

Ephesians: Lesson #38: Walk as Children of Light
Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children
For Wednesday, Sept. 10th

Read Eph. 4:17 – 5:20 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

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

It’s Confusing to Walk in Darkness

- Imagine for a moment that you wake up in the middle of the night. For some reason the electricity has gone out and your lights don’t work. You get up to see what’s going on, but as you walk through the house you can’t see. You hit your foot on a toy you left out. You bump your knee on a chair. Then, you trip and fall. Darkness is not easy to get around in.
- But the kind of darkness we are talking about is not being able to see what is right and wrong. The Gentiles, the people who were not Jews, did not know about the true God. They did not have His law. Because of that they did things that were terrible – they led very sinful lives. If they did something bad, they never felt bad about it.

Jesus Taught Us to Live Differently

- Jesus didn’t want to leave us in darkness, so He shined His light on the world teaching us how we could live in the light and how we could live better lives.
- Paul talks about how we live before we become Christians. That life was lived to please us, not God. Think of that life as like a dirty, stinky set of clothes. Those clothes need to be taken off. But it’s not really clothes that need changing, it’s our lives. We need to get out of the sinful ways that we have been living.
- Then we have to renew our minds. We have to learn to start thinking God’s way. We have to want to live our lives to serve Him.
- Last of all, we have to put on new clothes, clean clothes. Of course, I really mean new ways of living, new habits.

What Are Some Things That Need to Change?

- What are some examples of taking off our old ways and putting on the new ways?
 - You have to take off lying, and put on telling the truth.
 - You may get angry at some things, but you can’t let it make you do something wrong (like hitting someone). Instead you to get your anger under control and bring it to an end.
 - If you had been guilty of stealing, you would have to quit. Instead you would need to earn your money honestly. Then it would be good to share some of what you make with other people.
 - You have to take off the habit of saying bad or mean words, then start saying words that are good.
 - Instead of being rude or hateful, you have to love people, forgive them and try to help them.

Imitate the Lord

- What does it mean to imitate? It means to copy the actions, appearance, mannerisms, or speech of someone or something. How would you imitate a monkey? How would you imitate the sound of a bird?
- How can you imitate the Lord? We do that by acting the way He would act. We try to love the way God did.
- God loved us so much that He gave His Son to die for us. Jesus loved us so much that He gave His life for us. The Lord's kind of love is a giving love. Our love ought to do for others, give to others, help others.

Some Things That Don't Fit

- Have you ever had to wear a pair of shoes that were too small for you? Or a maybe pants that were too big for you? Sometimes things like that don't fit us. Some things don't fit what a Christian is supposed to be.
- Living immorally, being greedy, saying bad words – those things just don't fit how a Christian is supposed to live. Those things will also keep us out of heaven.

It's Good to Live in the Lord's Light

- Aren't you glad that we don't have to live in darkness all the time? Jesus gave us His light to help us see the right way to live.
- It's our job to walk in the Lord's light. Paul says we are "children of light", not "children of darkness."
- We should never act like those people who don't live in the light of God's Word. Instead we should be trying to get them to live in the Light.
- Instead of doing things like going out and getting drunk like some people do, we should let what God reveals through His Spirit in the Bible fill us up. We should sing to God and pray to God and thank God for all that He does for us.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

The Gentiles Walked in Darkness

Eph. 4:17 So let me tell you what the Lord would have me testify to you: Don't you spend any more time walking like the other Gentiles walk in worthless minds.

18 Their understanding is covered in darkness and because their minds were ignorant and their hearts were blind, their lives were shut off from any closeness with God.

19 Because they have become callous, no longer feeling any sense of shame, they have given themselves over a lifestyle of excessive sin -- They don't restrain themselves from any sin, they don't resist temptation, and they don't care if their conduct is shameful. They work at being impure and greedy.

The Light of Christ Teaches Us to Live a Better Life

20-21 But that's not the kind of life you've learned to live from Christ, if in fact, you have listened to Him and allowed yourself to be instructed by Him. For we know that the truth is in Jesus.

