

Northeast Church of Christ

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From the Pen of Paul: *Walking With God (2)*

Note: We are continuing to look at the Christian life using the word-picture of a "walk."

As Christians we are also to **walk honestly**. Paul wrote, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying" (Rom. 13:13). Here Paul is urging us to live lives that are pure and holy rather than a life after the flesh. Notice that he says "*as in the day*." Jesus had mentioned earlier that "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). If the Christian walks honestly "*as in the day*," it is because he has nothing to hide. In the passage cited from Romans 13:13, Paul is contrasting the way the Christian ought to walk with a life of idolatrous darkness. Only a life of responsibility toward God can deliver man from the degrading role of fleshly lusts and pleasure. One who walks honestly will avoid every word or action even remotely tending toward evil; he will do his best to demonstrate his faith to others remembering the words of Jesus, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). The Christian's life should be an "open-book" for all to observe.

The Christian is also to **walk by faith**. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight..." Earlier, near the close of the preceding chapter, Paul had written concerning his trials, burdens and persecutions

that he constantly faced because of his life as a Christian: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; For we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:16-18). It was following these statements that he mentioned that "we walk by faith, not by sight."

David Lipscomb, in his *Commentary on 2nd Corinthians*, wrote: "To walk by sight is to walk after the things of this world. One walks by sight who makes mammon his god; lives for getting and hoarding, or else for spending and squandering; estimates worth by wealth, and will count himself a happy man if he can die rich. A man who walks by sight, who cannot control his appetite or passion, cannot put aside the thing good for food or pleasant to the eyes even for the sake of avoiding tomorrow's sickness, or a life of disgrace, finds himself again and again yielding to temptation from which he has suffered; weakly lives and miserably dies the slave of that which his better nature condemns and despises, but to which his body of flesh and blood, made a tyrant by long yielding to it, ties and binds him. Again, a man walks by sight who allows himself to live for the admiration of other people. Thus, not only covetousness or self-indulgence in the lower sense of the word, but vanity and worldliness and vulgar ambition, all have their root in walking by sight."

On the other hand, one who walks by faith walks in faith in the promises of God

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“Is not the Catholic Church the oldest church in the world?”

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS NOT the oldest church in the world. Jesus Christ said he was going to build His church (Matt. 16:18). Jesus did build His church on the first Pentecost after His resurrection (Acts 2:1-47). This was many years before the Catholic church started.

The Catholic church came as the result of the gradual change in church government, as well as some additions to and subtractions from the Word of God. The Catholic church did not have a universal pope until 606 A.D.

God's plan for church government in local congregations was and is elders to rule the congregation with deacons, preachers, teachers, and members to serve under them. Please notice that each congregation had a plurality of elders over one congregation (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; I Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17). The Catholic church changed this. They put a number of churches under one “Bishop.” These “Bishops” in the Catholic church got to thinking that they were the successors to the apostles. Of course, they assumed this position. But by the middle of the second century they held almost complete authority over the government of the church. One could not find this arrangement in the Bible to save his life.

These so-called “Bishops” or “chief elders” began having their gatherings to decide what the church would or would not do. These gatherings were called synods and councils. No man nor group of men has the right to make laws for the church. God has already given us what we need to know about the work of the church in the Bible (Matt. 16:19; II Tim. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9). Thus, this is only one of many points the Catholics are wrong about.

In 325 A.D. there were 318 of the “Bishops” or “chief elders” that met at Nice and wrote the Nicene Creed. This was the first human creed to be written after the establishment of the

church of Christ in 33 A.D. This kind of activity is strictly forbidden by the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19; II John 9-11; Matt. 16:19).

As time went along the Catholic church in its formation started making a difference in church members and those who held church positions. This distinction came to be known as the “clergy” and the “laity.” The Bible knows no such distinction. After this took place there was the move by the “clergy” to use such presumptuous titles as “Father” or “Reverend” to those who held certain positions in the Catholic church.

In the fourth century, Constantine became the ruler of the Roman Empire. He set forth to organize the Catholic church as was the Roman Empire. The Roman government had an Emperor, and under him Advisors, and under them Governors, and under then Lieutenant Governors. So the Catholic church came to have in its organization the Pope, and under him Cardinals, and under them Archbishops, and under them Bishops. The Bible knows no such organization as this, nor does it authorize such.

So the Catholics changed the Bible arrangement of church government, and started human creeds. They started the use of holy water in 120 A.D., Latin mass in 394 A.D., extreme unction in 588 A.D., purgatory in 593 A.D., transubstantiation in 1000 A.D., celibacy in 1015 A.D., and sprinkling for immersion or baptism in 1311 A.D. Of course, all of these things are foreign to the Bible. They started a number of other non-Biblical things that space will not permit me to mention.

The Roman Catholic church is the oldest denomination in the world. From it, basically, came all the other denominations. The church Jesus built is the oldest church in the world. If anyone denies this, then we shall be glad to talk with them.

—*Malcolm L. Hill*

concerning the future; this leads him to walk after the things of God or walk with God, as did Noah and Enoch. Instead of seeing with the eye, faith is seeing by the Spirit. Walking by faith is taking every step we take in compliance with God's instructions. The Psalmist described God's word as “a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). Faith is taking God at His word. Faith is believing fully and completely and demonstrating, by obedience, whatever God promises or says in His word. Faith “comes by

hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). And the Hebrew writer defines faith as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). We cannot hope for anything which God has not promised; nor can we hope for anything that He has promised without complying with His conditions upon which the promises are based. And, we cannot do by faith anything which God has not commanded!

Are you walking by faith?

—*Paul M. Wilmoth*