

DISCIPLES OF JESUS, HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

SESSION # 8

Paul is delivering very significant doctrine and theology for a follower and disciple of Jesus. As we continue to discover the heart of this Ephesians letter, we discover Paul beginning to define for us what the real-life and real-time life looks like in obeying Christ' commands in our daily routines.

I. OUT WITH THE OLD! IN WITH THE NEW!

- A. **Ephesians 4:17-19** *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*
- B. As it has been said before, we should not seek to become more like the world in order to reach the world for Christ. We seek to become more like Christ in order to reveal the life of Christ to a dying and lost world. There is no such thing as someone "becoming too heavenly-minded so that they are no earthly good". It is quite the opposite. Only Christ can transform the human heart and lifestyle. Therefore, this is our pursuit; the man who continues to transform us because of love.
- C. *"Is Christianity a way to life or a way of life? My answer is: both. If you neglect either, you have not got the full understanding of the Christian religion. It is both- in a particular order. You come to Christ and find the way to life, and then you work that out in a way of life. You don't try to live the Christian way of life first and hope that that will lead you to life. You find life first and then you live it. So Christianity is a way to life and a way of life."* (David Pawson)
- D. Following Jesus is a call to full surrender to His leadership and His plans and dreams. We must forfeit our old life in order to receive His new life for us. Can I ask you what has Christ offered you yet you have not received and began to walk in? Could it be that He is waiting for you to first surrender to Him before He gives you more?
- E. **Ephesians 4:23-24** *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*
- F. **Romans 12:2** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
- G. This is one of the most practical principles of discovering and implementing of God's will and direction for our lives. As we read, study, and meditate in God's written Word, our minds are transformed. We discover God's heart and character and then we discover what our place is in the eternal plan of God.
- H. What is your plan and practice for doing this? **Read it! Write it! Say it! Sing it! Pray it!**
- I. **Joshua 1:8** *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

II. OUR HEARTS ARE UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

- A. **Ephesians 4:30** *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

- B. Paul points out three primary ways that are common to us all that become the stumbling blocks for grieving the Holy Spirit who now lives on the inside of us. Christ desires to transform us from the inside out and then to entrust to us great authority and influence as His representatives in the earth. These three areas are: Truthful—Trustworthy—Tender-hearted.
- C. **Truthfulness-** We are called to speak the truth for our benefit, for the benefit of others, and for the benefit of Christ's reputation. Remember, previously Paul instructed us to speak the truth in love and with a tender heart for the one we are speaking with (**Eph. 4:15**). There is a reluctance to speak the full truth in this day in fear of others and cancel culture.
- D. **Matthew 10:28** *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- E. **Trustworthy-** Christ desires to entrust us with His words to be cherished and shared in the right way and in the right time and to the right people. Our lifestyle should be of integrity and honesty before God and people. We determine to work hard in word and deed in the grace of God (**Eph. 4:28-29**).
- F. **Tenderness-** Christ desires to make our hearts soft and flexible as we discover how He feels about us and others. Do we have a sensitive heart to the emotions of Christ? Do we feel the sting of disobedience toward Christ? How about feeling Christ' heart towards another person? How do we speak and treat other Followers of Jesus?
- G. **Ephesians 4:32** *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*
- H. *"It is the devil's lie that you cannot change human nature. You can't change your old nature, no, but you can 'put it off' now that you are in Christ. You can 'put on' a new nature, and a Christian is in the happy position of being able to put off certain things that belong to his old nature and put on things that belong to his new."* (David Pawson)

III. WALKING IN LOVE—IN LIGHT—IN WISDOM

- A. **Ephesians 5:1** *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*
- B. Like a newborn baby, we come to Christ as a newly born-again child. As we discover the new life, we learn, grow, and in time begin to take our first steps in walking out the foundations of this new Heavenly Kingdom lifestyle. I remember the first words and steps of our children. They were major milestones of celebration for all of us. So too our new life in Christ.
- C. The progression of our spiritual journey in Christ, especially as laid out by Paul in the book of Ephesians is to: Sit—Walk—Stand.
- D. **Imitators of God-** Think for a second about suggestive marketing. Everything that we see and hear for marketing is an attempt to convince us to become like the people and products being sold to us. In a world in search of heroes and role-models, Paul extends this invitation to be *"imitators of God"*. Wow!
- E. **Christ as our Example of Love-** Paul calls us to now walk in love in the same example of Christ. Christ loved the world to death. So too, we are called to love this way.
- F. **Christ, A Sweet-Smelling Aroma to the Father-** Paul also defines how this beautiful description of loving and laying down our lives moves the Father's heart. He says that this sacrificial living becomes a sweet-smelling aroma to the Father. Ahh!
- G. Paul gives us a clear and politically incorrect description of what type of lifestyle will not inherit and enter Christ' Heavenly Kingdom (**Eph. 5:3-5**)

- Fornication, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, etc. These are common practices of a person living outside of God's defined boundary lines of right living. These common sinful practices are self-destructive and make our own lives the idol we serve to satisfy. Paul says that these people WILL NOT inherit Heaven with Christ.
 - Those who live as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven will inherit its lasting promises. Those who live for the kingdom of this world will inherit this world and its promised destruction.
- H. **Walk in the Light**- Paul reminds Christ's disciples that we have been brought out of darkness and into the light of Christ. We are encouraged to walk with the Spirit and talk to the Spirit so that we will produce the fruit of the Spirit's life.
- I. **James 1:17** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*
- J. If God is the "Father of Lights" we are to become sons and daughters of light. If there is any area in our heart that we are attempting to hide from Christ or is in opposition to His commands, we must repent and turn from these things.
- K. Just as there are no shadows cast by the Father of Lights because He is unchanging and unmoving in His character. In other words, nothing is hidden in Him. Our lifestyle and decisions must be examined and remain open before His gazing eyes.
- L. **Ephesians 5:10** *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*
- M. This is our act of worship to Jesus. When we stop to ask Him, seek His character and thoughts in the Bible, we are expressing our love and worship to Him. We say, "Jesus, what do you want for me? How can I live to honor and please You today?"
- N. **Ephesians 5:14** *Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Is. 26:19; Is. 60:1; Rm. 13:11)*
- O. **Walk in Wisdom**- Paul takes time to powerfully define the difference between wise and foolish living.
- P. **Ephesians 5:15-16** *See then that you walk circumspectly (cautiously/intentionally), not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*
- Q. Those who live foolishly are disconnected from the future and from their actions, decisions and eternal inheritance. We only have one life to live which is about preparing for eternity.
- R. Paul makes the connection between foolish living and a drunken lifestyle. He then connects the wise lifestyle to the sober lifestyle. Too much wine in the natural disconnects us from the world around us. It becomes a stumbling block for many and keeps many from seizing the time given to us. Paul commands us to be filled with Holy Spirit so that we are fully alive and awake and ready to seize the time given to us. (Remembering the movie, 'INCEPTION')
- S. Will we live a life out of control or under control of God's Holy Spirit?
- T. **Ephesians 5:18** *"...be filled with the Spirit." (continual command)*
- U. **Ephesian 5:19-21** **speaking** *to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another in the fear of God.*