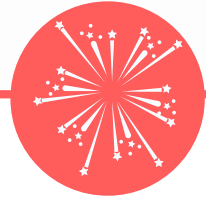


# “STAY OR WALK AWAY”

## SERIES

### “JESUS WALKED AWAY”

WEEK 2



#### SPARKS

- When good things happen in your life, do you find some people celebrate with you while others criticize?
- Have you ever felt pressure or unfair criticism from a teacher, boss, or leader? How did you respond?
- Was there a moment when walking away allowed you to pursue something God was calling you to?



#### WORD

“54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.”

JOHN 11:54

(Read also John 11:45-57 for context)

Last week in Learning From Jesus, we focused on how Jesus models wisdom in relationships. This week, Jesus Walked Away, looks at John 11:45–57,

where Jesus chooses to withdraw after a powerful miracle. Jesus did not walk away out of fear or avoidance, but out of discernment. He knew when staying would distract from His mission and when walking away was the faithful response. As we talk about walking away, it’s important to be clear about what is not toxicity. Rules and regulations, consequences of sin, discipleship, and rebuke, correction, and truth are not harmful in themselves. They are often necessary for growth and obedience.

Following Jesus means embracing the Great Commission and living out the calling and purpose God has uniquely designed for each of us. Sometimes that means staying. Other times, like Jesus, it means walking away.

## 1. GOD-GIVEN SUCCESS BRINGS MIXED REACTIONS

*John 11:45-46*

*'45 **Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.**'*

When God blesses your life and success comes from Him, not everyone will celebrate it. Some will be inspired and strengthened by your growth, while others will try to pull your testimony apart. Those who plan, expect, or quietly hope for your failure often reveal jealousy and fear of being left behind. Jesus' miracles stirred belief in some and plotting in others, showing that even God-given success can bring mixed reactions. How do you usually respond when someone reacts negatively to your growth or success?

1

## 2. TOXICITY CAN COME FROM AUTHORITY, YET GOD REMAINS IN CONTROL

*John 11:49-50*

*'49 But one of them, **Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.'**'*

Sometimes toxicity comes from unexpected places, even from people in authority. The high priest Caiaphas plotted against Jesus out of fear, jealousy, and a desire to protect his position. Yet even this toxicity was under God's hand. What Caiaphas intended for harm, God allowed for a greater purpose, and that is, the salvation of many through Jesus' death. Not every opposition is meaningless; God can use it to accomplish His plan. How can knowing that God is in control help you navigate difficult situations with authority figures?

2

### 3. WALKING AWAY CAN PROTECT YOUR CALLING AND PURPOSE

*John 11:54*

*'54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.'*

Not all toxicity is meant to be endured. Jesus chose to walk away to safeguard His mission. Some situations must be left behind so you can protect what God has entrusted to you. Walking away is not quitting; it is an act of discernment, obedience, and faith. By stepping back, Jesus ensured He could continue fulfilling His calling and purpose. Are there situations or relationships in your life where walking away might be the most faithful choice?

3

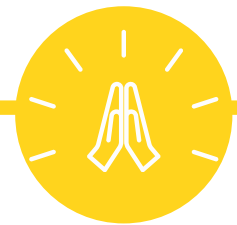
## LIVE IT!

- Learn to label but not judge. Recognize when a situation or person is toxic without condemning them. Naming the issue helps you respond wisely rather than reacting in anger or fear.
- Set boundaries. Step back when needed to protect your calling and purpose. Healthy boundaries allow you to stay faithful without being consumed by others' negativity.
- Speak Truth with Love. Address issues honestly but with grace. Your words can guide and correct without creating unnecessary conflict.
- Pray and Ask for Help. Bring your struggles, decisions, and interactions with difficult people to God in prayer.



## PRAYER

- Ask God to help you stay humble and focused on His purpose, regardless of others' opinions.
- Thank God that He is sovereign and nothing is outside His control. Pray for discernment to recognize when toxicity is present, even from people in positions of authority.
- Pray for courage to walk away from situations that threaten your God-given calling.



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