



As we've gone through Ephesians verse by verse, we've seen how the Apostle Paul clarified and even ratified many core doctrines of the Christian faith. A few highlights:

- God the Father predestined us for salvation before He even made the earth ([Eph 1:4](#)).
- Our salvation is only found in Christ, by grace, through faith and only because the will of God and His love for us ([Eph 2:4, 2:8](#)).
- We were once dead in sin, but now are alive in Christ ([Eph 2:1,5](#)).
- Salvation for the Gentiles was a mystery of God that had been hidden for generations and fully revealed after Christ had been raised ([Eph 3:4-6](#)).
- We are obligated to live in a manner worthy of the calling we have received – a life of obedience to God and love toward our fellow brothers and sisters ([Eph 4:1-4](#)).

As we look at [Ephesians 5](#), we get into some painful truths that should cause each of us to do a careful self-examination of our hearts. But in order to fully understand why Paul wrote these things, we also need to consider the audience. Remember, Paul did not write Ephesians to you and me *directly* – he wrote it to the church body in the city of Ephesus around 60 AD.

We learn from history that Ephesus was, from a worldly standpoint, a wealthy, aspiring, and desirable city. Yet, sin was absolutely rampant, as well as the worship of the manmade Greek goddess, Artemis. The massive temple dedicated to Artemis was spectacular and one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the world. Loathsome and vile sexual sin accompanied the worship of her image, and Christians in that city would have been surrounded by the blatant and outward rejection of everything their beliefs held as true. Just like today, it would have been easy for a weak believer to be sucked into this sinful lifestyle, perhaps not to purposely worship Artemis, but maybe to “go along to get along” so as to remain a part of society. They would have been required to give honor to Artemis in everyday life or be viewed as a blasphemer or worse. Being a strong, outward Christ-follower would have made a person an outcast, barred them from shopping in the local markets, and possibly even jailed. Looking at our culture today, it's not hard to relate to what the Ephesian believers were going through, and it is likely each of us will personally encounter this type of situation more and more as we draw nearer to Christ's return, therefore we must remain strong ([Matt 24:12](#)).

With this in mind, we can begin to see Paul's point:



Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things [see v3-5] the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 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. Eph 5:6-12 NASB

Paul pulls no punches here. Rejecting Christ and choosing a life of sin, disobedience, sexual immorality, and worship of other gods leads only to being subject to God's wrath and eternal damnation (cf: [Heb 10:26-31](#)). These are the ***sons of disobedience*** (the apostle John says these are those who "***practice sin***" (see [1 John 3](#)). However, in the Ephesian society, Paul called on believers to be different. He insisted they not take part or even ***speak of the unfruitful deeds of darkness***, the same darkness they used to be prior to salvation (see [Eph 2:2](#)).

In contrast, Paul said of believers, "***now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.***" We can compare this to what the Apostle John wrote to see its significance:

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-8

Even though true Ephesian believers would have been treated as outcasts and barred from many activities in their society, Paul did not tell them to abandon their city and flee for the hills. He simply told them not participate in the evil behaviors of the lost. By being ***children of Light***, Christians reflect the holiness of God, and like a bright light in a dark room, evil is exposed when subject to the Light. The Holy Spirit exposes sin in man's heart; when we walk as children of God, obedient when no one else dares to be, His eternal word, written on the hearts of everyone, speaks and convicts (cf: [John 15:22](#), [Rom 1:20](#), [Heb 4:12](#)). What one chooses to do when that conviction arises is between them and the Lord, and has eternal consequences.

We once again see the importance of walking the walk we talk – being different from the world while we live in the world. Our goal is not to be different so that people think highly of us, as was the prideful sin of the Pharisees (see [Matt 6](#)). Instead, our aim in



obedience is for God to be glorified and people to see and desire Christ. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so must we reflect the goodness and holiness of our perfect Lord. And in doing so, the true Light (cf: [John 1:9](#)) pierces the hearts of sinners and, Lord willing, leads them to repentance and salvation.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece