

Ephesians 5:8-21  
"Life In The Light"

Let's not forget the emphasis of the last ½ of the book of Ephesians. Paul is pouring into us an appropriate response to the work of Christ on our behalf. After all He's done *for* us, considering everything He's given *to* us, this is the appropriate way to respond to Him...

In short Paul is teaching us what it looks like to lead a life of true righteousness & holiness. How we're to walk worthy of the calling w/which we were called, in all lowliness & gentleness, being patient w/one another, forgiving *toward* one another, *bearing w/one another in love... endeavoring* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

No longer are we to order our lives as the unbeliever. We're to put away lying & speak the truth. We're to put off greediness & be willing to give. We're to put away all bitterness & unforgiveness w/all malice & be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God in Christ has forgiven us.

Be imitators of God as dear children. & Walk in love, not sentimental love, sacrificial love just as Christ has loved us & given Himself for us... But fornication & all uncleanness along w/covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking & coarse jesting... These things shouldn't be found w/in the arena of our lives, they're not fitting (they're inappropriate) ... Look at Vs 5-7

That is, "Don't share in these kinds of things w/them." This word "partakers" speaks of "sharing in". We're not to share in these things. The bible teaches that the Christian is a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), of God's promises (Eph 3:6), Christ's sufferings, (1 Peter 4:13); holiness, (Heb. 12:10); the heavenly calling, (Heb. 3:1) and God's glory (1 Peter 5:1).

These are the things we "share in" w/God. How then can we share in the things that are contrary *to* God? It's who you *once were*, but no longer *are*. Therefore; lead the life that reflects who you *are* in Christ, not who you *were* in the world... To the Corinthians Paul put it like this, "...what communion has light with darkness?"<sup>1</sup> They're mutually exclusive in their very essence, light can't compromise w/darkness; it can only expose it. Even so we're to be done w/our past lives & pressing forward in the newness of life that Christ has given us. Notice.

Vs 8-10

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<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Co 6:14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Paul is saying, “Lead a life that is fitting for the believer!” These things may’ve once been descriptive of your life, but no longer should that be the case in Christ. & Notice that he doesn’t say that you once walked *in* darkness, but rather you once were darkness. You weren’t just “in the dark” you “were the dark” there was no hope of radiating any kind of light, you were w/out hope being w/out God in the world.

Light isn’t something that you can find w/in you if you just look deep enough. Outside of Christ *there is no light*. Jesus said, **“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”**<sup>2</sup> He said, **“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**<sup>3</sup> Light is a picture of that which is good, that which is godly. Remember what John said? He said, **“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”**<sup>4</sup> Darkness is a picture of that which is *ungodly*, that which is evil.

& Even as God is love therefore we’re to walk in love (being imitators of God as dear children), even so God is light & we’re to walk (or order our lives) as children of light.

Again, notice that he doesn’t say, “but now you’re *in* the light.” He says, “You are light in the Lord.” So live like it. Jesus said, **“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**<sup>5</sup> Jesus is the light of the world, & if Christ be in you than you are light in the Lord.

How do you know if you’re no longer walking in light but if you’ve gone back to the darkness in various areas of your life? If you find yourself deleting your history on your computer, why is it? If you’re lying, why? **What are you seeking to cover? Do you find yourself blaming others or taking personal responsibility for your actions? If these kinds of things have their hooks in you, you’re not allowing the light to expose something, you’re in the dark.**

“For the fruit of the Spirit (or more literally of the light) is in all goodness, righteousness & truth.” There’s nothing to hide, nothing to cover up, it’s open for all to see.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 8:12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 3:19–21]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Jn 1:5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 5:14–16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

These are the kind of characteristics that accompany light. Things are open & above board morally, relationally, there is a genuineness & sincerity about them. In other words, there's no intentional deception, truth is the earmark.

These are the things that are "acceptable" (that is, well pleasing) to the Lord. Things that are good, righteous & true. These are the things through which we discern, or prove our lives. That's what Paul is talking about when he says, "Finding out", it's speaking of discerning the will of the Lord, proving it out through goodness, righteousness & truth.

### Vs 11-12

I trust you're picking up on the pattern here. That we're to make a clean break from the kind of sin that defined our lives in the past. We're to have *no fellowship*, no participation w/the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

Now I want you to notice that Paul didn't say that we're to have no contact w/those who are in the dark. He's not saying, never hang around unbelievers... How then would they come to the light, or have contact w/the light? How would they hear the gospel of J.C. How that God loves them, that Jesus died on the cross *for* them & that if they turn from their sin & trust in Him then they can be saved? Jesus said that we're to lead our lives in such a way that men *see our good works*... If you're not careful you'll wind up leading your life in a Christian bubble. Afraid that someone's sin might rub off on you if you get to close... Let's not forget that Jesus was called "the friend of sinners".

