



Walking in Christ's Love, Light, and Wisdom Ephesians 5

Introduction

Paul's description of the believer's walk in Christ continues in Chapter 5. This is the second part of the third major division of Ephesians. Our outline looks like this:

- I. The Believer's Position in Christ - Ephesians 1
- II. The Believer's Possessions in Christ - Ephesians 2-3
- III. The Believer's Practice of Purposeful Living in Christ - Ephesians 4-5
 - A. A Worthy Walk - Ephesians 4:1-16
 - B. A New Walk - Ephesians 4:17-32
 - C. A Walk in Love - Ephesians 5:1-7
 - D. A Walk in the Light - Ephesians 5:8-14
 - E. A Walk in Wisdom - Ephesians 5:15-33
- IV. The Believer's Spiritual Power in Christ - Ephesians 6

Paul laid his doctrinal base in the first part of his letter (Chapters 1-3) and continues with the practical outworking of that doctrine in the lives of believers. Knowing God's Word is important, and it must be balanced with living God's Word. In Ephesians 4, we learned what it means to *walk worthy of the calling to which you were called* (4:1), and that the Christian walk is entirely different than a worldly walk. In Chapter 5, Paul defines this new walk as walking in love, light, and wisdom.

Outline of Ephesians 5

- I. Walking in Love - Ephesians 5:1-7
- II. Walking in the Light - Ephesians 5:8-14
- III. Walking in Wisdom - Ephesians 5:15-33

I. Walking in Love - Ephesians 5:1-7

Paul puts the standard for the Christian walk as high as it can be. *Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children.* If walking in love is our goal, God is our example. His is the highest and greatest love (Ephesians 3:19). *We love because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19).

A. Love, as Christ Loved Us – Ephesians 5:2

Jesus Christ is the greatest example of love in giving Himself for us, *as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma*. By His sacrifice on the cross, Christ was the perfect offering. He saved us from our

sins so we could have new lives and live for God. This was an offering pleasing and glorifying to God. Paul describes it as a *sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma*.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the perfect fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrifices. The Book of Leviticus describes the five offerings God commanded for Israel. All five looked ahead to and pictured the perfect offering of Christ. The first three were described as being a *sweet aroma to the LORD* (Leviticus 1:17; 2:2; 3:16) and were voluntary offerings.

1. The burnt offering - Leviticus 1

This offering required the sacrifice of an unblemished male animal from the flock or herd. The burnt offering depicted Christ's perfection.

2. The grain offering - Leviticus 2

The grain offering expressed the offerer's dedication and thanksgiving to God. It was a picture of Christ's perfect devotion to God's will and plan of salvation.

3. The peace offering - Leviticus 3

This was a reconciliation, or fellowship, offering. It was fulfilled in Christ's sacrifice which depicted both His peace with God and His making peace between God and man.

4. The sin and trespass offerings - Leviticus 4-5

The last two offerings are not described in Scripture as a sweet aroma to God. Both depicted Christ as the sin bearer.

B. As Children of the Kingdom - Ephesians 5:3-5

1. "Saintly" living and speech - 5:3-4

Those who walk "in Christ" live pure lives, free of immorality and greed. "Such sins are so godless that the world should never have reason even to suspect their presence in Christians" (The MacArthur Bible Commentary, John MacArthur). Furthermore, a Christian's speech is to be pure, free from obscenity, foolish talk, and *coarse jesting*, such as off-color jokes. Rather than participating in crude conversations, a Christian should give thanks to the glory of God (Ephesians 4:29, 5:20; Colossians 3:8, 4:2).

2. A matter of inheritance - 5:5

No fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Such a person does not demonstrate saving faith in Christ, but rather unbelief, and will not inherit the kingdom of God. See also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 12:14.

C. Not deceived - Ephesians 5:6-7

People in the world try to deceive those who are “in Christ” by enticing them to sin “just this once” and to compromise their testimony. Some Christians allow themselves to be deceived and eventually pay a heavy price in loss of reputation and fruitfulness for Christ. Paul gives strong warning against being deceived and partaking in the sins of the world.

We all need continual reminders against slipping into sinful behaviors. The apostle Peter wrote, *I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the....truth.* Peter knew that even mature believers need encouragement and exhortation to stay the course as they endeavor to live for Christ. In his letter, he continued, *Yes, I think it is right....to stir you up by reminding you* (2 Peter 1:12-13).

