

*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey.  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. – Don Moen*

Most Christians can tell you the number one place where they encounter God. But in my experience, limited though it may be, the most common place by a long shot is a walk through nature. Now the nature part varies, from forests to beaches to rivers to plains, but there's something about a combination of walking and nature that just brings people closer to God.

Take a look at the gospels, and you find story after story of people walking with Jesus in nature. From the Sea of Galilee (where Jesus famously walked ON nature) to the Jordan River, from walks through the wilderness to walks through (NOT around) Samaria, Jesus walked with his disciples all the time. And not just because they had to get somewhere in their car-less society, but because when we walk through nature we draw closer to God.

This is true for me. Each year I try to take a personal silent retreat, and so for 30 hours or so I drive up to a retreat center (or Covenant Harbor if they've got a room free), live completely alone, and don't say a word out loud. Now 30 hours isn't too hard for me not to talk, but that's not the point. The point is the walk. Every year, I walk about 6 miles each day around Lake Geneva. The Lake Walk there is really fun and the houses are impressive in their diversity, but on this particular retreat each year, what matters is the walking and the nature. It is on these walks that I hear from God, that I feel close to Him, that I find my creativity for ministry renewed.

But once a year isn't enough God time, so I try to find places closer to home for a Walk with God in Nature. This can be a path through the woods near our home, or time walking to and sitting near a lake (well, a retention pond), or just a stroll around the lake at Independence Grove. But whatever the venue, I need these Walks with God through Nature. Without them, my spirit feels dry and shriveled until I can spend time with God again.

Last week, my wife Heather had a meeting at Libertyville High School which is about half way between our house and our church where I work. So we drove there, and I decided to walk the rest of the way. There's a great bike path that leads directly from the school to the church, so I walked it. And on that walk, I had a number of surprising encounters with God. This week I'm going to tell you about a few of them, from finding a penny to meeting Steve to reaching out in faith.

For today, answer me this...

Where do you find yourself regularly drawing closer to God?

How long has it been since you've taken a walk with God through nature?

Can you commit to taking a walk like that in the next day or two, and while you do keeping an eye out (or maybe an ear) for God?