

Ephesians

Lesson Fifteen Walk of Light in the Church

5:1-17

Introduction:

1. After establishing the essential nature of the church, Paul began to focus on how a member of the Lord's body is to live.
2. The Christian walk is to be different from the world – putting off the old man and putting on the new.
3. Building upon that idea, Paul now describes the Christian life as a walk in light.
4. This lifestyle is necessary to maintain fellowship and unity in the Lord's church.

5:1-2 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor

- A. To walk the walk of a Christian – to live the life of a Christian – one must be a follower of God.
 1. The word “be” actually means, “Become.”
 2. The Greek word for “followers” is *mimetes* (μιμητης), meaning, “Mimic or imitator.”
 3. Thus, the Christian strives to become an imitator of God – growing more and more like him each day.
- B. The motivation for following God is His great kindness toward man (4:32).
 1. He is forgiving.
 2. He is a Father to the forgiven.
 3. He sees Christians as dear (beloved) children.
- C. In order to follow God, the Christian must walk according to His path.
 1. We must walk in good works (2:10).
 2. We must walk worthy of our calling (4:1).
 3. We must walk differently from the world (4:17).
 4. We must walk in love (5:1).
 5. We must walk in light (5:8).
 6. We must walk in wisdom (5:15).
- D. The example of love to be imitated is the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.
 1. By His very nature, “God is love” (1 John 4:8).
 2. God demonstrated His love for man by giving His Son (John 3:16).
 3. Jesus confirmed His love for man by dying on the cross (5:25; Gal 2:20).
 4. Christians must imitate this example of love...
 - a. Toward God – by imitating, following, and obeying Him
 - b. Toward man – by forgiving, fellowshiping and serving them
- E. Jesus gave Himself as both an offering and a sacrifice – well-pleasing to God.
 1. There were some OT offerings that were not sacrifices, because they were not killed.
 2. Jesus was both an offering and a sacrifice because He died for man.
 3. The sweet smell shows that God approved (Gen. 8:21; Lev. 1:9; Phil. 4:18).

5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints

- A. In order to walk in love, light and wisdom, there are some things that the Christian must not do and certain attitudes that must be resisted.
- B. These things are not to be named “once” among the church.
 - 1. Obviously, this means that a child of God should not commit these sins.
 - 2. One may have been guilty of them before becoming a Christian, but afterwards, they must be resisted.
 - 3. However, the word “named” also means, “Uttered or mentioned.”
 - 4. These sins should not be committed so that there will be no occasion to talk about them (cf. vs. 12).
 - a. We live in a world – much like the Ephesians – that delights to not only commit these sins, but also to talk about them constantly.
 - b. On the television, in music, in the school system, everywhere...
 - c. Sometimes, these things must be mentioned or discussed, but it should always be truth and soberness – never with flippancy or approval.
 - 5. Practicing the things condemned in this passage does not become one who is sanctified and set apart from the world.
- C. **Fornication** is a sexual relationship between individuals who do not have the right to engage in such.
 - 1. God’s law is clear that physical intimacy is authorized only for a husband and wife – united in the bonds of marriage.
 - 2. This idea was frowned upon by the Gentile world of the Ephesians and fornication was rampant and accepted by society – in fact, it was incorporated into their idolatrous worship.
 - 3. Yet, the church was to be different from the world by walking a different path.
- D. **Uncleanness** is “physical or moral impurity” – “lustful, luxurious, profligate living.”
 - 1. Whatever sexual sin was not covered by “fornication” is condemned by “uncleanness.”
 - 2. Uncleanness refers to sinful acts committed out of an uncontrolled lust.
- E. **Covetousness** is also a form of lust, a “greedy desire to have more.”
 - 1. It is usually thought of as a wanton desire for material wealth.
 - 2. However, this word can refer to an inordinate desire for any number of things.
 - 3. Covetousness, if unchecked, leads to many sinful and destructive actions.

5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks

- A. **Filthiness** means, “Shamefulness, obscenity” in words or deeds.
 - 1. This includes words, gestures and actions that are impure.
 - 2. It also includes those things that entice others to lust.
- B. **Foolish Talking** refers to “stupid, heedless, absurd speech.”
 - 1. This is the idea of irreverence, speaking foolishly of holy things.
 - 2. It is also a foolish talk about sin – praising, minimizing, or laughing at it.
 - 3. In the Bible, the fool is a specific kind of individual.
 - 4. “The Hebrew word, *kesil*, pictures one who is foolish, stupid and inclined to make wrong choices. His decisions move him in a direction that may

provide immediate pleasure, but will eventually lead to ruin and destruction. He is mentally dull, morally insensitive, arrogant, disrespectful, deceitful and untrustworthy” (Eldon G. Woodcock).

- C. **Jesting** is “ribald, low, vulgar wit;” “polished and witty speech as the instrument of sin.”
 - 1. This does not mean that it is wrong for a Christian to tell a joke.
 - 2. It does mean that one must be careful of the jokes he hears and tells.
 - 3. Especially, one must not ridicule or mock things holy and righteous.
- D. These things are not befitting or proper; instead, the Christian should be known as one whose life and words are used to express gratitude.

