

Series: What's the church?

“Walk in Love, Light & Wisdom”

Ephesians 5:1 - 21

Big Idea – Be a wise child of God – copy your Father!

Ephesians 5:1 Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

3 Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. 4 Filthy stories, foolish talk, and dirty jokes—these are not for you. Instead, there should be thankfulness to God. 5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

6 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7 So have nothing to do with them.

8 For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. 10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.

11 Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. 12 It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. 13 But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, 14 for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, “Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

5:15 So be very careful how you live. Do not live like those who are not wise, but live wisely.

16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.

1. Walk in love – vss. 1, 2

The word imitate, or be followers, means to copy, like when little kids copy their parents. Can be a compliment, or embarrassing, right?

Since we're God's children, we're supposed to copy Him.

3 reasons:

Love because God loved us

1 John 4:16 “...God is love...”

1 John 4:19 “We love Him because He first loved us.”

Love because we're God's children

Galatians 3:26 “...you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ.”

Love because Christ gave us an example of sacrificial love.

“...Christ gave himself as a sacrifice for us...”

2. Walk as children of light – vs. 3 - 14

Ephesians 5:8 “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

John 8:12 Jesus said, “I am the light of the world, he who follows me shall not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

3 reasons:

1. We are saints (vv. 3-4). That is, we are "set-apart ones" and no longer belong to the world of darkness around us. We have been "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Negatively – no immorality, no sexual sins

No "Covetousness" the two sins are but different expressions of the same basic weakness of fallen nature—uncontrolled appetite.

The fornicator and the covetous person each desire to satisfy the appetite by taking what does not belong to them. "The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) would describe these two sins.

In Ephesians 5:4 he warned against sins of the tongue, which, of course, are really sins of the heart. Note relationship between the sins named in Ephesians 5:3 and those in Ephesians 5:4. Those with sensual appetites usually cultivate a base kind of speech and humor, and often people who want to commit sexual sins, or have committed them, enjoy joking about them.

Two indicators of a person's character are what makes him laugh and what makes him weep.

The saint of God sees nothing humorous in obscene language or dirty jokes.

Jesting translates a word that means "able to turn easily." This suggests a certain kind of conversationalist who can turn any statement into a double meaning. The gift of wit is a blessing, but when it is attached to a filthy mind or a base motive, it becomes a curse.

Positively - be quick to give thanks! This is certainly the best way to give glory to God and keep the conversation pure.

A Christian lady attended an anniversary dinner in honor of a friend, not knowing that there would be a program of low comedy following the meal. The so-called comedian tried to entertain the crowd with coarse humor that degraded everything that the Christian guest held to be sacred and honorable. At one point in the program, the comedian's throat became dry. "Please bring me a glass of water," he called to a waiter.

At that the Christian woman spoke up, "And bring a toothbrush and a bar of soap with it!" I remember my mom used to threaten to wash our mouths out with soap if we said bad words!

Christians who have God's Word in their hearts (Col. 3:16) will always season their speech with salt (Col. 4:6); for grace in the heart means grace on the lips.

2. We are kings (vv. 5-6).

When we trusted Christ, we entered into the kingdom of God (John 3:3);

Paul makes it clear that people who habitually and persistently lives in sin will not share in God's kingdom. "They which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21, literal translation). "Whoremonger" is a translation of the Greek word pornos, from which we get our word pornography, and it means "one who practices fornication—illicit sex."

The morally unclean and the covetous will join the fornicator in judgment. Paul says greed is idolatry which is the worship of something other than God. These warnings deal with the habitual practice of sin, not the occasional act of sin. David committed adultery, yet God forgave him and one day took him to heaven. David was disciplined for his sin, but he was not rejected by God.

In Paul's day, there were false Christians who argued that believers could live in sin and get away with it. These deceivers had many arguments to convince ignorant Christians that they could sin repeatedly and still enter God's kingdom. "You were saved by grace!" they argued. "so go ahead and sin that God's grace might abound!" Paul answered that foolish argument in Romans 6:1-4

Or they say, "Sin in the life of a believer is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person!" Yes—it's worse!

God judges sin no matter where He finds it, and He does not want to find it in the life of one of His own children. I personally believe that no true Christian can ever be lost, but he will prove the reality of his faith by an obedient life.

There are many professors who are not possessors (Matt. 7:21-23). A Christian is not sinless, but he does sin less—and less—and less! The Christian is a king, and it is beneath his dignity to indulge in the practices of the lost world that is outside the kingdom of God.

3. We are light (vv. 7-14).

main thrust of the passage 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is a parallel passage that explains the contrasts between the child of God and the unsaved person. Paul did not say that we were "in the darkness," but that we "were darkness."

Now that we are saved, "what communion has light with darkness?" After all, light produces fruit, but the works of darkness are unfruitful as far as spiritual things are concerned. "For the fruit of the Spirit [or "the light"] is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." It is impossible to be in darkness and light at the same time!

The light produces "goodness," one manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Goodness is "love in action." Righteousness means tightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Both of these qualities are based on truth, which is conformity to the Word and will of God.

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

and "Everyone that doeth evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20-21).

"walk as children of light" means to live before the eyes of God, not hiding anything. It is relatively easy to hide things from other people because they cannot see our hearts and minds; but "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

When you take a flight, you surrender yourself and your luggage to an inspection and are happy to do so, because this inspection helps to detect bombs. You're not afraid to walk through the "detection tunnel" or have luggage pass through the X-ray equipment when you have nothing to hide.

