

A Young
Woman's
Walk with
God

Elizabeth George



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All right reserved.

Scripture verses marked *kjv* are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Verses marked *tlb* are taken from *The Living Bible*, Copyright ©1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189 USA. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Terry Dugan Design, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Cover photo © Kate Powers / Taxi / Getty Images

Harvest House Publishers has made every effort to trace the ownership of all quotes. In the event of a question arising from the use of a quote, we regret any error made and will be pleased to make the necessary correction in future editions of this book.

Italicized text in Scripture quotations indicate author emphasis.

Acknowledgment

As always, thank you to my dear husband, Jim George, M.Div., Th.M., for your able assistance, guidance, suggestions, and loving encouragement on this project.

A YOUNG WOMAN'S WALK WITH GOD

Copyright © 2006 by Elizabeth George

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

George, Elizabeth, 1944-

A young woman's walk with God / Elizabeth George.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.).

ISBN-13: 978-0-7369-1653-0 (pbk.)

ISBN-10: 0-7369-1653-9

1. Teenage girls—Religious life. 2. Christian teenagers—Religious life. I. Title.

BV4551.3.G47 2006

248.8'33—dc22

2005029083

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

06 07 08 09 10 11 / BP / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Copyrighted material

Contents

A Word of Welcome	7
1. Getting It All Going	9

Getting the Right Attitudes

2. A Loving Heart	23
3. A Happy Heart	35
4. A Quiet Heart	49
5. Looking at Jesus' Attitudes	63

Getting Along with Everybody

6. A Time to Do Nothing	77
7. A Time to Do Something	91
8. A Time to Do Everything	103
9. Looking at Jesus' Actions	117

Getting Your Act Together

10. A Choice to Just Do It	129
11. A Choice to Take It	143
12. A Choice to Not Do It	159
13. Looking at Jesus	173
Getting the Most Out of Your Life	185
Notes	191

Getting It All Going



I live in the state of Washington. And never in my life would I have dreamed it, but right in my front yard is an apple tree! That means I get to watch God's process for the miraculous production of apples from start to finish each year. But believe me, I know very well the work it takes me and my husband to do our part in improving and increasing a crop of apples! We nurture, fertilize, water, prune, train, spray, and protect this tree...and our efforts have definitely paid off.

As I think about our amazing apple tree, I can't help but wonder about the fruit of our lives as Christian women, no matter what our ages. Should you and I pay any less attention to our own fruitfulness—in our case the spiritual kind—than Jim and I do to an apple tree? Shouldn't we be actively cultivating the fruit of the Spirit in our lives so we reflect the glory of God and the beauty of Christ? But what exactly can we do to get the growing of spiritual fruit going? What

practical steps can we take to get it all together so we become more like Jesus?

Finding Out About the Fruit of the Spirit

Well, just as I studied to learn more about my apple tree and the fruit it produces, you and I need to study God's Word to better understand the fruit of the Holy Spirit and how it grows. Take your favorite pen in hand now and interact with these truths from the Bible. And if it's not a good time—you know, you don't have a pen, you're on the bus, or you're getting ready to turn out the light and get some much-needed sleep—then just read along for now.

A Word from God's Word About Fruit...

- The word “fruit” is used throughout the Bible to refer to telltale evidence of what is on the inside of a person. If what's inside is good, then the fruit of that person's life will be good. But if what's inside is rotten, the fruit of that person's life will be bad. That's what Jesus taught when He said,

Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit... The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him (Matthew 12:33,35).

What sort of fruit have you seen in your actions lately?

- Any person who has received Jesus as Savior and Lord and has Christ living within will bear good fruit. He will be *“filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God”* (Philippians 1:11). How do you think exhibiting the fruit of righteousness brings glory and praise to God? And in what ways has the fruit you are bearing shown others what Jesus is like?

