

# Jesus' Purposeful Walk



## SABBATH—MAY 17

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 4:4; Luke 2:40; Luke 6:12; John 4:34; John 17; 1 John 2:6.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Those who claim to belong to him must live just as Jesus did” (1 John 2:6, NlrV).

**ADVENTISTS ARE A PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE.** We feel happy when the church or its members get positive press. We also are happy when everybody thinks we are good. But how might we feel if we were reported in the newspapers as losers, troublemakers, or rebels? Would our sense of faith in God be strong enough to keep us growing? We admire Jesus. But do we really understand how He felt when governmental (ruling) and religious leaders of His time mocked Him?

In the end we find Him roughhoused by Roman soldiers: “The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they twisted thorns together to make a crown. They placed it on his head. They began to call out to him, ‘We honor you, king of Jews!’ Again and again they hit him on the head with a stick. They spit on him. They fell on their knees and pretended to honor him. . . . Then they led him out to nail him to a cross” (Mark 15:17–20, NlrV).

What makes a person able to go through such physical and mental abuse without losing his mind? How does a person remain strong and calm when the whole world turns against him without any support? For Jesus, the answer lay in His close connection with God. This explains His purposeful walk with His Father, which is the subject of this week's lesson.

**SUNDAY—MAY 18****THE EARLY YEARS (Luke 2:40)**

What do we know of Christ's childhood? We know about His birth and a little bit about His very early years. We know about His visit to the temple at age 12 (read Luke 2). But that is all, until His baptism by John at the start of His public ministry (work). Then He was "about thirty" (NirV; read Luke 3:21–23).



**Jesus visits the temple at age 12.**

Nevertheless, it is possible to look at Jesus' life and learn several lessons about His early training. We can guess that Jesus had good training to prepare Him for public ministry. We also can believe that His strong lead-

ership came from His close connection with God.

**Read again the story of Jesus at the temple (Luke 2:39–52). What things are found there that help us understand how Jesus received His early spiritual training? Also, what part did His parents have in His growth and training?**

We have Bible stories about Jesus' birth in the Gospels.<sup>1</sup> Besides these stories, those verses are all we have on the first 30 years of Jesus' life. Bible experts figure that most of the Gospel materials center on the final week of Jesus' life. This means that the Gospels are "Passion narratives,"<sup>2</sup> not biographies (stories about a person's life). They were made for the purpose of focusing on the two very important events of the Christian faith: (1) the mystery of Jesus' birth (the Incarnation)<sup>3</sup> and (2) the meaning of His death and resurrection.<sup>4</sup> Between these two events we find His unselfish life of service and sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> And we may say that Jesus' focus and faithfulness come from His close relationship with God.

**What principles (rules) can we take from this story that we can use in our own spiritual life?**

1. Gospels—the four books in the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus' life and His teachings. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels.

2. Passion narratives—stories about Jesus' crucifixion (death on the cross).

3. Incarnation—the coming of Jesus as a human being (person).

4. resurrection—return to life from the dead.

5. sacrifice—the act of giving up something of value, such as a life, to save or help someone or something.

**MONDAY—MAY 19****AT THE START OF JESUS' MINISTRY (Matthew 4:4)**

After His baptism, Jesus goes out into the desert for 40 days. His purpose is to pray and think about His mission. None of us who study this lesson has had any personal knowledge of what that means. Here we come face to face with Jesus' strong desire for a very special relationship with God.



**Jesus fasted and prayed for 40 days in the desert before starting His mission (work).**

But the clear reason for this wilderness experience was for testing (Matthew 4:1; read also Luke 4:2). And Satan was there to take advantage of<sup>6</sup> this opportunity (a chance). As Jesus was very hungry, Satan tried to drive Jesus and His Father apart. Satan wanted to break Jesus'

strong hold on God. He worked hard to separate Jesus from His Father and to destroy the special closeness between Them.

