

# Ephesians 5:1-20

*As Paul continues with instruction, he gives the amazing command to be "imitators of God." Since we are God's "beloved children" and "children of light," the believer has the tremendous privilege and responsibility of living a life of love, just as Christ did for us. Paul focuses on attributes that should characterize our talk and our walk, so that the light of God's love can shine through us to a world filled with darkness.*

*These instructions are convicting and challenging for every believer.*

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## Day 1

Ephesians 5:1-4NAS

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;*

*2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*

*3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;*

*4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

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### **Walk in love**

1. What charge is given to believers and why? 5:1 (Cf. 4:1)

- What do we need to remember about our identity in order to do this? 5:1b (Cf. Eph 5:8; Colossians 3:12)

2. What is our example of how to "imitate" God? 5:2a (See 1 Peter 2:21)

- Why is love so important to our witness? I John 4:19-21

3. How far did Christ's love take Him? 5:2b (Cf. Romans 5:6-10)

- How did Jesus explain His love for the Father? John 14:31

4. What are we asked to sacrifice? Romans 12:1

- How does this relate to giving up our right to "anger" and "bitterness" etc. (4:31)?

5. What behaviors did Paul warn against and why? 5:3 (What is the source of these behaviors? Eph. 4:17-19)
- To what extent are they to be avoided? 5:3b (Compare the command in Colossians 3:5)
6. In what way(s) do you think simply naming (or discussing) immoral or impure things (5:3) is detrimental or defeating?
- What implications does this have for the care we need to take with magazines, TV, movies, the internet, etc.?
7. What command did Paul give concerning immorality in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20? (What makes this sin so harmful?)
8. Why do you think Paul linked greed/covetousness with immorality and impurity?

**FYI:** "**Fornication** ["immorality"] and other forms of unclean living were certainly sins against which converts from paganism needed to be put on their guard... We may think it strange to see **covetousness** ["greed"] so closely associated with these vices, but Paul is simply moving from outward manifestations of sin to their inner springs in the craving of the heart. We may remember how our Lord similarly traces murder back to the angry thought, and adultery to the lustful glance (Matthew 5:21 ff. 27ff.)."  
- F. F. Bruce

9. What care should be taken with our words? 5:4

**FYI: (5:4)** "Paul used a comprehensive list of sexual sins:  
**Fornication** (*porneia*), a broad word describing sexual sin.  
**Uncleanness**, another broad word for 'dirty' moral behavior, especially in a sexual sense.  
**Filthiness**, which has much the same idea as uncleanness.  
**Coarse jesting**, which has the idea of inappropriate, impure sexual humor.  
**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.  
...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.  
...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)."  
- David Guzik

10. What *should* be an important part of our speech? 5:4b (Cf. Hebrews 13:15)

**Applying the Word:** *How has your speech changed over time as a believer? In what ways could you continue to improve your speech?*

## Day 2

Ephesians 5:5-10 NAS

5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;

8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

9(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

### **Do not partake with the immoral**

11. Interestingly, with what did Paul connect immorality, impurity and covetousness? 5:5 (Cf. Colossians 3:5)

- With what does 1 John 2:16,17 connect those things?

**FYI:** Another surprising revelation is that "**covetousness**" is equivalent to "**idolatry**." In fact, "Thou shalt not covet" is the last of God's ten commandments (Exodus 20:17), whereas the first two are commands against idolatry (Exodus 20:3-5). Covetousness, in God's sight, is equivalent to the worship of the creation more than the Creator (Romans 1:25), the same as the worship of other aspects of nature as personified in various gods and goddesses. The god of money and material things is Mammon, and Jesus stressed that 'ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Matthew 6:24)."  
- Henry Morris

"In the New Testament period the term **idolatry** began to be used as an intellectual concept. Idolatry became not the actual bowing down before a statue but the replacement of God in the mind of the worshiper...At this point the modern believer must understand the vicious nature of idolatry. While we may not make or bow down to a statue, we must be constantly on guard that we let nothing come between us and God. As soon as anything does, that thing is an idol."  
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