- The fruit of the Spirit has been described as “those gracious habits which the Holy Spirit produces in the Christian.”¹ In Galatians 5:22-23, the apostle Paul lists these “gracious habits”—*“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* All nine fruit stand together and make up our walk with God. They are like a string of Christmas lights—there is one string with many lights that all light up at once when plugged into the electrical socket. But if one bulb goes out, the entire string goes out. That’s how God’s fruit is borne in our lives. Not one of them can be missing, and all must be evident—lit up—to be God’s fruit. As you recall your actions today, were any of these spiritual habits missing? What must you do to get “plugged into God,” the power source, again?

“So What Can I Do?”

I'm sure you want God's fruit to mark your life, to make you beautiful from the inside out. If that's true, you probably wonder, “So what can I do? How can I make this happen? What do I need to do to get things going, to get this business of spiritual fruit-bearing in motion?”

Well, first, here's one thing you can't do. You can't think, *Perhaps if I just try harder...* No, Jesus teaches that do-it-yourself effort isn't the answer. The fruit of the Spirit can only be produced as we yield to God and allow His Spirit to work in us as we walk through the events and encounters life brings our way each day.

Next, remember that the fruit of the Spirit act as one. They are like a watch that contains many parts. A watch can be taken apart for cleaning and repair, but each piece must be put back into place for the watch to run. In this book, we will take apart and inspect each fruit of the Spirit. Then we'll see how they all work together to present a whole, just like a watch.

Here's another thing you can do: Realize that, as a whole, the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit are all produced in the same way. Everything that is said of one characteristic is true of the other eight. They are one and the same fruit, interwoven and related to one another. And they are produced as we look to God.

Finally, never for a second forget about the battle that is going on between your flesh and the Spirit. In Galatians 5:17 we learn that “the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do

what you want.” You and I will face this struggle—the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit—until the day we die. But, praise God, when we walk or “live by the Spirit... [we] will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (verse 16). We will have victory over the flesh—our body and its cravings—when we walk by the Spirit.

So, what does it mean to walk by the Spirit? In simple terms, walking by the Spirit means:

Living each minute God’s way—obeying Him.

Seeking to please God with...

the thoughts we choose to think,
the words we choose to say, and
the actions we choose to take.

Letting God guide us each step of the way.

Letting God work in us so we can bring glory
to Him.

Discovering the Secret to Walking with God

Are you catching on? Are you getting it? It is only as we walk by God’s Spirit that we show forth Christ in our lives. And it is only as we “abide” in Christ that God gives us the grace to do this. This, my friend, is the secret to walking with God: We must abide in Christ. Jesus said in John 15:4-5:

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in

him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

What's the point? Only by abiding or remaining in Him can you and I as followers of Jesus bear fruit (verses 2,4,5). To “abide” or “remain” means

“continued fellowship with the Lord,”²

“dwelling in His fellowship and being submissive to His will,”³ and

keeping “contact with Jesus...a constant contact.”⁴

Here's where our *doing* comes in. Like all I *do* to help my apple tree along, there are a few things you can *do* that help you abide in Christ. Let's call them “fruit boosters.” These four practical steps—things you can *do*—will help you remain in constant contact with Jesus, to abide in Him, to remain close to Jesus and dwell in Him as He dwells in you.

1. *Get into God's Word*—One Bible teacher explains, “Abiding cannot be maintained [without]...giving the words of Christ a...[reigning] position in the heart (cf. Colossians 3:16).”⁵ So...be diligent about spending time in God's Word. Make it your habit to get into your Bible, to read it, study it, and meditate on it on a regular basis. Don't merely go through the motions. Instead, work at making your time in God's Word full and meaningful.

2. *Make time for prayer*—Prayer is a must for walking with God. I read some time ago that “no blessing of the Christian life becomes continually possessed unless we are

men and women of regular, daily, unhurried, secret lingerings in prayer.”⁶

Here’s a question for you. Would others—your family and friends, teachers and other students—describe you as a person of “regular, daily, unhurried, secret lingerings in prayer”? Do whatever you have to do to make prayer a vital link between you and God. Through prayer you learn more about God, His heart, and His purposes. To abide in Christ and be a woman who walks with God, do all you can to develop your prayer life. (And P.S., to learn more about prayer, read my book *A Young Woman’s Call to Prayer*.⁷ There’s nothing you can’t talk about with God!)

