

Commitment to the Basics

The Path to Walking with God

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

Genesis 5:21-24

*Noah was a righteous man,
blameless among the people of his time,
and he walked with God.*

Genesis 6:9

*He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6:8

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

Commit, Co-operate, Continue

3 Steps for Committing to the Basics

Commit

Step 1 – Establish the Non-Negotiables

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.

Psalm 37:4-6

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:29-30

Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this your spiritual act of worship.

Romans 12:1

Co-operate

Step 2 – Let the Holy Spirit work through “the Basics.”

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:8

***Don't you know that you are God's temple
and that God's Spirit lives in you?***

1 Corinthians 3:16

*Because those who are led by the Spirit of God
are sons of God.*

Romans 8:14

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 14:26

“By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace. The inner righteousness we seek is not something that is poured on our heads. God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us.”

Richard Foster from the “Celebration of Discipline”

Continue

Step 3 – Keep Going and Never Give Up

Then He said to them all, if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

Luke 9:23

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.

James 1:25

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ.

2 Timothy 3:14-15

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Hebrews 10:36

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him, and kissed him.

Luke 15:20

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 2:12-13

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.

Ephesians 3:20

*1 By faith in Christ I walk with God,
With heav'n, my journey's end in view,
Supported by his staff and rod,
My road is safe and pleasant too.*

*2 I travel through a desert wide,
Where many round me blindly stray;
But he vouchsafes to be my guide
And will not let me miss my way.*

*3 Though snares and dangers throng my path,
And earth and hell my course withstand;
I triumph over all by faith,
Guarded by his Almighty hand.*

*4 The wilderness affords no food,
But God for my support prepares;
Provides me ev'ry needful good,
And frees my soul from wants and cares.*

By Faith in Christ I Walk with God – John Newton

*5 With him sweet converse I maintain,
Great as he is, I dare be free;
I tell him all my grief and pain,
And he reveals his love to me.*

*6 Some cordial from his word he brings,
Where'er my feeble spirit faints,
At once my soul revives and sings,
And yields no more to sad complaints.*

*7 I pity all the worldling's talk
Of pleasure that will quickly end;
Be this my choice, O Lord to walk
With thee, my guide my guard, my friend.*

By Faith in Christ I Walk with God – John Newton

Commitment to the Basics

INTRODUCTION

Good morning men.
Thank you Mark for sharing your story.
It is amazing and encouraging to
hear about what God has done in your life.
I know that He will continue to work in you and through you.

As for me,
I consider it a great privilege
to share with you men this morning.

I grew up in Michigan and moved to Texas when I was 23.
I have made my living as an architect now for 33 years.
I have been a husband to my wife Lisa for 34 years,
I have been a father to my daughter Elyssa for 25 years,
And I have been walking with God for 10 years now.

My first trip to KMI was in 2008
making this my 9th trip to the conference.
KMI is one of the spiritual highlights of my year.
For me, it is a refueling station
where I find nourishment and encouragement
to continue in my walk with God.
We should all be very grateful
to the team of men
who work so hard to put it all together,
especially Peter Axup who leads the effort.
Thank you Peter and thank you for this opportunity.

One other important bit of background information
that you should know about me
is that I serve in a disciple-making ministry
at Watermark Community Church in Dallas.
The ministry is called "The Equipped Disciple."
It has been instrumental in my spiritual growth
and I will be forever grateful to those that helped me there.
The objective of The Equipped Disciple ministry
is to help people become established in their walk with God.
Our track is the Navigator's Colossians 2:7 series.
The 2:7 series provides basic training in the disciplines of the Christian life:

the quiet time,
scripture memory,
prayer, fellowship and witnessing.

OBJECTIVE

That's enough pleasantries – let's get down to business.
The topic that was given to me for my time this morning is "Commitment to the Basics."

I searched my heart and prayed
for God to give me an objective for this morning.
I've heard that we should pray no small prayers
and that we should appeal to God's highest level of willingness.
So I've prayed that what comes out of this morning
is nothing less than revival -
I am asking God for a revival of our spirits,
and a revival of our churches and our communities.
I believe that this aligns with God's will and so I trust Him
to use this time as a catalyst.

THE PROBLEM

Why would I pray and ask God for revival?
I would like to think that we are all in the business of revival.
We are all called to help people
find the immeasurable joy that comes from walking with God.

