

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

WALK IN THE LIGHT (EPHESIANS 5:1-16)

MAY 12, 2019



The Hill

1 Cor. 6:12-20

1. Grace means we are free from sin, but not free to sin (1 Cor 6:12-13).
 - a. Forgiven sin isn't beneficial
 - b. Forgiven sin can still control our lives
 - c. Forgiven sin is not of God
 - d.
2. Sexual intimacy is for creating a unified, lifelong, spiritual bond between two people (1 Cor 6: 14-16).
3. Flee anything that will threaten that spousal bond (1 Cor. 6:18)

In Christ our sin is forgiven, but our lives (and bodies) are not our own (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

As children of God, our lives are not our own to live as we please. We must seek to imitate Him and walk in the light rather than the darkness.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. **What does it mean to be godly? How relevant and important is this question to believers you know? To unbelievers?**

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

2. Do you consider the concept of being godly impossible, prideful, irreverent, or challenging? Explain.

Leader: Our culture understands being godly as being like God. Paul's words, in Ephesians 5, challenge us to compare ourselves to God, and to become more and more like Him as we do. He is pure, so we are to live in purity. He is light, so we are to walk in the light. It is essential to remember that this call to purity comes after we have received God's grace that leads to salvation. We are not saved by attaining some level of purity. Instead, we are able to forsake sin and choose purity because we have been saved. Furthermore, purity is an ongoing pursuit. Thankfully, God is willing to forgive us when we fall short (1 John 1:9).

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 5:1-7.](#)

3. Have you ever thought of yourself as an “imitator of God” (NIV, “follow God’s example”)? How would you describe to a new believer what it means to imitate God’s behavior? What characteristics demonstrate we are God’s children?

4. How would you describe the kind of love (v. 2) that should be a defining characteristic of life for believers?

Leader: Jesus modeled, among other things, true love and sacrifice. Because of how much He loves us, He sacrificed His life for us, and that should motivate us to love others in return. No characteristic better defines God than His sacrificial love. The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:8,16). If we are to imitate God, love must be the defining characteristic of our lives as well. Loving others the way Jesus “loved us and gave Himself up for us” requires giving sacrificially of all we possess and even our very lives.

5. How does self-indulgence (vv. 3-7) contrast with the self-giving nature of Jesus?

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6. How are the sins in these verses examples of idolatry (v. 5)?

Leader: Understanding culture's influence on our bodies, minds, and speech is of the utmost importance, because like it or not, we all imitate something or someone. There's no middle ground on this one: We're either learning how to imitate Christ or we're imitating the world around us. Idolatrous behavior limits our service to God and robs us of effort, time, and energy that we could have used to live for Him.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 5:8-16.](#)

7. What do the symbols of light and darkness represent in this passage? What does Paul mean by "walk as children of light"?

8. What should characterize the lives of those living as "children of light" (v. 8)?

9. Look at Philippians 1:20-21. How do these verses communicate the same idea that Paul expressed in Ephesians 5?

Leader: The fruit of the light includes the qualities the Holy Spirit brings about in our lives to help us live as children of God. When we choose daily to live in the light of God's truth, we put on goodness (moral excellence), righteousness (a characteristic we gain through Christ's sacrifice for us), and truth (honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness).

10. What is it about biblical wisdom that makes it necessary if we want to live in the light and imitate God's love (v.15)? Give some practical examples of what it looks like to live as wise people.

11. According to verses 15-16, what is the first step to living a life of wisdom?

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Leader: Paul's charge to live in wisdom comes on the heels of the previous verses, which help us understand what lives changed by the gospel look like. Living in wisdom means taking every opportunity to glorify God and reflect the gospel to those around us. When we resolve to live in the light, we choose to pursue Christ above all worldly pursuits. We do this so that our lives will testify to others about God's grace, mercy, and love.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

12. In what specific areas of life are you working to imitate Christ? In what ways are you working to reflect His values?

13. In what areas of life is it most difficult to imitate God? Why is this the case? Even so, what could be the result of imitating God in those areas?

