

**03/17/24 “Walk as Children of Light”
Ephesians 5:5-10**

Welcome...

We are studying the wonderful book of Ephesians. So, far we have seen in Ephesians chapter 5:

- In verse 1, we are commanded to live like God.
- In verse 2, we are commanded to love like God.
- In verses 3-4, we are commanded to avoid sinful actions, but also commanded to adopt a sacred attitude

Read Ephesians 5:5-10...

We are entering the Spring season and we are reminded very visibly that light is essential to all life on Earth. Photosynthesis is a chemical process that occurs in plants when they are exposed to sunlight. During photosynthesis, water and carbon dioxide combine to form carbohydrates (sugars) and give off oxygen. Photosynthesis is needed for animal and plant life.

God designed that the sunlight that shines on an apple tree, with the proper amount of rain and good soil conditions, the green leaves of the apple tree soak in the light, and eventually the tree produces buds and in time there is going to be fruit.

Light has produced fruit. The fruit helps us to identify the tree. A child can tell the difference between an apple tree, a peach tree or an orange tree by seeing its fruit. Sunlight is essential to producing fruit.

Paul uses that kind of analogy in our text to speak of the lifestyle of the genuine Christian. God designed that the Light of His Son would shine in the darkness of our hearts and transform us to bear spiritual fruit. Paul is commanding us to walk as children of light and then so doing produce the fruit of the light which he says, “consists in all goodness, all righteousness and all truth.”

Main point” In Ephesians 5:5-10 Paul provides three features of how Christians are to walk as children of light.

- I. How We Are to be Certain (in verses 5-7)**
- II. How We Are Changed (in verse 8)**
- III. How We Are to be Characterized (in verses 9-10)**

My prayer is that we each honestly and prayerfully evaluate our lives and see what fruit there is in our life. Is there a root and fruit connection, is Jesus rooted in your heart and the Holy Spirit and the light of God’s Word is producing godly fruit of goodness and righteousness, and truth? Are you growing and learning what is pleasing to the Lord? And if there is no fruit, it's not too late; there is time for you to repent and trust in Christ, and come to salvation and begin bearing fruit of righteousness.

Let’s begin with:

- I. How We Are to be Certain (in verses 5-7)**

Verse 5...

This you know with certainty - actually contains two verbs, the first verb means absolute, positive, beyond a shadow of a doubt, knowledge, and the second refers to experiential knowledge.

What are we to be certain about? Verse 5...

Notice in verse 5 Paul uses the same basic Greek words immorality, impurity and greed as he did in verse 3.

In verse 5 the first is “immorality” which translates the Greek word *porneia*, which shares a common root with our word “pornography.” It includes all kinds of sexual sin outside of marriage, including fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and prostitution. While these outward actions should all be avoided, in the Sermon on the Mount Christ focused attention even more pointedly at their inward source.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28, “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Once again we are reminded that the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

Paul also refers to “impurity,” using the Greek word *akatharsia*, which is related to our English word “catharsis” but formed as a negative. Just as something cathartic cleanses us, something “akathartic” pollutes us. Thus, *akatharsia* refers to the effects of immorality on our hearts, minds, and bodies - moral uncleanness that leads to guilt, shame, obsessions, and enslavement to sin.

The word translated “greed” could also be translated “covetousness,” and in fact, that is how Paul uses it here in Ephesians 5:5 to refer to a “covetous man.”

Covetous describes one who is “grasping,” one who wants more, one who is always eager for more and especially for what belongs to someone else. Someone greedy for gain. One who desires to have more than is due.

How do we know if we are guilty of idolatry? We know if we sin to get what we want or we sin when we don’t get what we want. For example, in the area of immorality, a man wants to be intimate with his wife, but when his expectations are not met he turns to *porneia* and lusting after other women.

Paul states it very plainly in Ephesians 5:5: the sexually immoral person is an idolater. Sex always involves the thoughts, motives, desires, demands, expectations, or idols of the heart. When we deal with sexual sin, it is not enough to simply avoid committing acts of physical immorality. We must uncover the heart sins that acts of physical immorality reveal. There is a root and fruit connection as we saw last time when one of the solutions presented at the end of verse 4 is to be content and thankful to God for your circumstances – whether single or married.

