

EPHESIANS 5:1-17



INTRODUCTION

Pastor David opened up his message by letting us know there are different ways to walk based on one's lifestyle. Describe a place where you love to walk and why.

THESIS

Think of all the different words we use to describe how one walks. The different words show that there are many ways to walk, and each of them says something. Jesus' followers walk (i.e. have a lifestyle) characterized by walking in God's light and love. Today we discover the wisdom to do it.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q1. What are some practical ways believers can sacrifice to walk in love?

Q2. What are some ways believers can walk as children of light in a highly sexualized?

Q3. What are some reasons it is important for believers to be in relationship (vs. fellowship) with non-believers?

Q4. How can believers learn to walk in wisdom so they can better understand the will of the Lord?



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Neighboring Idea: **Contemplate and pray that God would guide you to walk in the light and love your neighbors.**

- How have you loved your neighbors inside the group this week?
- How have you loved your neighbors outside of your group this week?



PRAYER

- Praise Jesus for He is with us always, even to the end of the age.
- Pray for an opportunity to walk with a neighbor.
- Pray we would continue to walk by faith and not by sight.
- Pray for your neighbors as you walk in your community, school, and work.
- Pray we would walk like Jesus every day and not just on Sundays.
- Pray we walk in the Light and expose the darkness.





NG Study Guide: Ephesians 5:1-17 :: “How to Walk” [6.9.24]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. Regularly review the notes at the bottom.

The Study

Thesis: Think of all the different words we use to describe how one walks. The different words show that there are many ways to walk, and each of them says something. Jesus' followers walk (i.e. have a lifestyle) characterized by walking in God's light and love. Today we discover the wisdom to do it.

Think of all the different words we use to describe how one walks:

Stroll, saunter, amble, trudge, plod, dawdle, hike, tramp, tromp, slog, stomp, march, stride, sashay, glide, troop, patrol, wander, ramble, tread, prowl, promenade, roam, traipse, mosey, and perambulate.

The different words show that there are many ways to walk, and each of them says something. This section (Ephesians 5:1-17) tells us how a disciple of Jesus should walk.

A. A Disciple of Jesus Christ Should Walk in Love.

1. (1-2) Walking in love as Jesus loved us.

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 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.

a. [1] **Therefore:** Here, Paul concludes the thought from Ephesians 4, where he described how Christians should relate to one another.

b. [1] **Be imitators of God:** The idea is simple – that we are to make *God* our example and model. We can't content ourselves comparing us among men. We must heed the idea of 1 Peter 1:15-16: *as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”*

It does not say, “Think about God” or “Admire God” or “Adore God,” though those are all important Christian duties. This is a call to practical action, going beyond our inner life with God.

We could say this is a continuation of the same idea Paul mentioned in Ephesians 4:13 regarding the extent of Christian growth: *to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*. We could also say that this is a continuation of the idea from Ephesians 4:32, where we were commanded to be *forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*. God’s behavior towards us becomes the measure for our behavior towards one another.

It is important to see that *God is far more than our example*. Many errors come into the church when Jesus is presented *only* as an example of behavior. We are not *saved* by the example of Jesus, but *once saved* His example is meaningful to us. God is *more* than our example, but He is *also* our example.

c. [1] **As dear children**: Children are natural imitators. They often do just what they see their parents or other adults do. When we act according to our nature as children of God, we will imitate Him.

d. [2] **Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us**: As in all things, Jesus is our example. As He **has loved us and** has **given Himself for us**, we are to display the same kind of self-giving love.

e. [2] **An offering and a sacrifice**: Jesus’ giving of Himself was obviously a sacrifice pleasing to the Father. We can also offer a pleasing sacrifice (**a sweet-smelling aroma**) as we give ourselves in love to others.

We often think we could lay down our life in a dramatic way to show our love for others. But God often calls us to lay down our life little by little – in small coins (as it were) instead of one large payment – but it is laying down our lives, nonetheless.

2. (3-4) A contrast to walking in love: conduct not fitting for the Christian.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

a. [3] **Let it not even be named among you**: Paul groups together these ideas of sexual sin and impropriety, indicating that none of these are **fitting for saints** and should not even **be named among** God’s people.

Paul used a comprehensive list of sexual sins:

- i. [3] **Fornication** (*porneia*), a broad word describing sexual sin.
- ii. [3] **Uncleanness**, another broad word for “dirty” moral behavior, especially in a sexual sense.
- iii. [4] **Filthiness**, which has much the same idea as **uncleanness**.
- iv. [4] **Coarse jesting**, which has the idea of inappropriate, impure sexual humor.

We must notice the theme of the moral appeal. It isn't “avoid these things so that you can be a saint.” Rather, it is “you are a saint; now live in a manner fitting for a saint.” The constant moral appeal of the New Testament is simply this: *be who you are in Jesus*.

b. [3] **As is fitting for saints**: This emphasis on sexual sin was appropriate. The culture of Paul's day (and in the city of Ephesus especially) was given over to sexual immorality. The sort of behavior Paul says is not **fitting for saints** was pretty much completely approved by the culture of his day (and our own).

c. [3] **Covetousness...** [4] **foolish talking**: Paul also included **covetousness** and **foolish talking** in this list because of their close association with sexual sin. The desire to have something that doesn't belong to us, and foolish speaking have both led many people into sexual sin. Yet **covetousness** and **foolish talking** also have relevance *beyond* their relation to sexual sin.

i. [4] **Foolish talking** is literally “an easy turn of speech.” In the context, the idea is of the one who can turn every conversation into a joking comment on sexual matters, usually with a double-entendre.

d. [4] **Rather giving of thanks**: Positively, the Christian is to give **thanks** for sex. We receive it thankfully as a gift and enjoy sex in a way that glorifies the Giver.