To turn your back on “empty words” and choose a disciplined Christian walk is to show love for Christ and others. Will you selflessly serve others through consistent behavior, even though you might sometimes be tempted to relax your standards? To maintain a high standard is not “legalistic,” it is the loving thing to do.

II. Walking in the Light - Ephesians 5:8-14

A. Children of Light - Ephesians 5:8-9

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provided insight into the Essene sect (200 B.C.) and their teachings concerning “the children of darkness” and “the children of light”. The Apostle John used the themes of darkness and light in his gospel and epistles. Evidently the concept was very familiar in the first century. Jesus also spoke of darkness and light, referring to people as one or the other. We are either children of darkness or children of light, depending on whom we follow. Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world, he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

Those who walk in the light display the fruit of the Spirit in *goodness, righteousness, and truth.*

B. Discovering what is Acceptable to the Lord - Ephesians 5:10-14

1. *Have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness*

2. *But rather expose them*

Like a slimy creature that slithers away when you turn over a rock, Satan hates to be exposed. He cannot stand the light. One way to conquer evil is to expose it. Rational, unprejudiced people will recognize evil when it is exposed and will avoid it. People whose consciences are seared and who knowingly indulge in evil practices will refuse to acknowledge the light. Such people *love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil* (John 3:19). *For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed* (John 3:20).

Christians need to be constantly alert to temptation because it is easy to be enticed by *the passing pleasures of sin* (Hebrews 11:25). Stand firm and let your light shine in the darkness.

III. Walking Wisely - Ephesians 5:15-33

The Book of Proverbs contrasts the foolish person with the wise person, as Paul does here. *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.* Having discussed the foolish walk, Paul now gives sound instruction.

A. Redeem the Time - Ephesians 5:16

Time is the one commodity we all have in common. We may differ in background, looks, means, and opportunity, but we all have twenty-four hours a day. They can be “spent” and they are gone, or they can be “redeemed” and kept for eternity. Not every moment can be used for prayer, Bible study, or witnessing, but every moment can be used in or out of God’s will. A committed Christian recognizes the importance of time as a resource. It is a limited resource which will someday end on earth for each one of us. What we do with it is our choice, and God will hold us accountable. To redeem the time is to buy it back by putting it to good use. Time is not ours, but God’s. Each day, do you accomplish something of eternal value so you will not waste that day?

B. Understand What the Will of the Lord is - 5:17

Paul says it is *unwise* not to understand God’s will. God has revealed His will in His Word. He will reveal further details to those who ask Him (Matthew 7:7;

John 7:17; James 4:3). Have you asked God for His will concerning your career, housing, marriage, all aspects of your life?

C. *Be Filled with the Spirit* - 5:18-20

Wisdom and understanding begin with being filled with the Holy Spirit. Few people use these verses when referring to being filled with the Holy Spirit, yet that is precisely what they are about!

1. Commitment

First, being filled with the Spirit is in agreement with two points mentioned previously: the need to redeem our time in a disciplined life and the need to commit to God's will.

2. Obedience

Second, it is a command to be filled with the Spirit. Obedience is a response required from us, not something we are to seek until God "does it." The process of being filled with the Spirit is neither mysterious nor weird. It is The Normal Christian Life as the title of Watchman Nee's book states.

3. Expression

Third, there is an intelligible, simple expression associated with being filled. It is the language of a merry and thankful heart. We are to speak, or share, God's Word with each other, to make melody in our hearts, and to thank Him at all times in the name of Jesus. *For all things* does not mean that we need to thank Him for tragedies, but perhaps for what He can do with the tragedy or what He can do with us through the tragedy. When Paul says, *in everything give thanks* (1 Thessalonians 5:18), it may shed light on the meaning here.

In order to express the Holy Spirit's filling, it is helpful to know and memorize Scripture, including psalms, and also hymns and spiritual songs. We can uplift those around us and lift our own spirits also, by making melody and reflecting on Scripture.

D. Submit to One Another - Ephesians 5:21

Fourth, we are wise to submit to one another in the fear of God. Jesus said to agree quickly even with someone who is against us (Matthew 5:25). This is illustrated by three basic relationships: wives and husbands, children and parents, slaves and masters. These will be discussed in the next lesson.

Applications

1. Do you welcome the light of God's Word shining on your life and clearing away any debris of the world that has accumulated? Or do you hide from the light? Anyone who covers their sins will not prosper (Proverbs 28:13). How do you respond to evil? Do you ignore and cover it up or expose it?

2. Are you humbly taking to heart Paul's reminders concerning your Christian walk? What action are you taking concerning loving others, letting your light shine, and redeeming the time?