PRAYER

Close your time in prayer, thanking God that He has brought us into the light. Pray that your group, and our church, would be a place where we encourage each other to live in the light. Pray also that your group would seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that you might all make the most of every opportunity you have to glorify God.

MEMORIZE

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.
Ephesians 5:8

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

EPHESIANS 5:1-16

5:1. Just as it is natural for an earthly child to imitate his earthly father, so should the spiritual child imitate his Heavenly Father. The word imitate comes from the word mimeomai, from which we get our word mimic. It means "to act like."

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5:2. To imitate God in this context means to walk in love. Love denies self. It is willing to give up self-interest for God's sake. Since Jesus gave himself up for us, we ought to give ourselves up for him. To give oneself up means "to follow, to obey, to live in relationship with." When we live with this attitude toward God, we please him just as a pleasant aroma pleases the one who smells it (see Lev. 1:17; 3:16; Isa. 53:10). Jesus became the sacrifice for our sins. We must become a living sacrifice, obeying him (see Rom. 12:1).

5:3-4. The opposite of imitating God and giving oneself up for him is living in sexual immorality, impurity, and greed (note the same Greek words for impurity and greed in 4:19). Paul says that it is not proper for these things even to be named among the children of God. These are sins of "deed." In addition to sinful deeds, there ought not to be sinful "words." Obscenity, foolish talk, coarse joking ought not be part of the speech patterns of Christians. Rather, we ought to speak from a heart of thankfulness to God.

5:5-7. Paul warns the Ephesian Christians not to engage in the activities of those who are disobedient. It might be possible to infer that if Christians engaged in these activities (immorality, impurity, covetousness) they would lose their salvation. That is not Paul's point. Paul is saying that we are not to do these things because we are no longer those who are disobedient. Since we are not part of them anymore, we should not be partners with them. It is not a matter of salvation in this instance but a matter of identification. We are not like them anymore; therefore, we ought not to live like them. If we are partners with them, we are forewarned. Such people do not share the kingdom inheritance. Rather, they endure divine wrath. No fine theological arguments can get around that simple truth.

5:8-10. It would be a gross inconsistency for a Christian to participate in the flagrant sins of non-Christians. The Ephesian Christians were once just like those who are disobedient. But no longer! Rather than doing deeds of immorality, impurity, and greed, they should do deeds of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Christians are no longer darkness, but children of light. Therefore, we should do deeds of light, not darkness. Only as you walk in God's light can you please him.

5:11-14. Not only ought we not to do the same sins as those who are disobedient, but we should try to expose them. Paul may be referring to exposing the sins of church members, because the church is responsible to hold its members accountable for their lifestyles. If a Christian lives in flagrant, unrepentant sin, the church is to try to get them to turn from their sin (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1).

The context is dealing with the disobedient. This would indicate that the church should attempt to expose the sins of the non-Christian, which would be a full-time job if done very thoroughly. Society's major sins certainly need to be exposed.

Sins are exposed by shining light into sin's darkness. An amazing thing happens. Darkness can no longer hide its nature and acts in secret. All is exposed to light. Light that makes everything visible brings an even more radical element. Literally, this reads, everything that is revealed is (or becomes) light. Light turns darkness into light. This is the church's mission. Whether the people in darkness are church members or society members, the goal is to transform them completely from darkness to light.

The poetic passage in verse 14 may be a quote from an ancient hymn based on Scripture. It is not a direct scriptural quotation. A person who was participating in the deeds of darkness is to wake up and rise from the dead, meaning to turn from those deeds. Christ will shine on you may mean that Christ is pleased with the person who turns from such deeds. He is light and the source of their light. His shining light exposes all their darkness and transforms them into light.

5:15-17. The world in which we live is filled with dangers and deceptions. It is not always easy to live an enlightened life even when we want to.

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We can get tripped up or ambushed by events and people without even being aware of the danger. We must be very careful to live our life rooted in wisdom, using our time wisely. Not to do so would be foolish. The will of the Lord is that we live carefully, cautiously, always matching our lifestyle with the teachings of Scripture.