



MAY 2025

Ministry[®]

INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

Closing Prayers

Facing the end times
on our knees

PAGE 6



10

NEVER WALK ALONE

14

WHAT IS PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT?

18

WHEN YOU ARE RUNNING ON EMPTY AND LOOKING FOR THE NEAREST EXIT

Don MacLafferty, MDiv, is the founder, president, and full-time volunteer with In Discipleship, Apison, Tennessee, United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

Never walk alone

Stop walking alone. Jesus didn't. Nor should you. You may disagree, perhaps thinking, "You don't know what I am going through." You are correct—I don't. But Someone does.

On December 30, 2024, I began a new private study in the written Word on Jesus' dependence on His Father. I am searching the Gospels for everything I can discover about Jesus' relationship with His Father while on earth. In my journal I list the Bible reference and a summary statement of what the passage reveals about the relationship, and then I write out the text. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were full of powerful discoveries. But just the past few days of searching the Gospel of John has provided the most profound pictures of how Jesus operated on earth in full reliance on His Father.

I did not begin the study with the intent of finding something to share with others. Rather, the Spirit of God drove me to it because He knows I need to know, understand, and personally experience the peace, rest, and fellowship that Jesus had with His Father. God recognizes that I need such an experience now as we all are facing increasing unknowns as we navigate difficult times punctuated with rapid fulfillment of prophecy.

How do you picture Him?

When you reflect on the years Jesus walked on earth, how do you picture Him? Do you think of Him as a lonely, solitary figure or One in deep fellowship?

Every morning God the Father awakened Jesus to have unrushed time alone with Him. Jesus testified of His daily relationship through the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 50:4:

The Lord God has given Me the tongue of
disciples,
That I may know how to sustain the weary one
with a word.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple
(NASB).

What a powerful fellowship Jesus enjoyed with His Father every day! This unseen, holy friendship influenced every moment of Jesus' life on earth. Jesus placed Himself humbly as the One to be disciplined by His Father. His Father poured His love and power into Jesus' life every morning and throughout the day.

He sought His Father

Mark 1:35 gives us a glimpse of the daily fellowship Jesus enjoyed with His Father. In this instance Jesus left Simon's home to savor time with God. He did not want anyone or anything to distract Him. At that moment He was not focused on ministering to the individual seeker or the hungry crowds. Nor was He thinking of how many children He could bless, how many sick He could heal, or how many demon-enslaved people He could free.

Scripture says that Jesus went to an isolated place to pray. He sought His Father, yearning for the deepest possible fellowship with Him daily, just as He had enjoyed for eternity in the past in heaven. Every day Jesus sought for and found His Father in a fresh way. God then breathed His life, love, and strength into Him.

Constant connection

Jesus strode into each day fully engaged with His Father as He ministered to people. He did not leave His Father behind after the early morning worship moment. Rather, He walked *with* God throughout the day.

Jesus was always with His Father, whether He was facing the demoniac by the sea, comforting the woman thrown at His feet who had been caught in adultery, or speaking to the secretive Nicodemus in the dead of night.

Our Savior was with His Father in the best and the worst of times. Jesus was with His Father when receiving the adulation of the crowds after feeding the 5,000. And He was with His Father when many of those same voices screamed, "Crucify Him!"

The Messiah of the world was with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. There He wrestled with His Father. Jesus came to do His Father's works (see John 9:4), but as He faced the terror of the cross, He hesitated. The immensity of the world's sin and the separation from the Father was almost overwhelming, yet He accepted the Father's will (see Matthew 26:39–42).

In His time of greatest desperation on the cross, when He had no evidence of His Father's presence, Jesus still affirmed His belief in that presence by crying out to Him, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34, NASB). If Jesus did not believe His Father was present, He would never have cried out to Him. He never would have asked Him such a painful question. But Jesus did cry out to the One covered in darkness. He still asked the One who loved Him most such a hard question because He believed His Father still heard Him.

Since Jesus had walked with His Father all the time, He continued to look to His Father with His very last breath. His Father had affirmed Jesus at His baptism (Matt. 3:17), on the mountain of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5), and when the Greek seekers came looking for Him in the Temple (John 12:28). But in Jesus' closing moment, when His Father did not feel close to Him, He still breathed His last words to the One He always walked with: "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit" (Luke 23:46, NASB).

Faithful followers

Our Father God has always had faithful followers who lived in deep communion with Him in both the best and worst of times. Enoch walked with God when the world was exceedingly evil. Noah walked with God when the world was even worse. Jesus walked this same journey when all the dark forces of evil were seeking every second to make Him go alone.

Pastor, church leader, before you define yourself with the role and responsibility that you are known for, you must remember that you are, first and foremost, simply a child claimed by your Father God. He formed you in your mother's womb (Ps. 139:13) and loved you before your earthly family even thought of loving you.

Run to God as your loving Father.

Here are some practical tips to never walk alone:

1. Turn off your phone at least an hour before you sleep. Close your day by thanking God for how He showed up for you during the day.
2. Each night ask your Father to wake you up to have unrushed time alone with Him (Isa. 50:4). God did it for Jesus, and He will do so for you if you ask Him.
3. Keep your phone off until you have enjoyed unrushed time alone with God each morning in His Word and in prayer.
4. Rethink how you begin your time in the Word. Take time to first greet God. How we greet a dear friend is so different from how we greet a stranger. Consider how you will greet God as you begin the day before you read His Word. For me it is so easy, if I am not careful, to miss this key priority. Dear friends have special ways to greet each other. How about you?
5. Ask your Father God to give you a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Luke 11:13; Acts 1:4, 5) before you read His Word. The Holy Spirit will teach you His Word (John 14:26; 16:13).
6. Search the Word for a fresh picture of Jesus. Jesus is the main point of Scripture (see John 5:39). He came to show us what our Father God is like. The more you know Jesus, the Son of God, the more you will know and love your Father God.
7. Communicate with God throughout the day. Call upon Him. Wait on Him. Hear what He has to say to you through the Word and prayer throughout your day (see Jer. 33:3).

What makes us feel alone

As a pastor or leader in the church, you may, at times, feel alone. Your decisions may alienate some members. Perhaps you may find yourself sidelined because of your position. At times you may be misunderstood or even marginalized or maligned. But your Father understands you and loves you. So why not run to Him, walk with Him, and stay with Him?

As a leader you may fear walking alone—being the only one who speaks when all others are silent or the only one who stands when everyone else remains sitting. Perhaps you fear losing your support, friends, or the love of your life. What we fear may be what makes us lonely.

April, my bride of nearly 37 years, is the greatest love of my life after Jesus. I always assumed we would walk together until Jesus came again. Three years ago we had a big shock: she was diagnosed with stage four aggressive large B cell lymphoma. In a few days our expectations of being "together forever" were upended.

April and I had started walking together well before she became my girlfriend. We kept walking every day when we were engaged, when we were first married, and when we had our first child. We kept walking when we had two children to push in a stroller and when three children kept us always active. Through the decades we have walked thousands of miles together, hand-in-hand.

Cancer confronted me with fear of walking without her in my life. At this moment April is in remission! We are thankful, yet we know that her cancer can return any time. But we have chosen to celebrate every day we have together, whether it is many or few.

Recently my Father God challenged me about my fear of losing my bride. He gently whispered to my soul, "With Me you will never walk alone." 📖

Share your thoughts on this article by writing to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.