

## WALKING IN LOVE, LIGHT, & WISDOM

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### Ephesians 5:1-21

#### Walk in Love

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

#### Walk in Light

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

#### Walk in Wisdom

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

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This passage of Scripture that I pulled from biblegateway.com separated the text into three sections, walking in love, walking in light, and walking in wisdom. We'll look at how we can and should be walking in what are those three elements that are of the very nature or character of God but as we know and as we see from our Scripture that there are hindrances to our walk in Christ.

How it goes in our Christian walk in faith is first and foremost that we should be walking in love for, as Paul spells it out for us in **1 Corinthians 13**, without love, we are nothing. If we are truly children of God, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, then we will

bear the fruit of the Spirit and it could be said that the chief among that fruit is love, once again, quoting Paul, he concluded, there is faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of those 3 is love. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.**" (1 John 4:7-8) Second is walking in light. Jesus said that while He is in the world that He is the light of the world. He is now seated on His throne at the right hand of the Father but He is still in the world through the Spirit that He has given to us, that is, He dwells in those who HAVE received Him into their hearts. (John 1:12-13) So then, if Jesus is the light of the world, and we have Jesus within us, we should be shining forth His light in the world, right? What then does light do for us? The light (Jesus) illumines The (His) Way (John 14:6) and it also exposes that which is in darkness. Jesus, in speaking of the light 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." (John 3:19-21) That certainly doesn't mean that those in the darkness won't confront the light. Just as was with the Pharisees, they didn't have any problem flaunting their deeds in the Light and confronting the Light (Jesus). Those in darkness will even try and make a mockery of the light to justify themselves in the darkness, and as we know what happened to Christ, the end result was that the darkness tried to snuff out the Light. That didn't quite work out for them as planned did it? For Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) We too will overcome the world in the Light of Jesus! The third topic for us in this passage of Scripture is that we should be walking in wisdom. The Word (being Christ) is our Wisdom as we should operate in the wisdom of the Word as His Spirit leads us into all truth. The primary way of walking in wisdom is in the fear of the Lord, so that in spiritual warfare, we are to "therefore **submit to God**. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." That means for us to not let the tactics of the enemy of our souls to stir us up in confusion and frustration. Sometimes we are led by the Spirit to just wait on the Lord by resisting the devil and then he will flee away to stir up trouble with someone else. Yet there is more to spiritual warfare than that and we will briefly look at that a bit closer, as well as each of these mini topics so to speak and see what we can get from our passage of Scripture today from **Ephesians 5:1-21**.

### WALKING IN LOVE

Our passage of Scripture for today starts in chapter 5 of Ephesians but it starts with, "therefore be imitators of God as dear children."

So, although that tells us that, what is to follow of God calling us to walk in love, light and wisdom, we still would be needing to ask, what was said prior to the therefore that we are being led to consider. Therefore, (pun intended) let us look at the previous verse at the end of chapter 4 and it says, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Putting that verse together with the "therefore" verse we get a summation as follows: As God has demonstrated His love towards us, by sending His Son Jesus to die for our sins, we should therefore love one another, be kind, tenderhearted, and forgive one another, and then to also be imitators of God as we are His children. That all can really be summed up in what Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34) Jesus was asked previously what is the greatest commandment of God. "Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."" A key consideration for us is that we need to be operating in that OURSELVES and not just looking at others in how they are missing the mark. We will all miss the mark from time to time as God is teaching us His ways which is in WHO He is.

What we are first presented in Ephesians 5 is a metaphor of how our living for God is to be a sweet-smelling aroma and then what can be an implied analogy is that if we are not a sweet-smelling aroma to the Lord then we can be a foul stench in His nostrils. King David said in Psalm 34:8 to, "taste and see that the Lord is good" and that can be for us an implied comparative metaphor as seeking to get a good taste of the things of God (as we are seeking Him with all of our heart) but we, most of the time, may be just getting a faint whiff of His presence. As that metaphor applies to the tasting of food, we can smell something cooking and you can actually taste it. You ever go by one of your favorite restaurants and smell the cooking and you can already taste what it is? So then, as we are to love God as He first loved us, to have a longing to "taste and see that the Lord is good" but we should be also emanating His presence as we are placing ourselves on the altar as a sacrifice to God, surrendering our lives for His, that is, the new life that He gives us in Christ Jesus, and we should be putting off a sweet smelling fragrance to God and to others. We want to be giving God more than just a faint whiff of a sweet aroma, we want God to have a good whiff of us and be able to taste of His work that has been done in us. One again, that ties in with loving God with all that is in us, and then also loving others just as Christ has loved us and given His life for us. We also should want others around us to get a good whiff of our spiritual presence

in Christ Jesus. Collectively then, we can be like a field of fragrant flowers for the Lord to be blessed by our fragrance!