3. *Do what God asks*—Your waking prayer each morning should be to make choices that honor God and His Word, to really love God! Jesus said, “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love” (John 15:10). In other words, in keeping His Father’s commandments, Jesus stayed close to His Father and gave us a model for obeying God’s commands.

4. *Give your heart to Jesus*—Before anything...or anyone... can grow, it must be alive. Therefore ask yourself a simple question: Am I alive spiritually?

We read in Romans that

—“*all have sinned*” (3:23), that

—“*the wages of sin is death*” (6:23), and that

—“*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (5:8).

What this means is that you and I are sinners (there's no doubt about it!), which earned us the death penalty, but Jesus took on our sin and died in our place. As the words to one hymn ask, "Amazing love! How can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"⁸ Think about it!

Getting It All Together

Here's another question for you as you move toward getting it all together—Have you accepted the wonderful truth of Christ's death on your behalf and named Jesus *your* Savior and the Lord of your life? Have you given Jesus your heart? As the Bible instructs, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Before you can experience any spiritual growth, this seed of faith in Jesus must take root in your heart and life.

So...are you alive?

Only three answers are possible—*no*, *I'm not sure*, and *yes*.

Answer #1: No—If you answered no—if you have not accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior—you can set foot on the path of walking with God and growing in Him right now by earnestly praying words like these from your heart. This is Step 1 toward getting your life together:

Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I want to repent of my sins and turn and follow You. I believe You died for my sins and rose again victorious over the power of sin and death, and I want to

accept You as my personal Savior. Come into my life, Lord Jesus, and help me obey You from this day forward.

Answer #2: I'm not sure—If you aren't sure if the seed of faith has taken root in your heart, you may want to say a prayer of recommitment. You could pray words like these:

Jesus, I know that in the past I asked You into my life. I thought at that time that I was Your child, but my life hasn't shown the fruit of my belief. As I again hear Your call, I want to make a real commitment to You as the Lord and Master of my life.

Or perhaps the following prayer better fits your circumstances:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that in the past I asked You into my life. I want to be Your child, I think and hope that I am Your child, but I want to *know* that I am Your child. Lord, give me the reassurance that I have eternal life through You because of Your death on the cross for my sin.

Whatever you do, if you're not sure where you stand with God, let Him know right now in a very personal prayer. Don't worry about the words. Just share your heart with Him. After all, God loves you, and He already knows your heart. He wants to be close to you.

Answer #3: Yes—Finally, if you answered—or can now

answer—"Yes! I know I'm alive in Christ now and forever!" take a few moments to thank God and praise Him for all that Jesus has done for you. Make a fresh commitment to walk with Jesus in obedience, to walk down the path of greater growth.

Heart Response

It's the prayer of my heart that God would use what's in this book to inspire you to grow in God's grace so that you are truly changed. Is that the desire of your heart too? Then I pray that you are moved to give yourself totally to Christ. May you seek nothing other than to follow Him, to walk with God.

Things to Do Today to Get It Going

In the chapters that follow you'll be given a list of "Things to Do Today" for getting started or improving on each fruit of the Spirit. In this chapter make your own list. Glance back through this chapter and write down three things you can do today to accelerate your walk with God. Be sure to write out exactly when you will do these things.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*Would You Like to Know More
About Walking by the Spirit?
Check It Out!*

- ✓ What is God's call to you in Galatians 5:16?

What will be the result if and when you follow this instruction?

- ✓ According to Galatians 5:17, what conflict do believers live with?

Give one or two specific examples of your struggle in this area.

- ✓ Make a list of the “acts of the sinful nature” listed in Galatians 5:19-21.

Check the ones you struggle with most.

- ✓ Now list the fruit of the Spirit named in Galatians 5:22-23.

How do they differ from the “acts of the sinful nature”?

- ✓ Read John 15:1-8. Then review the section entitled “Discovering the Secret to Walking with God” and make a plan of action for how you will abide in Christ this week. Don't forget to be specific about when and how you will follow-through on your plan.