

## ROCK GROUP BIBLE STUDY

August 1, 2003

### Walk in Light

#### Ephesians 5:7-14

*7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light {consists} in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things, which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says, Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."*

**Remember:** Ephesians chapter 5 can be easily divided into three parts based off two words that form the structure of this chapter. In verses 1, 7, and 15, the word *therefore* [OUN] occurs, and it is followed shortly thereafter by the imperative form of the word *Walk*. So verse 1, 7 and 15 each begin a new thought. Remember that not all translations accurately render the Greek in this section. However the NASB does a very nice job of translating the Greek here.

**Remember:** The term *therefore* closely connects this section with what comes before and points backward emphasizing that since the old self has been laid aside and the new self put on, then we should not walk as those who are in darkness (the old way), but we should walk in light (the new way); We should not be imitators of the world (the old way), but be imitators of God (the new way). Since we have been saved/changed then we are to walk as children of light.

**Remember:** The term walk is often used in Scripture to describe how the Christian should live out his daily life. Clearly throughout the book of Ephesians the idea of the Christian walk is highlighted. In 4:1 we are to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. In 4:17 we are not to walk as the Gentiles walk, but rather in righteousness and holiness in truth (4:24). In Ephesians 5:2 we are to walk in love and this week we will focus on verses 7-14 and the injunction to walk in light.

The structure of this passage in verses 7-14 is based upon two prohibitions one listed in verse 7 and the other in verse 11.

· *What is the first prohibition that Paul gives the Ephesian believers in verse 7?*

Do not be partakers with them!

· *What does it mean to be a partaker?*

The term means "partners" or "a participant with" and is used to signify "one who shares in a possession or relationship." So Paul is saying, "Do not be a participant with them or do not share in a close relationship with them!"

· *Who is Paul referring to when he says "with them"?*

The term "*with them*" refers back to the phrase "*sons of disobedience*" in verse 6. Paul is exhorting the Ephesian believers not to share in close relationships with the evildoers of verses 5 and 6. In those verses Paul references the immoral or impure person, the idolater, those who deceive and those who are disobedient. In essence Paul is exhorting believers not to form close personal relationships with unbelievers.

**· *What is the significance of Paul's prohibition here and how does it apply to your personal relationships?***

Believers should not be participants or partners with unbelievers. As he has stated in the previous verses, those individuals will not have an inheritance in God's kingdom. In fact all they will receive is God's wrath and judgment. Paul's point is that since we have put off the old self and put on the new self (i.e. we have become believers) then we are not to have our closest relationships with those who are unbelieving.

As believers in Christ your closest relationships and friendships should be with other believers. This certainly does not mean that you cut off all contact with unbelievers. Paul is simply exhorting the Ephesians to be in the world, but not of the world. We are to be participants with Christ in righteousness, not participants with the world and its evil practices. We are to be imitators of God, not imitators of the world.

**· *According to verse 8, what is Paul's reason for giving the prohibition not to be partakers with unbelievers?***

Paul exhorts them not to participate with the evil doers of the world because there has been a change in their life. They have been transformed! They have been converted! They have become believers in Christ! If they became participants with the evil doers of the world then they would be living according to the old way/the old self because they were formerly darkness. They were unsaved and practiced wickedness. But now they are light in the Lord. They have put off the old self and put on the new self. They are in the Lord. They are in Christ. They have been saved by grace and as a result they should be striving to live like Christ.

**· *After emphasizing the transformation that has taken place in the believers life, How does Paul further exhort the believer?***

He commands them to walk as children of light. They are no longer to walk according to the deeds of darkness, but they are to walk or live like believers in Christ. The term walk as mentioned earlier is emphasizing how we are to live. It is in the imperative so it is a command. We are not to live like unbelievers, but live like believers.

**· *How is this exhortation related to Jesus' instruction in Matthew 5:14-16?***

I believe that this command is very closely related to the idea presented in Christ's instruction in the sermon on the Mount. The idea is that we are to live in such away that we are different from the world so that the world will take notice of our good works and give God the glory. We are to be a witness to the watching world. Because Christ was the light of the world (John 8:12) then we are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

**· *How is this exhortation in verse 8 related to the previous context of chapter 4?***

We are to live in a manner worthy of our calling in Christ. Since we have been saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-10) then we should be walking in good works. We should be living in humility,

gentleness, with patience and abounding in love (Eph. 4:2). We should not be walking as the Gentiles in the futility of their minds, darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God (Eph. 4:17-18). We should be striving to live like Christ as an imitator of God.

· ***In verse 9, Paul describes walking in light as producing fruit. We should be walking in good works producing fruit. What kind of fruit should we be producing?***

Goodness—this is a term used only 4 times by Paul and emphasizes a moral excellence, to being good in both nature and effectiveness. It finds its highest expression in that which is done willfully and sacrificially for others.

