

## Walking the Walk

### Talk is cheap, but actions are expensive!

It is incredibly easy to discuss needs, make promises, and talk of doing something. It is an entirely different thing to put discussion, talk, and promises into action. Most of us experience this truth at the same time every year when we make our New Year's resolutions. We **discuss** our need to exercise more consistently, read more broadly, budget more faithfully, and so on. We then **promise** to fulfill these good intentions. Finally, we **talk** and share our goals with others only to realize that we are usually incapable of meeting these goals. Similarly, changing and growing in our spiritual life takes more than talk and good intentions. It is costly, demands action, and requires the Holy Spirit's work.

Nehemiah 10 is the logical extension of the written promise that God's people signed at the conclusion of the preceding chapter. Chapter 9 records Israel's prayer of confession, detailing the history of their habitual disobedience and God's faithful patience and forgiveness. The next chapter begins with God's people, from the leadership on down, taking three action-steps to ensure that their confession and promise are not just empty words. They will walk in God's Word, separate themselves unto God, and support worship of God. The first of these three action steps is foundational for the success of the other two and for our spiritual success as well:

... the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath **to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God**, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord and his rules and his statutes. (Nehemiah 10:28-29)

The Word of God has the power to save, cleanse, and sanctify. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Bible is able to do what our pitiful promises and our impotent intentions cannot. Yet, we often forget that its transformative power is unleashed only when we "walk" in it, allowing it to become part of our very being (Col 3:16). Walking in the Word doesn't just happen on its own. It is costly. Resembling physical walking, it demands balance, skill, and has a predetermined destination in mind. To put it more clearly, it starts with personal study and takes continued

practice to “walk the walk of the Word” and move toward a deeper relationship with Jesus that is consistently fruitful.

So, “meditate” on the Word! As one Hebrew scholar, Chad Bird, defined the term based on Isaiah 31:4: “When you meditate, you are a lion crouching over its prey. You are the eater and the Word is your food. Take a bite, chew it, taste it, crunch the verbs, salivate over the nouns. There is no rush... Savor the feast. Growl over the words you swallow.” Begin today. And if you falter, start again. Remember, it takes practice to walk. Don’t quit!

***Psalm 1:1-4 (ESV)*** - *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. **He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.** The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.”*