

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***  
*107 East Austin*  
*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*  
*830-997-8834    jthomas@fbgbible.org*

**C0510 -- Mar. 9, 2005 – Ephesians 5:7-11 – Walk in Light-Part 1**

**1. Do Not Become Involved with Evildoers (5:7-10)**

**a. Command: Do Not Get Involved (5:7)**

**Ephesians 5:7 Therefore, [you all] do not become partakers with them.**

The division should be between verses 6-7 not 5-6 or 7-8. Again, Paul makes this clear by the use of two important words, **therefore** (*oun*) at the beginning of verse 7 and **walk** (*peripateo*) at the end of verse 8. He uses these two words in conjunction every time he makes an application of the doctrine in chapters 1-3.

4:1	Walk in <b>Unity</b>
4:17	Walk in <b>Holiness</b>
5:1-2	Walk in <b>Love</b>
5:7-8	Walk in <b>Light</b>

5:7-14 is an inference of 5:1-6. Why are we to Walk in Light? Two reasons. First, because you are not a son of disobedience. The sons of disobedience are under the wrath of God, but you are an imitator of God. Second, because you are a child of light not of the darkness, therefore act like a child of light.

Verse 7 should be translated **do not become partakers** rather than **do not be partakers**. The word for **become** is *ginesthe* and it is used in 4:32; 5:1; 5:7 and 5:15. In all four places it is a present imperative meaning “to begin and to continue”. So, Paul is saying “do not begin and do not continue partaking **with them**”. Who is **them**? **them** refers back to the **sons of disobedience** in v 6 who are under the wrath of God. The word for **partakers** (*summetochos*) means “to become an accomplice in a plot”. Do not become an accomplice in the plot with the sons of disobedience. What is the plot and who is behind it? The plot

is to thwart God's plan. The person behind the plot is Satan. Satan has a plan too and his plan is to destroy as many people as possible; take as many people to hell as possible. This is why one of Satan's names is "the Destroyer". One of Satan's *tactics* in completing his plan is to destroy God's witnesses in the world. If he can deceive you into thinking that it is harmless to participate with unbelievers then he can destroy your witness and drag more people to hell. So, his tactic is to confuse issues so that the believer thinks that light and darkness are not mutually exclusive categories! Satan tries to confuse believers into thinking that they can become partners with unbelievers who are headed in the opposite direction of Christ.

However, it is important to note that Paul is not saying that believers should avoid all association with unbelievers. Instead, Paul is saying we should not participate in their lifestyle. That's what destroys our witness as lights in the world. Turn to 1 Cor 5:9-11 for Paul's clear teaching on this matter

**1 Corinthians 5:9-12** <sup>9</sup> I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; <sup>10</sup> I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world [*God designed the world so that believers had to associate with unbelievers*]. <sup>11</sup> But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler - not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within *the church*?

We'll get back to Christian judging in a moment but let's move on to verse 8.

**b. Reason: Christians are Changed Persons (5:8a)**

**Ephesians 5:8 For [you all] were formerly darkness, but now light in the Lord. [you all] walk as children of light**

Verse 8a is an additional reason we should not be partakers with unbelievers. The reason, **you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. you were** is an imperfect tense meaning "ongoing action in the past". What Paul means by the imperfect is that you were born into this world in darkness and you remained in darkness until God saved you. It is important that Paul does not say that you were **formerly** in **darkness**, but that you **were** **darkness**. You were the embodiment of **darkness**. This means that by

position you were **formerly darkness** during that entire time. The word for **darkness** (*skotos*) is always associated with “evil and sin”. It therefore points to the fact that **formerly** we all lived in the “realm of sin” and under the “power of sin”. Sin was our master and commander. As such we did not have the light of God’s revelation. For an unbeliever their present state is “as good as it gets”. The future for unbelievers gets only darker and darker. For the believer this is “as bad as it gets”. The future for believers gets only brighter and brighter (1 John 2:8). You may have **formerly** been **darkness** but this is no longer who you are. Paul says,

**now you are light.** Now that God has saved you, **you are light in the Lord.** **light** and **darkness** are mutually exclusive. It is important to notice that Paul does not qualify those who are **darkness** but he does qualify those who are **light** as **in the Lord.** What this signifies is that those who are **darkness** are all alone and are there by their own doing as sinners in Adam (seminal imputation) but those who are **light** are not alone and are not **light** by their own doing but by that of the **Lord.** Jesus Christ is the source of the **light** (John 8:12; 9:5). We might say Jesus Christ is the Electric Company and we are light bulbs connected to Christ. As long as we remain in fellowship with Christ we are the light of the world, but as soon as we unscrew ourselves from Christ we become indistinguishable from all the other bulbs that have never been attached to Christ. We **become partakers with...the sons of disobedience.** To unscrew yourself from Christ as a light source is clearly possible b/c Paul commands us at the end of v. 8 to **walk as children of light.**

**c. Command: Walk as Children of Light (5:8b-10)**

**(1) Command to Walk as Children of Light (5:8b)**

This does not mean you can lose your salvation, but it does mean loss of light. You won’t be reflecting the glory of God, you won’t be an imitator of God if you don’t **walk as a child of light.** Light bulbs were meant to put off light. Since you are like a **light** bulb and not like a bulb still sitting on the shelf at Wal-Mart, it only makes sense to stay in connection with Christ so you can be a conduit of Christ’s light to the world and reflect God’s glory. Therefore, Paul commands us to **walk as children of light.** Again, this command is present tense meaning that our habitual life pattern should be one of **walking as children of light.** By position we are **light**; now our experience should line up with our position.

