

New Ways to WALK



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Where, oh where was winter this year?
Oh where, oh where could it be?
With warmer days, and little snow,
I've been filled with so much glee!

Is this a tune you've been singing
along with me this winter season?

Typically, I am yearning for a warm vacation this time of year—dreaming of eighty-degree temps and sunshine somewhere in the south where I might be able to defrost and escape the frozen tundra. The dreary cold days of winter weigh so heavily on me that I don't know if I can take even one more flake of snow by the time we march into March. But this year, it's a whole different story!

My three-mile daily morning walks, marked in previous winters with a little dread, layers of clothing, frozen nostril hairs, and frosty eyelashes have been refreshingly brisk and more enjoyable this year. And with so many days when snow pants haven't been needed, I've even had more spring in my walking steps without the bulkiness of the pants slowing me down.

Speaking of more spring in walking steps, I've learned a new way to walk that I want to share with you.

Last summer, I did a Bible study called "Our Father: A Study of the Lord's Prayer" by Becky Harling with my beloved mother-in-law and daughter. It was a sweet time as we learned how to best pray with the best teaching from the Lord Himself.

I'm an acronym girl. And I needed a way to remind myself how to pray like Jesus after completing the study. **WALK** became my word.

Worship the Lord
Ask audaciously
Lean into His will
Keep forgiving

Though I have not always prayed like this, learning to do so has changed my perspective—taking my time with Jesus off of me and my desires and turning it to Him—making it into a worship sesh where I praise, honor, and yield to what He has for me. In doing this, the bad and the ugly moments of life move from fear, anxiety, and all of the negative emotions to "it is well with my soul". And the good and beautiful moments of life move from simple gladness to deep and utter gratitude to God.

Oftentimes prayer can be a list of wants and desires, completely devoid of bowing down and worshiping a holy God that we have the freedom and privilege to come to in prayer. As I have learned to better pray, my **WALK** with Him has become more intimate and more meaningful. Let's walk a little further together.

"This, then, is how you should pray:
'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
We also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'"
Matthew 6: 9-13

Since this isn't the way we talk in our everyday lives, the Lord's Prayer might sound complicated. But when we break it down, it's so chock full of goodness that we realize Jesus knew just what He was saying when He taught us to pray like this.

(W) Worship the Lord. We lift His name on high. We sing of His mighty works – we might even start our prayers with a great worship song. We praise Him for loving us and for saving us through His Son. We thank Him for all the things—the big and little things—anything that makes our hearts swell even a little. For the breath in our lungs, for the food in our bellies, for the day He has already planned ahead, and even for the warmer-than-normal winter! When we worship like this, with grateful hearts for what God has done and for Who He is, He gives us a new perspective. And the grumblings we might otherwise have start to fade away as we bask in His goodness.

(A) Ask audaciously. We ask great big things in great expectation that God can do them. He is the Mountain Mover, Great Physician, Prince of Peace, Miracle Worker, Wonderful Counselor, Shephard, Provider, Protector, etc. We can come to Him and ask for big things because we know He can deliver them. He can move mountains, heal bodies, bring peace that surpasses our understanding, work miracles, give wisdom, guide, provide, protect, etc. But, when we first come in Holy Worship, the things we ask for start to change as He changes our perspective and helps us to remember all He has already done and reminds us that His ways are not our ways and His plans are good—even in the struggles and trials of life.

(L) Lean into His will. After worshiping and asking, our hearts become so full of knowing all that God is and all that He can do that we are able to lean fully into His will. But, this is perhaps one of the hardest parts of our WALK. Worshiping and asking are things that we actively do. We are good at doing things. But are we good at being still and knowing that He is God? Are we good at leaning into what He knows is good for us? Leaning is not being lazy, leaning is having faith and trusting God with it all. Leaning is dying to self and clinging to the One who has our best interest in mind.



"We care for people and fix cars!"



(K) Keep forgiving. Forgiveness is hard. Forgiveness is constant. Sometimes memories creep in and we have to forgive all over again - taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ. Forgiveness is not for the faint of heart, it is for the faithful in God. He wasn't kidding when He said we would need to forgive seventy-times-seven. We have hearts that feel easily wronged so we have to keep forgiving the little things and remembering how we are forgiven for the little things that we have done.

But what about the big things? The things in life that are unfair and unjust and leave us completely undone. The things we never even fathomed could happen, but they did. And everything in us wants to hold onto anger and unforgiveness because the person who wronged us is unworthy of our forgiveness. But the truth is, our unforgiveness hurts us more than the other person—it keeps bitterness in our hearts and disrupts the relationship we have with Jesus. Forgiving doesn't necessarily mean reconciling or opening the door to more moments of hurt or pain. Forgiving means laying the wrong at the foot of the cross—all the wrongs—the big ones and the little ones, and living in the peace that God gives us because we have been obedient in our forgiveness of others.

Is that it? You may think that my **WALK** acronym left out the "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" part. But here's the deal: **WALK** is a two-parter. As we pray with this acronym, we also learn to DO the walking. So, when we literally walk with Jesus—by being in His Word, following His ways, and praying like Him, He not only leads us away from temptation, but He shields us from the evil one. Now that, my friends, is the best way to **WALK** triumphantly.

