

Life's Journey With Jesus

Introduction

Life is just that, a journey. It begins with life at birth and is not complete until life's end. In between, we often reference this traversing of life as a journey. In life, so many things can and do happen. Some are good, some not so good, and there is absolutely no way to predict the events of our journey, no matter how hard we try. It doesn't matter how hard you prepare (and we should), nor the circumstances in which you were born: whether you're poor, middle class, or ultra wealthy, highly educated, doctorate, military training, or on-the-job training. It also doesn't matter what your race, creed, color, or national origin is. Preparing oneself for life's journey is an absolute necessity, but successfully navigating life's journey is not just for the prepared, but the protected people who walk this journey with the Prince of Peace and life's ultimate guide.

As children of God, to trek through life's journey is to get on, stay, and walk through life with the ultimate life coach and navigator. This is being on *Life's Journey With Jesus*. He is our guide. Our decision is do we want to go through life's journey with or without Jesus. No truer words are spoken of our eternal guide than what David heard God say in Psalm 32: 8, "*I will instruct thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*" As an example, if you were to go on a journey or an expedition out in nature, a place that you are unfamiliar with, this is best undertaken with a guide. The nature guide knows all the twists and turns, the safe and dangerous places to be, and how to navigate rough terrain. What's most important is the guide is with you when beginning the journey, during the journey, and knows exactly how to guide you to its end. What's also comforting to know is that the guide will remain with you throughout your entire journey. Isn't that just like our Lord? With us every step of the way! Exemplary of the chorus from the song which says, "And he walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, and the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known."

In this Bible study, we aim to give biblical principles and disciplines to those of us who will walk this journey of life with the Lord Jesus Christ.

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I. Before Beginning the Journey with Jesus

A. The Journey Begins

Every journey has a beginning. The Journey with Jesus has its origins at the beginning of time and creation. It was Jesus who was with God in the beginning during creation, and was both an observer and participant in our creation (*John 1:1-3*). Thus, it was the creative power and presence of our Lord that began this walk with Him before we knew to trust him in Life's Journey. The walk of life with Jesus begins with our creation, because he knows us before we

came into existence (*Jer 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee...also Isa. 49:1; Gal. 1:15*). So many people think that the journey with the Lord begins with their conscious decision to come to the Lord, but the walk and journey together with the Lord begins with Him. It is Him who draws us to himself for the journey together with him (*John 15:16a “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,”*). However, everyone’s call to the Lord may not be for the same life purpose, but none the less, the call is common to us all. Although the Lord calls, chooses, and attempts to draw, we have to be willing to yield our lives to him. He will not force his love upon us (*Rev. 3:20*) One last comment on the journey beginning with the Lord. We can’t help but be drawn to the journey because of what he did, and the pure spiritual magnetism with which it all happens because the Calvary Event, Christ himself said of this attraction in *John 12:32 “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”*

1. Creation

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” ...also as part of his creative works, was to create mankind. As part of God’s creative work, man was given the assignment of the earth’s stewardship. *After God charged Adam and Eve to take dominion over the earth...*

(Gen. 1:26) And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Along with stewardship of the earth, there were certain freedoms and liberties God granted to them according the Genesis 2: (*Gen. 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 ¶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*). God still grants liberties and freedom of choice along the journey with him. However, given the history of Adam and all of humanity, are these liberties to our benefit or our detriment? Human history shows a jagged past with the freedoms the Lord has allowed. The journey with God began in Genesis, and all Adam (and Eve) had to do was obey and follow instructions. Here is where the divide begins.

2. Sin

When we disobey the command(s) of God, the journey with Him causes us to go down a path different than the one the Lord is on. Genesis 3 records the account of:

- ❖ *Temptation* by the serpent (*Gen. 3:1-5*)
- ❖ *Contemplation* by Adam and Eve’s contemplation (*Gen. 3:6*)
- ❖ *Explanation* as to why they disobeyed God’s command (*Gen. 3:9-12*)

Sin, the transgression against the command and will of God, caused man’s walk with God to become splintered and it separated man from his creator. God’s holiness does not allow for God

and sin to co-exist. Not only was man separated from God, but both Adam and Eve were expelled from their ineffably beautiful and bountiful paradise in Eden's garden. Also implicating man's departure from the journey are the accounts of sinfulness in Genesis chapters 4 to 11: Cain slaying Abel; sin in all of humanity and the story of Noah; the tower of Babel and man's attempt to ascend to heaven. Sin is now firmly entrenched in the flesh and nature of man. This life of sin had to be dealt with by God. The life that man now lives pushes us further and further from being able to walk intimately along life's journey with the Lord. Life with the Lord is sometimes difficult and demanding, but how would humanity survive without the presence of the Lord? The Journey with Jesus is also at times complicated and filled with vicissitudes that practically command a person and the presence of someone else with us along life's journey to help us deal with the issues that fill this world of sin. The only way forward from here is for a way to be made for us to be returned to love and fellowship with the creator, and that way is through redemption.

3. Man's Need for Redemption

With sin in our flesh and no savior in sight, there is no prospect of having a life and journey with the Lord. There is only one way to restore fellowship with God and rekindle the intimacy of a loving lifelong walk with him, and that was for the Lord to redeem sinful man.

Redemption is a term associated in current English usage with a transaction involving the release of an item (or person) in exchange for some type of payment. This association is not at all foreign to biblical understandings of redemption. The contexts of usage in the Old Testament and the New Testament, however, add important dimensions that help in grasping the theological implications of the concept.

