

A Study of Ephesians 5:6-21

Review

Chapter 1

- Paul greets Christians at the church at Ephesus.
- Paul praises God for accomplishing through Jesus – (1) adoption of believers and (2) uniting all things, including the church, under the headship of Jesus Christ.
- Paul thanks God for the faith and love of the Ephesian Christians and prays that God will give them greater knowledge of God and all that He is accomplishing through Jesus.

Chapter 2

- Before Christ they were dead, controlled by their sinful minds, their flesh, and the world's "spirit".
- Because of God's great love and grace, He sent Jesus Christ to make them alive again to be His workmanship, the church, and do the works God has prepared for them.
- The masterpiece includes Gentiles and Jews united as one body in Christ, the dwelling place of God.

Chapter 3

- Paul reveals the mystery of Christ that was revealed to him – that in God's sovereign, eternal plans through the work of Christ, Gentiles are full members of God's kingdom.
- The unity of the church by God's Spirit is the revelation of the wisdom of God.
- Paul prays God will strengthen them so that Christ would dwell in them and they can know His love.

Chapter 4

- Paul summarizes what to do as a result and in response to what God has done through Jesus – walk worthy of their calling, i.e., walk united by God's love and truth.
- Jesus gives church leaders to equip the other believers to use their gifts in ministry to one another. The result - a church united by God's love and anchored in His truth.
- This means believers must leave behind the old ways of thinking and think and live as those made new in Jesus Christ.
- Paul addresses four areas that are opportunities for Christians to show they have put on the new self – in their honesty with one another, in how they reconcile with one another, in how they serve one another, and in how they build one another up.
- He ends the chapter similarly to how he began it – by listing fruit of the Spirit that should be characteristic of a healthy church.

Chapter 5

- Paul connects walking worthy with imitating God and walking in the love of Christ.
- He addresses another area in which the new life shows up – sexual ethics. Anything, specifically here sexual immorality), in which Christians see themselves or someone else existing for their purposes rather than God's, is the old self. The new self understands everything in the context of God's grace.

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is

good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” ¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul continues to teach on what it means to walk worthy and to put on the new self. In verses 6-10, Paul follows a familiar pattern – what not to do, what to do, the reasons you should or can do it.

- Verse 6 – Do not be _____. What does Paul mean by “empty words”?
- Verse 7 – Do not become _____. With whom? What does Paul mean by this?
- Verses 8-9 – Walk as children of _____. What does Paul mean by light?
- Verse 10 – Paul includes an interesting word here – “try.” What does this word imply regarding discerning what is pleasing to Jesus?

Verse 10 is a reminder that knowledge and love are both “things” that we might possess, but also “things” that we must use or express. We will return to this question when we cover verses 15-17.

In verses 11-14, Paul is making a sharp contrast between light and dark. This is similar to what we read in John’s writings (e.g., John 1:4-9, 3:19-21, 8:12, 11:9-10, 12:35-36, 46; 1 John 1:5, 7, 2:9-10). Paul is reinforcing one of his major points about becoming a Christian. What is it?

What is the positive effect of light that Paul explains in verses 13-14?

Paul quotes from a baptismal hymn. What should this have reminded the Ephesians of and how would it have helped reinforce his point about the effect of light?

In verses 15-17, Paul says to “look carefully” in how Christians walk. This implies something similar to his inclusion of the word “try”. In both cases, he is telling the Ephesians that it is not enough just to have love or truth – that we must express and use both carefully. What are some of the dangers/problems that can arise if we do not take care in how we live, love, and communicate the truth of God?

Paul ends this section with a final don't/do. In verse 18, he says not to get drunk, but to be filled with the Spirit. Why are drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit incompatible?

Paul describes part of what being filled with the Spirit looks like in a healthy church. What are some of the characteristics of a Spirit-filled church?

- Verse 19 –
- Verse 19 –
- Verse 20 –
- Verse 21 –

REFLECTION – What of these characteristics do we see in our church? How can we cultivate them?

How We Should Walk

Walking	Description
Worthy (4:1-3)	
Not as Gentiles (4:17-19, 22)	
Imitate God (5:1)	
Walk in love (5:2)	
Walk as children of light (5:8-10)	

Walking under the power and influence of sin would be the opposite of what Paul is describing. Why are multiple, overlapping ways of saying something similar important for Paul to include?