If we are to love God fully, with all our being, that would mean that we should be as Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (**John 15:13-14**) So we should be surrendering our will for God's will. We should have the same mindset as Jesus when He was just about to be betrayed by Judas and then be led away to be crucified, Jesus prayed to His Heavenly Father, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (**Matthew 26:39**) That right there is the love of God in perfect form. Our lives, in surrenderedness to Christ, should be a sweet smelling aroma to God so that others we can be His examples that encourages others to that same faith in Jesus Christ, for the glory of God. You ever think about the Scripture that says "love covers a multitude of sins" in how Jesus in His shedding His blood and giving His life so that we can be reconciled to God, be forgiven of our sins, and then to be promised eternal life in Christ? Peter used that phrase saying, "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." (**1 Peter 4:8**). What did Jesus pray when He was hanging on the cross? "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." James, also used the phrase saying "let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." (**James 5:20**) The love of God is not only the forgiving others and praying for them it can also mean the pulling them out of the flames of hell, so to speak. What lies behind that should always be the love of God. Amen?

"But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Fornication is the having of sexual relations with someone that is not one's spouse. Fornication and uncleanness are really tied together in that if we are giving ourselves up to anything that lessens our place in Christ, as children of God or replaces God in our lives to be our gods that we are worshipping besides the one True God then it be said of us, as it was with the Israelites, that they were whoring after other gods. As children of God we are to be a sweet-smelling aroma to God in all that we do or say. If Jesus were to come to you at the end of your day and asked, "what did you do today?" would you be ashamed to tell Him ALL that you did? Yes, we all fall short of God's will and purpose for our lives from time to time. But that shouldn't have us operating in the things that bring a foul stench to His nostrils or dishonor our witness of Him as the Light of the world. That goes for

the lusts of the flesh and in covetousness. We have to really let it sink deep in our hearts that we are here to be the light of Jesus. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17) We are to be clinging to God, not this world. We are to get used to loving God with all that is in us and to be loving others as ourselves. The love of God is eternal, this world is not.

### **WALKING IN LIGHT**

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." "Jesus tells us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) We are intended to be the light of Jesus not to be in darkness where all of the people of the world are. That goes for our time in private too. When God says He will never leave us nor forsake us, that speaks of His faithfulness and longsuffering towards us but it should also remind us that we are to be living according to His godliness, in His light in public and in private. Amen?

Those of the world would listen to this message and likely laugh or scoff. Even many within the church would also say or think that what I am saying is just being a bit too zealous for God. But what I am speaking is not my own words but the Word of God. The bottom line for us is that we were created for God's purpose and His pleasure and for His building of His eternal kingdom and that we are God's whether we acknowledge it or not. We were ultimately created for...are you ready for this? We were created for God's glory. "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." (Isaiah 43:7) Nevertheless, the choice is ours. We can choose to rebel or we can get on God's plan for our lives, for the glory of God. We can blend into the darkness in this world and go the way of destruction, as is the way of the world, or walk in the light of Christ which leads to eternal life in Christ.

As I said, the world laughs and scoffs at the message of the cross of Christ. As they mocked Jesus they will also mock us. I came across this the other day. After the death of King Solomon, his son Rehoboam became king. Because of the sins of King Solomon, which was in Solomon turning to other gods, that is the gods of all the women in his life, God told Solomon that He was going to take most of his kingdom away from him but that it would happen during his son Rehoboam's reign. Rehoboam did anything but seek the Lord's mercies and forgiveness, in fact it says in 2 Chronicles 12:1, "that he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel along with him." What a