Since we are talking about walking and we cannot walk everywhere we go I wonder if we can also use the acronym **WALK** differently in the automotive world. I also wonder if we can weave our new automotive acronym back into our faith walk as well. Let's give it a try.

Wait patiently
Ask Questions
Listen carefully
Keep maintaining

(W) Wait Patiently. Just as we wait patiently for divine intervention or guidance, in auto repair, patience is key when dealing with complex issues or waiting for diagnostics or repairs to be completed. We live in a busy world and we want our vehicles back ASAP. But have you ever considered all that goes into caring for your vehicle? Here's the process:

- Details of concerns or services must be documented by the Service Advisor for the technician.
- The vehicle is then dispatched to one of the technicians.
- The technician test drives the vehicle, assesses it based on concerns, diagnoses problems (which can be simple or complicated), and inspects it.
- The findings of all that was inspected are returned to the Service Advisor who estimates costs and sources parts.
- The Service Advisor then calls the customer to share and help prioritize findings as well as receive authorization for service(s).
- Meanwhile, the technician may be assessing another vehicle by the time your authorization is obtained. It's not a huge struggle—it's just a juggle. And because the Service Advisor is also juggling several cars by completing estimates and contacting customers, it's a real balancing act to keep all the pieces in perfect play.
- After your authorization, the Service Advisor needs to order the parts – are they immediately available or will there be a shipping delay? Sometimes they need to order different parts from different suppliers while ensuring they all arrive around the same time. Other times extended warranty companies need to be called. And if you know anything about warranty companies, you know it's a real crap shoot of when you might finally get ahold of a human being after waiting on hold for hours on end.
- The repairs and maintenance can be performed once the parts arrive and details are settled.

- When services are complete the technician takes the vehicle for another test drive to confirm the problem(s) is fixed.
- Then the Service Advisor can coordinate pick up or delivery as well as payment for your vehicle.

Maybe you've never fully considered all that goes into taking care of your vehicle from start to finish. But clearly, being patient is a key component to making sure the process goes smoothly.

(A) Ask Questions. In the same way, we ask questions of God and seek His understanding in our circumstances, in the automotive world, asking questions is essential to understanding the issues affecting your vehicle. At times, customers can be intimidated by the auto service process or they might not understand the mechanics behind certain issues. That's okay. That's why you build a relationship with the service team—so they can guide you through the process. They are happy to answer questions, and if they don't know, they are happy to get answers for you.

Don't hesitate to inquire about unfamiliar terminologies, recommended repairs, or the reasoning behind certain diagnostic procedures. By actively seeking knowledge and understanding, you empower yourself to make informed decisions regarding your vehicle's maintenance and repairs, fostering a sense of confidence and control in the process.

(L) Listen Carefully. Just as we must be still to listen and discern what God is saying to us in our walk with Him, listening carefully to expert advice from automotive professionals is crucial for maintaining and repairing your vehicle effectively. Pay attention to their recommendations, explanations, and insights regarding your vehicle's condition and necessary repairs. By actively listening and considering their expertise, you can make informed decisions prioritizing your vehicle's safety, performance, and longevity. You can also return to the (A) and ask more questions for clarity.

I've been in the automotive industry for many years and one thing that some consumers have been known to say that really chaps my hide is "they keep trying to upsell me". What does that even mean? If you are at a restaurant and your server asks you if you want an appetizer, are they trying to "upsell you"? Or are they trying to make your taste buds happy with a little meal before your meal? If you are at the doctor and they tell you that you need a medication for what you came in for as well as a surgery for something else they discovered, are they trying to "upsell you"? Or are they taking the best care of you?

When you equip yourself by asking questions, listening, and seeking professional guidance regarding vehicle repairs or maintenance recommendations, you have the power to make informed decisions. Just like you can say you don't want the appetizer, the pills, or the surgery, you can say you don't want whatever it is your Service Advisor is recommending. As their name suggests, they are there to advise you in the service process, not to "upsell you". Listen carefully, ask questions, and make decisions. That's good walking!

(K) Keep Maintaining. Lastly, just like we need to maintain a good relationship with Jesus so we can stay spiritually and emotionally healthy, in the automotive realm, it's important to maintain a consistent schedule of preventive maintenance to ensure your vehicle's longevity and reliability. Regularly scheduled maintenance, such as oil changes, fluid exchanges, tire rotations, and alignments, helps keep your vehicle performing at its best. Not only that but proactively maintaining your vehicle regularly gives your mechanic the ability to assess your vehicle at regular intervals to identify potential issues early on and prevent costly repairs down the road.

All this talk about walking makes me think of the familiar phrase "Don't just talk the talk, but walk the walk". What a good piece of advice that we can apply here. Even before spring officially springs, let us put some spring in our steps as we carry out these new ways to WALK. WALK in your prayer life, WALK with Jesus, and WALK confidently during the auto repair process.