

Footprints

ANN was walking in the mountains during winter with hazardous snow and ice. She had studied the route, and carried her map and compass. Nonetheless she was relieved to see footprints along the way, helping her to stick to the path but also to avoid dangerous sheets of ice. Snow clouds were gathering, so she was keen to get down safely. She was scared of slipping so her stride was less than that of some of the people who had gone before.

As she stared ahead carefully finding and following more footprints it occurred to her that this was only a safe plan if the previous walkers had known what they were doing. In her training the advice had always been to keep referring to map and compass.

What to Follow?

In life, our map and compass are the Bible – God’s guidebook. Our path is not always clear and can be difficult. In fact, problems are a necessary part of the Christian’s life (see Romans 5:3). The Bible is full of accounts of how people have lived their lives, sometimes obedient to God, but more often not.

For example, Paul quotes the negative experiences of the Hebrews in the wilderness:



Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted... Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11).

In contrast, Abraham was a supreme example of faith, and we are encouraged to ‘walk in his steps’ (Romans 4:12). Hebrews 11 lists Abraham and other people as ‘faithful’. However, just like us, even they wandered from the true path by sinning:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

There is only one person who has never sinned and who always did exactly what God wanted. That is Jesus (1 Peter 2:22). So we are asked to follow his steps – or footprints (v21). While we are not asked to go through all that Jesus endured, he asks us to follow his example, trying to behave as he would, to the best of our limited ability (see Matthew 16:24–26).

Like Ann we should study the guidebook (the Bible) to make decisions in life. In applying godly principles we should learn from biblical examples, especially the Lord Jesus. For it is only through Jesus that we can ever reach the end of the path – the Kingdom of God.