An author asked Charles Spurgeon for permission to write his life story, and the great preacher replied, "You may write my life in the skies—I have nothing to hide!"

But walking "as children of light" also means revealing God's light in our daily lives. By our character and conduct, we bring God's light into a dark world. As God's lights, we help others find their way to Christ. The mind of the unsaved person is blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4) and by sin (Eph. 4:17-19).

Only as we witness and share Christ can the light enter in. Just as a healthy person can assist the sickly, so a child of God can lead the lost out of darkness into God's wonderful light.

Light reveals God; light produces fruit; but light also exposes what is wrong.

No surgeon would willingly operate in darkness lest he made a false move and take a life. How could an artist paint a true picture in darkness? The light reveals the truth and exposes the true character of things.

Explains why the unsaved person stays clear of the church and the Bible. God's light reveals his true character, and the exposure is not very complimentary. As we Christians walk in light, we refuse to fellowship with the darkness, and we expose the dark things of sin for what they really are.

"I am come a light into the world," said Jesus (John 12:46). When He was here on earth, the perfection of His character and conduct exposed the sinfulness of those around Him. A big reason why the religious leaders hated Him and sought to destroy Him.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15:22).

A Christian who is "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14) exposes the darkness and sin around him just by living like a Christian. Paul tells us to live balanced lives—positively, to walk in the light; negatively, to denounce and expose the wickedness of those in the darkness. It is not enough simply to expose the wickedness of those in the darkness. It is not enough simply to expose sin. We must also bear fruit.

Verse 12 gives a caution. Be careful how you deal with the "unfruitful works of darkness." The motto today seems to be, "Tell it like it is!" But that can be a dangerous policy when it comes to exposing the filthy things of darkness if we unintentionally advertise and promote sin.

Paul said, "It is a shame even to speak of those things" (Eph. 6:12). Some preachers enjoy reveling in the sensational, so much so that their sermons excite appetites and give to the innocent more information than they need.

Remember Rom. 16:19 "...I would have you be wise in what is good, and innocent concerning evil"

It is not necessary for the believer to perform an autopsy on a rotting corpse to show it's rotten. All he has to do is turn on the light!

"For whatsoever makes manifest is light" (Eph. 5:13).

When you think of light, you think of waking up to a new day, and Paul presented this picture (Eph. 5:14), paraphrasing Isaiah 60:1. You have the same image in Romans 13:11-13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10.

That Easter morning, when Christ arose from the dead, was the dawning of a new day for the world. Christians are not sleeping in sin and death. We have been raised from the dead through faith in Him.

The darkness of the graveyard is past, and we are now walking in the light of salvation. Salvation is the beginning of a new day, and we ought to live as those who belong to the light, not to the darkness. Hear Jesus cry out "Lazarus, come forth!"

The believer has no business in the darkness. He is a saint, which means he is a partaker "of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). He is a king, because he has been delivered "from the power of darkness" and has been translated "into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13). He is "light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8).

3. Walk in wisdom – vs. 15 – 17

Ephesians 5:15 So be very careful how you live. Do not live like those who are not wise, but live wisely.

16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the will of the Lord is" literally, what the Lord wants you to do.

Paul is saying, "Don't be a sleepwalker! Wake up! Open your eyes! Make the most of the day!"

It is sad to see many professed Christians "drift" through life, like sleepwalkers, who never really make the most of opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him.

Some Reasons:

1. It is a mark of wisdom (v. 15). Only a fool drifts with the wind and tide. A wise man marks out his course, sets his sails, and guides the rudder until he reaches his destination.

When a man wants to build a house, he first draws his plans so he knows what he is doing. Yet, how many Christians plan their days so that they use their opportunities wisely?

2. Life is short (v. 16a). "Buying up the opportunity—taking advantage of it."

An old Chinese proverb says, "Opportunity has a forelock so you can seize it when you meet it. Once it is past, you cannot seize it again."

Our English word "opportunity" comes from the Latin and means "toward the port." It suggests a ship taking advantage of the wind and tide to arrive safely in the harbor. The brevity of life is a strong argument for making the best use of the opportunities God gives us.

3. The days are evil (v. 16b). In Paul's time, this meant that Roman persecution was on the way.

4. God has given us a mind (v. 17a). The word "understanding" suggests using our minds to discover and do the will of God.

Too many Christians think that discovering God's will is some mystical experience without clear thinking. This idea is wrong—and dangerous.

We discover the will of God as He transforms the mind (Rom. 12:1-2); and this transformation is the result of the Word of God, prayer, meditation, and worship.

God gave you a mind - He expects you to use it.

means that learning His will involves gathering facts, examining them, weighing them, and praying for His wisdom (James 1:5).

God does not want us simply to know His will; He wants us to understand His will.

God has a plan for our lives (v. 17b). Paul mentioned this in (Eph. 2:10). Since God saved me, He has a purpose for my life, and I should discover that purpose and then guide my life accordingly.

Father God shows us His will through

Prayer

His Word,

His Spirit in our hearts,

the working of circumstances

Start each day in prayer saying "Lord, show me what your will is for me today so I can do it!"

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