

Ephesians Chapter 5
Week 6, v. 11-14

Eph 5:11-12 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

The KJV says "and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness..." This conveys the same meaning of the word partakers in Eph 5:7, which we looked at a few weeks ago. We are not to participate in the deeds of darkness.

Bottom line: we are not to have fellowship [<sugkoinoneo> to share in company with] with those who are practicing sin.

Have you ever felt out of place, as if you did not belong in the group or situation surrounding you? There should be a great contrast between someone who is living for God and those who are living for the world.

Those who are in darkness serve sin; those who are in the light serve God.

By making choices that honor God, the sin around you is exposed. The word exposed is translated reprove in the KJV. It is not enough to only avoid those who practice sin, the way we live our lives should convict sin. Light exposes darkness. When you are with a group of people who are unsaved, how do their words and actions change? Why do they become uncomfortable to act as they normally would if you were not there? Does your life and conversation direct others toward the light?

Mt 5:14:16 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Let's revisit the phrase in Eph 5:8, which says "walk as children of light". Light makes everything visible. As children of light, we should have nothing to hide. There is no need to fear what others may expose about us. Eph 5:11 says we are not to be a part of sin but our lives will expose the sin in others as we live for Christ.

Have you seen the commercial on television for febreze? People are blindfolded and led into a room that is a disaster with trash strewn all over – but this room has been sprayed (probably quite heavily) with air freshener. They are asked to describe what they smell. Their answers are always pleasant and positive. Then, their blindfolds are removed and they are aghast at what they see. The true state of the room is exposed. Light does that to sin.

What happens to a plant when it is not in the light? Fruit plants/trees require full sunlight for optimum production.

The deeds of darkness are unfruitful. Nothing good is produced from sin.

1Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

2Co 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

2Th 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

2Th 3:14 And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame.

Do you have relationships with those who are not Christians? Is that okay? How are those relationships different from the ones you have with other Christians?

Eph 5:12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

What is a secret? Information intentionally withheld. Have you ever tried to hide something? In a negative sense, people try to conceal things that are not acceptable.

Paul is probably speaking of the pagans who had developed evil practices in their temples and idol worship. These practices were usually held in the dark or at night. To even speak of such practices is shameful. The description of deeds carried out in darkness can create pictures in our imagination which corrupts our soul. Paul did not give clear descriptions of those practices because it was not necessary. What he did do is warn of their destruction.

Rom 1:24-32

Is it wise or safe for Christians to be familiar with detailed accounts of the deeds of darkness?

What makes something disgraceful or shameful? The dictionary says this is something so bad or unacceptable that it should be something to be ashamed

of. Other words associated with disgraceful are shocking, outrageous, scandalous, dishonorable, discreditable, reprehensible, appalling and dreadful.

Ephesians 5:12 says it is shameful to even speak of these things. "The very naming of those abominations often produces improper associations in the mind; the description creates polluting images before the imagination... Paul did not describe these vices, he denounced them; he did not dwell upon them long enough for the imagination to find employment...He mentioned the vice, and then he mentioned the wrath of God..." (Albert Barnes Commentary)

Eph 5:13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Have you ever *not* been included in something because you "were no fun"? Those who live in darkness do not like the light.

Joh 3:20-21 "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Heb 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Ps 33:13-14 The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; From His dwelling place He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth,

Ps 90:8 Thou hast placed our iniquities before Thee, Our secret [sins] in the light of Thy presence.

Job 34:21 "For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And He sees all his steps.

God sees all things. There is nothing hidden from Him. He is the source of light itself. God is omnipresent. He knows what is in our thoughts; He knows what is in our heart. We can hide nothing from God.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, *and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

We cannot pass off hypocrisy for sincerity. He will judge us according to truth, not according to appearances; Albert Barnes' NT Commentary

Eph 5:14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

We have opposites again. Awake as opposed to sleep; arise (stand) as opposed to death.

What happens when you sleep? Are you able to accomplish anything good or useful? When we are asleep in our faith, we are oblivious to anything that may harm us. We are unable to hear the warnings of the Holy Spirit. We cannot enjoy the blessings that God has bestowed on His children.

Have you ever been so tired that you have fallen asleep driving a car? If you have, you know it is scary. Even when you drift off for just a split second, you jolt awake with a sense of fear knowing how close you were to disaster. For that split second you had no idea what was in front of you or if you were driving within the lines of the road.

When we are awake and alive in our faith, our senses are heightened to God's work in our lives and His blessings. His light shines on us.

Eph 1:18 [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

There is a significant difference between light and dark and life and death and being awake and sleeping. There should be a significant difference between Christians and non-Christians. We are to be separate. We are to have no fellowship with those who practice sin. We are set apart from the vices of sin and look to Christ to be enlightened. Those who have not made this decision need to be encouraged of the urgency to do so. Those who have placed their trust in Christ need to be active about shining their light – we should feel a sense of urgency to share the Truth with others.

Paul wrote the book of Ephesians to the believers in Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. (Eph 1:1) Now, he tells those believers to 'wake up, stop sleeping as if you were dead, and Christ will shine on you'. Can we forget who we are and what it means? How does this happen? We are reminded several times to act as children of God.

Ro 13:11-12 And this [do,] knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. *Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

1Co 15:34 *Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak [this] to your shame.*

1Th 5:4-6 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; *so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.*

Ro 6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin [as] instruments of unrighteousness; *but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God.*

We need to wake up, remember we are alive in Christ and actively live for Him.

Col 3:1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Christ will give His light to those who seek Him.

2Co 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

This week: Read Ephesians 5. Consider the questions below and use the "Apply It" bookmark and your journal notes to guide you. Ask God to show you His will for your personal application. You may want to record additional insights in your journal. We will use these questions as a quick review next week. Review **memory** verses **Eph 5:1-2** in the NAS version and if you are trying the memory challenge, review Eph 5:15-17.

Think of those connected to your life who are unsaved. Make a concerted effort to pray for them this week and, if possible, to spend time with them. If that isn't possible, perhaps you could write a note or make a phone call. Pray that God will allow your life to shine in a way that would attract others to Him.

In Eph 5:12 we were warned to be careful of the details of sin that is around us. Do you allow sinful thoughts or information to pollute your mind? When someone asks us to pray for another who is struggling in sin, we do not need to know all the sordid details. What we do need to know is that someone is in trouble and we need to lift them up in prayer to God who knows exactly what the problem is. Practice saying, "I don't need any more information but I will definitely pray".

In what other ways can we allow thoughts of sinful deeds to permeate our minds? Think about the material you read, the movies or programs you watch, the jokes you listen to, the music you hear, the environment you place yourself in, the company you keep, etc. Pray that God will make you sensitive to His holiness so that you will not be comfortable to gaze upon sin even for a moment.

Read Ro 13:11-12 and 1Th 5:4-6. Are you awake in your faith or have you been sleeping? Is your focus on the hope of His calling and the blessings you have as His child? How would your life change if you were to live each moment as if it were your last on earth? How would your life change if you knew for certain that Christ would return tomorrow?

"Christians are not sleeping in sin and death. We have been raised from the dead through faith in Him. The darkness of the graveyard is past, and we are now walking in the light of salvation. Salvation is the beginning of a new day, and we ought to live as those who belong to the light, not to the darkness."
Warren Wiersbe