



### Time to Reflect

- How might we reflect God's love in our daily lives and radiate our faith clearly and distinctively?
- How can we possibly strive to sin less as we seek to become the people that God longs for us to be?

Last week we focused on the theme of Christian living and we considered some very helpful guidance as we strive to live as God's people. This week we continue to reflect on Christian living as we consider Paul's challenge to follow God's example, live as children of light, and avoid the fruitless deeds of darkness.

**"If we are the children of God, then we ought to imitate our Father. This is the basis for the three admonitions in this section. God is love (1 John 4:8); therefore, 'walk in love' (Eph.5:1-2). God is light (1 John 1:5); therefore, 'walk as children of light' (Eph.5:3-14). God is truth (1 John 5:6); therefore, walk in wisdom (Eph.5:15-17)."**

(Warren Wiersbe, *Be Rich: Ephesians*, p133)

### Specifics

- Our passage begins by presenting a challenge: 'Follow God's example...and walk in the way of love' (v1-2). Having responded to the gospel message and accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord, we need to move from our old ways and embrace God's new ways of living.
- The old nature is, primarily, based on ourselves and what we want. It is a self-focused way of living. The new way of life to which we are called redirects our focus away from ourselves and towards God. It is a way of living that is expressed in and defined by true love – towards God and other people.
- Warren Wiersbe reflects, "We are born into a loving relationship with the Father that ought to result in our showing love to Him by the way we live."<sup>1</sup>
- Our love for God is actually our response to His love for us. Note how Paul called the attention of the Ephesians to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (v2). This is, of course, the ultimate demonstration of God's love for all of us.
- The cross speaks of sacrifice and it reminds us of God's eternal and unconditional love. In 1 John 4:19 we are reminded that, "We love because he first loved us."
- Wiersbe helpfully suggests, "If we walk in love, we will not disobey God or injure men because 'he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law' (Rom.13:8). The Holy Spirit puts this love in our hearts."<sup>2</sup>
- Paul moved on to focus on the theme of light, challenging the Ephesians to walk as children of light. This is also the call to avoid the ways of darkness and sin.
- Note how he moved quickly and directly in (v3) to highlight two specific areas of sin that we could refer to as an uncontrolled appetite. Sexual immorality and greed (v3) are actually the lusts of the flesh and the eyes. Paul told the Ephesians that there wasn't to be even a hint of these sins among God's people.

<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Be Rich: Ephesians* (David C Cook, 2009), p134.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p135.

- From here he also considered sins of the tongue and the heart (v4-6). This particular section redirects our thinking to the importance of character.
- Wiersbe contends, “Two indications of a person’s character are what makes him laugh and what makes him weep.<sup>3</sup>” What do we think about and watch? Once again, we return to the concept of purity and its importance for Christian living.
- It must be made clear that this is not an optional extra. Note the first of two clear warnings issued by Paul in this week’s passage (v5).
- Put simply, “...Paul made it clear that people who deliberately and persistently live in sin will not share in God’s kingdom.<sup>4</sup>”
- This is an important instruction that relates to how we should be living as Christians. Our thinking and our words should be pure, reflecting the heart and love of our God.
- There is clear warning in this passage about the dangers of habitual sin. Paul was responding to a major problem that emerged quickly in the early church, a problem that is still very common today.
- Wiersbe narrows in on this as he writes, “In Paul’s day, there were false Christians who argued that believers could live in sin and get away with it. These deceivers had many arguments to convince ignorant Christians that they could sin repeatedly and still enter God’s kingdom.<sup>5</sup>”
- None of us are sinless but, as Christians, we should strive (with God’s help and grace) to sin less. We are called to be children of the light (v8) and not to be partners with those who live in the darkness of self-centred living (v7).
- By our character and our conduct, we bring God’s light into this dark and broken world. We help others find their way to Christ. When we think about ‘light’ we are reminded, in a spiritual sense, that it has three main purposes: to reveal God; to produce fruit; and to expose what is wrong.
- Paul issued a second warning to the Ephesians as he instructed them to, “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness...” (v11).
- He then implored the Ephesians to walk in wisdom (v15-17). Note the instruction given in (v15): “Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise...”
- It is important, for all of us, that we seek to make the right choices as we endeavour to do the will of God. It is heart-breaking to watch Christians drift aimlessly through life, stumbling from one crisis to another. This makes (v14) incredibly relevant!
- Wiersbe reflects, “It is sad to see many professed Christians drift through life like sleepwalkers, never really making the most of opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him.<sup>6</sup>”
- We are to make the most of the gift of life that God has given us, seeking ways to serve Him and see the extension of His Kingdom.
- To be able to engage in this work it is important, indeed essential, that we walk in light and love. We need to pursue purity and go for spiritual growth.
- In all of this, we are committing ourselves to aligning to God’s will for our lives (v17). This is the journey of a lifetime and we can only undertake it with God as our guide.
- Let us commit ourselves to walk in God’s light and shine His light within our world. Let us strive to follow His ways and seek to become all that He wants us to be.

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<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, *Be Rich: Ephesians*, p136.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p136.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p136.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p141.