

## EXPOSITION OF EPHESIANS

### Message #16

### Ephesians 5:7-21

I ran across an interesting definition of worldliness recently that said this: “Worldliness is what any particular culture does to make sin look normal and righteousness look strange.”

We are living in a world that does everything it can to make sin look normal. You cannot watch anything on TV without seeing the promotion of some form of immorality. You cannot read any paper or magazine without seeing the promotion of some form of idolatry or greed. You cannot listen to any political speech without hearing some form of arrogance and pride. This world does its very best to make sin look normal.

But what doesn't look normal in this world and what appears to be very strange is a pure commitment to understanding and applying God's Word. When you find a believer who is interested in understanding and applying God's Word to his or her life and defending it in this world, it sticks out as a very unusual and abnormal and strange thing.

God wants His people to stand out in this world. He wants us to look different, talk different and live different. He does want us in the world, but He does not want us to so blend in that we don't look like we belong to Him.

We may recall that we are challenged in this very chapter to be imitators of God as His beloved children of grace (5:1). What we learn here is this:

**TO REFLECT THAT WE ARE GOD'S BELOVED CHILDREN OF GRACE, GOD HAS COMMANDED THAT WE LIVE OUR LIVES IN WAYS THAT SPECIFICALLY SHOW WE ARE NOT CHILDREN OF THIS EVIL AND DARK WORLD.**

Now the “therefore” of **verse 7** connects us back to the previous section where we were told we are not to be immoral or impure or greedy, and we must watch what we say with our mouths so that we may receive our inheritance. The unsaved heathen world could care less about any of this, but because we are God's beloved children, we need to keep away from those very things that will bring the wrath of God down on this world.

Now in these verses God gives us a series of commands that He expects us to obey. If we choose to obey them we will reflect we are His child and we will receive a full inheritance. By virtue of the fact that they are commands, the potential for not obeying is also there. God does not force His people to obey His commands. It is possible for us to obey them and it is possible for us not to obey them.

Now there are nine imperatives or commands in this text which we want to consider:

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #1** – Do not partake of a dark lifestyle. **5:7-8a**

The “therefore” of **verse 7** refers back to the fact that unbelievers have no inheritance in eternity and they pursue sins that will bring God’s wrath to this world. Therefore, in view of that, we do not want to be a partaker of their dark existence.

The word “partakers” (συνμετοχος) is one that means a together partaking or joint participation (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 431). The verb “do not” is present tense. Paul is saying that no believer should ever be continually involved in joint participation in the lifestyle of those who are lost. The reason is straight foreword and simple—do not partake with them because we were formerly darkness but now we are light in the Lord.

Do not jump over the theology in this verse. The verse does not say we were in darkness, it says **we were darkness**. In other words, prior to faith in Jesus Christ we were in sin by classification of God. We were not good, we were dead in trespasses and sins and that is the way God saw us. But in Christ that all changed. We are now children of light so we should no longer walk as we did when we were children of darkness.

By the way, you are in one of two classifications of God here tonight. You are either darkness or light. The determining factor is whether or not you are “in the Lord.”

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #2** – Do live as children of light. **5:8b-10**

God commands His children to walk like they are His children. He expects them to walk as children of light. Now in order to do that we must know what the path of light is and in order to know that, we must know the Word of God because God’s Word is “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). So the more we know of the Word, the more we are able to walk as children of light.

Now Paul says walk as children of light in conformity with the Word and you will produce quality fruit:

**Fruit Quality #1** - Children of light reflect goodness .

**Fruit Quality #2** - Children of light reflect righteousness .

**Fruit Quality #3** - Children of light promote truthfulness .

**Fruit Quality #4** - Children of light strive to please the Lord.

We will not please the Lord by participating in a lifestyle that is immoral or filthy.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #3** – Do not participate in acts of darkness. **5:11a**

The word “participate” (συγκοινωνεῖτε) has to do with a joint fellowship with something (*Ibid.*, p. 431). The present tense of the verb indicates that we believers are not to have continual fellowship with dark, perverted things. These kinds of acts are unfruitful. Now carefully notice we must not fellowship in the sin; it does not say we cannot fellowship with the people.

We live in a world filled with sinful people who sin. We work with these people, we live next door to these people and we do business with these people. Our responsibility is to not participate in their dark sin. We reflect light by not doing the dark things they do.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #4** – Do expose acts of darkness. **5:11b-13**

The word “expose” (ελεγχω) is one that means to reprove in such a way that it is convicting. This is a very strong word. It is the idea of treating something with contempt and then rebuking it in such a way that it brings about conviction (*Ibid.*, p. 144). Now the point of this text is not only should we refuse things, but we should also rebuke things.

Now Paul gives a follow-up explanation why and how we expose acts of darkness:

**Explanation #1** - Acts of darkness are disgraceful to even discuss . **5:12**

This is a very critical point. We do not expose evil acts by discussing the evil act. It would appear that the way to expose acts of darkness is not to discuss them. Our job is not to sit down and discuss all the evil, immoral, impure things that people do. Our job is to expose darkness by presenting light.