But our society will say that sexual indulgence, materialistic madness, and degrading speech are “no big deal.” Paul says you should know with certainty that is not the case! Yet, it is easy to become so numb to these pandemics of modern society that Paul’s unflinching directness in Ephesians 5:5–6 comes as a shock to us.

Paul says quite bluntly that people engaged in a blatantly and perpetually sinful lifestyle—immoral, impure, and covetous—have no share in the kingdom of God (5:5). In fact, verse 6 plainly declares God’s wrath will come upon them.

Paul addressed the same issue in the Corinthian church writing.

Paul gave a similar warning to the Galatians writing in Galatians 5:19-24...

Look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11...

If the way you live (your outside) shows that your inside (heart) is dominated by desires of a sinful nature, then even though you are inside the church, you may in fact be outside of the kingdom of God. (repeat)

So Paul describes how you need to be certain. You need to do a bibliocardigram and examine your heart with God's Word. If there has never been a significant behavioral change in your life - a desire for holiness, for the things of God, for His Word—NOT perfection, but at least a change in the direction of your life and lifestyle. If there has not been a root and fruit connection, which is Christ is rooted in your heart and the fruit is a hunger for God's Word, a desire to glorify the Lord in your thoughts, words and actions, and change in direction as far as who you are trying to please. If there has been no change then there is reason to seriously consider whether you have truly been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, whether you have truly been born again, and whether you are indeed a new creation in Christ.

Wayne Barber writes, "when you become a Christian, something changes. You stop chasing sin. Sin starts chasing you. It doesn't mean you cannot fall in one of those areas, but it means you cannot pursue sin and claim to know Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit inside of you will not let that take place. To repent and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and come to salvation is not some religious insurance policy, it is a spiritual photosynthesis miracle of God's light changing your heart, transferring you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:13-14 says, "For God rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

You also need to be certain about the plight of those who do not know Christ. Without Christ, without being transferred from darkness to His light, our unsaved family members, classmates, coworkers, and neighbors will face the wrath of God. If the Lord has saved you, then you are an influence in the lives of the unsaved and we need to be certain here of God's truth. Without Christ, the unsaved will be condemned to hell.

You and I cannot change the heart of the unbeliever. But we can speak the truth in love to them. As Paul said in Romans 1:16...

2 Corinthians 5:17...

In Christ you have a brand-new life. Being born again in Christ doesn't mean you can't sin. It doesn't mean you can't struggle in an area of sin. But you are miserable in the process because the Holy Spirit lives within you. The Holy Spirit is there to convict you and bring you back to the cross to where you can repent and grow in Christlikeness. A Christian is not sinless, but he does sin less—and less—and less!

Verse 6...

The "empty words" we hear today go like this: "God is too kind to condemn to Hell those whose belief and behavior doesn't measure up to His word. Love will prevail. God is love and thus understanding our frail human nature there will be no wrath, no condemnation, no eternal suffering in hell." These are clever reasonings, but they will not convince God to turn aside His wrath.

Yet there is hope, for the damning list we read in 1 Corinthians 6 ends with, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

When I grew up, we did not have cookie jars in our home. But when I went to my friend's house, there were cookie jars with cookies, Pot tarts, candy bars, and M&M's. All part of a healthy diet. And so, when I went to my friend's house, I would help myself to these as often as I wanted.

There are open cookie jars everywhere we go as believers. All around us we see the misery of those who have helped themselves by indulging in impurity, immorality and greed.

What are we to do? Notice verse 7...

What about befriending unbelieving classmates, coworkers, and neighbors? Paul is not saying we are no longer to be "in" the world but that we are not to be "of" the world. We should seek to befriend and minister to unbelievers, but Paul here is warning against falling into the sins of unbelievers.

We must not join them in their sin. We must reprove and correct those who claim to be believers but are obsessed with lust. We must love them enough to speak the truth to them if they are offended – even if they reject us.