In Genesis 3:15 God announced the enmity that would come between Satan and mankind. This is the *protevangelium*, the first announcement of the gospel in Scripture. Satan would be dealt a destructive, head crushing blow. This is a reference to Christ's victory over Satan at the cross (*Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14*) when Christ would render Satan powerless, enabling man to be forever restored to fellowship with God, making possible man's ultimate rule. Satan would have a minor victory ("you shall bruise him on the heel"), suggesting the death of Christ; however, that very death would spell Satan's defeat.

Although Adam and Eve had sinned, incurring death, God moved to resolve man's dilemma by pointing to a future Savior who would eliminate death, restore believing man to fellowship with God, and consummate history with the Messiah's reign on earth to restore all that Adam had lost. Even though Adam lost considerable authority in his kingdom rule as God's mediator, *Genesis 3:15* looks to the future when the Messianic kingdom will be inaugurated, restoring all that Adam lost.¹

With Redemption, there is now a glimmer of hope that man can get back to God, and restore the fellowship once enjoyed in our Edenic paradise. But redemption was not something we could do. Redemption was a plan of God and had to be initiated by God. Although there is now a plan

¹Enns, P. P. 1997, c1989. *The Moody handbook of theology* (Pages 41-42). Moody Press: Chicago, Ill.

by God to put us back on the path to being on Life's Journey with the Lord, we would also find a way to jeopardize God's plan to redeem us once again.

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B. Lost and Wandering Along Life's Journey

Sin causes separation. When we are separated from the Lord, we are lost. Being lost and separated from the Lord is probably the most damaging aspect of our getting through life's journey with the Lord. Exemplary of being lost and wandering are the people of Israel during their transition from slavery to freedom and liberation. Their lack of trust in God's anointed leader (Moses), and questioning the methodology of God's deliverance condemned Israel to a lengthy period of being physically and spiritually lost. In the years ahead of them, maybe a play on two similar words express their frustration, they *wondered* about their *wandering*.

1. Rejecting God On The Journey

God's plan of redemption would begin to draw us closer through Him making a selection of one person that would make for God having a people who would be his, and all peoples of the earth could be blessed and find redemption through this one man. Abraham. In Genesis chapter 12 God told Abraham that he was going to make him the father of many nations. The selection of Abraham meant that there would be lineage through which God could send the Redeemer so that man could make his way back to God and enjoy life's journey with and through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. However, Abraham would risk our redemption by believing the lineage would be through Ishmael, rejecting God's specific plan to work through Sarai. Isaac would risk our redemption by blessing the younger son Jacob and not his older son Esau. Jacob would risk our redemption through his treachery and trickery in his character and integrity. Once the people of Israel were delivered from Egypt, they once said that Moses led them into the desert to die and instead wanted to return to Egypt. Blaming Moses and rejecting the plan of God to be on the journey to guide them to the promised land angered God, thus, the wilderness wandering would begin. Once the journey to the promised land began, they would risk redemption by molding a golden calf to worship in the desert. All along the journey from slavery to deliverance and freedom, God's chosen people made repeated attempts to reject his attempt to guide them through the journey.

2. Result: Lost, Alone, and Wondering

The people of Israel illustrate perfectly the need for having God along the journey of life with us. For 40 years they wandered because of their stubbornness, disbelief, and disobedience. Their life's journey, by some estimations to the promised land, would only have taken them approximately 40 days(theoretically) instead of 40 years considering the number of people that we're in their company. This is a perfect example of not trusting God along life's journey. When we do not trust God along life's journey, wherever God directs us to or our destination is, it will always take us much longer to get there as opposed to walking closely, intimately, with

obedience, faith, fidelity, and trust in God. Also during this period of wilderness wanderings, whether it's the Israelites or us we, will always be lost and appear to be alone wandering through all of the ups and downs, ins and outs, and struggles of life. Simply stated, it doesn't have to be this way. Many Saints think that because they can't see God or see evidence of him that they are in this or on this journey alone and that is just not so. To know that God is on the journey with us do we need a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by Day for guidance? In this day that's just not the way we know that God is present with us.

The journey that we are on is for a very specific and defined purpose and it is all to the glory of God. God does not want us lost, alone, and wandering. He wants to walk with us every step of the way, but if we continue to reject his love, guidance, and the significance of all that he has done to redeem us to himself we jeopardize everything that God has done.

3. God Remembers

When life's journey feels so lonely and it appears that we are all alone, the glimmer of hope that we are provided is we see that God never forgets about us. Although the earth was full of sin through Genesis chapter 6, God remembered Noah. Genesis chapter 6 verse 8 says that “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Knowing that God sees all the things we do both good and bad, even in a life full of sin there is grace to be found. The example of Noah provides us with an example and eternal hope that God will not forget about us. God desires nothing less than to walk personally and intimately with us. Think about this, God had to walk so closely with Noah because of what he assigned him to do in building the ark. The amount of rain that God was going to send had never come upon the earth before, and no structure like that which God asked Noah to construct had ever been built before. Therefore, it is no way that Noah could have done what he did without being on a personal and intimate journey walking with the Lord day-by-day, step-by-step. There is strength and encouragement to be found in Noah’s story. Do you sense that something is going on in your life that you've never done before, that you have never seen done before, but you know it is your assignment to get it done? Then it is your responsibility to do whatever is needful and necessary for you to have a personal and intimate walk with the Lord such that life's journey with Jesus becomes your guiding force for you to accomplish those things like never before.

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