

Joyful Life Bible Studies

EPHESIANS 5:1-21 "The Walk of Love"

Lesson 8

Man by nature is a mimic. A child learns how to walk, talk, eat properly and function in the culture in which he is growing up by following his parent's example. Paul teaches us how a Christian should copy or imitate God as a child does his parents. If we are the children of God, we ought to imitate our Heavenly Father. This is the foundation for the three admonitions in this section of Ephesians chapter 5.

"God is love" (1 John 4:8). . .therefore. . ."walk in love" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

"God is light" (1 John 1:5). . .therefore. . ."walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8)

"God is truth" (1 John 5:6). . .therefore. . ."walk in wisdom" (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Each of these "walks" is part of Paul's exhortation to walk in purity. Before you begin, read Ephesians 5:1-21 to get an overview of what Paul is trying to communicate.

The word "followers" is the Greek word mimetai from which we get our word, mimic. A mimic is not someone who copies general patterns, but someone who copies specific characteristics. We are to be mimics, or imitators of God.

"walk" -means daily conduct or lifestyle.

FIRST DAY:

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

1. In what specific area is Paul concerned that Christians should imitate God?
2. What example is given to help us understand the quality of love about which he speaks? (Also see Romans 5:6-8).
3. How do the following scriptures tell you to be an imitator of Christ's love?
 - a. Luke 10:29-37
 - b. John 13:13-17
 - c. John 15:12,13
 - d. 1 John 3:16-18

For further study: The sweet-savor offerings are described in Leviticus 1-3. The burnt offering pictures Christ's complete devotion to God. The meal offering shows His perfection of character. The peace offering-His making peace between God and sinners.

4. What are some examples of practical acts of love that you can show toward others?
5. How does Paul describe Christ's sacrifice for us in Ephesians 5:2? What does this mean?
6. Has your life been a sweet smelling aroma to God this week? Why or why not?

SECOND DAY:

Read Ephesians 5:3-7

Whatever God establishes, Satan will counterfeit. If God's love and the love of His children is self-sacrificing, forgiving and unconditional, then be sure that Satan will corrupt the world's love to be selfish, unforgiving and conditional. In this section of Ephesians 5, Paul exhorts us to walk in God's love and then lists the characteristics of the world's love that Christians are not to have a part of.

1. Using a dictionary or concordance, define the following as mentioned in verse 3:

fornication: (I Corinthians 6:15-18; I Thessalonians 4:3)

uncleanness: (I Thessalonians 4:3-7; II Peter 2:10)

covetousness (Exodus 20:17; Romans 7:7)

b. Why do you think these three are linked together? (The scripture references above will help clarify this).

c. What does the phrase "let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints" mean? (Ephesians 5:3).

2. Ephesians 5:4 names three more aspects of children of disobedience.

a. What should be our standard of conversation as Christians?

Filthiness means "that which is disgraceful." It refers to obscenity and especially has to do with words.

Foolish talking means "stupid talk". It is the speech which comes from a fool-senseless, unprofitable words.

Jesting -(Eutrapelia-Grk.) literally means "able to turn easily". It can refer to someone who takes something that is said and "easily turns" it into something dirty.

*In Ephesians 5:8, notice that Paul doesn't say we were in darkness - he says we **were** darkness. In other words, we were not just victims of Satan's system, we were contributors.*

- b. What harm is there in dirty stories, coarse talk or flippancy of speech?
- c. What is the alternative given in Ephesians 5:4? What do the following verses say?

(1.) Psalm 100:4

(2.) Psalm 140:13

(3.) I Thessalonians 5:18

3. What two reasons does Paul give in verses 5 and 6 for his clear commands in verse 3?
4. Verses 5-6 might imply that no one who sins through immorality, impurity or greed can be saved. How do Romans 8:1-5 and I John 1:9,10 shed light on these verses?
5. Are you involved in any of the patterns of behavior that Paul warns against in verses 3-5? If so, what steps will you take to turn away from this sin? (Read Ephesians 5:7).

THIRD DAY:

Read Ephesians 5:8-14

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

Light and darkness are the ultimate contrast - total opposites. God has called us to be light in a dark world. The only way we can be effective is to walk as children of light without doing the deeds of darkness. In Ephesians 5:8-14, Paul gives us five things we need to know if we want to walk as children of light. Let's study them. . .

