

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

T H E B O O K O F

EPHESIANS

How to live the Christian life

EPHESIANS: HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – PART 34
Children of Light in a Dark World / Ephesians 5:1-14

*“¹Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ²And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. ³But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; ⁴neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. ¹⁴Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.” -Ephesians 5:1-14 (NKJV) *focus vv.7-14*

KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EPHESIANS

To gain a better understanding of the Book of Ephesians, consider the following background information:

1. **Authorship:** The Apostle Paul - Traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul.

2. **Date of Writing: A.D. 60-63** - Likely written around A.D. 60-63 during Paul's Roman imprisonment.
 3. **Place of writing: Rome** – Paul wrote the book/letter of Ephesians from a Roman prison
 4. **Audience: Ephesian Christians at Ephesus and surrounding area** Addressed to the Christian community in Ephesus, a major city in Asia Minor. Ephesians is considered a “circular letter” meant to be circulated to church in the area of Ephesus... possibly the same 7 churches
 5. **Purpose: How to live the Christian life** To strengthen the faith of believers and address issues of unity and spiritual maturity.
 6. **Themes: Grace, the church, and holy living** - Key themes include grace, the church as the body of Christ, and the importance of living a holy life.
 7. **Structure: Ephesus is divided into two main sections** - Divided into two main sections: doctrinal teachings (chapters 1-3) and practical applications (chapters 4-6).
 8. **Cultural Context: Ephesus was center of commerce and religion** - Ephesus was a center of commerce and religion, known for the Temple of Artemis.
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Application Questions

1. If we openly rebuke someone for their sin(s) (telling a dirty joke, using profanity, using obscene hand gesture, or worse... sexual promiscuity, drug or alcohol abuse, deviate sexual behaviors, use of pornography, etc) it may cut off all future opportunity for witness. How can we be tactful and loving and yet show disapproval?
2. Do you think that Christians should not have unbelievers as their friends or closest friends? Why/why not? Can you cite Scripture?
 - **2 Corinthians 6:14**, ¹⁴ *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*
 - **1 Corinthians 15:33**, ³³ *Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”*
 - **Ephesians 5:11**, ¹¹ *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”*
 - **James 4:4**, ⁴ *...Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity (hostility, hatred, animosity) with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”*
 - **Psalms 1:1**, *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.”*
 - **1 Corinthians 5:9-11**, ⁹ *I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or*

an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.” *(What about this one?)*

3. Since no one is perfect, how godly should we be before we tell others about Christ? What guidelines apply? **remember some people use their own sin and fallenness as an excuse not to share their faith... “I have to much sin in my own life to tell others how to live their lives!”*
4. Some argue that believers should frequent places where sinners are (bars, taverns, honky-tonks) to try to reach them? Agree/disagree? Why or why not?

Listen to Jesus’ words in his great Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5:13-16**...

“¹³ ‘You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.’ ¹⁴ ‘You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.’” – Matthew 5:13-16 (NKJV)

What is He (Jesus) calling us to here and how does this relate to the questions we just talked about? (see application questions above)

Some Powerful Quotes to Consider:

“For Christians to influence the world with the truth of God's Word requires the recovery of the great Reformation doctrine of vocation. Christians are called to God's service not only in church professions but also in every secular calling. The task of restoring truth to the culture depends largely on our laypeople. To bring back truth, on a practical level, the church must encourage Christians to be not merely consumers of culture but makers of culture. The church needs to cultivate Christian artists, musicians, novelists, filmmakers, journalists, attorneys, teachers, scientists, business executives, and the like, teaching its laypeople the sense in which every secular vocation—including, above all, the callings of husband, wife, and parent--is a sphere of Christian ministry, a way of serving God and neighbor that is grounded in God's truth. Christian laypeople must be encouraged to be leaders in their fields, rather than eager-to-please followers, working from the assumptions of their biblical worldview, not the vapid clichés of pop culture.” –J. Gresham Machen

- (1) What do you think of this quote? What do you think he’s saying and in your own words?*
- (2) What does this have to do with being “light” in the world personally?*
- (3) What affect might this have on our world, culture, and those around us who may not know the Lord?*

“We should not ask, ‘What is wrong with the world’ for that diagnosis has already been given. Rather we should ask, ‘What has happened to Christian being light in it’”? –John R.W. Stott

- (1) What do you think of this quote? What do you think he’s saying and in your own words?*
- (2) How does this quote speak to our often misguided world view?*
- (3) What do you think he is implying by the statement ‘What has happened to Christians being light? How can we fix this in your opinion?’*