22 Christ has taught that the life lived by that old person you once were, has to be put aside and separated from what we are now. In that life we were deceived into thinking that we should live for sinful desires, and it was ruining us.

23-24 So get rid of that old person you once were. Renew your mind spiritually. Then clothe yourself with the new person – the person God created has created to be righteous and holy in truth.

25-32 Now let's think about a few practical ways to apply this:

- Put away the old person practice of lying, and each of you put on the new person that speaks the truth with those around you. After all, you are all members of the same body, you are all connected to each other.
- Has something made you angry? The old person would keep brooding over it and let it get out of hand. But as a new person in Christ, don't let it lead you into sin. Don't let this turn into a deep-seated, violent rage. Deal with it that day, before the sun goes down. You don't want to give the devil an opportunity or place to get into your life.
- If you have been guilty of stealing, then don't do that any more. Instead, get your hands involved in good and honest work. Then out of the money you make you'll have something you can share with others that need your help.
- Make certain that no rotten words go out of your mouth. Instead, only speak words that help, words that would build others up, only words that are truly needed, so that it will give grace to the person hearing those words.
- Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God that you were sealed in for the day of redemption.
- Take away all bitter, harsh, resentful attitudes, words and actions. Remove all that hot-burning anger that flares up inside. Get rid of all the anger that slowly smolders in deep resentment. Do away with all the loud, angry, rough talk. Throw out the slanderous kind of talking that injures people. And along with all that, take away any mean-spirited desire to do harm to others.
- And in place of all that, keep working at being a person that is kind and helpful to each other. Keep on being tender-hearted, someone who feels for others. Be willing to show a spirit of grace in forgiving each other, just like God in Christ showed grace in forgiving you.

Imitate the Lord

5:1 So in all this constantly be imitators of God, like dearly loved children would imitate their parent.

2 And walk around in love just like Christ also loved us. For out of love He gave Himself in our behalf as an offering and sacrifice – a sacrifice that smelled sweet to God.

Sinful Things Don't Fit What a Christian Is

3 Now we know some things just don't fit the character of what a saint is: sexual immorality, all kinds of moral impurity, or being greedy and covetous of what others have. Those kind of things should not even mentioned in connection with you.

4 Nor should there be any kind of obscene and foolish talk. That includes any type of talking that is meant to act sinfully or promote sinful things: trashy humor, scoffing,

deception, bragging about sinful actions. None of these are proper for a child of God. Instead, let your speech be used to give thanks.

5 Now concerning all this, be sure you know with absolute certainty that no one who practices sexual immorality, or is morally impure, or greedy for more which is like idolatry, no such a person has any inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ.

6-7 Some people will try to deceive you about all this, making arguments and excuses about how a saint can practice sin and still inherit the kingdom. Don't be misled by their empty words. It's because of these very kinds of sins that God's wrath is coming on the sons of disobedience. So don't you dare join in with them in these sins.

Walk Like Children of Light

8-9 For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk around like children of light because light will produce all goodness, righteousness and truth.

10 This will show the proof of what really pleases God.

11 And don't join in with others participating in their works of darkness which are so unproductive of anything good; but shine the light of God's truth on them.

12 For it is shameful and disgraceful even to talk about the things they practice in secret.

13 But under the light everything will be exposed and can clearly be seen because everything shown is lit up.

14 It's for this reason that the Scripture said, "Wake up, all you who have fallen asleep! Arise, you who are dead! And Christ will shine His light upon you."

Walk Wisely

15 Therefore, as you walk, be alert and careful; not like fools, but like wise people.

16 Just like you might buy goods at the store, buy up time; take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way since the times we live in are troubled by evil.

17 Since we live in such times, don't be senseless and foolish, but study about what God wants and put it all together where you can comprehend it in your mind.

Be Filled With the Spirit

18 And don't be drunk with wine which wastes people's lives, but be filled up with the Spirit.

19 Speaking among yourselves in psalms (religious songs like those found in to book of Psalms), hymns (songs that praise God), and spiritual songs (songs that have a spiritual theme). Singing and making the music in your heart to the Lord.

20 Always giving thanks for all things to the God and Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.