

Ephesians Chapter 5
Week 4, v.6-7

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

Deceive means to cheat or to delude. It is intentional.

Have you ever been misled or tricked by someone who was dishonest? What is the goal of that person? To delude means to persuade someone to believe something that is untrue, usually for personal advantage.

What are empty words? Empty words lack sincerity and truthfulness. They are without value. In the KJV, we see the word vain used for empty, meaning no substance, devoid of value. Those who are deceivers give unproductive and worthless advice. Someone who deceives uses empty words.

We live in a world where we constantly hear comments like "it's not that bad", "it's not going to hurt anyone", and "things have changed" and so on. These comments can be deceitful. They are void of absolute truth. There are no lines drawn between right and wrong. In the world's thinking, it is not acceptable to be dogmatic, strict, or inflexible in our beliefs. The word dogmatic has a negative connotation in our society. However, it simply means expressing *strong held beliefs and opinions relating to religious, political, philosophical or moral behavior*.

Is it okay to stand firm on the truths of the gospel? Even to be strict and inflexible about these truths?

Heb 3:6 but Christ [was faithful] as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Heb 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;

Society in general would have us believe that the way to love others is to be flexible and to accept and even embrace everyone's choices. How would you respond to this?

Remember the truths we studied in the beginning of this chapter. Who are you to imitate? Whose child are you? How are you to walk? Our concern should be focused on the salvation of others (what they need) rather than the sin of others (what they are doing). It is good to hate the sin, but we need to love the sinner just as Christ loves us.

1Ti 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost [of all.]

Mr 2:16-17 And when the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax-gatherers, they [began] saying to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax-gatherers and sinners?" And hearing this, Jesus *said to them, "[It is] not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Lu 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Is there a possibility that we could be deceived by "empty" talkers? Do you know of anyone who has been led away from the Truth by the world's philosophy and smooth talking tongues? How does this happen?

What can we do to keep from being deceived with lies?

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Ro 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Jer 23:16 Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD.

How would you describe the actions of a disobedient child? At the end of verse 6, those who deceive with empty words are called sons of disobedience. This disobedience is the rejection of God.

Disobedience is unbelief with an obstinate and rebellious heart. Those who deny God and what He has done for them through His Son are disobedient and destined for wrath.

What does Eph 5:6 say happens to those who are disobedient? What is the wrath of God?

Wrath <orge> properly, desire (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind), i.e. (by analogy), violent passion (ire, or (justifiable) abhorrence); by implication punishment:--anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath.

Wrath: 1) great anger; 2) divine retribution, God's punishment for sin; 3) vengeance wreaked by somebody in anger
These are extreme, intense words.

Ro 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

The world wants to think that a loving God will not condemn. However, the Bible says that God will not excuse the sin of unbelief.

Ga 6:7-8 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Heb 3:18-19 And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? And [so] we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Na 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave [the guilty] unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet.

Think about the power of God. What does the Bible say about His power in the verse above (Na 1:3)?

Eph 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Mt 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth

Think of man's power. Without God, we are nothing. We were made *for God* (Prov 16:3, Rev 4:11); created *by Him*, blessed *by Him*, given understanding and wisdom *through His Spirit* (Eph 1:18, Job 32:8); given power *by His hand* (Gen 1:28, Ps 8:6-8). Take God out of the equation and we are nothing.

Would you rather suffer the wrath of God or man? Why? How does an understanding of God's wrath fit in with the importance of sharing the truth with others? Are there people in your life who need to hear the Gospel message – perhaps again? Are you certain where you stand before Christ?

Can it be difficult at times to take a firm stand against sin? How have you been ridiculed for not compromising God's principles? How do you respond?

"Suffer no man to persuade you that any of these things are innocent, or that they are unavoidable frailties of human nature; they are all sins and abominations in the sight of God..." (Adam Clarke's Commentary)

Eph 5:6 speaks of God's anger and punishment for those who choose to disobey and are rebellious of His truth. Paul now goes on to make certain that we understand that if we are His children, we are not to be in close communion with those who are disobedient.

Eph 5:7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;

Therefore means consequently or so; it follows a statement and gives a result or action to be heeded. We could read this as saying, therefore, because you are not sons of disobedience but instead are God's children...

Look back to the beginning of this chapter and list who we are in Christ and how we are to be characterized.

We are imitators of God – (v.1),

We are His beloved children – (v.1),

We are to walk in the example of Christ's love – (v.2),

Our lives are to be offered as a pleasing sacrifice to God – (v.2),

We are to be holy – (v.3),

We are to be characterized by thankfulness, offering continual praise to God – (v.4),

Sin does not characterize our life – (v.5),

We have an inheritance in the kingdom of God – (v.5),

We are not deceived but know the truth – (v.6),

We are not destined for God's wrath – (v.6),

[therefore] We are not to be partakers with those who are ungodly; those who live in sin displease God and cause His wrath to fall upon them.

Verse 7 in the KJV reads this way: "Be not ye therefore..." It carries repeated imperative information. In Strong's Greek Concordance the phrase *God forbid* shows up three times in defining the words in this phrase. It is crucial that we do not participate in the dark deeds of those who are rebellious and disobedient.

How easy is it for us to be lead astray? What does the Bible tell us about this?

Nu 16:26 and he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be swept away in all their sin."

1Ti 5:22 Do not lay hands upon anyone [too] hastily and thus share [responsibility for] the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

Pr 4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not proceed in the way of evil men.

Pr 13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.

1Co 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Mt 24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

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 and add **Eph 5:16** this week.

-- Are you standing on a firm foundation of Truth? Are you absolutely convinced that Jesus Christ is your only hope of eternal salvation? Can you support your answers biblically? What verses come to mind? If you are weak in this area, you may want to commit some scripture to memory or write down a few references to have available.

-- Are you willing to stand firm in your faith even if it means standing alone? In whose strength will you rely upon? Read Ex 15:2; 2 Sam 22:33; Ps 46:1; Ps 84:5 and 2 Cor 12:9. Spend some time in worship thanking God for His strength in your life.

-- Are you more apt to focus on the sin of another or on their need of forgiveness and understanding of the gospel? Read 1 Tim 1:15; Mark 2:16-17 and Lu 19:10. What was Jesus' example?

-- In this weeks' passage we were warned not to be deceived by empty talkers. How easy is it to find yourself just "going with the flow"? Are you quick to recognize words that are not based on truth? How do you guard yourself against empty talk? Evaluate the time and consistency you spend in the Word and prayer.

Go back through each verse we have looked at so far in Ephesians 5 and make two lists. One that characterizes those who are in Christ and one that characterizes those who are not. Is there anything you need to change?

Who are your closest friends? Are you encouraged in your faith by spending time with them or are you pulled away from God, enticed to follow the world's thinking? What is the purpose of your relationships?