

# **You Too Can Walk On Water**

**By**

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## **Introduction**

Lately I've been reading about Jesus. I wanted to learn more about how He carried Himself on a daily basis, so I could better pattern my life after Him. During my reading I came across the passage in Matthew 14 where Jesus walked on water. It's a familiar passage that has been the subject of countless sermons. But this time I thought about the exchange between Peter and Jesus and wondered, "What great things could be accomplished in my life through faith in Christ?"

This lesson takes a closer look at this question and provides some insight on how to apply certain principles in your life that allows God to do great things. Hopefully through this study, you will be able to experience things that you never thought possible, all due to a fixed-focused faith in Christ.

## **Scriptures Used In This Lesson**

Matthew 14:22 – 35

John 16:33

Read Romans 8:28 – 30

Psalm 138:7 – 8

Matthew 5:13 – 16

Proverbs 19:23

## **Storms Are A Part Of Life**

Read Matthew 14:22 – 24. This story takes place on the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Lake of Gennesaret. This lake is the largest fresh water lake in Israel, approximately 8 miles wide, 13 miles long with an average depth of 80 feet. There are two other accounts of this story in the Bible, Mark 6:45 – 51 and John 6:16 – 21. All three versions tell of the apostles in a boat struggling to row against a strong storm late into the night. Jesus had stayed on land by Himself to pray.

Just as storms would occasionally come upon the Lake, storms occasionally come into our lives. Read John 16:33. The day before His arrest, Jesus taught His disciples many things. One of the things He mentioned is that in this world they would have troubles. Sometimes thunderstorms blow over with no

major consequences. Other times storms cause damage – sometimes minor, sometimes severe. So it is in our lives.

We live in a corrupt, fallen world and as a result there are many reasons why storms come into our lives.

A few reasons are:

1. The sinful intentional actions of others
2. Our own sinful actions
3. Not following godly wisdom and principles
4. Satan's schemes against us
5. Being controlled by our emotions
6. Rationalizing to do something we know we shouldn't
7. Unaddressed emotional hurts which eventually influence our actions
8. Bad advice or teaching
9. Bad habits
10. Reasons we can't explain at this time

One of the misconceptions I had as a young Christian went something like this:

"God loves me. He is a 'good' God. He is all powerful. Therefore nothing 'bad' should happen to me since I am a Christian...one of His children."

There were some truths in this misconception but based on the ten items above, the conclusion doesn't necessarily follow. One of the things God does in the lives of His children is bring them into a "mature" relationship with Himself. The word "mature" comes from the Latin word *maturus* which means "ripe". Being mature means:

- Having completed natural growth and development
- Having undergone maturation (i.e., the emergence of behavioral and personal characteristics through growth processes)
- Having attained a final or desired state

Our Christianity is a process of growing in the knowledge and understanding of our Father, through our personal relationship with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us. Our “final or desired state” is to be like Christ in “behavior and personal characteristics”. Read Romans 8:28 – 30. Pay particular attention to verse 29. One of the “growth processes” used by God comes in the form of “storms” in our lives, no matter what the source. We don’t like them, but sometimes they are necessary for our growth.

**Key Point:** Our Christianity is a process of growing in the knowledge and understanding of our Father, through our personal relationship with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us.

**Key Point:** Our “final or desired state” is to be like Christ in behavior and personal characteristics.

**Key Point:** If we are not delivered *from* our storms, we will be delivered *through* them.

Read John 16:33 again. Right after Jesus tells His disciples they will have trouble in this world, He tells them, “But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (NIV). This is a word of encouragement for us also. Jesus’ primary storm was His death on the cross and separation from God, with Whom He had intimate fellowship for all eternity. And He overcame that storm by God through His resurrection. So since He overcame His storm, we can overcome our storms too, through Him, not on our own.

### **Walking On Water**

Read Matthew 14:25 – 29. The “fourth watch” of the night referred to a time between 3:00 am and 6:00 am. What’s notable about this is that the apostles had been struggling against their storm for a long time. Sometimes the storms in our lives can last a “long time” too. But we are not to give up. For at the darkest hour, Jesus appears on the scene. Perseverance, patience and faithfulness are “behavioral and personal characteristics” that are essential to Christian maturity.

When the disciples first saw Jesus, they were terrified...and understandably so. The last thing they expected to see was Jesus walking on water between 3:00 and 6:00 am in the midst of a storm they had been battling for hours. Immediately He identifies Himself and tells them not to be afraid.

Now re-read verses 28 – 29. Peter literally took a step of faith. He called out to the Lord, obeyed His command, and stepped out of the boat walking on water, with his eyes fixed on Jesus. This passage really made me think about how to overcome the trials of my life. Let's review Peter's steps one by one.