12. What warning did Paul give about a person who habitually lives this way? 5:5b

**FYI:** Not receiving an "inheritance" seems to refer to either:

- 1) a loss of eternal life – i.e. a person does not have the Holy Spirit within them (See I John 3:6) or
- 2) a loss of rewards - i.e. a person is resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit (See I Corinthians 3:13-15; 9:24-27)

13. What kind of deception did Paul warn against? 5:6a What do you think he means by “empty/vain words?”

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: Empty/vain** *kenos* NT:2756 expresses the "hollowness" of anything, the "absence" of that which otherwise might be possessed. It is used ...of words which convey erroneous teachings, Eph 5:6"  
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

14. What are some of the empty (vain, hollow) words or teachings that Paul encountered? Colossians 2:8; 16-23

15. What do people need to keep in mind regarding “empty words”? 5:6b

- How do we need to respond to them? 5:7 (Compare 5:11a)

### **Walk in light**

16. What were we once? 5:8a (Compare what were we called in 2:3.)

17. What amazing identity do we have in Christ? 5:8b What responsibility does that bring?

- How is this change described in Acts 26:18?

#### ***Digging Deeper***

What light has Christ given us? 2 Corinthians 4:6

**FYI: children of light.** A number of beautiful metaphors are used in the Bible to apply to those who have become 'children of God' (I John 3:10) by the new birth. They are 'children of the day' (I Thessalonians 5:5), 'children of the kingdom' (Matthew 13:38), and 'children of wisdom' (Matthew 11:19)."  
- Henry Morris

18. What should characterize our walk? 5:9,10 (Contrast 4:18,19)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: righteousness** "*dikaiosune* NT:1343 is 'the character or quality of being right or just'; it was formerly spelled 'rightwiseness,' which clearly expresses the meaning...Dikaiosune is found in the sayings of the Lord Jesus, (a) of whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God."  
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

19. What do we need to “learn” (lit. test, prove)? 5:10 (How do we learn this? Romans 12:2)

**Applying the Word:** When do you find it most challenging to maintain the qualities of “goodness, righteousness and truth” in today’s culture? (Consider social activities, home life, personal and professional relationships, etc.)

### Day 3

Ephesians 5:11-14 NAS

11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

14 For this reason it says,

"Awake, sleeper,

And arise from the dead,

And Christ will shine on you."

#### **Do not partake with darkness**

20. What does the word “unfruitful” (5:11) indicate about the nature of immoral behaviors?

21. How is the contrast between darkness and light described in Galatians 5:19 and 5:22?

- What are the consequences of this kind of behavior? Galatians 6:8

22. What are two responsibilities we have towards “deeds of darkness?” 5:11

- What do we need to keep in mind when we expose deeds of darkness? 5:12 (Cf. 5:3)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME expose/reprove** – *elencho* NT:1651, "to convict, rebuke, reprove"

- Vine's Expository Dictionary

"**becomes visible**" - NT:5319 "To make apparent, manifest, known, show openly."

- The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament (1435)

"God's light shows these up for what they are."

- Stuart Allen (99)

**"But how were they able to expose them and yet not mention them?"** The answer which is clear from the entire context is that by means of a life of goodness and righteousness and truth (Ep 5:9) they must reveal what a vast contrast there is between the works of those who walk in the light and the works of those who walk in darkness. (Exposition of Ephesians in the NT Commentary Set. Baker Book)"

- preceptaustin.org

23. How then can we expose deeds of darkness? 5:13 (Cf. 4:15)

24. In 2 Corinthians 4:2, list the steps Paul took when he confronted evil? (Note: “*Manifestation/setting forth*” in this verse is from the same word as “*expose*”.)