Unfortunately, it has been my experience
that few Christians truly know God in any significant way -
in any way that impacts their lives.
They will acknowledge that He exists
but they fail to consider if that fact
should be meaningful in their lives.
Often there is no real evidence
that His existence even matters to them.
Many reasons and excuses are offered
but more likely, the truth is that they are not seeking
to know the ways of God and to walk with Him.
They are distracted, deceived, or just defiant.
Most have not even begun to explore what it means to walk with God.
They miss out on the reality
that when we finally come to our senses
and turn our gaze to God,
He runs to us and throws His arms around us

and kisses us like the prodigals that we are.

THE SOLUTION

So today I am going to talk about the less travelled way - walking with God.

The main point of my message this morning is that to walk with God, we have to connect the small branch of our lives to the life giving vine that is Jesus. And to remain connected to Jesus, we have to be "committed to the basics."

Let's begin with some early old testament Scriptures and see what they say about walking with God.

In Genesis 5:21-24 we learn of Enoch:

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

In Hebrews, the scriptures also say that Enoch pleased God and that's virtually all we know of Enoch.

We all should be so fortunate to be remembered like Enoch.

Besides Enoch, the scriptures speak of another hero of the faith who walked with God.

In Genesis 6:9, the scripture says of Noah:

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

In Noah's case though, God has preserved a more complete story for us.

We are all familiar with how Noah stood out among His generation because of His relationship with God.

He was committed to walking in obedient cooperation with God even in very desperate times.

And when the flood came and lasted for nearly a year, he never wavered.

Later the prophet Micah wrote in Micah 6:8:
*He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

So we see that according to the prophet Micah,
humbly walking with God is required of men who desire to do good.

**With the arrival of Jesus ministry among us,
walking with God becomes following Jesus.**

We are all familiar with John 14:6:
*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father
except through me.*

Following Jesus is the way that God would have us walk as we seek to walk with God.

**And to follow Jesus and to stay connected to Him,
we have to be "committed to the basics."**

So what are the basics?

If we're going to talk about "commitment to the basics"
We have to know what the basics are.
The basics are the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life.
Among the basics are hearing, reading, and studying God's word.
They include memorizing and meditating on scripture.
The basics are part and parcel of the devotional life,
otherwise known as the quiet time.
The basics include all the different modes of prayer –
Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession.
I think you could also make a case that the basics include
Sharing our faith and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
These are the basics of the Christian faith – the ways that we walk
When we walk in relationship with God.

**I am going to talk about three steps that we must take
to remain committed to the basics -
to stay connected to Jesus and to walk with God.**

**The three steps we must take are to:
commit, cooperate, and continue.**

PART 1

So the first step is to **COMMIT.**

**If we are going to be committed to the basics,
then the obvious first step is to commit.**

**If I am going to be committed to walking with God
Then I must do whatever that requires.**

David, who was a man after God's own heart, wrote in Psalm 37:
*Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. **Commit your way to the LORD**; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.*

**To commit means that we must make some non-negotiable decisions.
It begins with making choices and setting priorities.
The bottom line is that we must commit ourselves fully
to following Jesus no matter the cost.**

Jesus says in Matthew 11:
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Jesus is offering Himself to us.
First, He says "Come, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."
Then immediately He says: Take up my yoke. It is easy and light."
He is saying that He wants us to Walk with Him and learn from Him.
He wants us to commit to life with Him – the life for which He made us.
This is where we will find joy.

In the spring of 2006, at the age of 46, I came to the conclusion that I had never before truly committed my life to Christ. So standing in the back of a high-school auditorium turned church I put my trust in HIS sacrifice and I offered Him my life in exchange. I made a decision to follow Christ.

**At that moment, I didn't know what it would mean going forward
But whatever might come,**

whom I would follow was settled.

My life has not been the same since.

The Gospel is the Motivation.

Over the next few months, as the gospel became more and more clear to me I came to a new understanding that I didn't need to earn God's favor. But still I knew that God had prepared good works for me to do and so I struggled in those early days to find the proper motivation.

I began to more fully understand my source of motivation to surrender to the Holy Spirit and give up my life for others when I memorized Romans 12:1:

Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this your spiritual act of worship.

I found in these 5 words "*in view of God's mercy*"
All the motivation I needed to dedicate myself to God.
The Holy Spirit showed me that God's grace and mercy saved me
And that God's grace and mercy would sustain me.

And so, I began down a path with God that was marked by various disciplines That eventually became "non-negotiable" for me.

Disciplines such as:

Daily time in God's word – non-negotiable.

Memorizing God's word – non-negotiable.

Running with other men who are running after God – non-negotiable.

Connecting with God through prayer – non-negotiable.

Sharing my heart for Christ – non-negotiable.

