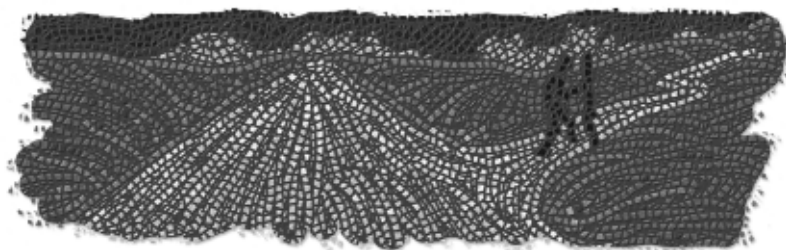


The Christian Walk



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 26

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 20; Isaiah 5:20; John 15:10; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 John 5:2, 3; 2 John 1:6.

MEMORY VERSE: “At one time you were in the dark. But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done. Live like children of the light” (Ephesians 5:8, NIRV).

PAUL CONTINUES GIVING HIS ADVICE on a life that will be “worthy of the calling” (Ephesians 4:1, NIV). He tells us to take the Christian walk very seriously (Ephesians 5:1-21). We do not have to read very much in Ephesians before we see just how serious Paul is about the Christian walk. Paul knows nothing about cheap grace. We are saved by what Christ has done for us. But we must answer the salvation Jesus has given us with obedience. We have a new life. We now have to live that new life as God commands.

In the verses for this week, Paul gives five parts of the Christian walk: love, judgment, light, wisdom, and fullness of the Holy Spirit. Paul devotes only a few words to each. But he clearly sets out what is expected of those who once walked in the dark but who are now in the light.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What does walking in love mean? How serious a warning did Paul give about the judgment upon sinners who refuse to repent?¹ How is walking in light different from walking in darkness? What is the difference between walking wisely and walking foolishly?

*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 3.

¹repent—to say you are sorry for your sins and then to turn away from your sins.

SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 27**WALK IN LOVE (Ephesians 5:1, 2).**

Read Ephesians 5:1, 2. Paul calls believers to be like God. Christ is like God. So Christ is our model in suffering, in obedience, in work, in prayer, and, above all, in love. Paul advises us to walk in love.

At least three principles² come from Ephesians 5:1, 2.

1. Christ's love is selfless. Christ's love is *agape* love. *Agape* love is based on principle, not on emotion. It is an outgoing love that meets the needs of others, even though they do not deserve it. God's love is such that He showed "his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV). To walk in love is to love the unlovable.³



Agape love.

Think about a person who is unlovable. What can you do to start showing this person love? Why not start showing love to that person now?

2. Christ's love is sacrificial. Christ is the greatest example of sacrifice. He accepted the cross of shame and gave up His life so people might be saved (2 Corinthians 5:21). To walk in love is to forget self in order to help others. "Discipleship⁴ means loyalty to the suffering Christ. So it is not a surprise that Christians should be asked to suffer."—Adapted from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 101.

When was the last time you really suffered for someone else? What does your answer tell you about yourself and the changes you need to make?

3. Christ's love brings healing to broken relationships.⁵ He can heal all broken relationships and bring complete unity (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18). To walk in Christ's love is also to heal broken relationships.

How have you seen God's love heal broken relationships? Think of an example you can share with your class.

²principles—general laws or truths.

³the unlovable—unwanted people whom we find difficult to love.

⁴discipleship—following Christ.

⁵relationships—the connections we have with other people.

MONDAY—NOVEMBER 28**WALK IN VIEW OF JUDGMENT
(Ephesians 5:3-7).**

Read Ephesians 5:3-7. Then answer the following questions:

1. What sins does Paul warn about?
2. How do these sins break the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17)?
3. Notice how Paul shows that these sins are different from his advice to “walk in love” (Ephesians 5:2). Why are these sins different from walking in love? (Also read Nehemiah 1:5; Daniel 9:4; John 15:10; 1 John 5:2, 3; 2 John 1:6.)
4. Study the warning Paul gives in Ephesians 5:6. What do you think he means by “words that don’t [do not] mean anything” (NirV)? (Also read 1 John 3:7.)

One of the saddest things of life is to live as if there is no God. To live as if there is no God shows that a person is interested only in the present (now). There is no thought about the future. But the Bible shows that history is moving toward a certain point when all people shall face God’s judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). We cannot escape it. Salvation in Jesus is sure. But just as sure is God’s

“anger with those who don’t [do not] obey” (Ephesians 5:6, NirV). God’s wrath (anger) is His judgment against evil and people who do evil. Because judgment is sure to come, Paul advised believers not to go along with people who do not obey God (Ephesians 5:7, NirV). Ephesians 5:6 talks of people who speak “words that don’t mean anything” (NirV). These people were false teachers who were saying that sin was not real and that there would be no final judgment for sin. No wonder Paul warns the Ephesian Christians to stay away from such people and their teachings. They were opposed to the truth as it is in Christ. Paul is horrified at these false teachings and calls these teachers “sons of disobedience” upon who will fall “the wrath of God” (Ephesians 5:6, NKJV). Paul pleads that among Christians there should not be even a hint, a thought, or a joke about these false teachings.

Look at the sins in Ephesians 5:3-7 that will bring judgment. Paul does not list adultery or murder, the more serious sins. What should this tell us about how serious the sins in Ephesians 5:3-7 are?

TUESDAY—NOVEMBER 29**WALK IN LIGHT
(Ephesians 5:8-14).**

Read Ephesians 5:8. Paul describes the Christian life as walking in love. He reminds us to remember the approaching judgment. In Ephesians

5:8-14, he talks about a third part: walking as children of light. In keeping with his style, Paul shows another difference: Once you were children of darkness. Now you are children of light (Ephesians 5:8).

