

Walking Before God

“I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1).

One of the ways a parent guides a child is through the use of direct commands. If a child perceives that a parent is only suggesting that he or she do something, it is very unlikely that the child will obey. To make totally clear what is expected, the parent must give pointed statements. Instead of vaguely asking, “How about cleaning up your room?” a direct command like, “You must clean up your room now!” should be used.

Following the revelation of Himself as “the Almighty God,” the Lord gave Abraham the direct command, “walk before Me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1). This means that he was to walk in front of God, in God’s presence, in God’s sight. Because this command came to the patriarch when he was ninety-nine years old, we conclude that he had previously walked with God. At this time, however, he was ordered to walk before Him.

How can we distinguish between the two ideas—walking with God and walking before God? It appears that walking with God makes us more aware of where He is, but walking before God brings us face to face with Who He is! Walking with God familiarizes us with God’s works and actions. Walking before Him, however, puts us more in touch with His heart and His ways. As we walk before Him, we become more sensitive to His nature, His character, His person.

Walking before God is living in consciousness of God! A new name was introduced to Abraham in this setting—the name “God Almighty,” or El-Shaddai, the many-breasted One, the God Who is more than sufficient. As Abraham became more conscious of God Himself, no doubt he became more conscious that God was conscious of all his deeds and his needs. Of course, we can be certain of this, too. “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

Walking before God is living in consecration to God! The words “before the Lord” are often associated with spiritual service and consecration. The Old Testament priests sprinkled blood “before the Lord” seven times (Lev. 4:17). Aaron turned the lamps “before the Lord” in the holy place (Exo. 27:21). The cleansing of the leper also took place “before the Lord” (Lev. 14:11). Oh, may we “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28).

Walking before God is living in compliance with God! Along side of the command “walk before Me” is the phrase “and be thou perfect.” The Hebrew word that is translated “perfect” suggests to “live uprightly, or sincerely,” and brings the God-conscious soul face to face with the responsibility of a blameless life. With Paul, let us pray that God will establish our “hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father” (1 Thes. 3:13).