“Being light demands two things: we practice purity in the midst of a dark and fallen world and yet we live in proximity to this dark and fallen world. If you don't hold up both truths in tension, you invariably become useless and separated from the world God loves.” – David Kinnaman, President of Barna Group

- (1) What do you think of this quote? What do you think he’s saying and in your own words?*
- (2) What do you think he means by “practicing purity in the midst of a dark and fallen world”? How might this affect our impact/influence on our world and those who are lost all around us?*
- (3) What do you think he means by “living in proximity to this dark and fallen world? What is he implying do you think?”*
- (4) What affect might this have on our world, culture, and those around us who may not know the Lord?*

How can a genuine believer in Jesus Christ today... a true Christian, truly have an impact on this tough, hard world we live in? How? Share your thoughts...

A BIBLICAL DOSE OF REALITY OF OUR TIMES (2 Timothy 3:1-9)

If you were to choose some words to describe the day in which we live, what words would you choose? _____

We need not look far or hard for an accurate analysis of the world in which we live. The Bible is timeless and actually tell us clearly what the world we live in is like **(READ: 2 Timothy 3:1-9)**

¹But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.” -2 Timothy 3:1-9 (NJKV)

The phrase “last days” refers to this age, the time since the first coming of the Lord Jesus. The phrase “terrible times” (or “perilous times” in the NKJV) is interesting. The same Greek word used here and translated as “terrible” is used to describe the savage nature of 2 demon possessed men in Matthew 8:28. And the words “times” had to do with epochs, rather than clock or calendar time. Such savage, dangerous eras or epochs will increase in frequency and severity as the return of Christ approaches. The church age in which we are in is fraught with these dangerous movements accumulating strength as the end nears. In other words we should not be surprised by the things we see happening in our day. Others may scratch their head and wonder why we see such mind-boggling violence, brutality, abuse, moral corruption and depravity, but Paul told us we would live in “perilous times.” Then Paul launches into this list of attributes characterizing and describing those in this world during these terrible last day times.

Here we find that Paul’s assessment, not unlike our passage in Ephesians 5) fits our times almost like he was looking through a time machine window and reading our day. We could perhaps more easily summarize Paul’s description in three words... these are three words that very much give us a dose of reality to the times... the tough times we live in today.

Some Words that Characterize Paul’s Description of Our Day: (in 2 Timothy 3:1-9)

1. **Perilous** (v. 1) – We are told that *“perilous times will come”* (“terrible” in NIV, “perilous” in the KJV & NKJV, “difficult” in LB & NLT). Some scholars have translated this word as “terrible” or “perilous.” The Greek root word from which this term comes means “grievous, harsh, fierce, savage.” It’s used only one other time in the New Testament – in Matthew 8:28. There we read of two demon-possessed men whose consequent behavior was “exceedingly violent.” That’s an excellent description of our world – violent, harsh, perilous, difficult. **Present day illustration:** *Can you cite any present day examples of the perilous times we live in!*
2. **Ungodly** (vv.2-5) - *Can you cite any present day examples of the ungodly times we live in!*

3. **Depraved (vv. 6-9)** – Here Paul cites two men from Moses’ day as prime examples of man’s ungodly state apart from salvation. Paul describes them as having a “depraved mind” – that is – as possessing a corrupted or ruined understanding of the truth. (How do we get a “ruined” understanding of truth?) A world such as ours which is filled with people like those is indeed a difficult place in which to live. **Present day illustration:** *Can you cite any present day examples of the depraved times we live in!*

A GREAT REMINDER OF OUR INFLUENCE FOR OUR DAY (Matthew 5:13-16)

Technically, the only one who can preserve this world is Jesus Christ. But as His servants, we have been commissioned by Him to carry on this work in His absence. In one of His best-known and best-loved sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed our task through His use of two metaphors – salt and light. Let’s take time to reread these very familiar verses. (Read: Matthew 5:13-16)

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” – Matthew 5:13-16 (NKJV)

2 Ways We Can Make A Difference and Have an Influence on our World: (according to Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16)

1. **Be salt - “The Salt of the Earth” (v. 13)** – It’s interesting to note that Jesus described the qualities of a servant throughout the Beatitudes (vv. 3-12), He used the words, they, their, and those. But when He spoke of the servant’s influence upon society, He personalized His words by using the term you. In this way, He made the metaphor stronger and more direct. He said, “*you are the salt of the earth...*” The word translated as “salt” in verse 13 is the Greek word “halos” which refers to plain old, ordinary salt. However, in the New Testament day “salt” was anything but plain, old or ordinary. It was very important to everyday life. In ancient Greece “salt” was called “theon,” which meant divine. The Romans held that, except for the Sun, nothing was more valuable than “salt.” Often Roman soldiers were paid their daily wages in “salt,” and it was from this practice that the saying “not worth his salt” originated. How can we be salt? To find out let’s consider a couple of distinct uses of salt.