Men,

To walk with God should be our desire.

To call others to walk with Him and to help others walk with Him is our purpose.

I don't know about you but

I want my tombstone to say:

He walked with God.

Let me challenge you -

Promise yourself, by the power of God, that you will be a man of God.

Commit to walking with God by following Christ – no matter the cost.

PART 2

Now that we are resolved and determined to walk with God, what is the next step?

The second step is to CO-OPERATE.

In order to walk with God, we must co-operate with the Spirit and the work that He intends to do through “the Basics.”

When Jesus died on the cross
He cried out, "It is finished!"
And so it was.
His sacrifice was complete
His work was finished
and it was sufficient.

By His stripes I am healed
By His blood I am saved.
But that is not the end of the story.
In fact, it is just the beginning!

Christ's work was not the end for me
It was a new beginning.
In Salvation I am a new creation -
the old has gone, the new has come.
He saved me on the cross
but today He is saving me still.
He saved me unto sanctification
He saved me unto holiness.
He saved me to walk with Him
To be conformed to His image
BY THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

Look at God's word in Galatians 6:8:

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

This is where the spiritual disciplines -the basics - come into view and their purpose is to provide a means for the Holy Spirit to be activated in your life.

Let's look at a few verses about the Holy Spirit and His role.

At salvation, the Holy Spirit took up residence in my soul.

1 Corinthians 3:16

*Don't you know that you are God's temple?
and that God's Spirit lives in you?*

He was given to me to lead me, to guide me.

Romans 8:14

*Because those who are led by the Spirit of God
are sons of God.*

He was given to teach me the ways and words of Jesus.

John 14:26

*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

He lives in me to guide me, to comfort me, to give me joy.

He gives me the boldness of Joshua,
the courage of David,
the faith of Abraham.

But I have a choice –

I can struggle with God as Jacob did, as King Saul did,

Even as some of the heroes of the faith did at different times.

Or I can surrender myself to be conformed to Christ as the Holy Spirit desires.

I can go my own way - and I am prone to wander -

Or I can cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

And this is where the spiritual disciplines come into play.

Richard Foster put it this way in the *Celebration of Discipline*:

“By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace. The inner righteousness we seek is not something that is poured on our heads. God has ordained the Disciplines

of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us.”

The Spiritual Disciplines Are God's Means of Grace.

The devotional life, scripture memory, prayer, fellowship, meditation, fasting, sharing your faith - these are all intended for us to move ourselves into the place where God can bless us -where His Spirit can do His work.

The disciplines are God’s means of grace to transform us. When you get up in the morning and open God's word, you are putting yourself in a place where the Holy Spirit can transform you. You are availing yourself of God's grace through His Word and the Spirit will use it to grow and to heal you.

When you memorize God's word you are giving the Holy Spirit a vocabulary and He will use it to transform you – to teach you, rebuke you, correct you, and train you in righteousness.

When you run with others who are following Christ The Holy Spirit will work through them, as a transforming source of encouragement and accountability.

It has been my experience that when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit the spiritual disciplines are like keys to the rich storehouses of God.

To me, the Quiet Time is a key to a door beyond which lies all the treasure of relationship with God. Spending time with God daily, He reveals to me the great mysteries of the universe - the truth of all things. The more I spend time with Him the more clearly I see.

To me, Scripture Memory is a key to a door beyond which lies all the transforming and healing power of the God of the universe. To the extent that I hide His word in my heart, I am healed. To the extent that I hide His word in my heart, I am empowered to show others the path to transformation and to healing.

To me, Prayer is the key to a door

beyond which lies all the compassion, mercy and peace of our God.
Prayer unlocks the peace that surpasses understanding
It appropriates mercy and compassion
It unleashes the trumpets of glory and fills our worship
It activates our Advocate
and it connects us to the Almighty.

To me, the disciplines are keys to the treasuries of grace - the riches of God.
We only need to cooperate and unlock the doors so that the Holy Spirit may usher us in.

PART 3

**Now that we are committed to following Christ
and cooperating with the Holy Spirit,
what is the last piece?**

The third step is to CONTINUE.

Walking with God is a day-by-day act of "continuing."

Consider the words of Jesus in Luke 9:23:

Then He said to them all, if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

If I am faithful to cooperate with the Spirit today,
I must still make the decision to be faithful tomorrow.
And the same is true of the next day and the next.
It is an act of the will that is carried out day-by-day,
Hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute.

**In the Scripture, we are commanded to "continue."
If you think about it, you will realize that
The command to "continue" can never be fulfilled.
In other words, you will never graduate from the basics.**

Look at James 1:25:

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.

