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# Walk In God's Footsteps

## EPHESIANS 5:1-7

### Introduction

1. The way in which you and I live our lives is often described by the apostle Paul as a walk.

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2. Here in 2:1-2 of his letter to the Ephesians, he describes the way we walked (lived) prior to our salvation:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”  
(Ephesians 2:1-2, NASB95)

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3. Our obedience to the gospel is to result in a different walk however:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10, NASB95)

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,” (Ephesians 4:1, NASB95)

4. Paul had just finished addressing the Corinthian Christians their new self and the renewed mind which was to identify them as Christians.
5. In our text tonight, he begins from here and points in the direction their walk and ours is to take us.

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[It begins with our being . . .]

## I. Imitators Of God

### A. WE ARE TO MIMIC GOD, AS CHILDREN MIMIC THEIR PARENTS

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children” (*Ephesians 5:1, NASB95*).

1. The Greek word translated as imitators is μιμηταὶ (*mimētai*), from which we get the word “mimic.”
2. Just as children mimic their parents, so we are to mimic God.
3. At Mt. Sinai when God gave Israel the law through Moses, He told them to mimic Him — “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (*Leviticus 19:2*).
4. In *Luke 6:36*, Jesus commanded His followers, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”
5. In his Sermon on the Mount, He said, “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (*Matthew 5:48*).
6. In *Ephesians 4:24*, Paul showed the Ephesians that the new self which we put on is to be like God in a righteousness and holiness which conforms to the truth.
7. In *4:32*, Paul indicated that we imitate God when we are kind and tender-hearted toward one another.

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### B. WE ARE TO WALK IN LOVE

“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.” (*Ephesians 5:2, NASB95*)

1. Not just any kind of love, but love based upon Christ’s example.
2. Paul describes how this love was shown to us — “Christ . . . gave Himself up for us” (*Ephesians 5:2*).
3. Paul told the Galatian Christians, “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”

(Galatians 2:20).

4. Christ's love for us was a love which resulted in the offering of His body on the cross as a sacrifice to God for our sins.
5. We imitate God by loving others, even to the point of death if necessary (1 John 3:16).

“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16, NASB95)

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[Our walk continues with our . . .]

## II. Abstaining From Evil

### A. THINGS WE ARE TO AVOID

“But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” (Ephesians 5:3–4, NASB95)

1. Immorality (“sexual immorality” ESV, NIV84, HCSB; “fornication” NKJV)
  - a. This sin is the first listed among a group of sins which the apostle Paul called the “works (deeds) of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19).
  - b. It includes any kind of illegitimate sexual relations.
  - c. God declared that such relations are to take place only between a married man and woman.
  - d. In 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul wrote that we are to “flee,” “run from sexual immorality” (HCSB).
  - e. This is what Joseph did when Potiphar's wife grabbed his clothes and tried to seduce him (Genesis 39:12).
2. Impurity (“uncleanness” NKJV)
  - a. Unrestrained sexual behavior.

- b. Describes a person who is morally “unclean in thought and life.”
  - c. Paul’s desire is that we refrain not only from the act of sexual sin, but even from the thought of it.
3. Greed (“covetousness” ESV, NKJV)
- a. Greed, *pleonexia*, is “the desire for having more or for what a person does not have.”
  - b. Typically, it refers to the desire for material possessions.
  - c. In this context it refers to insatiable sexual desire.
- ☐ These must “not even be named” (“heard” HCSB) among us because such things are “improper for God’s holy people” (NIV84).
4. Filthiness (“obscenity” NIV84, “coarse talking” HCSB)
- a. Shameless, immoral conduct in general.
  - b. Obscenities
5. Silly (foolish) talk — foolish talking about sexual sins.
6. Coarse jesting (“crude joking” ESV, HCSB)
- a. Jokes with indecent content.
  - b. Paul did not want the Ephesians to joke about such things.
  - b. Why? Such joking would create an atmosphere in which a person comes to tolerate and even become involved in such sins.
- ☐ These sins are “not fitting” for our conversations. They are “out of place” among those of us who profess to follow Christ.

**Slide 7****B. THE REASON FOR SUCH AVOIDANCE**

“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. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (*Ephesians 5:5–6*, NASB95)

1. In addition to the fact that such sins are “out of place” among God’s people,

Paul gives us another reason we must avoid these sins.

2. It is the fact that anyone who practices these sins will not go to heaven.
3. This truth is reinforced by Paul on other occasions:

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“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10, NASB95)

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“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19–21, NASB95)

4. Look at what the apostle John writes in his first letter:

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“Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God” (1 John 3:7–10a, ESV)

5. Notice what Paul writes in verse 6 of our text:

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“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the

wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (*Ephesians 5:6, NASB95*)

- a. Satan will use “empty words” to try and make us think otherwise.
  - b. Someone may say to us, “God is love” and such a god will not condemn people to Hell because they enjoy life a little more than the rest of us.
6. Paul’s caution to us is this: “Therefore, do not be partakers with them” (*Ephesians 5:7*).

## **Conclusion**

1. Is there any hope for those who have engaged in the sins of which the Corinthian Christians were guilty in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 ? Look at verse 11:

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“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (*1 Corinthians 6:11, NASB95*)

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2. If you are a Christian here tonight know that you too were washed, sanctified and justified. Now, Paul calls you to “be imitators of God, as beloved children; 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.” (*Ephesians 5:1–2, NASB95*)
3. If we strive to imitate our Lord, as Paul did (*1 Corinthians 11:1*), we will not be obsessed with lust, find ourselves shouting obscenities, or engaging in off-color jokes.
4. Our Lord will give you the strength to imitate Him if ask Him to help you do so.
5. I know this, because He doesn’t want you to be lost!