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Continuing To Walk In The Steps Of The Savior

EPHESIANS 5:8-21

Introduction

1. As we saw last week, the way in which you and I now live our lives as Christians is important to God.
2. After revealing to us all that God has done for us in Christ, Paul began the second part of his letter by urging the Christians in Ephesus and us as well to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [we] have been called” (Ephesians 4:1).
3. He cautioned the brethren about walking any longer as the Gentiles walk, “in the futility of their mind” (Ephesians 4:17).
4. Instead, the new self which each of us put on in our baptism is to imitate God and “walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us” (Ephesians 5:2).
5. After warning these Christians against the immoral lives and immoral talk in which those outside of Christ were engaged, he cautioned, “do not be partakers with them” (Ephesians 5:7).
6. Paul continues his thoughts by pointing to two more ways in which we should walk.

[The first is that we should walk . . .]

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I. Walking As Children of Light

A. WHY? CHRISTIANS ARE CHANGED PERSONS (8A)

“for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light” (Ephesians 5:8, NASB95)

1. You and I are no longer a part of the darkness in which we used to live.

a. At one point we were darkened in our understanding (Ephesians 4:18).

1) In speaking of the world of his day, Paul told the Christians in Rome, there were those who, “even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21, NASB95).

2) This darkness and hardness of heart caused us to be “alienated from the life of God” (Ephesians 4:18).

b. Jesus told Nicodemus that there was a time when we loved darkness rather than the Light, because our deeds were evil (John 3:19-20)

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.” (John 3:19–20, NASB95)

2. Now, as Christians, we are “light in the Lord” (v. 8).

a. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared us to be “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), and said that we must “Let [our] light shine before men in such a way that they may see [our] good works, and glorify [our] Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

b. In his letter to the Christians in Philippi, he said that it is through our shining “as lights in the world” that we “prove” ourselves to be “children of God above reproach” “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Philippians 2:15).

3. You have been rescued out of darkness (Colossians 1:13)

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,” (Colossians 1:13, NASB95)

- a. The word “domain” refers to territory governed or under the government of a sovereign.
- b. The “domain of darkness” is that realm over which Satan has influence and activity.

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B. WHAT KIND OF FRUIT DOES A CHILD OF THE LIGHT PRODUCE?

“(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:9–10, NASB95)

1. As Christians, we are to be known for all that is good, right and true.
2. In his earlier letter to the Christians in Galatia, he referred to it as “the fruit of the Spirit” and expounded upon the nature of this fruit (Galatians 5:22–23).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23, NASB95)

3. Now, we make it our goal to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
4. Sadly, those who choose not to follow Christ or to please Him become known for the opposite, that which is evil, wicked and false.
5. But, if we are to live as children of the Light we must learn what pleases our Lord (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 1:10)

“Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:9)

“so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in

all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10)

Slide 4**C. WHAT DOES A CHILD OF THE LIGHT AVOID?**

“Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.” (Ephesians 5:11–12, NASB95)

1. “Unfruitful deeds of darkness” (11)
 - a. Sin bears no beneficial fruit.
 - b. It brings no benefit to the person participating or to those around him.
2. Why?
 - a. They are shameful (disgraceful) to even speak about.
 - b. They are done in secret.

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3. If anything, light exposes such deeds for what they truly are — evil.

“But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.””

(Ephesians 5:13–14, NASB95)

4. This is what Jesus was referring to in his conversation with Nicodemus when he said,

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.” (John 3:19–20, NASB95)

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II. Walking In Wisdom

A. WALKING WISELY INVOLVES . . .

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (*Ephesians 5:15–17, NASB95*)

1. Making the most of our time (16)

- a. God wants us to make the right use of every opportunity (cf. *Colossians 4:5*).

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.” (*Colossians 4:5, NASB95*)

- b. Why? Because “the days are evil” (16)

- 1) Many are living in sin.

- 2) Since the time is short, we must use every opportunity to help turn them from darkness to light (cf. *James 5:20*)

“Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (*James 5:20*)

2. Understanding the Lord’s will (v. 17)

- a. Only when we understand what pleases God can we carry it out in our lives.

3. Avoiding drunkenness (18a)

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,” (*Ephesians 5:18, NASB95*)

- a. A drunken man acts abnormally — “dissipation” — he/she shows a lack of concern or thought for the consequences of his/her actions.
 - b. Rather than controlling himself, such a person is controlled by the alcohol he consumes.
4. Being “filled with the Spirit” (18b)
 - a. We are controlled by the Holy Spirit of God
 - b. Thus we increasingly demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

Slide 7**B. BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT RESULTS IN OUR . . .**

“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Ephesians 5:19–21, NASB95)

1. Communication with “one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (19a) — our singing is a means by which we minister to one another.
2. Communication with “the Lord” through “singing and making melody with your heart” (19b) — our singing is also a means by which we worship the Lord.
3. Always thanking “God . . . the Father” for all things (20)
4. “Being subject to one another” (21)
 - a) Willingly serving others
 - 1) Regarding one another as more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3).

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;”

(Philippians 2:3, NASB95)

2) Looking out for the interests of others (Philippians 2:4).

“do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4, NASB95)

- b) Not dominating others or exalting ourselves
- c) This begins with a fear of Christ.

Conclusion

1. As God’s beloved children, you and I are to make every effort to imitate our heavenly Father.
2. It begins with our walking in love, a love willing to sacrifice for the good of others.
3. Our imitation of God also includes our walking “as children of light” since our Lord’s light shines within us.
 - a. This means we strive to live lives which are good, right and true.
 - b. We make our goal to please the Lord.
4. Additionally, we walk as wise individuals, always seeking to make the most of the time which God has given us.
5. Finally, we go through life with a spring in our step and a song in our heart, because we are thankful for which God has done for us and continues to do in our lives.
6. Does this describe you?