

HOW TO HAVE A CLOSER WALK

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"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." I Cor. 9:26&27.

Paul often referred to Old Testament scriptures and the fluctuation of the old time followers of God. Israel spent so very much time straying, and yet in periods of obedience great things happened. They could be led by the Shekinah glory of God in a cloud during the day, and a pillar of fire by night. They walked through the sea on dry ground, were fed manna daily, and drank from the rock that Moses struck. Yet there were sad times Israel failed to walk with God. All the wonderful provisions of God did not protect them from a desire to sin. Certainly they knew He walked in their midst, but with hard hearts they slipped into complacency and sin. Today, we do not have all those manifestations of the power of God surrounding and leading us. If Israel could forget and slip into sin so easily, how much more we must do battle to walk in close proximity with God. Certainly, we don't want to be lulled into a broken relationship with God. There are three Biblical principles to follow to win today's battles. They are vital to the closer walk we all need in this busy, fast moving life. **(1). Humility:** *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."* Gal. 6:1&2. Humility means to concentrate on God, and not self. It encompasses a very high view of God, and an honest assessment of self. True humility must

have deep thought about self, others, and the Lord. Our humility needs to be growing, and two things stand out in this attitude which daily must possess us. First, we all have the same challenge or purpose, to glorify God. I Cor. 10:31 says *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*" No matter who you are, your life must bring glory to God. That should be your very goal in living day by day. You and I must be God honoring persons each and every day. This takes constant attention daily, for we must keep our thoughts on God, and others, and not ourselves. It is not what I want, but what God wants for my life. The humble believer must continually honor, love, respect, and obey God. To do this, we have to shut out the clamor of the world, and listen for the heavenly sounds of the Lord. Another thing to remember is that we all struggle together. You and I are very much alike in many areas. Paul urged humble believers to be *"considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."* Gal. 6:1b. We have a tendency to look at the sins of others, and say that would not tempt me. This is the thought of a proud person who looks down on others, and their failures, and thinks, that is not one of my problems. We must humbly remember, but for the grace of God it might be our problem for sin doth so easily beset us. All of us are capable of committing the worst sin possible, because our heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Every believer is eminently entrapable and must be on guard against sin in every form. Satan would love you to lift self above others with pride and indifference. It is then easier to knock you down for you are not on guard. I believe this is why Paul said *"But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."* Gal. 6:4. If today, what you do is honoring God, then rejoice within and reach out humbly to others. Proud believers don't work to win souls, are not faithful to the services in their church, and overall carry

themselves in an proud manner among others. You can be a believer, but not a humble one, unless you realize there is so much more you could accomplish for God. True humility is a glorious trait of a faithful, God honoring, follower of God. **(2). Self Counsel:** *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."* I Tim. 4:16. This is no doubt one of the hardest things we are challenged to do on a daily basis. We have a busy tendency to sit down and grab a book, turn on TV, or take a nap. Can you say honestly, you take quiet time daily to back yourself into a corner, and consider how you are doing? I think not! We all seem to be so self occupied in every manner of life, without realizing we fail to leave time for God. Paul is saying it is easy to know doctrine, and even help others without considering our own heart's needs. Timothy learns, it is important to consider first his own heart, and the needs there. You can know a lot about the Bible and not apply the teachings to your own heart. We must first live it, and then we will be ready to teach it, share it, and minister in it. That's why the previous verse says save thyself first, and after getting right with God be able to share the victories of God with others. Remember God desires to change you, and you have plenty of room for true change. After you identify where God wants you to change, you are ready to ask what am I willing to do about it? Your answer will keep you in the rut of disinterest, or cause you to seek out how you can improve. Remember Jesus said *"for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."* Luke 6:45. He also said *"all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."* Mark 7:23. Our heart is critical to our actions as a believer in a God pleasing way. Often what we live for in any particular moment stands in opposition to God and the Bible. Two very important questions pop into my mind and no doubt yours. Do I want this so much I am willing to

sin to get it? Do I want this so much I am willing to sin if I do not get it? Many questions swirl around us. What do you love or hate? What do you want, desire, crave, lust and wish for? What desires do you serve and obey? What do you see, aim for, and pursue? What are your goals and expectations? What do you fear, and what do you worry about? What do you think you need, and on and on? What do you pray for and think about most often? It is very clear that we need to stop often for self examination, and press toward being a total God pleasing person. **(3) Accountability:** *"But exhort one another daily, while it is called today: lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."* Heb. 3:13. Brothers and sisters in the Lord should play a great part in the daily lives of believers. Though this is important to achieve, it is also difficult. Most of the friendships of church members are very shallow. Most are too shallow and otherwise occupied to really care about their spirituality. Your pastor and deacons and perhaps SS teachers try to help you, but most members have no idea how to help each other spiritually. Most have not seen attempted spiritual observation and encouragement with accountability to God. Church leadership finds it hard to have intimate friendship with most in the congregation. The Bible gives boundaries for Christian areas, but there are great areas open to be of help and encouragement to others. Look for a wise, spiritual friend you can trust, who will give you honest feedback. Your friend should be one who applies Biblical principles to their lives, and help you do the same. You can even set a meeting time to discuss problems, and decisions that should be made. Perhaps several friends to meet in a weekly Bible study, with honest confession and a desire to take a better direction that pleases God. You could soon understand things you never understood before. Compare and share and gain more of God's glory in your life A closer walk can be yours.