

Chapter Seven: Walk in Christ

The term Christian is first found in Acts 11:26 where it is used as a name for the disciples. The word itself, *Christianos* (G: 5546), means “a follower of Christ” (Thayer 672). If we wear the name of Christ, should we not also live up to that name and actually walk after him? We have no better example to follow. Colossians 2:6-10 commands us to walk in Christ Jesus the Lord. Walk, *peripateō* (G: 4043), is “used to denote the manner of life” (Barnes 1068). It refers to the type of life we live and the choices we make. To walk in Christ is to look to him as our example and guide, thus allowing him to regulate our lives. From this passage we learn exactly how this is accomplished: 1) Receive Christ; 2) Be Rooted and Built Up in Christ; 3) Be Established in the Faith; and 4) Beware.

To begin our walk with Christ we must first receive Christ. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6). Received, *paralambanō* (G: 3880), means “to receive from another” (Vine 510) and then to “accept” (Strong 1633). The first part of the definition refers to being taught while the second refers to what is done with that teaching. Paul writes, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17), thus showing faith comes through teaching. To receive Christ we must first be taught Christ and then allow that knowledge to develop into an obedient faith. To receive Christ is to have “consented to him, taken him for ours in every relation and every capacity” (Henry *New* 9:15). Receiving Christ is not only learning about Christ but also obeying Christ and conforming to him and his commands. When we put Christ on in baptism, we receive Christ (Galatians 3:27). When we rise from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life, we receive Christ (Romans 6:3-6). When Paul addressed the Colossians they were already walking in Christ; they had already received him. Paul is simply encouraging them to continue in that walk. “As we have received Christ, or consented to be his, so we must walk with him in our daily course and keep up our communion with him” (Henry *New* 9:16).

To continue to walk in Christ we must be rooted and built up in Christ (Colossians 2:7). Rooted, *chizoō* (G: 4492), means “firmly planted, or established” (Vine 539). The analogy is that of a tree whose roots are grounded deep in the soil, giving it a solid foundation and a means of nutrients from which to grow. Christ is the soil, the foundation in which man must plant his faith. Paul writes, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). Jesus is the only foundation suitable to build our lives upon and only in him will we find the spiritual nutrients necessary to be built up in him. Built up, *epoikodomeō* (G: 2026), “signifies ‘to build upon’” (Vine 83). It is not enough to simply receive Christ and make him the foundation of our lives. We must also

build upon that foundation. Jesus likened one who both hears and does what he commands to a “wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24). His house, or life, stood firm when the storms of life came because the rock foundation was Christ. “We cannot be built up in Christ, unless we be first rooted in him. We must be united to him by a lively faith, and heartily consent to his covenant, and then we shall grow up in him in all things” (Henry *New* 9:16). To walk in Christ requires a firm foundation upon which we continually build.

To continue to walk in Christ we must be “stablished in the faith...abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:7). Stablished, *bebaioō* (G: 950), means “to confirm; keep strong” (Strong 1598). Such a strengthening of faith comes through studying the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:10-12), thus gaining a better understanding of those things which were first received as well as additional truths about Christ and life in him. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for not strengthening their faith (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). Since they were still “babes in Christ” he fed them with milk instead of meat. Peter encouraged the disciples: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). Grow, *auxanō* (G: 837), means “to grow, increase” and is used in reference to “inward Christian growth” (Thayer 84). Just as infants grow stronger and healthier on a milk diet, so do babes in Christ. And, as infants grow and mature to add meat to their diet, so must Christians. We must continue to study and grow in Christ, thus strengthening and confirming our faith. Being rooted and built up in Christ and stablished in the faith is a never-ending process of continual growth and maturity that leads to abounding in thanksgiving. Abounding, *perisseuō* (G: 4052), means “abundantly furnished” (Vine 6). Thanksgiving, *eucharistia* (G: 2169), is an “expression of thanks” (Strong 1613). We show our abundant thanks verbally in praise to God and actively by walking in Christ. All the aspects of walking in Christ work together and build upon each other. We cannot walk in Christ without being rooted and built up in Christ and stablished in the faith with thanksgiving. Nor can we be rooted, built up and stablished without also walking in Christ. None of these actions can be done without the others as they are all part of each other. “If we walk in him, we shall be rooted in him; and the more firmly we are rooted in him the more closely we shall walk in him” (Henry *New* 9:16). Furthermore, the closer we walk in him the more thanks we will give; and the more thanks we give the more closely we will walk in him.