3. (5-7) The consequences of conduct not fitting for Christians.

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

a. [5] **Has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God**: The people mentioned in Ephesians 5:3 (the **fornicator**, the **unclean person** and the **covetous man**) have no inheritance in God's kingdom. If God's kingdom is alive in them, a transformation has occurred so that they cannot rest in the habitual practice of these things.

b. [5] **Covetous man, who is an idolater**: Significantly, Paul says that the **covetous man** is an **idolater**. Idolatry happens in much more subtle (and powerful) ways than simply bowing down before a statue.

c. [6] **Let no one deceive you with empty words:** We cannot allow **empty words** to excuse or minimize the judgment due to the practice of these sins. People today hope to talk away God's judgment. Yet it is certain that [6] **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

d. [7] **Therefore do not be partakers with them:** Paul assumes that Christians would not have their lives *habitually* marked by these sins. Yet believers should not even *occasionally* be **partakers with them** who are.

4. (8-12) The passing from darkness to light.

For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

a. [8] **For you were once darkness:** As Paul condemned those who practiced fornication, uncleanness or covetousness as *the sons of disobedience* (Ephesians 5:6), he also recognized that this was the exact **darkness** Christians had emerged from. But now, having been enlightened, we are to [9] **walk as children of the light**. Believers should be who they are in Jesus Christ.

i. Paul doesn't only say that we were once *in* darkness. He says we [8] **were once darkness** itself. Now, we are not only in the light, we [8] **are light in the Lord**.

b. [9] **For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth:** In contrast to the walk in darkness and wrath is the **fruit of the Spirit**, more fully described in Galatians 5:22-23. [9] **Goodness, righteousness, and truth** should mark us because we have the Holy Spirit in our life.

c. [11] **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them:** Instead of associating with ungodliness, we expose the [11] **unfruitful works of darkness**. However, we do not do this for the purpose of merely talking about them (which is [12] **shameful**), but for the purpose of educating ourselves enough to avoid them.

i. Paul was careful to say that we should avoid the [11] **unfruitful works of darkness**, not the people who are in darkness.

B. A Disciple of Jesus Christ Should Walk in the Light.

1. (13-14) The fact of the light's presence.

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”

a. [13] **But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light:** Even the things done [12] **in secret** will be exposed. They will be made [13] **manifest** by the light of God’s searching judgment.

This is a *reason* for avoiding and exposing the unfruitful works of darkness as described in Ephesians 5:8-12. Since those unfruitful works are destined for exposure and their day will be over, it makes sense for Christians to avoid such unfruitful works.

b. [14] A Disciple of Jesus Christ Should Walk in] **Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead:** Our participation in the light is shown by our resurrection with Jesus (He *made us alive together with Christ*, Ephesians 2:5). Paul quoted what was probably a worship chorus from the early church to illustrate this truth.

i. Remember that this exhortation to **awake** comes to *Christians*. A Christian may be asleep and not know it. If you are asleep, you probably do not know it. As soon as you become aware of your sleep, it is evidence that you are now awake.

ii. “This sleepiness in the Christian is exceedingly dangerous, too, because he can do a great deal while he is asleep that will make him look as if he were quite awake.” (Spurgeon)

We can speak when we are asleep.
We can hear when we are asleep.
We can walk when we are asleep.
We can sing when we are asleep.
We can think when we are asleep.

2. (15-17) Walking in the light means walking in wisdom.

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

a. [15] **See then that you walk circumspectly:** Because this light was given to us, we should walk **circumspectly** – carefully, wisely, **not as fools**.

b. [16] **Redeeming the time:** There were two ancient Greek words used for **time**. One had the idea simply of day upon day and hour upon hour. The other had the idea of a definite portion of

time, a time where something should happen. It is the difference between *time* and **the time**. The idea here is of **the time**; it is a definite season of opportunity that Christians must redeem. This same word is translated *opportunity* in Galatians 6:10.

Paul isn't telling us to make the most of every moment, even though that is good advice. He tells us to seize opportunity for the glory of Jesus. It isn't to make the most of time, but to make the most of **the time**.

The idea behind **redeeming the time** is that you buy up opportunities like a shrewd businessman. You make the most of every opportunity for Jesus Christ.

c. [16] **Because the days are evil**: This is another reason why it is important to walk wisely. Jesus spoke of a time when, *many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold* (Matthew 24:11-12). Surely, we are in those times, **because the days are evil**.

d. [17] **Understand what the will of the Lord is**: This is what real wisdom is. It is the contrast to being **unwise**. Our main understanding of **the will of the Lord** comes from a good knowledge of His word.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, God gives a definite way to walk:

Walk in love, following the pattern of Jesus Christ.

Walk in the light, full of God's wisdom.

Next week's passage:

Ephesians 5:18-21 :: "In Christ You Are Spirit-Filled"