

My Life in the Light

My Life--part 5

March 17, 2013

Ephesians 5:3-14

DAY 1

Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1. There are two commands in this verse: (1) Imitate God, and (2) Live a life of love. Which of these is harder for you? Why?

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints.

2. In Eph. 5:2, we are charged to live a life of self-*sacrificial* love. Paul contrasts this self-sacrifice with self-indulgence in Eph. 5:3, Paul gives us three big, "umbrella" terms. What are they?

3. "Fornication" - the Greek word is "porneia." Can you tell what English word we use? "Fornication" means *any* sexual activity outside of marriage.

4. "Impurity" - the Greek word is akatharsia. The word is a broad term meaning "uncleanness." This is any sin that makes us "unclean" before God and in need of renewed cleansing. "Uncleanness" includes both actions and our thoughts, public and private sins.

5. "Covetousness" is the sin of wanting something that is not mine to have. It is also an inordinate desire for something as too important. Words that would fit under this umbrella term would be greed and lust. Covetousness is an internal sin, a sin of the heart.

6. Which of these sins is your biggest nemesis?

7. Take a few minutes and pray about this. Ask God to turn your heart away from sin, and instead to faithfulness, purity, and contentment.

DAY 2

1. Yesterday, we looked at three big, "umbrella" words about sin. Two verses later, Paul addresses the severity of these three sins.

Ephesians 5:5 Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

2. After we come to Christ, we are not made perfect. We still have to deal with temptation and saying "no" to sin. Unfortunately, no one says "no" perfectly. When we sin, does this jeopardize our salvation? Our "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God?"

3. Paul addresses these same issues in 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

4. What words or themes are in common with Eph. 5:5?

5. What does Paul add in the 1 Cor. 6:11?

6. Let's illustrate with two examples:

a. When we persist in sin, when we *keep on* sinning, when we justify and rationalize our sin, it should make us wonder if we are serious about having Jesus as our Lord. We can deceive ourselves that it's OK to sin as we want and still claim to be Christians.

b. In contrast, when we sin, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, our conscience makes us feel guilty *and* the Holy Spirit works in our hearts to lessen our commitment to sin and strengthen our desire to honor God by turning to obedience.

What strikes you about these two examples?

7. Take a few minutes to pray. Ask God to help you take sin seriously. Ask Him for His power for obedience.

DAY 3

1. Paul has alerted us to the seriousness of sin. He continues with the same theme.

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

2. To whom does the wrath of God come? What strikes you about this title, "the sons of disobedience?"

3. Paul addresses the "wrath of God." Why does God's wrath arouse such contempt from our non-Christian culture?

4. All of God's attributes are right and just. Jot down how God's wrath for sin can be both *just* and *right*.

5. Paul warns us that we may be deceived with empty words in these matters. What would be an example of empty words regarding:

a. Sin?

b. Wrath?

6. God's wrath is meant to keep us from driving our life "over the cliff." God cannot be good and at the same time allow us to ruin our lives and the lives of others without taking "special measures!"

7. Have you experienced God's discipline or wrath before? When?

8. Is today's warning apropos to you? How so?

9. End your time with prayer.

DAY 4

1. Paul moves from specific sins to a discussion of the difference between light and darkness.

Ephesians 5:7 Therefore do not associate with them, ⁸for once 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), ¹⁰and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

2. Paul describes two kinds of people: those who are in darkness and those who are in the light. When does someone "graduate" from darkness to light?

3. Paul says we *are* light! It's **not** a matter of getting better and better until we "qualify" for light because we've earned it. How does that strike you?

4. Since we *are* light, what does Paul say we are to do? (5:8)

5. In Eph. 5:9, Paul says that the fruit of light is found in three types of activities. See if you can give an example of each:

a. What is "good" -

b. What is "right" -

c. What is "true" -

6. Is there an area of your life where you need to walk in the light?

7. Finish with prayer.

DAY 5

1. We finish our passage with the same theme of dealing with sin by walking in the light. See if you can spot the overlaps Paul makes...

Eph. 5:11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; ¹³ but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴ Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

2. If you are trying to deal with your sin *by ourselves*, you will find help in these four verses! Help #1 comes from Eph. 5:11. What do you think Paul means by exposing your works of darkness?

3. How would involving others help you?

4. Help #2 comes from Eph. 5:12. There is a way we can talk about our sin that actually re-enforces it. Can you think of an example?

5. Help #3 comes from Eph. 5:13. There are plenty of times where just verbalizing the battle with temptation helps to defuse the power of temptation. What may seem like a forest fire of temptation can be "tamed" to a fire in the fireplace. Have you experienced this with a trusted brother in the Lord?

6. Help #4 comes from Eph. 5:14. If we have lived in darkness, we never need continue in darkness. We can change like one rising from his sleep into "awakeness."

1 Thessalonians 5:6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

7. How would what we learn in this verse help us in dealing with sin?

8. Our passage for the week began with strong warnings to deal strongly with sin and ended with some practical helps! What is your biggest takeaway from our passage?

9. Thank God for this passage and His power.