

Walking in Jesus

Colossians 2:6-15 (NASB)

On New Year's Day, I watched the evening news on 1News. The TV reporter interviewed people about their New Year's resolutions. Some said they wanted to spend more time with family and friends. Others said they hoped to find a higher-paying job. Some simply wanted to have fun. A young man said he hoped to find a girlfriend in 2026. People all want to have better lives in the new year.

The key to a better life lies at a deeper level. It is one's lifestyle – the consistent pattern and direction of how a person lives. The Bible uses "walking" as a metaphor for how one lives day by day. Today, I would like us to look together at the lifestyle that leads to a truly better life: "Walking in Jesus".

When talking about "walking in Jesus", some may dismiss it as an exclusive Christian view. They believe there are many other valid ways to live a better life. That was exactly the situation challenging the Colossian church in the mid-first century. Founded by Epaphras, Apostle Paul's co-worker, the church was soon influenced by Greek philosophies, the worship of the goddess Cybele, and other mysterious spiritual practices. False teachers told the church that the best way was to combine these with their faith in Jesus. Paul wrote to urge them to walk in Christ and avoid the false teachings. Colossians 2:6-15 is the central thesis of the letter. They had come to faith in Jesus, and now they were to walk in Jesus.

⁶Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

⁸See to it that there is no one who takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ. ⁹For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over every ruler and authority; ¹¹and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision performed without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

¹³And when you were dead in your wrongdoings and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our wrongdoings, ¹⁴having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

From the passage, we will study three key points: Walk in Jesus, Avoid false teachings, and Yield to the power of the cross. The first letters of the three points form W.A.Y.—the WAY of walking in Jesus. Verse 6-7 is the core of the passage. It is so rich in meaning, and we will examine it in depth.

1. Walk in Jesus (2:6-7)

Verse 6-7 is a single sentence. The core message is an imperative: "so walk in Him (Jesus)." The surrounding clauses show us the basis and manner of this imperative and how it happens.

By saying "therefore," Paul teaches that coming to faith in Jesus must lead to a life of walking in Him. And the approach of the walking is "as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord." The word "received" refers to accepting what others handed down. The Colossians believed in Jesus by learning the Gospel from Epaphras, who faithfully passed on the teaching from the Apostles. Paul says they must live by obeying the truth handed

down to them. That same truth is now in the Bible. For Christians in the 21st century, we should also “walk in Jesus” by obeying the Bible's teachings.

In the Bible, “walking” is a metaphor for living one’s life day by day. The phrase “in Jesus” means living in conscious spiritual fellowship with Jesus. New Testament scholar George Ladd summarized the Pauline letters and noted that “in Jesus” has three meanings. First, it means “being in the salvation accomplished by Jesus” (Romans 8:1–2); second, it means “living in the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17); and third, “being in the Church, the body of Christ (Romans 12:5).

Then, Paul explains how “living in Jesus” happens by using three more metaphors: the root of a tree, the construction of the Holy Temple, and an overflowing cup.

Paul says, “so walk in Jesus, having been rooted (in Him).” The verb’s voice and tense tell us that God is the one who roots us in Jesus, and that what He has done already is affecting Christian living today. Our lives receive nutrition and support from the root, from Jesus. God rooted us in Jesus.

Paul moves to the Temple construction metaphor, “so walk in Jesus, ..., now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed.” The passive verb indicates that the “construction” God is doing it, not us. The present tense indicates that God’s work of building and strengthening is ongoing.

Paul uses the Temple metaphor in both Colossians and Ephesians (the sister book of Colossians). Ephesians 2:20-22 explains its meaning in detail that believers “are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” That tells us that Christian living is communal – believers are connected by Jesus and built up together by God. God gives us different spiritual gifts so that we serve and support one another. The Temple is the place of worship. We worship and glorify God together in the church community. The Temple manifests God’s glory, and our lives are a living testimony to God.

Paul says that God is building and strengthening us in faith, “just as you were instructed.” Again, Paul emphasizes the teaching passed down from the Apostles and Epaphras, which means the Bible for Christians today. Our growth in faith is the work of God, grounded in the truth of the Bible. Learning from the Bible is critically important for Christian lives.

I would like to encourage all of us to read the Bible every day. If you don’t have a reading plan yet, here is a helpful tool. It is “The Bible in One Year” program, developed by Nicky Gumbel and his wife, Pippa Gumbel, who are the founders of the Alpha Course. The mobile app provides three passages with simple commentary and prayer- a passage from the Psalms or the Wisdom books, a passage from the Old Testament, and a passage from the New Testament. Following Nicky and Pippa, you can finish reading the whole Bible in a year. You can get the Chinese content in the WeDevote app. The English content is available in “The Bible with Nicky and Pippa” app.

Now, we return to the third metaphor for how “walking in Jesus” happens. It is an overflowing cup. Paul says, “so walk in Him, ..., overflowing with gratitude.” The verb “overflow” means going beyond expectation. The active present form of the verb shows that we are the ones who “overflow with gratitude,” and that this happens continuously. Walking in Jesus means we experience God’s grace and His wonderful work in our lives, and we respond to God with thanksgiving. The blessing is so rich that we cannot help but give thanks to God. This is a beautiful picture of one’s life in Jesus.

To summarize, “walking in Jesus” is an imperative after we come to faith in Jesus. God is the one who

works in us, rooting and building us in Jesus, so that we live out what God puts in us and become a living testimony for God's glory. "Walking in Jesus" happens based on the truth in the Bible.

2. Avoid The False Teaching (8-12)

Verse 8 warns us of the danger of being taken captive "through philosophy and empty deception." In the first-century context, Paul's use of the term "philosophy" refers not only to the Greek philosophies but also to a range of religions, worldviews, and even magical practices. These were "in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ".

In our contemporary culture, "philosophy and empty deception" appear in various forms. Individualism and relativism dominate modern thought. They teach that personal happiness is the highest goal, individual freedom is the ultimate value, and that each person defines their own right or wrong. The absolute truth is dismissed as outdated and exclusive.

Books promoting such ideas often become bestsellers. The people promoting them have millions of followers on social media. They tell you to live for yourself, not others; make money, make yourself happy, make it happen NOW; there is no absolute truth, and you decide what is right or wrong for yourself; if it feels right, it is right for you; do whatever you want and don't hold yourself back. You read or hear those sayings in books, on social media, and from people around you.

These sayings could be "persuasive" to you, especially during difficult times. You may say, "It feels good to me. Why can't I just go do it?" The simple reason is that human feelings and perceptions are unreliable and can often be deceived. Just consider one example of the danger of trusting feelings. All aircraft pilots are trained to "never trust your feelings but to trust the instruments." After sharp turns or turbulence, pilots can suffer from spatial disorientation – their sense of up or down and of turning or straight is confused and wrong. Flying the plane based on their feelings is fatal. Likewise, when our perception of truth is distorted, our lives fall into chaos if we follow our feelings.

How do we avoid the danger? The antidote is clear: Christ alone is the truth and the source of our life. Verses 9-12 give us three reasons why "Jesus Only" is the way to a fulfilling life in its fullness. The first reason is that "in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over every ruler and authority." God's fullness dwells in Jesus, and God already made us complete in fullness. This is the fullness that dwells in our newborn life.

The second reason for walking in Jesus only is that God has already made us His people in the New Covenant. When God made the covenant with Abraham, He required Abraham and the males in his family to be circumcised as a mark of the Covenant, in which God was their God, and they were God's people. In Jesus, the Old Testament covenants are all fulfilled. God has done on us the circumcision of Christ. We are God's people, and we are in His blessing to be complete in fullness.

The third reason is that we have been given a resurrected life with the power of the Holy Spirit. The baptism symbolizes that we were dead with Jesus to the old flesh, and we were resurrected with Jesus, so that we can live to God. This is the newborn life within us. This is the life in fullness in Jesus.

We need to "avoid the false teachings" as we walk in Jesus. In Jesus only, shall we walk our lives, not any other way.

3. Yield to The Power of The Cross

Verses 13–15 tell us that walking in Jesus means not relying on ourselves but yielding to the power of the cross, that is, relying on what Jesus has done on the cross.

Our newborn life has complete freedom in Jesus because of His sacrificial death on the cross. God has forgiven our sins and canceled our debt of sin. We are free to live out a life of fullness in Jesus.

Our new life within also triumphs over sin and the dark forces. Here, Paul uses another image to describe this triumph. It depicts the Roman army's public parade upon returning to Rome in victory. They would display the captured enemy soldiers, a way of declaring total victory over the enemy. Paul says that Christians also have the glorious triumph over sin and the devil, and that we can live out that victory in our daily lives. Sin and the devil cannot enslave us, because Jesus defeated them.

The testimony of a Chinese brother vividly illustrates God's work and the power of the cross. More than twenty years ago, Brother Chen ran an IT company that sold computer and network products and provided IT services to enterprises. While doing business, he encountered a fraudster. Through a fictitious business deal, the scammer deceived him and took almost all of his money. His company was about to collapse. After months of searching, he finally located the scammer. However, his lawyer told him that because the fraud scheme was sophisticated, even if he filed a lawsuit, it might not be possible to recover the money. The brother was desperate and furious with hatred. He decided to confront the scammer violently. He took a long-handled wrench, placed it in the trunk of his car, and prepared to kill the scammer and then take his own life.

Before setting out, he wanted God to curse the scammer. But when he began to pray and uttered the words, "Lord...", the Holy Spirit came and held him powerfully. He found that he could not even speak a curse. After struggling for a while, he felt the Holy Spirit had set him free from hatred and furious anger. He was able to open his mouth and speak to God. He was amazed that the prayer that came out of his mouth was asking God to save the scammer in Jesus. A tragedy was avoided. Eventually, through legal proceedings, the brother was able to recover some of his losses. Because of the power of the cross, he was forgiven by God and able to overcome the dark force and continue his life.

Such dramatic testimonies do not happen often. But the triumph of the new life is something we can experience every day. In this new life, there is freedom that comes from Christ and the power of Christ's resurrection. This new life enables us to live victoriously in Jesus.

Summary

At the beginning of the year, we all desire a better life. Yet what truly matters is the pursuit of a better way of living—"walking in Jesus." Colossians 2:6–15 gives us the WAY—Walk in Jesus, Avoid the False Teachings, and Yield to the Power of the Cross.

"In Jesus" means we live consciously in fellowship with Jesus, in His Salvation, in the Holy Spirit, and in His Body, the Church. Walking in Jesus means actively living out what God has done and continues to do in us. God has rooted us in Jesus and is building and strengthening us in faith based on the truth of the Bible.

On the journey of walking in Jesus, we must avoid false teachings that may seem persuasive but draw us away from Jesus. We should fix our eyes on Jesus alone, because in Him is all the fullness, in Him God has made us His people, and in Him God has given us new life.

To live a victorious life in Jesus, we should not rely on ourselves but yield to the power of the cross. The salvation accomplished on the cross made us free and gave us victory over sin and the devil.

This is God's amazing grace and work. This is God's calling to us to actively live in Jesus. May the Lord keep us throughout 2026, as we walk in Christ and experience the fullness of life.