When I was flying in VP-65 at Pt Mugu, each year I would receive a NATOPS evaluation. When the evaluator, Dave Eguchi, would debrief me at the end of the flight and tell me that I passed I would say something like, "Praise the Lord. All glory to God." Sometimes that would lead to a conversation. Dave was incredibly intelligent and did not seem interested in the gospel at all. It seemed futile to share the gospel with him. But some years later I received a message from him that said, "Thank you for your faithful witness. I have embraced Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior!"

Praise the Lord, and Paul now explains how this change takes place.

II. How We Are Changed

Verse 8...

Spiritual darkness means not having fellowship with God through a relationship with Jesus Christ. The darkness of separation from God is overcome through Christ: "In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" John 1:4–5.

When the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned the apostle Paul in Acts 26:17-18 the Lord said, "for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

But notice in Ephesians 5:8 Paul does not say that we used to be in the darkness, whereas now we are in the light, although this is true as we heard in Colossians 1:13. Rather, Paul says here that we used to be darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. Being children of light implies that this profound change comes from God's power in the new birth. It is an act of His creative power. Just as He, at the first, created light out of the darkness, so now He has changed us from being darkness itself into being light in the Lord.

Have you ever been in a place that was so dark that you could not even see your hand in front of your face? Once I was in a cave and turned off my headlamp and for a few seconds (which seemed like minutes!) I realized what it would be like to be totally blind.

Paul says that we formerly were darkness. We were spiritually blind. We not only didn't see God's glory and truth, but we also didn't have the ability or desire to see such things. We didn't sense our need for the Savior, because we thought we were good enough to go to heaven and we didn't understand the absolute holiness and justice of God. So, we lived entirely for ourselves and our own pleasure, Romans 1:18 says we suppress the truth in unrighteousness and selfishness trying to avoid the thought of death and eternity.

But, when God saved us, He opened the eyes of our understanding so that as 2 Corinthians 4:6 says we saw “the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” We saw our true condition as guilty sinners, but we also saw the all-sufficiency of Jesus and His death on the cross to cover all our sins. We had a new understanding of God’s Word and a new desire to know God and His truth more and more.

We now hate the sin that we formerly lived in and we long to be like our Savior, holy in all our ways, learning what is pleasing to Him. We now walk in the light, rather than in darkness, because God has made us light in the Lord.

Verse 8... “But now” - This is one of those great and mercy-filled “but now’s”

Like the one we saw in Ephesians 2:1-4...2:12-13

Here in Ephesians 5:8 “But God” in Scripture signifies the great “Divine Transfer!”

How are we changed? The “you were darkness” is no longer who you are! “But now you are Light in the Lord!”

Friends, may we never forget, may we always remember, may we forever be grateful for our Father's great transfer from the kingdom of darkness to light. May the divine transfer continually motivate us (enabled by the Spirit) to discipline ourselves for godliness, as we strive to follow in Jesus' steps.

That is what commands in verse 8, “walk as children of Light.”

In contrast to those who walk in spiritual darkness, Paul uses the present imperative to command believers to continually walk in the light into which they have been transferred. Keep walking in the light, step by step, ever making progress.

Light and darkness cannot coexist. Notice Light is capitalized because the source of light is God and Christ.

Paul says, “walk as children of Light.” The imperative is in the present tense to denote habitual conduct for those who are children of light. The word “children” means a close relationship to the parent. Since God is light (1 John 1:5) and Ephesians 5:1 says believers are the children of God, then we are to walk as children of God or light. As light reflects the glory of God, so we as believers should reflect our Father’s glory.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

HB Charles is a pastor in Jacksonville, FL. He grew up in downtown Los Angeles. His father was a pastor and HB followed his father’s footsteps. As a young preacher, he was invited to speak at Youth Day at the New Guiding Light Baptist Church in Pasadena. When the service started, he sat in the pastor’s study alone waiting for preaching time. But he could see all the people coming in and he got a big head very quickly. But when he went to the pulpit, the packed auditorium was not happy. As he preached, half the people left. HB Charles later discovered the local church newspaper mistakenly put a photo of his father in the announcement, instead of HB. He said, “The congregation was upset, because they did not come to see me. They came to see my father.”