Based on ancient manuscripts, most modern versions translate Ephesians 5:9a as "Fruit of light" rather than "fruit of the Spirit".

1. Look up the following scriptures about light. Write down how they explain what it means to "walk as children of light".

Philippians 2:15

"goodness" - (agathos- Grk.) means overall moral excellence. It is a goodness that touches everyone with positive effect.

"righteousness"-this fruit has to do with our relationship with God-not deviating from the path of holiness

"truth" - this has to do with our relationship to self. It means "integrity, honesty, reliability".

"fellowship"- in Ephesians 5:11, this is *sunoinoneo* (Grk.) which means intimate fellowship

"reprove"-means to expose-prove them fruitless, probably by our conduct rather than public scolding.

Colossians 1:12,13

I Peter 2:9

I John 1:5-7

"(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth), proving what is acceptable to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:9-10)

2. What are the fruits of walking in the light?

a. How do goodness, righteousness and truth thrive on light?

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11a).

3. How are works of darkness described?

a. Why are we to avoid fellowship with the world?

II Corinthians 6:14-18

Titus 2:12

James 4:4

"but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light." (Ephesians 5:11b-13)

4. What should be our response to the works of darkness?

a. Has your example as a Christian walking in light ever exposed (or reprovved) the darkness? (i.e. coarse language, ungodly lifestyle) Share with your group.

b. Write Ephesians 5:13 in your own words.

Challenge: For further study on light read John 3:19-21; John 8:12.

"Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead And Christ will give you light.'" (Ephesians 5:14)

5. This verse is probably a quotation from an early Christian hymn, possibly a baptismal chant. What promise does it give to those who become Christians?

*"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him, my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk,
'Til trav'ling days are done."
(From, "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say")*

*"circumspectly"
means accurately,
carefully or exactly.*

FOURTH DAY:

Read Ephesians 5:15-17

1. What does it mean to "walk circumspectly"?
2. Why do you think it is important to walk so carefully in today's world?
3. Proverbs chapter 2 talks about walking the wise path according to knowledge, understanding and God's precepts-not going in the way of the wicked. Read Proverbs 2 and tell how it relates to Ephesians 5:15.
4. Why are we to "redeem the time"?
 - a. How can you make the most of every opportunity as a Christian?

*time-(kairos-Grk.)-
means eras, epochs,
periods or in a word
"opportunity".*

FIFTH DAY:

Read Ephesians 5:18-21

1. In verse 18, Paul tells us to be "filled with the Spirit". Look up the following cross-references and record what they teach about the filling of the Spirit.
 - a. What is the role of the Spirit? (Luke 12:12, John 14:15-17)

 - b. How do you become filled with the Spirit? Luke 11:13

 - c. What are the effects of the filling of the Spirit?
 - (1.) John 14:26

 - (2.) Acts 1:8

 - (3.) Romans 14:17

"Be filled with the Spirit" - A literal translation is "Be ye being filled with the Spirit." In the Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Alfred Martin says, "A believer can never obtain more of the Holy Spirit, for He indwells the Christian's life in all His fullness. But the Holy Spirit can get more of the believer; that is, he can exercise complete control of the life that is yielded to him."

*dissipation-wasteful
in the pursuit of
pleasure; harmful
diversion.*

2. Paul contrasted being "drunk with wine" with being "filled" with the Spirit" in Ephesians 5:18. Those who witnessed the Holy Spirit's first descent at Pentecost notice similarities between the two states. (See Acts 2:13). Think about how alcohol affects a drunk person. How is being filled with the Spirit like, but also opposite to, being drunk? (Also see Romans 8:5-14).

3. According to verses 19-21, in what other ways is the filling of the Spirit manifested in the believer?

To God

To Others

Personal: Do you have music in your heart from God's Spirit? What does it sound like?

SIXTH DAY:

As a summary of Ephesians 5:1-21, list on the following chart the thoughts, words, and actions which characterize the old life (darkness) and the new life (light).

LIGHT	DARKNESS

Personal: Take time today to pray about any area of your life that you are keeping in darkness - that is, not trying to find out what pleases the heart of God. (Since there may be some sin that you aren't even aware of, ask God to show you anything you are doing that is displeasing to Him.

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting."
Psalm 139:23-24*

