

1 John 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Analysis

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. John presents another test of profession, focusing on "abiding" (μένω)—remaining, dwelling, continuing in intimate relationship. "He that saith he abideth in him" (ho legōn en autō menein) addresses claims to ongoing union with Christ. The verb "abideth" uses the present infinitive, indicating continuous, settled relationship—not temporary or sporadic connection but permanent dwelling in Christ.

The obligation follows: "ought himself also so to walk" (opheilei...kai autos...peripatein). "Ought" (opheilei) expresses moral obligation and debt—those claiming union with Christ owe conformity to His example. "To walk" (peripatein) means to live, conduct oneself, order one's life. This isn't about occasional imitation but comprehensive lifestyle patterned after Christ.

"Even as he walked" (kathōs ekeinos periepatēsen) sets Christ's earthly life as the standard. Ekeinos (that one) points emphatically to Jesus—His humility, compassion, righteousness, prayerfulness, love, obedience to the Father. This doesn't mean duplicating Jesus' specific circumstances (we're not itinerant Palestinian preachers) but embodying His character and priorities. Those who claim to abide in Christ should exhibit Christlike qualities—the fruit of genuine union. Profession without progressive Christlikeness is empty.

Historical Context

The concept of imitating one's teacher was central to ancient education. Greek philosophical schools emphasized conformity to the master's teaching and lifestyle. Rabbinic Judaism taught students to observe and imitate their rabbi's conduct in minute detail. Early Christians applied this to following Christ—not merely learning His teachings but becoming like Him in character and conduct.

John's emphasis on walking "as he walked" provided crucial correction to Gnostic distortions. Gnostics claimed spiritual union with the divine Christ while rejecting the physical Jesus' earthly example. They despised material existence and bodily life, viewing Jesus' humanity as irrelevant or even illusory. John insists: the One we abide in walked on earth, lived a human life, set an example to follow. Genuine union with Christ produces conformity to His earthly pattern.

Throughout church history, Christ's example has been understood various ways. Some medieval movements emphasized literal imitation—poverty like Jesus, celibacy, itinerant preaching. The Reformation emphasized inner transformation producing Christlike character more than external duplication of circumstances. Puritan piety sought "closet walking with God"—private communion with Christ producing public Christlikeness. All agreed: claiming union with Christ while living unlike Him is hypocrisy.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What specific aspects of Christ's walk (compassion, prayer, truth-speaking, sacrifice, etc.) most challenge your current lifestyle?
2. How can you pursue Christlikeness without either legalistic performance or cheap grace that demands no transformation?

3. In what ways does your local church community encourage and measure growth in walking as Christ walked?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	λέγων	ἐν	αὐτὸς	μένειν	ὀφείλει	καθὼς	ἐκεῖνος
G3588	He that saith	in	him	he abideth	ought	even as	he
	G3004	G1722	G846	G3306	G3784	G2531	G1565
περιπατεῖν	καὶ	αὐτὸς	οὕτως	περιπατεῖν			
to walk		also	him	so	to walk		
G4043		G2532	G846	G3779	G4043		

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:21 (Parallel theme): For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

John 13:15 (Parallel theme): For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (Parallel theme): Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

1 John 3:6 (Parallel theme): Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Ephesians 5:2 (Parallel theme): And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Matthew 11:29 (Parallel theme): Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

1 John 2:4 (Parallel theme): He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:28 (Parallel theme): And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Psalms 85:13 (Parallel theme): Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

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