**According to the following verses, how does Jesus' answer show His close walk with God? What can we learn from this that we can use for ourselves? (Matthew 4:3–10; Luke 4:3–12.)**

To understand what is going on here, we need to remember Jesus' special part in the whole plan of salvation.<sup>7</sup> He was the sinless Son of God. Jesus came into the world in human flesh.<sup>8</sup> For this reason He had to live without sin, not just for a day but for His entire time with us. He was to struggle against temptation (the desire to do wrong) as we do. He was to be tempted as we are. But He had to remain sinless. It is very much the same as going through 33 years with your computer, writing articles, doing homework, answering letters, and never making a single mistake. We would never need to use the delete key. It is also very much the same as going through a course in algebra or physics and getting every problem right. It is playing the piano for 33 years without ever making a mistake.

That was Jesus' situation. He came both to set an example in selfless living and to die as the sinless One. In this way He brought salvation to the

6. take advantage of—to make use of someone or something for one's own gain.

7. plan of salvation—what God has done and is doing to save us from sin.

8. human flesh—having the body of a human being (person).

planet. So His effort had to be 100 percent and His walk with God very serious. He could not take it easy and make one mistake. If He did, God's plan was over.

**Imagine what it must have been like for Jesus to have never sinned, during His whole life. That is what righteousness (holiness) is all about. Think carefully about what you owe to Jesus, who offers you what you yourself could never succeed in doing.**

## TUESDAY—MAY 20

### IN JESUS' LIFE OF PRAYER (Luke 6:12)

Jesus lived for prayer. His public ministry began with a long period of special prayer. The Bible shows that He returned from the experience refreshed with living power (read Luke 4:14). It would have been unnatural for Him to go a single moment without prayer. He needed prayer to experience that living connection between Himself and Heaven. Jesus had a life of continuous prayer with His Father. But before every important event, Jesus spent time in special prayer.

**How do the following verses show Jesus' dependence upon God for guidance, direction, and strength during times of high importance, stress, or danger? In each case, keep the special event in mind: Matthew 14:23 (also read**

**verses 24–33); Luke 6:12 (also read verses 13–16); John 17 (also read 18:1–3).**

Mark 1:35 seems to be describing not just one event but rather a pattern (habit). It explains about Jesus getting up "a long while before daylight" (NKJV) and going out to "a solitary [lone] place" (NKJV) for prayer. He began each day with God. But during times of great need Jesus had longer prayer. Luke 6:12 informs us that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer on a mountainside before choosing the 12 disciples (followers), from among a larger group of followers (read Luke 6:13). Before His jaw-dropping walk on the lake, He had taken time out for a period of special prayer with His Father. And during the last week before the Cross, Jesus offered a very serious prayer, for His disciples and for all His people to the end of time.



Jesus began each day with prayer.

**What parts of a deeply personal walk with God do you find in John 17? What events put you on your knees? What has been your experience with the power of prayer to keep you going? How might you better improve your prayer life?**

### WEDNESDAY—MAY 21

#### GREAT DESIRE FOR MISSION (John 4:34)

For American poet Robert Frost in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," the woods were

lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep  
And miles to go before I sleep.

Jesus lived, knowing very well the deep darkness in the "woods" around Him. But for Jesus, unlike Frost, the "woods" were not always lovely. Like the poet, Jesus always had many miles to go before He slept. He had so much to do in so little time (read John 9:4, NIV). We find Jesus' great desire for mission when He has a meeting with the woman of Samaria. Suddenly, in the presence of this needy soul, Jesus forgets all hunger and all thirst. He is completely focused on the mission at hand.

Meanwhile, the woman becomes excited with the meeting. She leaves her water jar and rushes to the village

to spread the news of the most interesting Person she has ever met. The disciples return to find Jesus silent and thoughtful. He is praying for the success of this brand-new soul.

