

Walk in Light

Text: Ephesians 5:7-14

Introduction:

1. This is the 4th time we encounter the word 'walk' in this practical section of Ephesians. We have already been exhorted to:
 - Walk worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1)
 - Not walk as the unsaved (Eph. 4:17)
 - Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
2. The Christian life involves progress and forward movement. "The word depicts progress in the Christian life because the Christian life never stands still. It is a life of movement." (John Phillips)
3. In this section the Apostle now issues a call for us to walk in light. This is also a practical outworking of the command to be "followers of God" (Vs. 1). The word 'light' appears 5 times in these verses. Light is a part of God's very character so it makes sense that as His children we would walk in the light.
 - Psalm 27:1 "The LORD is my **light** and my salvation..."
 - 1 John 1:5 "...God is **light**, and in him is no darkness at all."
 - John 8:12 "...I am the **light** of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the **light** of life."
 - John 1:9 "That was the **true light**, which **lighteth** every man that cometh into the world."
4. We will study this exhortation to walk in the light under 4 headings:

I. THE COMMAND FOR WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 7-8)

A. The Reason for this Walk (Vs. 7-8a)

1. The reality of the lost (Vs. 7)
 - a. 'therefore' = draws an inference from what was said previously. Paul has just spoken of the impending doom of unbelievers (Vs. 6). They are under God's wrath on account of their sin.
 - b. 'partakers' = the word means "one who is a partner or accomplice in a plot" (Hoehner). It means "to hold with" another (Wuest). We are not to participate with the ungodly in the sins that provoke the righteous wrath of God (See Vs. 3-5).
2. The reality of the saved (Vs. 8a)
 - a. What You Were Then – "ye **were** sometimes darkness". This was the reality of our condition before we were saved. Eph. 4:18 describes this condition, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Thank God for the word 'were'. If you are saved, that's in the past! Observe the language of Ephesians 2:12 – "were dead" (Vs. 1), "in time past" (Vs. 2, 3, 11) and "at that time" (Vs. 12). We weren't just abiding in darkness, we **were** darkness! Our very character was depraved, contributing to the spiritual darkness around us.
 - b. What You Are Now – "but **now** are ye light in the Lord". The reality of our condition now that we are saved. Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* **from darkness to light**, and

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from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Col. 1:13 “Who hath **delivered us from the power of darkness**, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Not only have we been translated out of darkness into light, we are very light! The life of Christ shines through our lives – “In him (Jesus) was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4). Jesus said “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” (Matt. 5:14). Phil. 2:15 reminds us that “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” we “shine as lights in the world;” Jesus Christ is the source of this light – “light in the Lord”.

B. The Requirements for this Walk (Vs. 8b)

1. The Consistency Required – ‘walk’. The word ‘walk’ is in the present tense indicating an ongoing, habitual practice of life. “Be habitually conduction yourselves as children of light” (Wuest). The Christian life is a daily discipline!
2. The Quality Required – ‘as’. The word ‘as’ points to the standard of this walk. We are to walk in a manner befitting our position as “children of light”. The word ‘child’ is “a word that connotes a close relationship to the parent. As imitators of God, we should reflect the glory of God.” (Hoehner) This is in direct contrast to the “children of disobedience” mentioned in Vs. 6.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 9)

The Apostle inserts a parenthesis at this point to highlight three fruits that are produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit as we walk in the light. “These graces should characterize those who are children of the light” (Ironsides).

A. Goodness (Vs. 9a)

1. Also listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22. Only the Spirit of God can produce goodness in the true sense of the word in our lives.
2. The word is broad in its scope but it essentially refers to kindness, moral excellence. It refers to “that which is intrinsically right, free from defects, beautiful and honorable.” (Macarthur) Webster defines the word as “The moral qualities which constitute Christian excellence; moral virtue.”

B. Righteousness (Vs. 9b)

There are two senses to the word ‘righteousness’. There is:

1. Righteousness in its positional sense – the righteous standing God gives us when we get saved. This cannot be earned.
2. Righteousness in its practical sense – the practical outworking of our position in Christ. “The quality of life from which righteous actions spring” (Hoehner) This is what is in view in this verse. The Spirit of God produces right living in us as we consciously walk in the light of God’s presence.

C. Truthfulness (Vs. 9c)

1. The source of the truth – the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is called “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13).
2. The manifestation of truth. There will be:
 - a. Truth in word – honesty and integrity of lips.

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- b. Truth in deed – honesty and integrity of life.
- c. Challenge: Are we known as honest, sincere and trustworthy people?

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 10-13)

The Apostle now proceeds to outline several facets of this walk in the light. He shows us what this walk looks like in practice. Walking in the light involves:

A. Examining What's Acceptable (Vs. 10)

1. The Meaning of Proving
 - a. 'proving' = testing. It means "to put to the test for the purpose of approving" (Wuest). The word means "to approve after scrutiny as fit; to test or scrutinize." (Hoehner) The word was used of the testing of metals. The same Greek word is translated 'discern' (Lk. 12:56), 'prove' (Lk. 14:19, 2 Cor. 8:22, 2 Cor. 13:5, Gal. 6:4, 1 Thess. 5:21, Heb. 3:9), 'approve' (1 Cor. 16:3), 'try' (1 Cor. 3:13, 1 Pet. 1:7, 1 Jn. 4:11) and 'examine' (1 Cor. 11:28).
 - b. 'acceptable' = pleasing. The majority of the N.T. usage of this word has to do with pleasing God. Three times it is translated as 'well pleasing' (Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20; Heb. 13:21). We are to have a testing mindset in order to discern what is pleasing to Christ. John Phillips writes, "The criterion for judging what is to be permitted in our lives is whether or not the conduct is acceptable to the Lord. That standard settles all the issues. It sweeps away all the befuddling, pettifogging compromises and excuses. When Christ is brought into the picture, the choices are clear."
 - c. 1 Thess. 5:21 "**Prove** (same word) **all things**; hold fast that which is good."
2. The Means of Testing
 - a. The Word of God and the help of the Spirit of God are our main resources for discerning what is and what isn't pleasing to God.
 - b. Phil. 1:9-10 says "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in **knowledge** and in all judgment; That ye may **approve** (same word as 'proving') **things that are excellent**; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;" Note the connection between abounding in knowledge and exercising discernment.
 - c. Where Scripture does not directly address an issue, we need to look for principles in God's Word that we can apply to the situation. The "12 tests for unanswered questions" is helpful (refer separate document).

