

Walking After God

“Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him” (Deut. 13:4).

Thailand is an old nation with its own customs and traditions. The ancient rule of Thai etiquette for walking behind a royal personage, such as the King or the Queen, is as follows: “Those walking after a royal personage should walk in a modest way, i.e. not laughing, talking or paying attention to other people. If the royal personage is walking on a carpet, they should try not to step on the carpet.”

The King of all kings, Jehovah Himself, commanded the nation of Israel to walk after Him. Meaning “to come along behind, to follow after,” the term “after” magnifies a pursuit of righteousness. And, with the other commands associated with this main theme, such as fear, keep, obey, serve, and cleave, more light is dispensed on the subject. Every believer of every age is to obediently, diligently, and constantly pursue after Him.

It is interesting that this command to walk after God was delivered in the context of several warnings and instructions concerning idolatry. The true and living God was saying to His people, “Although false prophets will arise and encourage you to go after other gods, I want you to go after Me!” (see Deut. 13:1-4). He is King and He wants our undivided love, our undeniable loyalty, and our unquestionable homage.

To walk after God is to come near Him! Nearness to God is encouraged in the phrase, “Ye shall walk after the LORD your God.” It is also accentuated in the last four words of the text, “and cleave unto Him.” The word “cleave” means “to stick with, to stick to, or join to.” The idea is “to adhere, or to be glued together.” As a husband is commanded to “cleave unto his wife” (Gen. 2:24), so each Christian is commanded to cleave to the Lord.

To walk after God is to constantly fear Him! This is clearly set forth in the second phrase of the verse which reads, “and fear Him.” But fearing the Lord is further established in the next phrase, “and keep His commandments.” An earlier text indicates that the Lord greatly desires that we fear the Lord and keep His commandments. He said, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always” (Deut. 5:29).

To walk after God is to cheerfully hear Him! The two phrases we have not yet considered underline this important matter. We are commanded to “obey His voice” and “serve Him.” While “obey” means “to hearken, give heed, consent, or agree,” “serve” refers to “work, or labor,” which reflects a spirit of obedience. Since “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3), may we also testify, “The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey” (Josh. 24:24).