**When His disciples told Jesus to eat, what did He answer them? (John 4:32–34). How should we understand those words? What message can we take from them for ourselves?**

**What do John 9:1–12, 35–39 and John 12:27–36 teach about the great desire of Jesus for His mission?**

Jesus' feelings in these last few verses are full of meaning. They came after several visiting Greeks asked to meet Him (John 12:20–22). The Greeks' request opened the way for Jesus to take the message of the kingdom out of Palestine to the far corners of the earth. But He knew that to do so would tempt Him from doing the most important part of His total mission. This was to give His life as a ransom<sup>9</sup> for the nations. So, He ends the meeting by sharing a powerful example about a kernel of wheat falling into the ground (verse 24). This example is a symbol (word-picture) of His own sacrifice and of all who follow Him. They must have a full surrender (the act of giving oneself completely) to the will of God, no matter what the personal cost might be.

9. ransom—money paid for the return of a kidnapped person. Jesus' death paid the ransom for our freedom from sin and Satan.



Just as a kernel of wheat dies when it is planted and brings forth life, Jesus died so we might have life through Him.

What has been your own personal experience with what it costs to follow Jesus? Why is the cost cheap enough, no matter how expensive it may seem to you?

### THURSDAY—MAY 22

#### OUR OWN WALK WITH GOD (1 John 2:6)

Read prayerfully the above verse. What is the principle there for us to follow? We understand that we cannot (and should not) do everything that Christ did. But how do we make this verse real in our own lives? In what ways are we to walk as Jesus walked?

The idea of *walking with God* has

been very, very old in Bible history. Perhaps the first clear Bible example of the idea comes from Genesis 5: 22, 24. Verse 24 says, “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away” (NIV). In the Bible the Hebrew word for *walked* suggests a kind of continual, ongoing walk. It is something that happened all the time. Enoch might have his faults and struggles. But he kept on walking with his Lord.

We, as Christians, have the opportunity to do the same. But it is so easy to let other things get in the way of that walk.

**What are the things that so easily can slow down your walk with God? Too much leisure (free) time? Too much temptation? Too much to do? Too much work in order to just be able to continue? Once you know these concerns, what useful steps can you take to try to prevent these things from hurting you spiritually?**

Read what Jesus said in Matthew 13:22. What is His basic message? It is clear that none of these things can really be a good excuse for losing our way. This is because the Lord already has foreseen them. How important it is for us to make the daily choices wisely, as Jesus did, to keep our walk with the Lord purposeful and ongoing. Why should we give the tempter (Satan) anything at all to trap and turn us away from Jesus?

**FRIDAY—MAY 23**

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “It would do us good to spend an hour each day thinking deeply about the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the mind picture each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our faith in Him will become stronger. Our love will grow, and we shall be more deeply filled with His spirit.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, “The Passover Visit,” page 83, in *The Desire of Ages*.

In every possible way Satan tried to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unspoiled sacrifice. But Satan lost. Satan could not lead Jesus into sin. Satan could not discourage Him or drive Him from the work He had come to this earth to do. From the desert to the Cross, the storm of Satan’s anger beat upon Him. But the more merciless it fell, the more firmly the Son of God held on to the hand of His Father. And the more stubbornly He continued in the blood-stained path.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 5, page 1130.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

❶ The unwilling praises given to Jesus in Matthew 22:15, 16 speak of

Him as a person of honesty and truth. He was not easily influenced<sup>10</sup> by people’s office or power. What would people say about you? Could they offer you almost the same kind of praise? What about on a larger level—the level of your local church? Is it as willing to help the lower class of society as it is to try to impress the higher class of people? What does your answer tell you about changes that need to be made, if any?

❷ As a class, go over what you wrote down in Thursday’s study about regarding the things that can slow down your walk with the Lord. Compare<sup>11</sup> notes with other class members. What did you list in common? What were the differences? Even more important, how can you work together to help each other get past these challenges? What useful help can you give one another?

❸ In Matthew, Jesus often spends time on mountains and teaches on mountainsides. Finally, He shines in glory on a mountain (Matthew 17:1–9). “Higher ground” may mean the daily closeness Jesus experienced with God at the higher level. What are the ways that we, as a church, can work together to reach, in a sense, the highest level of spirituality (goodness), even while working purposely in the valley below?

10. influenced—to be affected or changed by the power of another person or thing.

11. compare—to show how two things are the same.