

Walking the House

By Jim Elliff



The title is a little misleading, but now that you are here, read what I have to say. I'm suggesting that many of you begin to walk IN your house . . . and that you do it as a way of improving physically and spiritually.

I have a beat in my home that takes me usually only 20 seconds to accomplish, but I can go as slow or fast as I want.

I walk through the middle floor of my home, the rooms of which are around a central stair well. I go through the living area, to the small library, across the hall by the front door to the dining room, into the kitchen and smaller dining nook, which leads, once again, into the living area.

I usually clear the furniture a bit, so that my path is straight ("Make straight paths for your feet"?). I'm careful to step over the fringe on the rug in the library, and not to stub my toe on the numerous chairs I pass, or trip on a stray computer cord.

This course has no weather-related problems. I enjoy the AC in the summer and heat in the winter. I don't have to put on a coat, or be worried about how I look. The floor is even and slipping on ice or stepping in dog deposits is impossible. In other words, it is near perfect walking terrain. Young men and women can do it, and 90 year olds can do it. I love to walk outside where I can get sunshine as well, but many days are not compatible with my desire for one reason or another.

Why walk in the house? Two reasons:

First, it is good for me physically. After doing this for a half an hour or even an hour, I feel rested on the one hand, and energized on the other. It gets the blood into my brain, which needs all the help it can get. And, I can do this more than once in a day if needed.

Second, it is a way I can do four important tasks, and this is what keeps it from being boring.

I can listen. Most of the time when I walk I listen to section of the audio Bible I'm working on. Often I'll listen over and over to the same text as a way to supplement my reading. Or, I listen to Scripture songs or other good music. Sometimes I can hear that audio sermon I promised I would listen to, or play the video interview that the other elders think is useful. I can do most of this with an mp3 player or my cell phone or with small speakers hooked into my computer.

I can think. Many of us need far more processing time than we get. When life seems stressed, we don't really need more media, but less. Just letting your mind go over that decision, or that message, or that mess is time well spent. It's perspective time. It's not unusual for me to talk completely through a message in my mind while I walk, working out the best way to say things.

I can discuss. Believe it or not, others in my family sometimes join in and walk in front of or behind me. But my range is not too far to keep a conversation going with someone who is sitting in one of the rooms or standing behind the sink. We often use the time to talk about Bible sections we are working on. My sons who are Bible language savvy, used to follow me when they lived at home, with their Hebrew or Greek Bible open. We'll read a section and talk about its nuances. My daughter was one of the best of the family walkers also. Or, we can discuss decisions in our lives, philosophy of this or that, or process events that have come our way. Often I've worked out difficult knots in the Bible text for a Sunday message on my feet.

I can pray. I like to make double use of my time this way. When we have others to pray for, this can be a reasonable time for that kind of intercession, especially when I'm walking alone. Walking and praying have a long history.

Ready?

You may not have the best house or apartment for this. I understand. But many of you simply haven't taken the time to scout out a good path. Perhaps yours would lead you up some stairs, or into a bedroom. Some may have only a straight-line course and 180-degree pivots to make it work. Small places can be right also; I've done this in motel rooms all over the world! You'll find some way to do it in most living spaces . . . or even in a prison if necessary.

So get moving!