**Explanation #2** - Acts of darkness are exposed by the light . **5:13**

The proper way to expose acts of darkness is by expounding the light of Scriptures. In other words the best way to rebuke dark things is by presenting the light of God’s Word. As we reflect light in our lives and as we communicate the light of God’s Word, acts of darkness are exposed. Wherever the true light of God shines, shameful things are exposed.

Carefully examine what is said here. Our country is in serious moral and economic trouble. There is not a politician who can clean up the depravity of this nation. The problem of this country is not political, it is spiritual. The key to turning this nation around to receive the blessings of God is to expose the evil by the light of God’s Word.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #5** – Wake up and rise up to a light reflecting lifestyle. **5:14**

Most believe Paul loosely quotes Isaiah 60:1 here and he uses it to challenge Grace Age believers who have fallen to spiritual sleep about dark things to wake up and get out of their dead state and Christ will shine on you. Jesus Christ is not only prepared to forgive us, He stands ready to fully bless us if we wake up to the fact that we need to confront dark things in our own life and in the world.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #6 – Walk looking at things very carefully. 5:15-16**

We are called to be good soldiers for the Lord and the Christian life is like walking through a minefield of a world and we need to be very careful as to the steps we take. The verb translated “be careful” (Βλεπετε) means to continually look at things to perceive, analyze and discern things. The Greek presents the idea of walking through life carefully picking your way and choosing your steps. We need to wisely navigate our way through this world, by carefully thinking about what we are doing. Now there are two areas we are to carefully analyze:

**Area #1 - Carefully analyze whether we are living as a wise or unwise person. 5:15**

The word “wise” (σοφος) is one that speaks of being very skilled and clever and knowledgeable in everything we do (Smith, p. 412). God does not want us to be a bunch of foolish buffoons. He wants us wise in our daily lives, our business lives and our spiritual lives. He does not want us living as a fool.

**Area #2 - Carefully analyze how we are using our time in these evil days. 5:16**

If you would have said to the Ephesians these are evil days, they would have probably said these are great days; prosperous days; enjoyable days. God says they are evil days and the wise person realizes this and analyzes what they do with their time in these evil days.

The words “making the most of time” actually read “buy time” or “redeem time” (εξαγοραζω). The word means to purchase time for yourself and use it for good in these evil days. The wise way to live life is to realize time is ticking away and use it wisely. Certainly one who is wise will invest a good deal of time learning the Scriptures and applying them to life.

One of the most godly men to ever live in the United States was Jonathan Edwards. God greatly used him to bring revival to this country in the 1700’s. After he was saved, he said “Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these resolutions.” He wrote out seventy resolutions that he desired to keep. Resolution number five said this: “Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can” (*Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards*, p. lxii). It is no wonder God so powerfully used him, he redeemed the time.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #7 – Understand the will of God and not be foolish. 5:17**

If you are not interested in understanding the will of God you are foolish, because it won’t be long and you will face God. To understand the will of God one must know the Word of God. The more we know of the Word, the more we are able to do God’s will. Any life not interested in knowing the Word of God is a foolish life.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #8 – Do not get drunk with wine. 5:18a**

Four observations:

- 1) It was real wine that could get you drunk.
- 2) Real wine was used at meals.
- 3) Real wine was used in church for communion (I Cor. 11:20-21).
- 4) This was action these believers needed to stop.

There is an inflexible principle that is seen over and over again in the Bible in both the O.T. and the N.T. and the principle is do not get drunk. Drunkenness is a sin that is no respecter of persons. It will always lead to destruction. This is true for people who are beautiful and not so beautiful; people who are young or old; people who are successful or not successful. Too much wine leads to destruction.

Getting drunk with wine is “dissipation” (ασωτια), which means is a wasteful way to live life (Smith, p. 66). Getting drunk with wine is a waste of time and a waste of life. Now Ephesus was a Gentile party city and many of those who came to faith were Gentile party people. Paul says one way to show that you are a child of God is by not getting drunk like most people of the world do.

**GRACE WALK COMMAND #9 – Do be filled with the Holy Spirit. 5:18b-21**

The contrast here is between being controlled by alcoholic spirits versus God’s Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit of God? It means to be controlled by the Spirit.

Now there are some key indicators that one is filled with the Holy Spirit:

**Holy Spirit Filled Indicator #1** - One will not get drunk with wine. 5:18

**Holy Spirit Filled Indicator #2** - One will continually speak to others properly at church.  
5:19a

The emphasis here is on speaking to each other at corporate worship services. When people come to church, what you say to them can reflect whether or not you are a true grace reflector. I could tell you horror stories, even from this fellowship, of some people who cannot control their mouths when at church. They say degrading and hurtful things. Paul says speak to one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. In other words, use speech at church to promote true things and true worship about God.

**Holy Spirit Filled Indicator #3** - One will continually sing to God in proper ways at church.  
5:19b-20

We should sing praises to God and we should always give thanks to God.

**Holy Spirit Filled Indicator #4** - One will continually be subject to one another. **5:21**

Think about how foreign this is to our culture.

Paul gives nine commands and if we will obey them, we will reflect the fact that we are a beloved child of God and we will receive a full abundant inheritance.