Righteousness—this term emphasizes a right character or integrity. It upholds biblical principals and ethical standards.

Truth—this term has to do with honesty, reliability, trustworthiness and integrity in contrast to the hypocritical, deceptive and false ways of the old life of darkness.

Pleasing to the Lord—As one produces the fruit of goodness, righteousness and truthfulness, he is seeking to be pleasing to God. He is seeking to walk in the ways of God. He is seeking to be an imitator of God. As a believer is learning and growing in goodness, righteousness and truth, they will give verification or evidence as to who they claim to be; children of light.

· ***What is the second prohibition that Paul gives the Ephesian believers in verse 11? Explain its significance.***

Paul urges the Ephesian believers not to participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. The verb may be translated "*do not become a partaker with others.*" The picture is as we are out in the world we are not to participate with the world in these unfruitful deeds. Paul is really just restating his previous prohibition in a different way. While the first prohibition emphasizes not to associate with evil doers/unbelievers, this prohibition emphasizes not to participate with them in their evil deeds. Since we are no longer darkness then we should not exhibit the deeds of darkness in our lives. Our lives should be transformed and produce the fruitful deeds of light rather than the unfruitful deeds of darkness.

· ***What unfruitful deeds of darkness do you think Paul has in mind based on the previous context of Ephesians?***

Chapters 4 and 5 emphasize a wide range of sinful behavior such as: lusts of deceit, falsehood, stealing, unwholesome speech, bitterness, anger, wrath, clamor, slander, malice, immorality, impurity, greed, filthiness, silly talk, course, jesting, covetousness, and idolatry. These unfruitful deeds along with any other should not be a part of the Christian life. They are to be avoided by the believer because they do not bring God glory and are of not benefit in witnessing to the world.

· ***How do the following verses relate to Paul's prohibition not to participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness?***

**1 Corinthians 5:9-11** Paul emphasizes a difference between participation and association. If we are to fulfill the Great Commission and go out into the world then we must have some association in it. However that does not mean that we participate with unbelievers in sinful activity. Paul's emphasis here is that we are not to participate or even associate with a sinning brother. We are to instead follow through a process of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20) when faced with the sinful activity of fellow believers within the church.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14** These verses further emphasize the above truths. It is necessary to take note that these are commands. We are to stay away from so called believers who are living an unruly life and are disobedient to the instruction of Scripture. It is important to emphasize that Paul's focus is that when this sinful behavior is the characteristic of one's lifestyle. Surely a one-time action does not characterize one as an unruly and disobedient individual.

· *What additional commission does Paul assign to the Ephesian believers in verse 11?*

As Paul continues in verse 11, he emphasizes that the Christian's responsibility goes further than not participating in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. He commissions them even to expose these deeds. John MacArthur says of this commission, "To ignore evil is to encourage it; to keep quiet about it is to help promote it." In other words we are guilty by association. The verb **expose** carries the idea of reproof, correction, punishment or discipline. So we are not simply to avoid those individuals within the church who have fallen into a pattern of sin, but we are to confront them. We are to follow through the discipline process that the Lord has provided us with in Matthew 18 with the hope of bringing repentance and restoration.

· *What reason does Paul give in verse 12 for not participating in these deeds of darkness, but rather exposing them?*

Because these deeds are so terribly disgraceful or vile they should not be participated in. In fact they should not even be spoken of. Some things are so disgraceful that they should be spoken of in as little detail as possible. Sometimes sin can be so vile that it is spiritually and morally dangerous to even discuss it. It should only be discussed and exposed to the extent necessary of getting rid of it. So only in the process of rebuking/reproving one in the church discipline process and even then it should be in as little detail as possible.

Note on verses 13 & 14:

There has been a great deal of confusion and discussion as to how verses 13 and 14 fit in with Paul's discussion here. It seems best to take it as an explanation of the transformation from darkness to light. Believers used to be darkness, but now they have become light in the Lord (vs. 8). By their righteous lifestyle they are to expose the deeds of darkness for what they really are (vs. 11). What happens when this exposure occurs is now explained in verse 13. As believers are walking in light, that light reveals everything for what it really is. In other words sin is revealed for the ugliness that it is and those who are in darkness have the opportunity to become light themselves. In verse 14 Paul uses words from Isaiah 60:1 as an invitation for those who are to become light and be saved. This would seem to further strengthen the idea from Matthew 5:16 that believers are to walk in light so as to be a living testimony to the unbelieving world so that those in darkness can become light themselves and bring glory to God.

### **SMALL GROUPS**

· *How are you doing in your walk? Are you walking in light? Are you letting your light shine before men or are you stumbling in the darkness? What can you do to improve your testimony to the watching world?*