**(2) Characteristics of the Fruit of Light (5:9)**

## **Ephesians 5:9 –For the fruit of the light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth—**

Verse 9 is parenthetical. Parenthetical verses simply mean that they are explanatory. Verse 8 could be directly attached to verse 10 and the grammar would be perfect. But Paul wants to answer a question we might have. What does it look like to **walk as children of light**? Three characteristics are mentioned; **goodness, righteousness and truth**. All three characteristics are **fruit of the light**. This means that although they emanate from believers they are sourced in **the light** itself, who is Christ in this context. God is all three of these things. *First*, God is **goodness**, which means “moral goodness and beneficial goodness” and also carries the sense of generosity. God is the standard of moral and beneficial goodness and He is the archetype of generosity in giving His one and only Son to the world (John 3:16). When we **walk as children of light** the **goodness** of God shines through us. *Second*, we have **righteousness**. Again, **righteousness** finds its source in God. God is righteous, meaning that His character is the standard for what is right and wrong in the universe. God imputed Christ’s righteousness to you the moment you trusted in Christ. When we **walk as children of light** we reflect God’s standard for right and wrong in our own lives. *Third*, we have **truth**. **Truth** also finds its source in God. That God is truth and the source of truth means that God defines reality. When we **walk as children of light** we are walking in conformity with reality, the way God made things. We are walking in the form, which results in freedom and balance in life.

Sinners, walking alone in the darkness, demonstrate three opposite characteristics; rather than **goodness** they demonstrate *evil*, rather than **righteousness** they demonstrate *wickedness*, rather than **truth** they demonstrate *falsehood*. All three of these find their ultimate source in Satan. Believers should **walk as children of light**. As children of the light we have a close relationship to the **light**. Therefore we ought to show dependence on the **light** by relying on God in every situation of life.

### **(3) Confirmation of God’s Pleasure**

#### **Ephesians 5:10 approving what is pleasing to the Lord,**

Verse 10 picks up Paul’s thought from verse 8. So, the first thing we ought to do is to **walk as children of the light**. But now Paul enjoins us to a second thing we ought to do. We ought to **approve what is pleasing to the Lord**. The words translated “trying to learn” in

the NASB come from the Greek word *dokimazo* which means “to test, to scrutinize, to examine” someone in order to approve of them. It was used of testing witnesses for a trial. The intent of a court is to test the possible witness with the goal of discovering if they are approved. That’s the sense of the word here. But what are we to approve?

We are to approve **what is pleasing to the Lord**. We want to approve things that are **pleasing to the Lord** and we want to disapprove of things that are not **pleasing to the Lord**. The **Lord** here refers to Jesus Christ. The word **Lord** means “master, owner”. A slave or employee should want to approve of what is pleasing to his master so believers should want to do and approve of what is pleasing to our Master, Jesus Christ. Of course, pleasing Christ would be pleasing the Father as well. But just **what is pleasing to the Lord**? We are pleasing to the Lord when we do His will and when we approve of His will. This goes beyond approving of God’s general will for all believers life which is found in His commandments. We are not supposed to test or examine God’s commandments for us. What Paul is enjoining us to approve of is God’s *specific will* for our lives.

God’s *general will* for all Christians lives can be found by studying Scripture. But some issues are not directly addressed in Scripture (e.g. what kind of car should I buy, who should I marry, what college should I go to, should we move, etc...). How do we discover God’s will for our lives in these areas so we can approve **what is pleasing to the Lord**? You must learn to find and use principles from Scripture which you can apply in your choices so that you will please the Lord. As you consult the Scriptures the Holy Spirit enables you to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. You can’t just sit around and pray about it. You must also search the Scriptures. Next week we’ll move toward wisdom which is creatively applying Scripture.

## **2. Do Not Become Involved With Evildoers’ Works (5:11-13)**

Believers are not to become fellow participants with unbelievers nor are we to become involved in their works. Instead, we are to expose their works. The reason we are not to do their works is because they are too disgraceful even to speak of.