Walking in Christ is not only embracing him but also shunning the doctrines of men (Colossians 2:8-10). Paul gives this exhortation through a warning: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (verse 8). Beware, *blepō* (G: 991), means “to take heed” (Vine 65). Spoil, *sylagōgeō* (G: 4812), means “to take captive” (Strong 1645) or “to spoil in the sense of *plunder, rob*, as when plunder is taken in war” (Barnes 1068). We must be alert and cautious so that we

do not allow our souls to be plundered. Paul directly gives warning about the teachings of man in opposition to the teachings of Christ. Philosophy, *philosophia* (G: 5385), is “the love and pursuit of wisdom” (Vine 470), especially “human wisdom” (Strong 1652). Vain deceit is comprised of two Greek words. Vain, *kenos* (G: 2756), means “empty” and signifies that which is “devoid of truth” (Thayer 343). Deceit, *apatē* (G: 539), is “that which gives a false impression” (Vine 151). The phrase references mere “fallacy...considerations not fitted to lead to the truth, but to lead astray” (Barnes 1068). Vain deceit is “void of anything profitable” (Vine 151). Tradition, *paradosis* (G: 3862), means “a handing down” (Vine 639) and refers to teachings passed down from generation to generation. The key here is the phrase “of men,” thus showing these traditions originated with man rather than God. Rudiments, *stoicheion* (G: 4747), generally means “any first thing, from which others belonging to the same series or composite whole take their rise; an element, first principle” (Thayer 588). Used here with the phrase “of the world,” it indicates the primary fundamental principles “of any art, science, or discipline” (Thayer 589). This broad term includes anything that interferes with or dilutes our faith. Verse twenty warns we can become “dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.” We must be careful what and how we study. All of these terms refer to philosophies and doctrines which are “vain and deceitful, which is prejudicial to religion, and sets up the wisdom of man in competition with the wisdom of God, and while it pleases men’s fancies ruins their faith” (Henry *New* 9:16). When the wisdom of God is pitted against the wisdom of man, God’s wisdom will always prevail for “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Corinthians 3:19). The key to Paul’s warning is the phrase “not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). There is nothing wrong with philosophy itself. There is nothing wrong with following certain traditions or investigating the workings of the world and the universe. There is certainly nothing wrong with trying to gain a better understanding of the more complicated biblical truths which are not necessary for salvation. The problem comes when such studies interfere with necessary faith building study or lead us to choose man’s wisdom over God’s. Even studies begun in all faith and sincerity can cloud our faith and lead us astray. Anything that takes us away from Christ or challenges his teaching fits the category and is against God. Paul warned the Colossians about these errant teachings and put the saints on their guard so their faith would not be stolen as plunder is taken in war. We, too, must heed such warnings as we continue to walk in Christ. Colossians 2:10 declares the superiority of Christ and his doctrine by simply stating, “ye are complete in him.” Complete, *plēroō* (G: 4137), means “to be filled, full, complete” (Strong 1637). Since man is made full in Christ there is neither need nor room for the doctrines of man. “All that is necessary to secure your salvation is to be found in the Lord Jesus. There is a *completion*, or a *filling up*, in him, so as to leave nothing wanting” (Barnes 1069). Anything else is in excess and interferes with those things necessary to our salvation. The reason there is such completion in Christ is given in

verse nine: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Godhead, *theotēs* (G: 2320), means “deity i.e. the state of being God” (Thayer 288). It “indicates the ‘divine’ essence of Godhood, the personality of God” (Vine 179). Bodily, *sōmatikōs* (G: 4985), means “in bodily form, corporeally” (Strong 1647). Even though Jesus was in a physical body while on earth he still contained the fullness, *plērōma* (G: 4138), or “completeness” (Vine 259), of the “Divine nature” (Barnes 1068). “The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ really, and not figuratively; for he is both God and man” (Henry *New* 9:16). The person of Jesus permanently houses deity. He was as much deity and a part of God the Father while on earth as he was and is while in heaven. For this reason, the doctrine of Christ is superior to every teaching of man and is the only doctrine able to make man complete. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Therefore, we must shun the doctrines of men as we embrace God and walk in Christ.

Truly we must walk in Christ for there is no other way fit for man to walk. To walk in Christ is to receive him, accepting him as the only one we are to obey. We must firmly root our faith in Christ, establishing him as our foundation and building ourselves up with maturity through the Scriptures. Such a faith will inevitably lead to a heart overflowing with thanksgiving, which shows itself by walking in Christ. Furthermore, those who walk in Christ will put off the teachings of man, recognizing their inferiority to the wisdom of God. Let us all take the wisdom of God and walk in Christ Jesus our Lord for in him alone is salvation found. “Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:5).

Questions:

1. Where is the first use of the term “Christian” in Scriptures? _____

a. What does it mean? _____

b. What does it imply for our lifestyle? _____

2. How do we begin our walk in Christ? _____

a. What is the source of our faith? _____

b. What are the two aspects of receiving Christ? _____

3. What does it mean to be rooted in Christ? _____

4. What does it mean to be built up in Christ? _____

5. What does it mean to be established in Christ? _____

6. What role does thanksgiving play in walking in Christ? _____

7. What warning did Paul give about the teachings of men? _____

a. Why are these teachings so dangerous? _____

b. How does man’s wisdom compare to God’s wisdom? _____

8. How are we complete in Christ? _____

a. How does this completeness relate to the doctrines of men? _____

b. Who alone is able to bring us salvation? _____

9. Explain in your own words what it means to walk in Christ. _____
