

Walk *in the* Light



Imagine there was a man in our church who claimed to be a Christian. His testimony sounded legitimate and he had a long history of church involvement. However, it was common knowledge that this man's life contained several glaring, long-term sins. One friend of yours insists that if this man were truly a follower of Christ, he would turn away from his sins. Another friend says that we all struggle with various sins and that this man's failings just happen to be among the list of highly visible sins frowned upon in Christian circles. The question is, can a person be a Christian and still sin long-term in grievous ways?

01

What is the command from Ephesians 5:1 and 2?
What does that mean?
How is it possible?
Who or what is our example?

02

Read 1 John 3:18 and 4:7. What do these verses tell us about love?
What are some practical ways you can demonstrate love to a non-family member?

03

Read verses 3 and 4. What attitudes and actions are we to "put off"?
How does Paul characterize these thoughts and actions?
What are we to "put on"?

04

In what way is an immoral person an idolater (v. 5)?

05

What does the command in verse 7 mean practically?

06

In this passage we find the word "darkness" twice and the word "light" five times. What is the significance of this metaphor?

07

What is meant by "walk as children of light" (v. 8)?

08

What are two commands found in verse 11?

09

What does it mean, practically, to "expose the unfruitful works of darkness"?

10

It has been reported that Alexander the Great once discovered a cowardly soldier in his army, who happened to be named Alexander also. It is further reported that he confronted the soldier with the command, "Renounce your cowardice or renounce your name!" As someone who bears the name of Jesus Christ, what should your character reflect?

Are there any commands from verses 1-14 that you're not currently obeying?

What is the number one reason God wants you to live wisely ("be holy")?

11

How do you plan to apply James 1:22 to this passage today?

LOOKING AHEAD 20081124-29 EPH. 5:15-21

M ^{v.15} – Paul is saying, "Be very careful (pay attention) in the way that you live. Don't live like a fool but be wise." What are the characteristics of wise living? (Ps. 1; 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33) What are the characteristics of foolish living? (Ps. 53:1; Prov. 13:16; 14:3; 19:1; 20:3; 26:11; 29:11; Ecc. 10:3) What are some of the benefits of wisdom? (Ps. 1; Prov. 3:13; 2:6-7; 8:11; 10:8; 29:3)

T ^{v.16} – God has given each one of us a fixed amount of time, every moment of every day brings us one step closer to eternity. Understanding the brevity of life, how then must a Christian live? We must keep eternity in view because life here will often be hard ("the days are evil"), but we also must keep eternity in view because we are commanded to redeem the time. Indeed, every moment of life is a precious gift from our loving Creator. Be sure that you are living life to the fullest. Ah, but there's a sticky proposition; what exactly does it mean to "live life to the fullest"? Live the way God has instructed you to live, in such a way as to bring maximum glory to your Creator.

W ^{v.17,18} – Instead of wasting your life (living in an unwise way), use the time God has granted you to get to know Him (understand His will). When Paul says "do not be drunk with wine" he is likely referencing the drunken and sensual pagan worship which was common in Ephesus; he is calling the believers there out of their old sinful thinking and actions. He calls that wasteful lifestyle "dissipation," which literally means "unsavedness." He then tells them instead of wasting your life, "Be filled with the Spirit." Practically speaking, how can you know God's will and be filled with the Spirit?

T ^{v.18,19} – Instead of wasting your life, praise God with it! Notice Paul mentions three different kinds of singing: "psalms" refers to Old Testament psalms put to music; "hymns" refers to other songs of praise, some of which we find in the New Testament (2 Tim. 2:11-13)—these songs likely taught about and or praised Jesus Christ specifically—and "spiritual songs," which were likely songs of testimony. He also tells us several characteristics of this singing; first it should instruct believers "speaking to one another," second it must be from the heart, and thirdly, the songs are to be sung to the Lord.

F ^{v.20} – We are instructed to give thanks: always; for all things; to God the Father; in the name of Jesus Christ. "Always" and "for all things" are very inclusive; you could say God is calling us to an "attitude of gratitude." We can, and should, give thanks to God even when life is hard or things don't seem to be going our way. Do you find it easy to give thanks when circumstances are difficult? Few people do. What can you do to foster a more thankful attitude?

S ^{v.21} – "Submitting to one another in the fear of God..." What do you think of when you hear the word "submission"? The dictionary definition of submission is, "to yield to governance or authority" or "to yield oneself to the authority or will of another." It carries the idea of surrender "to permit oneself to be subjected to something or to defer to or consent to abide by the opinion or authority of another." Basically, in submission, instead of seeking your own will you are willing to submit to the will of another "in the fear of God." Why do people tend to struggle in the area of submission? What are some common pitfalls?