Darkness stands for life before a person becomes a Christian. Light stands for life after a person becomes a Christian. Paul recognizes that believers have moved from darkness to light (Ephesians 5:8). Since they were converted, they have become light in the Lord. They reflect Jesus' character. Jesus said, "I [Jesus] am the light of the world" (John 8:12).



We walk from darkness into light.

Often we think light means knowledge or knowing facts. Often we think darkness means a lack of knowledge or not knowing facts. There is some truth to this idea. But what does Paul mean by walking in the light? Is he talking about

just head knowledge? Or is he talking about the moral life and the conduct (actions) of a Christian? Why is Paul's meaning of walking in light important?

Notice that Paul also is clear about living a life free from sin. He warns us to stay away from people who do evil.

How does Ephesians 5:13 help us understand how we might improve evil without having to open our mouths? (Also read John 3:19-21.)

Have you ever known anyone whose lifestyle, actions, and character acted as light that challenged your darkness? Did you accept the silent challenge humbly? Or did you flee the light or even fight against it by calling it darkness? (Also see Isaiah 5:20.)

WEDNESDAY—NOVEMBER 30

WALK IN WISDOM (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Paul has told us that our Christian walk must be different from the world's walk. We should walk according to love. We must remember the upcoming judgment in all we do. We should take care to walk in light. Now Paul says we should walk with wisdom.

What kind of wisdom does the Bible talk about? 1 Corinthians 1:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 3:19; 2 Corinthians 1:12. Give examples of this kind of wisdom.

Paul is not talking about worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom usually is concerned with just knowing facts. Facts can be useful, helpful, and good. But the Bible puts knowledge in the area of what we do. For example, the wise do correctly. The unwise do foolishly. What we do does not depend on just knowing facts.

How does Paul describe what it means to be “unwise”? Ephesians 5:17. How do the following verses help to answer that question? Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; Isaiah 33:6.



**Having reverence for God
is walking in love.**

The world runs only because of God. Everything that lives does so only through God’s will. So, knowledge means knowing God’s will as much as we are able. There is much about God and His will we cannot know. But we can know that His will for us is that we live pure, holy lives. We are to live lives that reflect His love and His character. This is true wisdom. Some of the smartest people in the world live in the worst ignorance⁶ and darkness.

Ephesians 5:15 tells us to walk “carefully” (RSV) so we are not “fools” (NEB). What useful things can we do that will help us not be fools?

THURSDAY—DECEMBER 1

WALK WITH THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Ephesians 5:18-20).

To the four principles of the Christian walk, Paul adds the final, most important principle: “Be filled with the [Holy] Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). Believers filled with the Holy Spirit will be equipped by God to walk the Christian way in love, light, wisdom, and with the coming judgment in mind. Having God’s wisdom and power to live the Christian life are two of the great blessings that come

⁶ignorance—lack of knowledge; stupidity.

from the Holy Spirit working in believers.

Why do you think Paul used the example of alcohol in Ephesians 5:18? (Also read Romans 6:16.)

Paul is using alcohol in his example. But he could really be talking about anything that controls the believer and prevents the Holy Spirit from working in the believer. Only the Holy Spirit should control us. Paul is making a deep religious point that is important to the experience of the new birth and holy living. Every Christian should ask, Who or what is controlling my body, mind, and heart? Am I under the control of alcohol, greed, lust, jealousy, or anything else that slows down my walk with God? Or am I under the control of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit guides us in the path we should go. If anything else controls us, we surely will be led away from God's righteous (holy) path.

If we are to be *filled* with the Holy Spirit, how much room is there for anything else?

After telling the Ephesians to be filled with the Holy Spirit, what other things does Paul tell them to do? Ephesians 5:19-21. How are all these things related?

If someone were to ask you if you have received the Holy Spirit,

how would you answer? What would you give as proof that you have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit?



Be filled with the Holy Spirit instead.

FRIDAY—DECEMBER 2

ADDITIONAL STUDY: *Walking in love:* “All who are filled with God's Holy Spirit will love as He loved. The very love that Christ showed in His life will influence them in all their relationships one with another.

“This love is proof of their discipleship. Jesus said, ‘You must love one another, just as I have loved you. If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples’ (John 13:35, NIV). People are joined together, not by force or self-interest, but by love. When they are joined by love, they show the working of an

influence from God. This influence and love produces unity. This unity is proof that the image of God is being restored⁷ in people. This is proof that a new way of life has been put in them.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Based on Sunday’s lesson, share in class ways in which love can bring peace between groups or persons who are divided. What can we learn from these examples?
2. “Don’t [do not] let anyone fool you with words that don’t mean anything” (Ephesians 5:6, NIRV). “Words that don’t mean anything” means false teachings. What are some false teachings in church today? How would you handle these teachings?
3. Discuss what holiness is. Is holiness more than obeying the Ten Commandments? Can you strictly obey the Ten Commandments and still not be holy? Explain your answer.
4. As a class, spend time doing what Paul tells believers to do in Ephesians 5:19, 20. Sing songs and have people share praise and thanks to God. Discuss the blessings we receive by praising God and thanking Him. Why should we make a habit of praising and thanking Him?
5. Discuss the difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom (Wednesday’s lesson). Do worldly wisdom and godly wisdom have to work against each other? Can worldly wisdom ever help us better understand godly wisdom? Explain your answers.

⁷restored—to make something as it was in the beginning. In the beginning, God made us in His image (Genesis 1:26, 27). Part of salvation is having His image restored in us.