

Deepening our Spirits / Souls with Christ

Matthew 6:6-13; Psalm 62:5-8;
I Kings 19:9-13; Romans 8:24-28

To get us into our topic today, let's start with some questions that you may have answers to.

What are some Bible characters that mention walking with God?

Adam and Eve – Garden. Enoch – walked with God. Israel in the Wilderness wandering around for 40 years. The two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road.

Do you know off hand any Bible verses about walking with God?

“He has made it clear to you, mortal man, what is good and what the LORD is requiring from you - [to act with justice](#), to treasure the LORD's gracious love, and to *walk humbly in the company of your God.*” Micah 6:8

Romans 13:13 tells us, “Let us *walk with decency*, as in the daylight: not in....”

What are some other words, besides the word walk, that indicate walking with God?

Maybe the most well known one is from Psalms: “The *steps* of a good man / woman are ordered by the Lord.” (37:23) The Psalmist also tells us: “The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide” (v. 31).

I discovered this statement by Job. “My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside.” (23:11)

And having just studied 1 John we find this: “The one who says he resides in God ought himself to *walk just as Jesus walked.*” (2:6)

Do you know of any quotes, from anyone – about walking with God?

Henry Ford said: “Those who walk with God, always reach their *destination.*” Walking implies a destination. Where does deepening your walk with God take you?

The evangelist Dwight L. Moody said, “If I walk with the world, I can't walk with God.” This *contrast*, the two paths, seems pretty obvious, but so many people try to walk as they please, and walk with Jesus. We know this isn't the path to deepness with our Creator.

And a last one from Pastor Jack Hyles, “God's mighty *power* comes when God's people learn to walk with God.” Seems obvious, right?

The church's primary activity is deepening, growing our relationship with Jesus, with each other and with our neighbor. So walking with our Creator, and deepening our relationship with the Almighty, is a good image of the spiritual life. This is the third Sunday of our series of deepening our walk with Christ.

We've looked at doing this with our heads and our hearts. Today it's with our spirits – our souls. Some people enjoy being with God. They like silence and prayer over other ways to connect with Jesus. But our heads, hearts, spirits, and hands interconnect. One type of walk without the other isn't enough. Looking at each of these four parts of our humanity, reflects how each of us are different.

This study comes from Jesus, via Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, asking us to focus on and deepen: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

When we walk with the Lord we draw closer to Him, with all our heart. Jesus becomes our focus. Our hearts long for Him. Our hearts seek His presence. Our minds fixate on following Jesus. Our desire to have fellowship with Christ and to be like Him will grow while our worldly desires will decrease. Walking with the Lord helps us grow in the awareness of sin in our lives, around us, and our need for a Savior. More and more we will grow in hatred for our sins and want to rid our lives of them. More and more we will confess and forsake our sins. This involves our thinking, our loves, and

our souls – our spirits. This changes our lives as we become radical, passionate and weird.

Gaylord Kambarami, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Zimbabwe, tried to give a New Testament to a very belligerent man. The man insisted he would roll the pages and use them to make cigarettes. Mr. Kambarami said, “I understand that, but at least promise to read the page of the New Testament before you smoke it.” The man agreed, and the two went their separate ways.

Fifteen years later, the two men met at a convention in Zimbabwe. The Scripture-smoking pagan had been saved and was now a full-time evangelist. He told the audience, “I smoked Matthew, and I smoked Mark, and I smoked Luke. But when I got to John 3:16, I couldn’t smoke anymore. My life was changed from that moment.” Aren’t you glad God’s book is more than just words on paper? It touches and changes our souls – our spirits.

How do we love Jesus Christ with all our spirit? We need to know the answer to this because it is one of the four things Jesus said we need to do to love God completely. We love the Lord with all our soul by living a life of faithfulness to all that the Lord has required of us. While loving the Lord with all our heart has to do with affection, loving the Lord with all our soul has to do with devotion.

The soul is the part of us that defines who we are. The dictionary defines it as the principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans. It’s regarded as a distinct entity separate from the body, and commonly held to be separable in existence from the body. It’s the spiritual part of humans as distinct from the physical part.

Furthermore, the spiritual part of humans is regarded in its moral aspect. It’s believed to survive death and be subject to happiness or misery in a life to come. So the soul or spirit is the immortal part of us.