As we continue to grow, the perfect law that is the Word ministers to us at our greatest point of need in every specific time. Though it never changes, it never fails to be sufficient and reliable, Fulfilling our need for wisdom and truth in every moment.

Look with me at 2 Timothy 3:14-15:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

One of the many benefits of KMI is the opportunity to meet

Some of the old lions of the faith –

Men like Jim Downing and Jim White

who have been walking with God for decades.

I assure you that they have not decided that they no longer need a quiet time

Or that they no longer need to memorize God's Word.

They have not given up prayer or fellowship with their brothers in Christ;

More likely they have determined that they need the basics more than ever.

Men, we must never turn back.

Once on the path, we are warned to never look back.

With God, there is only one way and that's forward with the advancing Kingdom.

God's plan is being fulfilled daily

and nothing we can ever do will thwart it or even slow it down.

Our only risk is that we could be left behind,

And that is only if we turn back and fail to be faithful.

To continue in our walk means to persevere.

The author of Hebrews writes in 10:36:

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

And then a couple of chapters later in Hebrews 12:1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

We can continue even though we stumble and fall.

I love the story of the prodigal son
and when I first came to Christ, I identified with the story deeply.
I believed that I had squandered so much of my life.
And when I came to my senses and God ran to me
I imagined it as a one-time event (and in some ways that is true.)
But as I began to learn what it meant to walk with God on a daily basis,
He gave me a new perspective.
I learned that truly I am a prodigal every day.
Each and every day, I need to get up and turn my gaze homeward
And that each and every day,
God will be faithful to meet me.

We can continue to walk with God because He is full of compassion.
Even though we fail on a daily basis
and our best works are filthy rags,
we can continue because of **His** compassionate grace.

Look at the climatic verse in the prodigal story:

Luke 15:20

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him, and kissed him.

We can continue to walk with God because **His** compassionate mercies are new every morning.

Lamentations 3:22-23

- *Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

We can continue to walk with God because **He** is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

And before I wrap up,
Let me share two concluding thoughts on Continuing.
First, remember this:

We walk by faith.

We see that we walk by faith in Colossians 2:6-7.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built

up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

We received Christ by faith and we were justified.
Now we continue by faith and we are sanctified.
By faith, we look forward to the day when we will be glorified.

And lest anyone should think I've said anything to the contrary
- let me be clear.
We do not walk with God under our own power.

We walk with God by the power of God.

Paul writes in Phil 2:12-13:

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

And in Ephesians 3:20:

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.

My friends,
Over the past 3 days you have attended workshops.
You have learned about the quiet time,
You have learned about prayer,
You have learned about memorizing scripture,
You have learned about meditation.

Now let me ask you,
After you've left this conference and returned to the duties of family
and the distractions of work,
will these 3 days fade in memory and be of little or no impact?

Or Will you commit to following Jesus,
Cooperating with the Holy Spirit,
And walking more closely with God?

Will you allow revival to gain a foothold in your heart
And take it home with you to your families,

Your churches and your communities?

I'd like to close by sharing a hymn with you.

John Newton was born in 1724 to a God fearing mother and a sea-going father. Following in his father's footsteps, he became a drunken and depraved sailor and captain of many slave ships. But after surviving a violent storm, he turned his life towards the Lord. After a time, he became a beloved pastor and a prominent supporter of the abolition of the slave trade. He wrote many well-known hymns but none as famous as "Amazing Grace."

But One of Newton's lesser known hymns is called *By Faith in Christ I Walk with God.*

1 By faith in Christ I walk with God,
With heav'n, my journey's end in view,
Supported by his staff and rod,
My road is safe and pleasant too.

2 I travel through a desert wide,
Where many round me blindly stray;
But he vouchsafes to be my guide
And will not let me miss my way.

3 Though snares and dangers throng my path,
And earth and hell my course withstand;
I triumph over all by faith,
Guarded by his Almighty hand.

4 The wilderness affords no food,
But God for my support prepares;
Provides me ev'ry needful good,
And frees my soul from wants and cares.

5 With him sweet converse I maintain,
Great as he is, I dare be free;
I tell him all my grief and pain,
And he reveals his love to me.

6 Some cordial from his word he brings,
Where'er my feeble spirit faints,
At once my soul revives and sings,

And yields no more to sad complaints.

7 I pity all the worldling's talk
Of pleasure that will quickly end;
Be this my choice, O Lord to walk
With thee, my guide my guard, my friend.