

# Week of January 8, 2012

## *Seeking Purity in a Sensual Culture*

### Passage Outline

1. **Walk in Love** (Eph. 5:1-5)
2. **Walk in Light** (Eph. 5:8-12)
3. **Walk in Wisdom** (Eph. 5:15-16)

### What This Lesson Is About

God empowers us to live pure lives as we imitate Jesus Christ and walk in His love, light, and wisdom.

### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life

We are all influenced by the sensual messages in our world but through God's power we can choose to live a pure life.

### 1. Walk in Love - Ephesians 5:1-5

#### **Ephesians 5:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. <sup>3</sup> But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

- A. Paul says **be imitators of God**. The root of the verb here means to mimic or copy, copying specific characteristics of another person. As God's **children**, we are to imitate God's character of boundless love and unquestionable purity.
- B. How did we learn to print letters and eventually write our names?
- C. Paul summoned Christians to **live a life of [literally walk in] love**. Paul is saying that we are not to just "talk the talk" but by God's power living in us we are to "walk the talk."
- D. Just like God who did not just tell us of His love for us, but exhibited His love when Jesus **gave Himself for us**.
- E. Jesus did not merely die for our benefit; rather, He died **for us**—instead of us. He substituted for us, receiving the full impact of the divine wrath against sin. Jesus offered Himself as a **sacrificial and fragrant offering** to atone for sin. During Christmas, we were able to smell a little of that fragrant offering in the fragrance of Frankincense as it smoked here in our Sanctuary.
- F. Jesus Christ took our place in paying for our sins; We now take His place in living out our lives as Jesus would have lived. **The Christian life is the Exchanged Life**.
- G. Since we are living for Jesus, would Jesus' life be:
  - i. **sexual immoral and impurity?** Jesus would never live this kind of life so we cannot either.
  - ii. **greedy?** No, Jesus is just the exact opposite of greedy; He is self-giving, completely!
  - iii. **obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking?** Can you imagine Jesus telling a dirty joke?

## How are You Living the “Jesus Life?”

Obscenity and dirty jokes penetrate almost every area of our lives—the workplace, schools, movies, and television. So common is this for us, that many of these verbal intrusions often go unnoticed. We may be tempted to camouflage our Christian identity, and join in the profanities around us so we sound just like everyone else around us.

Paul urges us to “Walk in Love” as he identified a number of actions or characteristics that are opposite to walking in love. Review those and check mark the ones that most frequently or most strongly stand in your way of walking in love. Confess these to Jesus and ask for His power to live the kind of life He would live through you.

\_\_\_ **sexual immoral**                      \_\_\_ **impurity**                      \_\_\_ **greedy**  
\_\_\_ **obscenity, foolish talk**                      \_\_\_ **coarse joking**                      \_\_\_ **something else**

H. Paul strongly warned that people who do these things do **not have inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and of God**. Paul is not saying that a single immoral thought, word, or deed would automatically disqualify us from heaven. What he is saying is that this kind of living can become a habit and that habit may disqualify us from the Kingdom of God.

### 2. Walk in Light - Eph. 5:8-12

#### **Ephesians 5:8-12**

<sup>8</sup>For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup>and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup>For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

- A. Instead of walking in **darkness**, Paul urged believers to **walk as children of light**. For many of us there is a sharp contrast in how we lived before Christ entered our lives, and after Christ entered our lives. That contrast Paul describes with the words **darkness** and **light**.
- Darkness** represents ignorance, error, evil and enemies of God;
  - Light** represents goodness, righteousness, truth and friends of God;
  - As Christians we no longer live in **darkness**, but walk as children of **light**.
- B. Been on an airplane lately? Federal flying regulations require that all passengers surrender themselves and their luggage for inspection. Though these procedures inconvenience us, we comply because the inspection could detect dangerous items. I have never feared walking through the scanner nor having my luggage pass through the X-ray equipment. Do you know why?—I have nothing to hide.
- C. God’s Word is His X-ray equipment: Each believer has the responsibility to discern what pleases God and how to live in the light. Through Bible study, prayer, and the counsel of other believers, we discern how God would have us live in any given situation. Practicing this discernment helps us put into practice God’s truth.