Another view of a soul / spirit, is that of the disembodied spirit of a deceased person. For example there are many books and movies around this theme: He feared the soul of the deceased would come back and haunt or destroy him.

The essence of the biblical definition of the soul means life, personality, the inner self and our identity. It’s where we make our decisions and choices that ultimately decide our lifestyle and behavior. Think of the soul as the “core you.” To love the Lord with all our soul means to love Him in the way we live, in the choices we make, in the ways we think, and in the behavior and lifestyle we adopt.

We know about the concept of the soul – our spirits living on after we die. Jesus told the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus in Luke. ([16:19-31](#)) The story is of a rich man who was completely indifferent to the plight of Lazarus, showing him no love, sympathy, or compassion whatsoever. When each of them died, Lazarus went to heaven, and the rich man went to hell.

Appealing to “Father Abraham” in heaven, the rich man requested that Lazarus be sent to cool his tongue with a drop of water to lessen his “agony in this fire.” The rich man also asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth to warn his brothers to repent so that they would never join him in hell. Both requests were denied. Abraham told the rich man that if his brothers did not believe in Scripture, neither would they believe a messenger, even if he came straight from heaven. The point of sharing this is, this is one example of the Bible telling us we have spirits, souls, that we need to care for.

So how do we love Jesus Christ with all our spirit? Here are three predominant ways to deepen our walk with Jesus Christ with all our soul: First, **Love the Lord with all your soul by making godly choices.**

Our lives are the sum of the choices we make. Plain and simple. Our choices show what we are committed to, and they reflect our core

values, our treasures, defining us and displaying our lifestyle before the world.

We do what we value. If we treasure our relationship with the Lord, our choices will simply mirror the treasure. Choices flow from what we treasure most.

Let's ask ourselves: How do I spend my money? What do I do with my time? What kinds of things do I read? What programs do I watch? What do I do for entertainment? Where do I go for relaxation? What things give comfort in difficult times? What kind of friends do I have?

All of these result in choices that demonstrate whether we love God with all our soul.

A second aspect to deepen our walk with Jesus Christ is: **Love the Lord with all your soul by pursuing obedience to His Word.** Jesus states it plainly, directly and succinctly in John 14:15. "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

Love must be demonstrated. When we keep His commandments, when we live by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God, we are tangibly expressing our love for the Lord.

I've been mostly happily married for just over 37 years. In those 37 years, I have made decisions based on commitment, promises, and love, that I did not feel like making at times. But I did it anyways. I am obedient to the covenant that I made over 37 years ago to love unconditionally whether I feel like it or not.

That's why this second part of the First Commandment is vital. Sometimes we are not going to feel like loving God, but we do it out of love for God, nonetheless. In the Kingdom, obedience usually comes first. Feelings, comfort, and convenience comes second.

A third way to deepen our walk with Jesus Christ is: **Love the Lord with all your soul by pursuing a life of humility in attitudes and speech.** Embracing humility is the stage where we can

express our love to the Lord. Jesus taught us how to love from a place of meekness, serving us unto death. This is the opposite of our human nature and what our culture teaches.

Mike Bickle says, "Meekness is power and privilege under control. It speaks of restraint in the use of power except to promote love. Meekness is not to be confused with weakness which is the absence of strength."

Meekness is expressed most dynamically in our attitudes and speech. What we say and how we say it enhances or quenches our ability to love the Lord by the power of the Spirit. Wrong speech will ultimately affect our spiritual lives and work against our love for the Lord.

You know these familiar verses. Jesus said, "For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34)

Proverbs (18:21) instructs, "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

When we have allowed the Holy Spirit to renew our minds; When we have asked Jesus to make Him to be our Great Treasure; and when we have given our souls back to our Creator; This is how we love God with all of our mind, heart, soul & strength. When our choices become Jesus-centered, a lifestyle of humility and godliness is born, this is loving God with all your soul. It's selling out to the Almighty. It's putting ourselves into our proper place in this world, for now and for eternity – through the power of God who sent his only Son to die for us – even though we don't deserve this.

When we love God with all of our being, it means that in all things our Redeemer takes first priority. Although it takes time, it's a walk whose destination is to go deeper. God desires for us to be in constant relationship with him. This doesn't only mean an occasional prayer or devotion to him, but a lifestyle where we recognize Jesus' lordship in our life, and that we are living for him alone. It's not being bothered that we might be considered weird by the people around us.