### **a. Command: Do Not Get Involved But Expose (5:11)**

**Ephesians 5:11 and do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead [you all] even expose them.**

Here is a second command similar to the one in verse 7. In verse 7 we were commanded **not to become partakers with** the sons of disobedience. Now we are commanded not to **participate in their unfruitful deeds of darkness**. We should not engage in **unfruitful deeds of darkness** because we are **children of the light**. If we were formerly darkness, but now we are light in the Lord why should we participate in the sins that come from the dark place which we are no longer in bondage too? Instead of participating **in the unfruitful deeds of darkness**, we should

**even expose them**. This is not talking about exposing the sins of unbelievers, but the sins of believers. In the context it is not even talking about exposing the believer who sins but the sin itself. The word **expose** is very important in the Greek. It means “confronting somebody or something with the aim of showing him or it to be, in some determinate respect, at fault.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore it means to **expose** the fault with the latent idea that some reproof or rebuke will follow. This is the NT technique of discipline. The design is to highlight the sin not the person. Believers are to help other believers who have fallen into sin by exposing their unfruitful works and showing that that when they participate in those works they are acting totally inconsistent with the light. The discipline technique is explained more fully in Matt 18:5-7 and 1 Cor 5. First, turn to Matt 18:15-17

<sup>15</sup> "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. <sup>16</sup> "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED**. <sup>17</sup> "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Stage 1, go to the brother privately, show the fault. If he responds positively then you have won your brother. The issue is settled. It should not be brought up again. This is the Forgive-forget technique. What is human forgiveness? Sometimes people define forgiveness as forgetting. This is not possible for humans. Forgiving does not mean forgetting. It is impossible to immediately erase from one's mind all remembrance of what someone has done against you. That would be nice but it's just not possible. Instead, human forgiveness for the Christian means “I'm not going to bring this up again.” What happens when we refuse to bring up something from the past? Over time we do forget. True forgiveness does lead to forgetting over time, but no one can forget immediately. So, human forgiveness means “I'm not going to bring this up again.” So, if you are married or you have friends that you have forgiven and you still bring up that incident then you never

really forgave them. It's still eating away at you and the relationship. When you really are ready to forgive them, make it right and don't ever bring it up again. Over time you'll forget and the relationship will heal.

But, let's return to Matt 18:16. Let's say your brother does not respond positively. What do you do then? Stage 2 involves taking one or two more with you so you can get all the facts straight and work it out. I don't know how many times Christians have avoided this principle but I'm telling you, if you don't follow God's prescribed means of dealing with sins against one another then you will divide people. I know you don't like the confrontation but when you don't learn to confront in love (Eph 4:15) then you really haven't ever learned much about forgiveness and restoration. The goal is not to destroy the person but to deal with the sin, forgive them and be restored to one another. Biblical discipline has as its goal "restoration". It promotes "unity" which is the major theme in the Book of Ephesians. If you reject this model then you might as well throw Ephesians in the trash can.

Now, what if the person refuses to be restored after two or three went to him/her? Then you have to follow stage 3 of Matt 18:17, tell it, that is, the sin, to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church then you have to move to Stage 4, let that man be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. A Gentile here refers to an unbeliever. Treat him as you would treat an unbeliever. That puts him in the category of the one in **darkness**. And that returns us to Eph 5:7 **do not become a partaker with them**. See, you treat him just as if he was an unbeliever. And maybe he or she is an unbeliever. If someone doesn't respond to these three levels of confrontation then they are probably not a genuine Christian. Why does Matthew say treat him like a "tax collector"? Because the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians felt the same about the tax collectors as we feel about the IRS. No one is looking for the IRS. We like to stay away from the IRS. And that's the way you should treat an unrepentant individual. Why should we treat them this way? Because they are probably not a believer. But, if they are a believer then the goal here is say "bye-bye, we'd love to have you back when you're ready to make this thing right". So, you see the goal is still restoration. But until they come back and say, "look I was wrong, I want to set the record straight, and I want to be restored" they have to be ignored. If they do come back and say something like that, and it's heartfelt, then they need to be forgiven and the issue should not be brought up again. This way they can be restored.

Now turn over to 1 Cor 5. See, many people say, "Well, you're a Christian and a Christian shouldn't judge others." Or, "the Bible says not to judge." Oh really? Let's go to the Bible and see if that's what it says or not.

**1 Corinthians 5:9-13** <sup>9</sup> I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; <sup>10</sup> I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within *the church*? <sup>13</sup> But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.

Notice the Bible never says a Christian shouldn't judge. The Bible says you SHOULD judge those *within* the church. You should not even eat with a so-called brother who is immoral, a coveter, an idolater, a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler. That's judgment if you ask me. You are judging his deeds and you're not associating with him. But, the Bible also says we are never to judge those outside the church. God Himself will judge them. But God's instrument of judgment for believers during this age is the Church.

Now look at chapter 6. For Christians the Church age is a trial period for learning how to judge righteously. Trial period for what? For judging the world and the angels in the millennial kingdom.

**1 Corinthians 6:2-6** <sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent *to constitute* the smallest law courts? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? <sup>4</sup> So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? <sup>5</sup> I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that* there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, <sup>6</sup> but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

That's how Christian discipline, Christian forgiveness, and Christian restoration works and that's what Paul's point is here in Eph 5:11. We are to expose unfruitful deeds.

---

<sup>i</sup> Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 678-79.

[Back To The Top](#)



---

Click [Here](#) to return to other lessons.

[Return to Fredericksburg Bible Church Web Site](#)