horrible legacy. His father was King Solomon, his grandfather was King David, and yet he not so much as even acknowledged the god of his fathers, other than humbling himself at one point. While Rehoboam reigned over Judah God gave the rest of what would be called the kingdom of Israel to Jeroboam. The reason I bring up this story is what it says in **2 Chronicles 11:15**, "Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made." The word that is used for demons is saiyr which is the same as the word satyr (say-ter) which was a half-man, half-goat demon that operated in lasciviousness which basically means lustfulness. The first bit of the making a mockery of God is the half-man-half goat. What does God's Word say about the man that He created? "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (**Genesis 1:27**) You see how Satan makes a mockery of the ways of God? That word satyr is where we can see the word satire which is a mocking or ridiculing of something, which is usually of indulgences. What we get from that though is as Satan is a **deceiver** and is out to steal, kill, and destroy, there are "many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (**2 John 7**) Yet the Apostle Paul also says that "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light." (**2 Corinthians 11:14**) Where am I going with this? The enemy of our souls WILL try and make a mockery of the things of God. Satan will say, "Has God said there is but male and female?" Satan will say, "Has God said, "Therefore a **man** shall leave his father and mother and be **joined to his wife**, and they shall become one flesh." (**Genesis 2:24**) We see it all the time as the enemy will also try and make a mockery of our worshipping God, our reading of God's Word, and in our time of fellowship in Christ. The world is going one way but we are called to be the light of Jesus. Being that light doesn't usually mean we have to intentionally expose the darkness, as the Light does that for us. That which is in darkness is revealed in the Light. But we may need to warn others from time to time that we fear for them and to be praying for their deliverance.

#### WALKING IN WISDOM

We are reminded in Scripture, that the enemy of our souls is not other persons. "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (**Ephesians 6:12**) BUT, the enemy of our souls certainly uses other people to mock us, mock the things of God, and to derail, distract, and discourage us from honoring and glorifying God. Not only do we come up against mockers of God and of Christ through those who want nothing to do with God, but we will also come up against that from those who profess to be Christians. One area that the enemy gets God's people to make a mockery of the things of God is in our passage of Scripture that says, "See then that you walk

circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation." Many times you will undoubtedly come across those who are not putting out a sweet smelling aroma to the Lord but rather a foul stench that actually makes a mockery of the ways of God. Claiming to be Christian, while high or drunk, or living in a relationship that is not honoring God. If there is no separation, no distinction between them and the people of the world, what then is their testimony to others? What kind of aroma are they sending up to God? God is telling us "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9) We are to be walking in the light of Christ! There's not much testimony for us as a child of God if we are still living in the ways of the world then is there? We are called to live as a new creation, living for righteousness instead of sin. Jesus spoke to the woman caught in adultery and said, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." To the man he healed by the pool of Bethesda, He said, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." (John 5:14) We are first called to believe on Jesus, as Jesus says in John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." But Jesus also said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Luke 5:32)

It is told to us in this passage of Scripture in Ephesians 5 what is the real problem with the drinking of alcohol and really it could be said about anything that intoxicates or alters the mind, that it causes dissipation. The counter to dissipation is being filled with the Spirit. Therefore what it is saying is that we fade further from the ways of God and our light of Jesus is darkened and really our witness is annulled in our testimony in Christ when we are allowing something such as alcohol to control us. I've known very few persons who could drink a glass of wine and then stop whenever they choose to imbibe. On the other hand, I have known more people than I can count, including myself, of persons who become dissipated so to speak in their drinking. Where I'm going with all this, is that in that dissipation we open ourselves up to making a mockery of the ways of God and giving authority and rule to the satyrs (the mocking demons). We've seen it way more times than we'd like to remember in our services here and at other places.

We are to be redeeming the time for the days are evil. We are not guaranteed another day past today. God may take you off this planet sooner than expected. A positive way to look at it is that Jesus promises us this, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much

fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:8) It is in Christ Jesus, "who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:30-31) What will be our legacy before man, what will be our testimony to others? Our testimony is not just in what we say, it is also in what we do. The Lord spoke through Isaiah saying, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." (Isaiah 29:13)

Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

As a living sacrifice to God we are His representatives of His love, His light, and His wisdom, and we are to be a sweet smelling savor unto God and to others. God promises us that He is going to reward us richly. As God said to Abraham He presents to us, through Christ Jesus "I AM your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1) To elaborate of what that means to us who ARE in Christ Jesus, we will be joint-heirs with Jesus. Yet in context this is what Paul says in Romans 8:17, "joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be glorified together." (Romans 8:17) Also we are promised to get to reign with Christ but once again, in context Paul says this, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us." (2 Timothy 2:12) Jesus paid the price for us to be reconciled to God and be forgiven of our sins but now Jesus is simply saying to us "come, follow me."