1. *He had a personal relationship with Jesus.* This is the first step in "walking on water" in your life. It is only by the power of Christ that you can accomplish the miraculous. It is His power, not your own that you overcome. And it begins by having a personal relationship with Him.
2. *He called out to the Lord with his request and waited to hear from Him.* Many times we call upon Jesus in the midst of our trials, "Jesus, help me!", but never take the time to wait and listen for His response. We get anxious to "do something" and settle for "anything". His response could come through the reading of His word, the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit, through a change in our circumstances, or through the advice of godly people. Waiting to hear from the Lord is so important to overcoming our trials.
3. *He was obedient.* Peter did what the Lord told him to do, when He told him to do it. Complete obedience to the Lord (doing what He says to do, when He says to do it, how He says to do it) is another critical step in not only overcoming trials, but doing what you never thought could be done.
4. *He had a fixed focus on Jesus.* As long as Peter had a fixed focus on Jesus, the power of Christ was at work in his life. The same can happen in our lives. We will be surprised at the results of what Christ can do in our lives if we keep a fixed focus on Him. And the reason for this is simple – so God can receive glory. When the miraculous occurs in our lives, other people see the results; His working in our lives becomes evidence of His existence and power.

"Walking On Water" means experiencing the mighty hand of God in a great and miraculous way in our lives. It requires our taking a step of faith, but we must make sure it is a directed, focused step of faith out of obedience to Christ. Otherwise our "step" will be out of foolishness or presumption. How do we make sure we are hearing from the Lord? We must recognize His voice and how He speaks to us. How do we recognize His voice? By spending time with Him. It all goes back to point #1 above, our personal relationship with Christ. Think of your best friend, child or spouse. They don't have to identify themselves when they call you on the phone. You've spent so much time with them and know them so well that you can not only recognize their voice, but immediately tell what kind of mood they're in. So it is with Christ...it's that easy. *Spend time with him.*

We are all familiar with the rest of the story in verses 30 – 33. Peter lost focus on Christ, looked at the storm around him, and began to sink. Jesus reached out His hand, grabbed Peter and they walked back to the boat together. As soon as Jesus entered the boat, the storm subsided. The main point I want to emphasize is this: *when we lose our fixed focus on Christ, we lose the ability to “walk on water” in our lives*. For Peter, losing focus on Christ opened the door to:

1. The turbulence of the storm in his mind
2. Fear
3. The lost ability to walk on water

*The last time you took your focus off of Christ, what did you lose? Why did you take your focus off Him? What can you do to prevent it from happening again?*

Another point I want to make is that Jesus was right there to help Peter; He did not let him be destroyed. Jesus is right there for us too. For encouragement read Psalm 138:7 – 8.

**Key Point:** Develop a closer relationship with Christ.

**Key Point:** Call on Jesus for help and wait patiently for His response.

**Key Point:** Be obedient to the directions from our Lord.

**Key Point:** Have a fixed focus on Christ.

### **The People Effect**

One final point I want to emphasize is that our “walking on water” will have an effect on other people, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. In fact, all our actions affect other people, whether we are “well connected” or prefer to stay to ourselves, for good or for bad. The diagram on the next page illustrates this point.

# The People You Influence



In the illustration, you can see that initially we mostly affect our friends, family and associates. But at the top and bottom of the diagram are a group of people I refer to as “Someone You Don’t Know Whom You Influence”. People, we don’t know or with whom we don’t associate, observe our actions and words, especially if they find out we are Christians. Since Christians are supposed to “live a certain way”, people have a tendency to watch us more intently to see if we “slip”. Another group of people in this category are children. Children are like sponges in that they capture and retain so much in their early years. Therefore they are very impressionable. Our children’s friends, whom we may not know, observe how we interact with our children and can be affected by the relationship – positively or negatively.

The illustration shows that we affect other people, who affect others, who affect others. Eventually many people, who we do not know, can be affected by what we say and do. That's why it's important for us to follow the advice of Christ offered in Matthew 5:13 – 16. We are the "light of the world". Jesus tells us to:

“...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven...”(NIV).

Notice that God is to receive the glory by our good deeds. When Jesus got back in the boat with Peter and the storm subsided, the other apostles were amazed. God received glory through Christ because this miracle provided evidence that Christ was Who He said He was, God existed, and was active in the lives of men. This is the same “testimony” we will have when we “walk on water” – even to those we don't know.

**Key Point:** Your words and actions affect other people, even those you don't know.

**Key Point:** Your “walking on water” will be a strong testimony that God exists and is active in the lives of others.

*Can you think of a time when you witnessed God working a “miracle” in someone's life?  
The miracle could be anything from a healing to a restored relationship to a new job.  
How did it affect you and others around that person? Do you think it strengthen the fact  
that God exists? Why or why not?*

### **Summary**

“Walking on water” may have seemed like an impossible feat only for Jesus. But if we allow God to work in our lives and remain fixed on Him, He will do great things in our lives too – all for His glory. We will have the pleasure of being in the middle of a miracle and be the recipient of great blessings. Others will look at the power of God and be witness to evidence that He exists. Don't try to imagine what God can do in your life, just make yourself available to Him each day, through faith and obedience. He will take care of the rest.

I'd like to end this study with one scripture of encouragement, Proverbs 19:23.

"The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble."  
(NIV)

The "fear of the Lord" refers to having reverence and respect for God. We respect God and hold Him in high esteem when we make time to know Him, when we call upon Him, when we wait for His answers, when we obey His commands, and remain fixed on Him. As a result we will "walk on water", content, and untroubled by the storms all around us.