## Jesus is the Light of the World

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). By our character and conduct, we bring God’s light into a dark world and help those in darkness find their way to Jesus Christ

Living as His light in our world, we can also give a loving verbal witness to those blinded by Satan’s darkness. Only as we share the good news can the light enter that person’s heart.

Check mark which best describes how well you “walk as children of the light.” How you might increase the “candle-watt” of your light?

birthday candle;       flashlight;       bonfire;  
 car headlight;       grand opening spotlight

### 3. Walk in Wisdom - Eph. 5:15-16

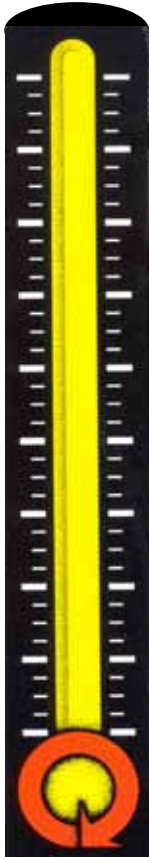
#### Ephesians 5:15-16

<sup>15</sup>Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

- A. Paul encourages us to focus by paying **careful attention** to the way we live. The Greek words here include the ideas of accuracy, precision, and absolute carefulness. Paul left no room for losing focus while living the Christian life. He knew **the gospel’s reputation depended upon believers’ public behavior**.
- B. Paul encourages us to live **as wise people**. In other words, Paul urges us to take our knowledge of Christ and apply it to our everyday lives. In so doing, we will walk in wisdom.
- i. Living wisely involves more than head knowledge; it required discernment. Later in this passage, Paul added that walking in wisdom required that one “understand what the Lord’s will is” (Ephesians 5:17).
  - ii. Living unwisely would be like going on a journey without knowing the destination. Someone asks you, “Where are you going?” and you respond, “Well, I don’t know.” Does that make sense? Yet, many believers meander throughout life, taking little or no care concerning any spiritual goal or destination.
  - iii. If we simply drift through life without giving **careful attention** and focus to where we are going, we may wander into Satan’s traps and end up destroying our witness and more.
- C. The Greek phrase for **making the most of the time** conveyed the idea of buying or redeeming time. There are two different meanings for the word “time.”
- i. **Time as on a Clock:** Paul did not use this word for time referring to a clock, with its measurements in hours, minutes, and seconds.
  - ii. **Time as an Opportunity:** Paul used a term that expressed a season, period, or an opportune moment. Therefore, Paul urged the believers to make the best use of time and grab the urgency of the

opportunities that God provides. As Believers, Paul is urging us to “Seize the Day.”

- D. Why? **Because the days are evil.** We live in a world dominated by evil. We have only so many divine appointments for making the Good News known. When these opportunities present themselves, we must seize every fleeting opportunity for the good of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. “Carpe Deim” Latin for “seize the day.”
- E. Being good stewards of time, we know the preciousness of this commodity. Therefore we must squeeze as much value as possible from each opportunity.
- F. We also must recognize that doing nothing good may be just as bad as doing something evil. Which of these illustrations show people doing something bad? The answer will shock you!



Good or Evil? \_\_\_\_\_  
Gangster types are an easy choice.



Good or Evil? \_\_\_\_\_  
Just because people are successful in business does that mean they are free from greed and selfishness?



Good or Evil? \_\_\_\_\_  
Just because people keep to themselves and do nothing bad does that mean they are doing the good that God desires of their lives?

**Answer:** All individuals above could be doing things that displease God. The successful business person can be full of greed. The person keeping to himself and doing “nothing bad” has no excuse for “doing nothing good” either.

### Biblical Truths of This Lesson

1. An authentic Christian lifestyle does not allow for sexual immorality, impurity, or crude talk of any kind.
2. We honor and worship Christ as we lead others to understand the high standards to which God has called us to live.
3. Coarse, obscene, and vulgar language has no place in a Christian’s conversation—it does not reflect God’s gracious presence in us.
4. Without careful attention and focus, we might wander into Satan’s traps and destroy our witness.