Paul isn't saying, "Don't go around unbelievers" he's saying, "Don't participate in their sin!" But rather lead a life of holiness that exposes it for what it is. Light will expose (or reprove) the unfruitful works of darkness...

There's a narrative in Jhn 8. The account of a woman caught in the very act of adultery who was dragged before Jesus to see how He would handle it. But the truth is that it's not really an account of a woman caught in adultery so much as it is an account of religious leaders caught in hypocrisy... "The law says we should stone her! What do you say?" That's when Jesus (after writing something in the dust w/His finger) said those famous words, "He who is w/out sin among *you*, let him cast the 1<sup>st</sup> stone..." & He stooped back down & began writing again... & read that one by one (being convicted by their conscience) from the oldest to the youngest, went out & left Jesus alone w/the woman... Jesus looks up & says, "Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." & Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go & sin no more." That's John Ch 8 Vs 11. Guess what Vs 12 says... We read it earlier.

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

### Vs 13-14

You see? Vs 13 Reveals to us that light won't compromise w/darkness, it'll only reprove & expose the darkness. Light makes manifest, that it, it reveals that which was previously hidden or unknown. Jesus said that like this, *"For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops."*<sup>6</sup> He's saying, "That which you think no one knows about, those little secrets you have, God knows. & Those things will be exposed in the light of His judgment." All the more reason to avoid the "unfruitful works of darkness" now. Those things are destined for exposure & judgment.

& I'm so glad, that Jesus bore our judgment & those things (for the believer) are under the blood of Christ. If you're *not* in Christ than I would urge you to come to Him, to confess your sin & believe in Him today... As we read in Vs 14 (read)

Now some wonder, is this an exhortation to the unbelieving world; a calling to rise from the darkness & death of sin, stepping into the light & life of Christ? Or is it a call to believers who've been "lulled to sleep" spiritually, who are about the works of darkness, living a life of spiritual lethargy, & the exhortation is to "wake up" & walk in the light of life?

For the sake of application I would say, "Yes!" The unbeliever should hear the call of God to turn from their sin & find life in Christ. The believer who's been waxing/waning spiritually, who's fallen into sin or has simply lost their 1<sup>st</sup> love relationally (Jesus is no longer their priority, no real burden for the lost personally), the exhortation is that we *wake up & walk in the light of Christ!* That we cease simply going the motions & mechanics of Christianity & serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

### Vs 15-17

Guys, it's a call to holiness, to integrity, to purity spiritually. "See then that you walk circumspectly." The idea is that we order our lives carefully (not foolishly w/out thought for what's in front of us or around us) so as not to stumble or fall. We're to walk in wisdom & be alert as to what's going on around us or before us so that we don't get detoured along the way.

How many of us have ever been not paying attention along the road on a trip somewhere & we missed our exit & suffered a detour that led you somewhere you really didn't want to be? He's telling us to keep our head in the game. To be intentional in the decisions we make, not leaving things to chance. Seek the heart of God.

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” He's not saying, “Make the most of your life” (though we should). He's saying, “seize the opportunities that are in front of you for the glory of Christ because that moment may never be set before you again.”

As you go through your day you'll encounter certain people, be in certain situations which may never come again. How do you handle that, do you lay hold of that, make the most of that for the kingdom of God? That's what Paul is saying. We're to have lives that aren't so cluttered that we're unavailable when the need arises. But we can “redeem” or “buy up” that moment (like a shrewd business man) for J.C. Lost opportunities may never be regained...

#### Vs 17

It's interesting isn't it? How people so often try to *mystify* the will of the Lord? Paul is just saying, “Walk in wisdom, redeem the time, seize those opportunities, it's God's will for your life.” If you want to know God's will, than get to know God's word...

Don't focus on what you're *uncertain of*, there's plenty you *are certain of*. You know you're to speak the truth, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind through the washing of the water of the word of God, through prayer & fellowship w/likeminded believers. You know you're to put off your former conduct (B.C.) & walk in love, walk in light, having no fellowship w/unfruitful works of darkness & you're to seize opportunities for ministry... let's start right there, what d'ya say? We *know* those things are God's will. Here's another.

