

WALK: Taking Steps Toward Maturity in Christ

“Walk in Love and Light” (Ephesians 5:1-14)
Community Group Curriculum for the week of April 26, 2015

Big Picture

We live in a dark world. Most people living in darkness have no clue. The last thing they need to see are Christians who are more enthralled with the darkness than they are the light. They understand the darkness; what is foreign to them is love and light. They need someone to show them love and light so they can see that they need it. They need Christians who really walk the walk, and that is Paul's message from Ephesians 5.

Let's Dig In!

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-14. Choose one verse or phrase from this passage that stands out to you. Discuss in your group.
2. We are commanded to imitate God (Ephesians 5:1-2). The example is to be like “beloved children.” How does a child imitate a parent? How can this be a good thing or a bad thing? Name ways you currently imitate God. Can others see that your life is led by the Lord? How?
3. In Romans 6, Paul argues that for a Christian to desire to sin is crazy – sin is a terrible slavery, and one of the reasons a sane person turns to Christ is to be freed from slavery. Consider a couple of sins Paul mentions in Ephesians 5:3-7, such as sexual immorality and greed. How are those sins a form of slavery?
4. How is thanksgiving an appropriate replacement for the behavior Paul condemns in Ephesians 5:3-7? How can you use thanksgiving to replace improper behavior in your life?
5. Ephesians 5:5-6 may seem to imply that no one who sins through immorality, impurity, or greed can be saved. How does 1 John 1:9-10, 3:6 and Romans 8:1-5 shed light on these verses?

6. What does walking as “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8-13) look like in daily life? Check out these passages for help: Psalm 27:1; John 9:5; 1 John 1:5-7.

7. Paul wrote this letter to Christians. Why do believers want to continue walking in the darkness? What can churches do to help people walk in the light? What can you do?

IF TIME PERMITS: In 1937, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*. In one famous passage he wrote, “*Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession...cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.*” This book was written as Hitler came to power, and Bonhoeffer himself became a voice of opposition to Hitler's leadership. Just one month before Germany surrendered, he was hanged. How was Bonhoeffer's life an example of what he wrote about the cost of discipleship? In what ways does Paul's letter to the Ephesians support Bonhoeffer's teaching about grace?

Pray

- Pray that you might imitate God in your thoughts, words, and actions.
- Pray that you diligently pursue what pleases God and turn away from things that displease God.
- Pray that you might intentionally come beside someone to help show them how to be “a child of light.”

Final Thought

Here's the bottom line: **Sinners need to see selfless love and saving light.** Are we showing it to them? Are we giving up stuff to love each other in ways that the world will take notice? Or are we indulging in the same sin and darkness as they are? No wonder they aren't interested in Christ or the church. We're no different than them. May we be close to people so that they can see our holy lives made possible because of Christ, so that their sin and need for a Savior can be revealed. Jesus is still in the business of bringing people from darkness into light and He wants to use you to do it.