5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God

- A. The reason these sins must be avoided is because one who is guilty of them has no inheritance in the Lord’s kingdom.
- B. One who practices these sins cannot be said to be imitating God or walking in love.
- C. These names describe those who commit the earlier mentioned sins.
 - 1. Covetousness is emphasized as idolatry (Col. 3:5); thus, the covetous man is an idolater.
 - 2. In truth, any of these desires that one allows to replace God in his or her heart becomes a form of idolatry.
- D. Note that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ are the same – and, they both refer to the church.

5:6-7 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them

- A. The Christian must take care not to be deceived by the empty words of the world.
 - 1. Men will try to convince the faithful that sin is not sin.
 - 2. Men will try to convince others that there is no punishment for sin.
- B. In fact, those who disobey God by practicing sin will come under the wrath of God.
- C. Therefore, Christian, do not be deceived and do not partake!

5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light

- A. There was a time when the members of the church at Ephesus participated in those sinful things – they were darkness.
- B. Now, their sins have been forgiven and they have become light in the Lord.
- C. To return to those sins would be to revert to darkness.
- D. Instead, they must walk as children of light and let their lights shine in the world.

5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)

- A. The fruit produced by the Holy Spirit – through the Gospel – is goodness, righteousness and truth.
- B. To demonstrate that one is a follower of God, the proper fruit must be seen in his or her life.
- C. Darkness produces corruption and death; light produces wholesome, living fruit.

5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord

- A. The way one proves what is acceptable to the Lord is by walking in the light.
- B. There are two ways to understand the meaning of this verse.
 - 1. By living the Christian life, one will put to the test what is acceptable to the Lord, resulting in a blessed life now and eternal life in Heaven.
 - 2. Or, by living the Christian life, one shows that he has tested and learned what is acceptable to the Lord.
- C. Compare Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 1:9-11

5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them

- A. In order for the Christian to walk as a child of light, he must have no fellowship with darkness.
 - 1. God is light and He has no fellowship with darkness (1 John 1:5).
 - 2. For man to be in fellowship with God, he must not walk in darkness (1 John 1:6-10).
 - 3. This includes not practicing sin and not having fellowship with sin.
- B. This Greek word for 'fellowship' means, "To share company with; to co-participate; to become a partaker together with others."
 - 1. This particular word is found only two other times in the New Testament.
 - 2. In Revelation 18:4, it refers to participating in the sins of the world.
 - 3. In Philippians 4:14, it refers to supporting the preaching of the Gospel.
- C. The word 'unfruitful' means, "Barren," and perfectly describes the works of sin.
 - 1. The Christian must not participate in works that have no light or life.
 - 2. Thus, we must not live a life of sin.
 - 3. We must not become "unequally yoked" with the worldly (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
 - 4. We must not seek and heed the counsel of the ungodly (Psalm 1:1-2).
 - 5. We must avoid those who teach error – this includes giving them money or supporting their works (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Jn. 9-11).
 - 6. We must practice church discipline (1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14).
- D. Instead of having fellowship with sin and error – which would cause the lost to think that they were saved – the Christian is to reprove them.
 - 1. The word 'reprove' means, "To rebuke, convict, convince, admonish, refute; to find fault with; to bring to the light."
 - 2. The child of God does this by holding forth the word of life – teaching the truth of God's Word (cf. Philippians 2:16).
 - 3. This is also accomplished by setting an example of walking in the light.

5:12-13 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light

- A. Sin is not only unfruitful and dark, but also shameful.
- B. The sinful practices of the world – especially the idolatrous world – are too shameful to speak of in "polite company."
- C. Thus, the Christian must in no way appear to be in fellowship with them and, instead, must reprove them with the Gospel.

5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light

- A. Therefore, God calls men to come out of darkness and into the light of His Son.
- B. Addressed to the world, this verse calls on them to wake up and come out from among the spiritually dead – those who are lost.
- C. Addressed to the church, this verse calls on them not to become complacent but to remain separated from the spiritually dead.
- D. The source of light – salvation – is Christ; and, He will shine upon those who come to Him in obedience.

5:15-16 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil

- A. Because of the temptations and challenges faced in this world, the Christian must walk in wisdom.
 - 1. The word 'circumspectly' means, "Exactly, accurately, diligently, or perfectly" (cf. Matt. 2:8; Luke 1:3; Acts 18:25; 1 Thes. 5:2).
 - 2. The Christian is to walk carefully according to the path revealed in the Word of God.
 - 3. The fool lives according to his own thinking and wisdom – not the revealed wisdom of God.
 - 4. The child of God must not fall into that way of thinking and living.
 - a. The result is personal sin and condemnation.
 - b. The result is division in and destruction to the church.
- B. To walk in wisdom, the Christian must redeem the time.
 - 1. This phrase means to buy up the opportunities of life.
 - 2. All men are granted the same number of hours and minutes in each day.
 - 3. To redeem them is to use them in a way that honors and follows God.
 - 4. Time management is a discipline that must be developed and maintained by Christians.
- C. Opportunities must be recognized and used because the days are evil – meaning that there are many temptations and distractions that would rob our time from the Lord.
 - 1. It is bad enough for time to be wasted.
 - 2. It is worse when opportunities to do good are neglected.
 - 3. It is worse yet when time is used to do evil and commit sin.

5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is

- A. Thus, the Christian must be wise in his manner of living.
- B. True wisdom comes from knowing and understanding the will of the Lord.
- C. One of the best uses of our time is in studying, learning, and memorizing the Word of God.
- D. Then, we must put it into practice by obeying, living, and teaching it.