- Why is this approach so powerful? Hebrews 4:12

25. Underline the positive effect our witness can have on unbelievers:

- Matthew 5:16 "...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. NIV
- Titus 2:7,8 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. NIV
- 1 Peter 2:15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. NIV
- 1 Peter 3:15-16 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. NIV

26. Underline the adverse effects our witness can have:

- 1 Peter 4:4 They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. NIV
- John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. NASU

27. From John 3:20,21, what two opposite reactions are there to the light? Why?

28. Because God’s light has the power to expose and correct darkness, what exhortation did Paul give? 5:14 (In 5:14, many think Paul is quoting a Christian hymn or compiling the meaning of several Old Testament passages together.) (See also 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6)

**Applying the Word:** How does Paul's command in 5:11 compare to the argument that in order to really love someone you have to love or accept what they do? (e.g. The more you love someone, how much are you affected by any self-defeating behavior in which they are engaged? Consider a parent's love for their child. How can making a moral judgment about some behavior be the most loving thing to do?)

## Day 4

Ephesians 5:15-20 NAS

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,

16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

### Walk wisely

29. From Ephesians 5, list the ways we are to walk.

- 5:2
- 5:8
- 5:15 (Cf. 1:17)

### Digging Deeper

Read Proverbs 2:1-5.  
How passionately should we be seeking God's wisdom/instruction?

30. Why do we need to be careful and wise? 5:16 (See also Colossians 4:5)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME:** "**careful**" – Strong's NT:199 *akribos*; exactly: KJV - circumspectly, diligently

**Making the most of/redeeming Strong's** NT:1805 *exagorazo*; to buy up, i.e. ransom; figuratively, to rescue from loss

"... 'buying up the opportunity' (RV marg.; text, "redeeming the time"... i. e., making the most of every opportunity, turning each to the best advantage since none can be recalled if missed." - Vine's Expository Dictionary

"The word translated '**time**' (Gk. *kairos*) denotes a critical epoch, a special opportunity, which may soon pass; 'grasp it,' says the apostle, 'buy it up for yourselves while it lasts.'" - F. F. Bruce

31. In 5:17, what did Paul contrast with being foolish? (Cf. 5:10)

- What did Jesus say about dealing with the world? Matthew 10:16

32. Why does Paul warn against getting “drunk with wine” ? 5:18 (Cf. Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-33)

**FYI:** “do not get drunk” “Over-indulgence in wine was a common enough vice in the world of the New Testament, to judge from the repeated warnings against it scattered throughout the apostolic writings.” - F. F. Bruce

**“But be filled with the Spirit:** ‘God in command and control of man’s whole life, flowing everywhere into it, that He may flow fully and freely out of it...’ (Moule)” - David Guzik

“We are urged to be continually being filled with the Spirit—that is, controlled by the Spirit. In a way analogous to how alcohol may control a person’s thoughts and actions, the better way is to allow the Holy Spirit to have control.

33. What attitudes and actions come from being controlled by the Spirit? 5:19-20 (Compare Galatians 5:22-23)

**FYI:** “The Spirit-filled life will be...fruitful (Ephesians 5:9), active (Ephesians 5:16), understanding (Ephesians 5:17), joyful (Ephesians 5:19), thankful (Ephesians 5:20), and submissive (Ephesians 5:21).” - Henry Morris

34. What different kinds of music do you see in 5:19?

**FYI:** “It is not easy to identify ‘hymns and spiritual songs.’ There is evidence from the early centuries that Christians praised God in singing, but we have no exact knowledge of the forms this took.” - Stuart Allen (101)

**“Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs:** This variety suggests that God delights in creative, spontaneous worship. The most important place for us to have a **melody** unto God is in our **heart**. Many who can’t sing a beautiful melody with the voice can have beautiful melodies in their heart.” - David Guzik

35. What attitude should always accompany this? 5:20a

- How can we be thankful for “all things” (5:20)? (See Romans 8:28,32, 37)

**FYI:** “Sometimes we may not know how to pray, but we can always praise and it never wearies the Lord! Not only this, but it will have a preserving effect on us, for we cannot truly praise and backslide at the same time.” - Stuart Allen (101)

**Applying the Word:** Have you ever made a conscious decision to have an “attitude of gratitude” in a difficult situation? What was the result?