).

2) Literalism and the Prophets: The Case for a Unified Hermeneutic, by Roy Beacham, Central Baptist Theological Seminary. "Dispensationalists embrace the idea that God intended all prophetic foretelling in Scripture to be understood literally and only literally" (32).

3) Israel and the Church: Is There Really a Difference? by Kevin Bauder, Central Baptist Theological Seminary. "This chapter will offer an understanding of this expression [*people of God*], which, while often used, is seldom defined" (72).

4) Biblical Covenants and Their Fulfillment, by William Berrick, The Master's Seminary. "This study purposes to illumine the believer's mind regarding the fulfillment of the covenants within the scope of their interrelationship with biblical dispensations" (102).

5) The "Kingdom of Heaven/God" and the Church: A Case Study in Hermeneutics and Theology, by R. Bruce Compton, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. "The expressions *kingdom of heaven* and *kingdom of God* refer essentially to Christ's future earthly rule in the millennial kingdom" (121).

6) Israel in the Church Fathers, by Larry Pettegrew, Shepherd's Seminary. "The eschatological system held by these early church Fathers, according to Hauser, was therefore premillennialism but not necessarily the kind of premillennialism that goes hand in hand with pretribulationism" (139). Pettegrew will further explain, "Moreover, almost all the Fathers, including the early Fathers who were premillennialists, were inconsistent in their hermeneutics, engaging in some doubtful typological interpretations" (145).

7) Acts, the Church, and the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, by Andrew Hudson, pastor, Westside Baptist Church, Janesville, WI. "This essay presupposes that, even though Acts is a unique book, it should be interpreted according to a literal or normal historical-grammatical hermeneutic" (168).

8) The Church, Israel, and Supersessionism, by Ryan Martin, pastor, Columbiaville Baptist Church, Columbiaville, MI. "I intend to present an exegetical argument from Romans 9-11 that ethnic Israel has a distinct future in God's plan" (196).

9) Will Jesus Come Before the Millennium? A New Testament Answer from Revelation 20, by W. Edward Glenny, University of Minnesota. "The goal of this essay is to defend and show the support for a premillennial return of Christ in Revelation 20" (234).

10) The Case for the Pretribulation Rapture, by Jonathan Pratt, Central Baptist Theological Seminary. "My goal is to provide both exegetical and theological arguments in defense of the pretribulation rapture" (250).

It should be noted also that this volume was a tribute to Dr. Charles Hauser, Jr., registrar and dean of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Minneapolis, MN, from 1986 until his retirement in 2006. I sat under Dr. Hauser when he was professor and Academic Vice President at Denver Baptist Theological Seminary where I received a ThM degree. I also knew Dr. Hauser during his years at Central. He and his wife Ann were great people. May God increase their tribe.