What a great illustration, as the Light of the Lord shines through us remember people did not come to see you. Our Father in heaven deserves all the glory! People are attracted to Christ when you shine His light through your life.

Paul has described how we are to be certain and how we are changed. Now he describes:

III. How We Are to Be Characterized

Verses 9-10...

A changed heart will result in a changed life. The more luminous our integrity — our goodness, righteousness, and truth — the brighter the light. How can we shine more brightly?

A man returned home from a trip and brought his wife a matchbox that would glow in the dark. After giving it to her she turned out the light, but the matchbox could not be seen. Both thought they had been cheated. Then the wife noticed some words on the box that said: “If you want me to shine in the night, keep me in the light.”

We need to spend time alone with Jesus — the Light — in prayer, exposing our lives like photographic plates to His presence so that His image, His character, is burnt into ours. If we do this, we will spiritually be like Moses when he descended Sinai after being alone with God — his face shone with the light of God. We need to open our Bibles and allow God’s truth to illumine our eager faces with goodness and righteousness and truth. If you want to shine in the night, keep in the light of Christ.

The three supreme characteristics, or fruit, of our walk as children of light, are all goodness and righteousness and truth.

The word for “goodness” in verse 9 refers to moral excellence, to being good in both nature and effectiveness. Like *agapē* love, *agathōsunē* goodness finds its fullest and highest expression in that which is willingly and sacrificially done for others.

Paul told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:15, “Always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men,” In his next letter to that church the apostle prays in 2 Thessalonians 1:11, “that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power.”

Galatians 5:22 tells us that goodness that is a fruit of light is also a fruit of the Spirit.

The second result, or fruit, of our walk as children of light is righteousness and has to do first of all with our relationship to God. Romans 4:5 says, “To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.” But righteousness also has to do with how we live. Those who are made righteous are commanded in Romans 6:13 to live righteously, to present themselves “to God as those alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness to God.” In 1 John 2:29 because we know that Christ is righteous, John says, we also “know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29).

The third fruit of the light is truth. Truth has to do with honesty, reliability, trustworthiness, and integrity—in contrast to the hypocritical, deceptive, and false ways of the old life of darkness.

We see therefore that goodness pertains primarily to our relationship with others, righteousness primarily to our relationship to God, and truth primarily to personal integrity. In those three things and in those three ways the fruit of the light consists.

The Christian life, just as every other kind of life, is only healthy when it is growing. As far as the walk of the believer is concerned, verse 10 tells what our primary focus should be.

Look at verse 10...

We do not determine what pleases the Lord by our own feelings, which fluctuate, or by what the world or other Christians say or think. We don't even determine it by our own conscience, in that our conscience may be improperly informed.

Rather, we learn what pleases the Lord through growing to understand His Word. Living to please the Lord is a fundamental difference between the believer and the unbeliever.

We now evaluate everything we do by the question, "Does this please the Lord, who loved me and gave Himself for me?"

David prayed a prayer that he would be pleasing to the Lord in Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer."

Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD."

Heartfelt worship here this morning pleases the Lord. Hebrews 13:15, "Through Jesus then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." When you come here and you sing with all your heart and you just are lifting up spirit-filled songs, hymns, and spiritual songs from a full heart, not hypocritically, but from the heart, that pleases the Lord.

Revelation 8:4 says the prayers of the godly, are said to be a pleasing aroma that pleases the Lord for you to pray.

Colossians 3:20, "Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."

So, you children, you teens, you young people, maybe you're in elementary school, you're in middle school, maybe you're in high school, and you're thinking, "This doesn't apply to me." It does. It pleases the Lord when you obey your parents gladly.

To pursue righteousness pleases the Lord. Evangelism pleases the Lord.

1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Paul has told us as believers how we are to be certain, how we are changed from darkness to Light, and how we are to be characterized by goodness, righteousness and truth.

May the light of Christ bear fruit in each of our lives for His glory!

Let's pray...