

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO DRAW CLOSER TO GOD

# WALK 10 STEPS with the LORD

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## Chapter One

### I AM THE LORD

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. – Exodus 20:2

There is no better place in the Bible to begin our journey with the Lord than with the First of the Ten Commandments in which, through Moses, the Lord declared to his people that He was God, who delivered them from slavery, and commanded them to have no gods before Him. The first step in moving toward a relationship with the Lord is to examine our belief in the fundamental premise that God exists. Most people affirm that there is a Supreme Being, especially Christians who attend church every Sunday, and even those who attend only occasionally. Before reading any further, you should ask yourself this eternal question: Does God exist? If your answer is “yes,” or even “I think so,” you should read on. But understand you are making a profound decision: you affirm that a power greater than you made the universe, the earth and us, and is at work in the midst of our world, and in

our very lives, at this very moment. If you are convinced there is no God, that is a courageous decision, and there may be little this book can do for you. But you may want to keep reading to test your conviction. You also may want to play along for while, just to see what difference it might make in your life if you pretended to believe for only a few hours or a couple of days. You might see things you never have before. You should test yourself to see whether you really want to live in a world where there is no God who would give you strength and joy, deliver you from very difficult circumstances (a slavery of your own?), if you really needed Him, and who would always love you, even when no one else does.

If you are ready to continue, you must determine what it means to decide that God exists. In the First Commandment, not only does God remind the Israelites that He is God, but also that it was He who delivered them out of Egypt and slavery. He then issues the commandment that they shall have no other gods before Him. Therefore, if you accept that God is God, you must recognize first that He is in control, not you. He is the one who delivers you from your own slavery, and you need only to look to Him to do so. But taking this step means

you must have enough faith to let go and give up control of your life and let God into it.

What other gods do you have that are pushing the only true God out of your life? At first, it may seem easy to claim that you have no other gods. You probably do not believe in a Sun god or a Wind god or Zeus or some other kind of pagan god, but many of us have other gods such as our job or career, money, our home, the success of our children, our social standing, our physical condition, sports, golf, fishing, our car, our garden, alcohol or drugs, our position in the church or in the community, or our relationship with our friends—all of which we serve with greater fervor than we do God. For example, with respect to money, Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters, for a slave will hate the one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24). What is standing between you and God? Is there a slavery from which you need to be delivered? As you wrestle with whether to accept God, you also must wrestle with whether there is anything else you insist upon putting before God.

No matter your age or circumstances, giving up control of important parts of your

life and turning those things over to an unseen God is difficult. Most of us are more comfortable with what we can see and touch and what we can accomplish through our own actions. But to test whether there is a God, at some point you must step out in faith and say you believe a power beyond yourself exists and deserves your attention. It is a wonderful thing if you can do this all at once and turn your entire life over to God, putting Him in complete control. Some people's circumstances lead them to that point, and they are blessed by it. If you are ready to do that now, *do it!* You can then skip the rest of this book, and go straight to the Bible. I suggest you start by reading any one of the four Gospels, from start to finish, and let the Lord lead you from there. But for many, transformation is not this simple. It certainly was not for me. The starting point is to believe there is a God and to state we are going to put our faith in Him.

It can be like training for a marathon: first you run a short distance—one or two miles—and then, as you train, you run farther each time until you are ready to run a twenty-six mile race. Making the decision to run the race is difficult. How will you find the time when there are so many other things you enjoy

doing? Committing the time and effort to begin training also is hard, but gradually, as you continue to train for the race, you come to enjoy, and even look forward to, the running. You feel better mentally and physically as you strengthen your body. Finally, you are ready to run the race. Finishing, not winning, is the goal, and even if you do not finish, you are stronger for having tried. Putting your faith in God works in the same way. First you must commit to run the race with Him. You ask Him to guide you in a few things, and as you see Him work, you will rely on Him more and more. Your life will be enriched, and you will become stronger. You will be able to handle more pain and adversity, and joy will come from the exercise of faith and the abundance of life that comes with it.

Are you ready to take the first steps in the journey toward God? Do you want to start to learn of the mysteries, the strength, the joy and the peace that come from knowing the Lord? Something has led you to open this book and read this far. Is it your life circumstances, or the recommendation of a close friend, or an academic curiosity? It does not matter because God has led you here. Do not let other gods stand in your way. Go ahead; take the next step and turn the page.

## Guiding Questions

1. Do you truly believe God exists? If so, what are the implications of that belief? How does it change your behavior or view of the world?
2. Which specific times in your life may God have been at work? Have there been any miracles in your life for which God might be responsible? If so, what are they?
3. What other "gods" do you have in your life? How do they inhibit your knowledge of and relationship with the true God?

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