B. Eschewing What's Unfruitful (Vs. 11a)

We are to have no fellowship with:

1. Ungodly Workers (Vs. 6b-7)
2. Unfruitful Works (Vs. 11a)
 - a. "**no** fellowship" = a total prohibition. We are called to a life of strict separation as God's children.

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- b. “fellowship” = the word means “to become a partaker together with others. The word refers to a joint-participation between two or more individuals in a common interest and a common activity.” (Wuest) Charles Hodge elaborates, “Those who have things in common, who are congenial, who have the same views, feelings, and interests, and who therefore delight in each other’s society, are said to be in fellowship... So we are said to have fellowship in any thing which we delight in and partake of. To have fellowship with the works of darkness, therefore, is to delight in them and to participate in them. All such association is forbidden as inconsistent with the character of the children of light.”
 - c. “unfruitful works” = they are of no value. This is in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit (Vs. 9). Think of all the sinning that goes on each day in the world. What good does any of it achieve?
 - d. “of darkness” = the “works of darkness” are the kind of things Paul has already denounced in the Epistle so far such as lying, anger, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, malice, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking and jesting.
3. True fellowship for the believer is in “the light”. 1 John 1:7-8 says, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we **walk in the light**, as **he is in the light**, we have fellowship **one with another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” As we walk in the light, we enjoy fellowship with:
- a. The Lord – “as he is in the light”
 - b. The Lord’s people – “we have fellowship one with another”
 - c. Note: True fellowship cannot take place in the darkness of sin and compromise. For there to be true fellowship according to God’s standard, it must take place in the light of God’s truth and God’s presence. This refutes the popular notion today of compromising on the truth in the name of “fellowship”.

C. Exposing What’s Evil (Vs. 11b-13)

- 1. The instruction to reprove (Vs. 11b)
 - a. “reprove **them**” = reference to the “unfruitful works of darkness” just mentioned.
 - b. ‘reprove’ = the word means to expose, convict and rebuke. It means “to reprove or rebuke so as to bring out conviction or confession of guilt.” (Wuest) “It means to convince by evidence” (Hodge). The same word describes the ministry of the Spirit of God in John 16:8 “he will **reprove** the world of sin”. It is not enough to simply separate from evil, we must also confront it with the truth of God’s Word.
 - c. William Macdonald: “The believer is called not only to abstain from the unfruitful works of darkness, but positively he is called to expose them. He does this in two ways: first, by a life of holiness, and second, by words of correction spoken under the direction of the Holy Spirit.”
- 2. The explanation why to reprove (Vs. 12-13)

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- a. The shameful and secretive nature of sin (Vs. 12)
 - i. Expositors: “The secrecy of the works in question is the reason why they require to be openly reproved; and the point is this – the heathen practice in secret, vices too abominable even to mention; all the more is the need of open rebuke instead of silent overlooking or connivance.”
 - ii. We are not to discuss these matters the way the world does (e.g., radio, T.V. talk). If we do speak of them, it should be to expose them with the truth. **Illustration:** Scientists who work with dangerous diseases and chemicals do not handle them carelessly. In like manner, we should not be foolish and careless when handling the disease of sin lest we also be defiled. “We can give God’s diagnosis and solution for sins without portraying every sordid detail.” (MacArthur)
 - iii. These sins are “done in secret”. “Sin loves the dark” (Robertson). Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (See John 3:19-21).
- b. The exposing and revealing nature of the light (Vs. 13). The light reveals things (makes manifest). The test of true light is whether it exposes sin and error.

IV. THE CALL TO WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 14)

Appears Paul draws on Isaiah 60:1-2 in this quotation – “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”

A. The Call goes to the Saint

1. AWAKE! – “Awake thou that sleepest” (Vs. 14a)
 - a. Interesting combination of the figure of sleep with darkness. Sleep usually takes place in the darkness. Those participating in spiritual darkness are in a state of spiritual slumber.
 - b. We find a similar exhortation in Romans 13:11-12 “And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time **to awake out of sleep**: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”
2. ARISE! – “and arise from the dead” (Vs. 14b) A “reference to the spiritual deadening demonstrated by their unfruitful works of darkness.” (Hoehner)
3. ANTICIPATE! – “and Christ shall give thee light” (Vs. 14c)

B. The Call applies to the Sinner

This verse could certainly be applied to the sinner.

1. AWAKE! – You are asleep in the darkness of your sin and on your way to the “blackness of darkness forever” without Christ.

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2. **ARISE!** – through Christ's power you can be raised from spiritual death to spiritual life (Eph. 2:1).
3. **ANTICIPATE!** – Christ will give you the light of His salvation in your heart if you repent and believe.

Conclusion:

1. Are you walking in the light as a believer or are you wandering in the darkness of your former life? Its time to wake up and get right with the Lord!
2. Are you saved? Maybe you are still in darkness, having never received the light of the Gospel truth. It's time to wake up and receive Christ!