

Out of Darkness, Into Light

October 4, 2025

Ephesians 5:1-14

Ephesians review:

Eph. 1: God chose, redeemed, sealed and empowers you.

Eph. 2: Man's predicament, But God saved you... and even us!

Eph. 3: God uniting people, people knowing God, people loving people.

Eph. 4: Usness, Usness Serving, Old Usness, New Usness

Eph. 5: Out of darkness into light; Out of foolishness, into wisdom; Marriage: Out of self, into your mate

DAY 1: A new model

*Ephesians 5:1 **Be imitators of God**, therefore, as dearly loved children ² 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. "Imitate" comes from the Greek word, *Mimētēs*.

2. In English we say "imitate," but we could also say, "mimitate!"

3. Every person is a unique individual, with different strengths and weaknesses, backgrounds, upbringing, schooling, social and financial status. God is in the business of building godly character, values, inclinations, perspective, etc. into each one of His people.

4. God is our "template."

a. Several years ago we were decorating the church for Vacation Bible School. We had five different life-sized characters we wanted to draw in the children's hallways. But none of us were that good of artists. What could be done? We made templates of the characters!

b. We placed a piece of tracing paper over each character and traced the character from the original. Each character was then traced with a thick, black Sharpie. We then laid the tracing paper on an overhead projector and could make the characters as big as we wanted!

c. When we shined the overhead projector onto the wall, the life-size character was outlined as if an artist had done it! The volunteers didn't create new characters. They faithfully traced the same picture onto the tracing paper.

d. We didn't have to create elephants or giraffes. Our job was simply to copy, to imitate the character's outline onto the sheet.

e. This is what we do as Christians. We are to trace God's character onto our "sheet" (our heart) and onto the pattern of our lives.

5. Who is the one you'd say you are really trying to imitate?

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: A new identity

Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² 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. While we are trying to imitate God in our daily living, we pursue that task delightfully, not grudgingly!

2. Here's why! Notice God's attitude toward you! Next to each phrase, jot down what strikes you:

a. *"as dearly loved children."* -

b. *"as Christ loved us..."* -

c. *"gave Himself up for us..."* -

d. *"as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God"* -

3. The image is of a father down, on one knee, delightfully beckoning his sons and daughters to run to him. This is how God feels about you and me. This is the motive from which God treats us.

4. In your everyday life, how do you imagine God looks and feels about you?

5. If your imagination of God is different than what Paul depicts, why do you think yours is different?

6. Jesus demonstrated this very truth from Eph. 5:1-2.

Matthew 19:13 Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. 14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

7. In actuality, we're already on the Father's heart. His approach to us is kindness, affection, and our growth.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: Priority #1: Live a life of love

Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² 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. Virtually everyone I know says to others, "I'm a loving person." How we think of ourselves as a loving person depends on what we call "love."

2. In our secular world, love is defined by affectionate feelings and sexual desires. These things come naturally to human nature. Why then would Paul command us to live a life of love? The answer lies in the definition of love...

...as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3. Underneath each of the bullet points and verses, jot down your thoughts on love:

- **A sacrificial love.**

"...just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us"

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

- **An undeserved love.**

Romans 5:6 While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. ⁸ But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

- **An intentional love.**

Romans 13:9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

- **A love that pleases the Lord.**

"...as a fragrant offering..."

4. When we say, "I'm a loving person," how do we stack up against this list?

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Priority #2: Live a life of holiness

Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

1. Men and women commit sexual sin. Marriages blow up. Families break up. Parents have to explain the unexplainable to kids. Sexual sin is destructive, and runs through people, a family, kids, and friends, extended families like hurricane Katrina.

- Sexual immorality-

2. Paul is speaking about any sex outside of marriage. Sex is designed for marriage between a man and wife. When sex is used properly it is meant to bring husband and wife closer together. When used improperly it reveals the growing cracks in marriage.

- Impurity-

3. The downward spiral of immorality is fueled by "impurity." There is an *outward* impurity and an *inward* impurity. The outward impurity is crossing lines that should not be crossed, ignoring relational guardrails. Inward impurity involves your imagination, your conscious thoughts, daydreaming about someone you should not be seeing.

- Greed-

Greed (plēōnēxia) means avarice, fraudulency, extortion: covetous practices, greediness.

4. We usually associate greed with wealth. The word means "insatiable," and is not applicable just to money or possessions. Whereas the first sin is sexual in nature, the second involves actions and words that create a platform for sexual immorality. "Greed" is a sin of the heart, where you allow your heart to crave, fantasize or romanticize a relationship with someone that is not yours to have. This is the essence of the tenth commandment. You shall not covet.

Ephesians 5:3 ...because these are improper for God's holy people.

5. Here is one great reason for holiness. We are set apart for His purposes.

Eph. 5:4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

- "Obscenity" - we equate this with cussing, but obscenity is having little regard for God's standards.
- "Foolish talk" = moros + logos: moronic talk. Using jokes to minimize God's standards;
- "Coarse joking" - sexual, vulgar humor. Effect: to justify my wrong sexual behavior.

6. Obscenity demeans sexual ideals, like sex within marriage. Foolish talk says things like, "My marriage is already dead. Our physical relationship can't harm anything." "Coarse joking" supports the lie that biblical norms are old-fashioned and don't apply today or to me.

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: This is serious business.

Eph. 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Eph. 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

1. To stay in this behavior puts you on a perilous path. It is one thing to think you are a Christian, but our pattern of life can either confirm this or should awaken us to the fact that we are not following Christ. This is not to say that becoming a Christian makes us perfect or cleans up every sin. It certainly doesn't. Our battle with temptation and sin is a lifelong one. The distinction made here is your **pattern** of behavior.

2. God's wrath comes on lost people who refuse to repent. God's discipline is sometimes needed on His people when we are disobedient.

3. You can be deceived about this. Don't be deceived about this. The media will not present to you holy and righteous people who care about others. The media either portrays Christians as holy but harsh, or hypocrites and soft. The media calls to the darkness in us.

Living in the light: under each of the verses below, jot down your thoughts.

1. Once you *were* darkness; now you are light.

Ephesians 5:8... for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord...

2. Because we are light, we live light.

Ephesians 5:8... for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.

3. Seek to please the Lord by doing what is good and right.

Eph. 5:9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

4. Don't dabble in darkness.

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 everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?