



# WALK ON THE MOON WALK WITH THE SON

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I was really tense. Every part of my being vibrated with the throb of the Saturn V rocket engine.

After six years of intensive training and simulation for Apollo 16, man's fifth lunar expedition, I was anxious to finally be on my way. The three of us, John Young, Ken Mattingly and myself, were strapped to our seats counting down the last seconds . . . 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, lift-off!

And then we were off into the atmosphere and beyond--starting eleven of the most exciting days of my life.

Our view of earth was probably the most spectacular sight I'd ever seen. The earth from 18,000 miles in space was like a beautiful jewel--the blue of oceans, white of snow and clouds, and brown of land masses. That little crystal jewel of earth hung there in the blackness of space.

I walked in wonder on the moon, breathless in admiration--in that incredibly still, crater-pocked, awesome environment, colored in various shades of gray. It was just the way it had been created--pure, unspoiled, untouched. I was proud to be one of the few men to have such an experience.

## **Always New Horizons**

All my life I had been success-oriented. I studied hard and scored well in high school, was graduated valedictorian from Admiral Farragut Academy in St. Petersburg, Florida and received a bachelor of science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy.

Due to chronic seasickness I just couldn't become an ocean-going Navy man, so I transferred to the Air Force, applied myself and became a good fighter pilot.

Being success-oriented, I set my sights on higher and higher levels of achievement in the Air Force. After a three year tour in Germany, I went to Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, earning a master of science degree in aeronautics and astronautics. During that time I met and married my wife, Dotty.

After analyzing my career goals, I realized the next step towards achievement as pilot and officer would be to further my flight training, so I applied and was accepted to the Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

## **Riding for a Fall**

It was two years later when one

morning I read a full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times, announcing plans for a new selection of astronauts. Overjoyed at the opportunity to again climb the ladder in my career, I applied and was selected in 1966 to be a NASA astronaut. We moved to Houston.

My new job brought instant success--name in the paper, invitations to the nicest parties, acceptance into society. That old ego swelled bigger and bigger, I liked this new job and all it brought with it.

I worked hard. I wanted that top flight--a trip to the moon. The next years were dedicated to long hours at work and a full social life.

Needless to say my marriage began to suffer. There was not much time or interest on my part towards this area of my life. In a way, I turned my marriage and family (we had two sons by then) over to Dotty and she began to feel the heaviness and loneliness that this brought.

After the flight, our marriage didn't improve and Dotty became very depressed and even suicidal. She had put our relationship first in her life and it was failing.

After Apollo 16, frustration and

boredom began to set in. My job had been the most important thing in my life and I had reached my goal of going to the moon. I asked myself, "What am I going to do now?"

I decided to change careers and become a businessman. My new goal now was to be a successful businessman and make a million dollars. We moved to New Braunfels, Texas where I completely immersed myself in my new job, working long hours.

But two years later, I decided I was in the wrong business, even though it had been financially successful. I sold out and began to search for another business, not aware that I hadn't yet dug to the root of my problem.

## **Uneasy Questions**

Even though I had been into the heavens, I hadn't found God on my moon flight. As a matter of fact, I didn't even find Him in church. A Sunday churchian, I read the Scriptures without believing a word. My thoughts about Jesus? I believed He was a great teacher, like Buddha and Mohammed.

After leaving NASA, I had seen a change come over Dotty and was

curious. She told me about having prayers answered and I could see a peace and purpose to her life that she had never shown before. She began to love and accept me in a different way.

A month after selling the business, Dotty asked me to go to a two-day Bible study at a tennis ranch near our home. We started at Genesis and headed for Revelation. As I sat in an easy chair with a cup of coffee in my hand and the Bible in my lap, the scales suddenly fell from my eyes. I saw that God had loved Charlie Duke from the time He created the world.

I saw how man had turned away from God, who constantly gave the same message "Turn to Me, and I will be your God and bless you."

The Scriptures kept pointing to the Messiah, to Jesus as the only way to salvation. For the first time I read and understood the gospel of John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and lived among us and we have seen His glory, the glory of the only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Was this true?

All of a sudden I realized I was faced with the most important question I had ever faced. In my heart Jesus was saying to me, "Who do you say that I am?" The only choices I could see were that Jesus was either the Son of God or a big liar.

As Dotty and I drove home, I looked at her and said, "Love, there's no doubt in my mind. Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And Charlie Duke was born again.

### **Earthwalk with Him**

I felt no blastoff into eternity, but I knew from God's Word, that by believing, He came into my heart. I got hungry for the Word of God from that moment on. I started praying "Lord, teach me the truth written in the Bible."

I also prayed, "Lord, help me to love my wife. I want to be a good husband and father."

He did just that. Jesus put a love, His love, in my heart for my wife. Jesus healed our marriage. We have put Jesus first in ours lives and the closer we get to Jesus, the closer we grow to each other.

As the months passed, I desired to know Jesus more. One night I awoke

and felt the strong presence of the Lord in my room. I knelt down and surrendered my whole life to Him. Right then, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and received power to tell others about Jesus and to live fully for Him.

Dotty and I began praying for the sick and we have seen God perform miracles. We have seen blind eyes opened, the deaf hear, cancers healed, and lives changed.

I have never known such an exciting life--a life filled with the love, peace, joy, and power of God.

In 1972, I rode Apollo 16 on a fantastic adventure. I used to say I could live 10,000 years and never have an experience like walking on the moon, but the excitement and satisfaction of that walk doesn't begin to compare with my walk with Jesus, a walk that lasts forever--a walk with the Son.

**My prayer is that you will join me in this eternal walk, by asking Jesus to come into your heart to be Saviour and Lord of your life.**