#### Vs 18

As long as we're talking about the will of God, here's something else that's God's will for you. That you not be drunk w/wine (or alcohol) in which is dissipation (or licentiousness) he's speaking of someone who destroys themselves by their manner of living. He's pointing out the destructive/detrimental effect of alcohol. It's responsible for over 88,000 deaths a yr in the U.S. alone shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 30 yrs... 30% of all driving fatalities are alcohol related each year. It kills nearly 5,000 teenagers every year (more than all other illegal drugs combined) & drunk driving costs the U.S. nearly 200 billion dollars per year.

Not only is it unwise practically, scripturally it's sin & it will destroy your life.

Now don't be confused here & think that he's comparing drunkenness w/being filled w/the Spirit. He's contrasting them. Alcohol is a depressant. Causes you to lose control of your mental & physical faculties, your higher faculties are gradually abandoned in favor of your baser instincts. The bible condemns drunkenness w/out reservation. *"Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise."*<sup>7</sup> & We're not simply talking about "falling down drunk" but being impaired in anyway by alcohol is sin (or even drinking w/the intent to be impaired).

However; the Holy Spirit is a stimulant. He moves every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance. We don't "lose control" under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we gain "self-control" (it's the fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5:23).

& When Paul says, "Be filled w/the Spirit" the grammar is like "be being constantly filled." It calls for a continual/habitual action. & No doubt much of the weakness, defeat and lethargy in our spiritual life can be attributed to the fact that we are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit. But here's the interesting part, it's in the command is in the passive voice, he's commanding something we can't do on our own... we can't manufacture the filling of the Holy Spirit.

What's going on here? The idea is that we're not to allow anything to hinder the Holy Spirit from influencing & filling our lives. Victory, & a life filled w/the Spirit of God won't come by working hard to eliminate sinful habits, but by allowing the Holy Spirit to take full control of all that you are... You're not resisting Him by hanging on to some vice, some shortcoming or ungodly aspect of your life.

"Well, what does a 'spirit filled' life look like? Is it speaking in tongues, miracles & eccentric phenomena?" No, in short it's a life of worship, a life that glorifies Christ & gives preference to others... Notice.

### **Vs 19-21**

Paul says that if we are filled w/the Spirit of God, worship will be readily on our lips & in our heart. "Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns & spiritual songs." We'll worship God publicly (speaking to one another) & we'll worship God privately/personally (making melody in our heart to the Lord). A Spirit filled life will be a life that gives praise, honor & glory to J.C. (Isn't that what Jesus said that the Spirit would do? He would glorify Christ, Jn 16:14).

<sup>7</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Pr 20:1]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Notice what else goes along w/the Spirit filled life. Thanksgiving. An attitude of gratitude. Gripping & complaining & the Holy Spirit just don't go together. Family we've been saved by the blood of J.C. given gifts by the Holy Spirit, the promise of heaven, everlasting life. The Spirit filled life is a life of humble thanksgiving...

### Vs 21

The Spirit filled life will give honor & preference to others. Paul will go on to explain how that will serve our marriages, our families, our work environments. & It's all by power on the inside, not pressure on the outside...

Now Paul is saying there's no rank or authority w/in the body of Christ & that we shouldn't recognize the authority God has given people because we all submit to one another. We know he's not saying that simply because of other passages where he was clear on that. There is organization & rank in the body of Christ that we're to respect. The military has a name for it when you no longer want to be "under rank", they call it "mutiny".

But Paul isn't drawing our attention to the concept of rank here. He's drawing our attention to being "team players", maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Don't push your opinion, let love rule... Think of others before you assert yourself. Not because that person is smarter than you, or more talented or more valued or anything like that. But because you fear God, love, revere & respect J.C. When you really respect someone you want to please them, you don't want to disappoint them or assert yourself over them. & Because of your respect for J.C. you'll submit one to another.

You are light in the Lord, walk as children of light. Wake up spiritually, order your life carefully & seize the opportunities that God gives to you. Give the Holy Spirit His way in your life. Don't hang on to sin, & submit to one another in the fear of God... Let's pray & ask God to conform our hearts to His will & His word.

### Prayer Points:

God we're asking You to take all this information & cause it to translate into application in our lives. That we wake up & have no fellowship w/the unfruitful works of darkness but live our lives as the light You've called us to be & caused us to be. Give us a heart for Your word that we might understand Your will & fill us fresh w/the Person & power of Your Holy Spirit. Give us a heart of worship, sacrifice & service. Be glorified in us...

Jesus took all your sin upon Himself, shed His blood & died upon the cross that you might be forgiven, don't hang onto your sin, turn from your sin & trust in Him today.