

# Live in the Light

## Ephesians 5

Week of October 6 - 12

Ephesians chapter 5 is a continuation of the ideas we began looking at last week. Paul elaborates on all the blessings and gifts we have received from God and their practical implications for our daily behavior. If we truly believe all the things we affirmed in Ephesians 1-3, then the instructions in Ephesians 4-6 are the logical result.

Where do we get this image of “living in the light”? See Ephesians 4:18 and 5:8. Before we were in “darkness” – we were ignorant of how we should live and we were separated from God. But now that is no longer true! We now know God, we have been called God’s children, and we have God’s instructions on how to live our lives. The only thing remaining is for us to strive to live out these truths.

**Objective:** Understand our motivation for living as children of the light, and some of the specific expectations. Begin to analyze what Christian living means for our relationships.

1. **Opening Discussion: What did you learn about God and yourself through your experience this week?** (The commitment you made last week.)

**Read Ephesians 5:1-20**

2. **Recall a time you have seen a child try to imitate a beloved parent. Re-read verses 1 & 2. What does this tell us about our motivation for living as children of the light or children of God?**
3. **Look closely at verses 3-7. The Temple of Diana – known for its 300 temple prostitutes - was located in Ephesus. Sensual pleasure was part of the culture of the city. Even so, what type of standard does Paul set for Christians in these verses? What does this tell us about what/who should (or should not) define what acceptable behavior is for “children of the light”?**

4. You've heard of the "fruit of the spirit". In this passage, what does Paul list as "fruit of the light"? Define each of these "fruits".

5. Verses 15-18 offer some guidance about how to choose our behavior (and how NOT to choose our behavior). Use these verses to fill in the chart below.

Verse	Criteria for deciding on proper behavior
15	
16	
17	
18	

Using this chart, write your own set of brief "checklist" questions that you could use to help make decisions.

**Read Ephesians 5:21-32**

This begins a section on how relationships should function in the family of God. The section continues next week in chapter 6.

These verses are often challenging for our culture to hear. Words like "submit" and "obey" are not popular with us. Often when people get bent out of shape about these verses it is because they read only a part of verse 22: "Wives submit to your husbands". However, it is very important to read the entire section in context!

6. It appears that verse 21 is an introduction to this entire section on relationships (5:22 – 6:9). Who is the "one another" being referred to here? What is the reason we are called to submit to "one another"?

7. **What “model” do husbands have in how they are to treat their wives? What does it mean for a husband to live and love his wife following this model?**
  
8. **Paul was writing this in a culture where women were addressed through their husbands and Jewish law termed women a “thing”. Given the cultural attitude toward women at the time and taking this entire section as a whole: Would Paul have been considered a “male chauvinist” or a “radical feminist” in his day?**
  
9. **Is what Paul says here about marriage relationships completely outdated? Timeless rules for a happy marriage? A combination? Why do you think so?**

### **Apply**

10. **Of all the things to avoid mentioned in these passages, which are the biggest challenge for you right now? What motivation does Paul give for avoiding these behaviors that is the most compelling for you?**

**11. Decide on ONE thing you would like to do based on what you have studied here. Share it with your group and commit to doing it for the upcoming week. Be prepared to share your experience with the group.**

**This week I commit to:**

**\*\*See notes on question #13 in week one for tips on this exercise.\*\***

Ideas for this week include:

- Paul gives several reasons that should be at the heart of our motivation to avoid acting wrongly and behave in honorable ways instead. Write down the reason you find most compelling and post it someplace where you will see it every day. With that motivation in the front of your mind, focus on behaving as a “child of God” this week.
- Verse 4 admonishes us to avoid “foolish talk or coarse joking”. Focus on your speech this week with these admonishments in mind. Keep a tally of how often you slip into foolish talk or coarse joking without even realizing it. Strive to be more aware of your speech and ways to make it more holy and honorable.
- At least once each day this week use the “checklist” questions you created in question #5 to help yourself pause and think about making correct behavioral choices.
- If married: Spend time honestly reading, praying and reflecting on Ephesians 5:21-32. Do these verses offer any guidance that should be implemented more in your marriage relationship? Focus on YOUR roll, not your spouse’s!
- **\*\*Remember – these are only ideas! Feel free to come up with your own commitment.\*\***