4 Ways Salt Can Make A Difference:

- (1) **Salt add flavor** – Salt is used for taste... it enhances the flavor of numerous foods. But when salt loses its taste, “*it is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and be trampled by men.*” In Jesus’ day tasteless salt was useless so it was taken and added/mixed with other ingredients in order to fill potholes in the dirt roads. By

analogy Jesus is warning his followers that if they lose their preserving influence in society, they in a sense are no more use or effect so they become overlooked... walked-by by the world. In other words they lose their ability to make a difference and impact our world.

- (2) **Salt speeds healing** – Salt stings when poured in an open wound or sore, but it does speed healing. Salt was often used for medical purposes in New Testament times, especially given their lack of medical help. And salt does possess many healing and antiseptic qualities. It is a good natural medicinal additive that can aid and speed healing.. It kills germs and fights infection. So, Christians must be a healing force in the world, killing the germ of sin and fighting the infection of sin and speeding healing by introducing Jesus Christ, the “Great Physician” to others. By the way, your life, lived like a Christian may stings some... and rub some the wrong way. That is the healing influence of Christ in you, the salt in life.
- (3) **Salt creates thirst** - Salt creates thirst! Christian, your life ought to create a hunger and thirst for God in the lives of others. You ought to attract people to Christ, not distract them from Him. Ask yourself, “Am I drawing people to Christ, creating a thirst for God and the things of God that I have in my life... or is my life a turn off, pushing others away?”
- (4) **Salt serves as a preservative** – Salt, can be used as a preservative, as a matter of fact, years ago, before refrigeration, salt was used to keep meat from spoiling and rotting. It was used to preserve meat to keep it in edible condition. So if we are the preserving agents of the world, then it too must be perishing... rotting and spoiling away. But Christ emphasized that our influence keep that corruption from coming to completion.

2. **Be light** - *“The Light of the World” (vv. 14-16)* – Elsewhere Jesus said of Himself, *“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* (John 8:12) In Matthew 5, however, Jesus said that Christians are the light of the world. In other words, when we become His followers (believers), His light shines through us to a world in darkness. Light’s basic function is to dispel darkness. But, as Jesus points out, light cannot perform its job if it is hidden. Therefore, He exhorts us to let our light stand out, plain for all to see, not just for a select or comfortable few. But what are lights of our lives for... what difference can light make? He answers that for us in verse 16, *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* As we think of light, let’s take note of three characteristics that stand out about light.

3 Characteristics of Light That Makes A Difference:

- (1) **Light is silent** – Have you ever noticed that light makes no noise and it just shines. And yet, in doing so, it offers profound appeal to those who see it from the darkness. It is essentially a silent, but very bright witness. Interesting! What could that possible mean?

- (2) **Light gives direction** – It exposes what the dark hides and has veiled and it illumines the pathway through many obstructions. (See Ephesians 5:8ff)
- (3) **Light attracts** – Ever notice a porch light or street light at night and all the bugs swarming around it. Light attracts. Those in the dark cannot fail to see the light when it pierces through and they are drawn to it somehow. As we live our lives in obedience to Christ through His Word, others readily see the radical difference and hope in us and will be drawn to it in different ways. Some may react violently to it, others may embrace it, but both are a reaction to the Light in us.

CASE SCENARIOS: How would you respond in each situation?

Case Scenario #1:

You friend and co-worker shares with you that she is very excited about a new relationship she is in. The only problem is that you know she is married and has two younger children at home... and the new relationship is now with her husband. You sense that she is looking for your affirmation and response to validate her “exciting” news. How should you respond as a Christian, not wishing to push away a friendship and opportunity to be a witness, but also not wanting to ignore the obvious in what she is doing?

Case Scenario #2:

You are working for a Moving Company. On several occasions you find yourself riding three abreast in the cab of the truck on the way to a job, the man sitting next to you in the passenger seat reaches under the seat and pull out a magazine filled with pictures of gorgeous naked women in seductive poses. He comment on each woman in graphic terms and asks for my response. How should you as a Christian respond to such a situation?

Or, maybe you're at work when the other workers share the latest dirty joke. Should you laugh? Should you rebuke them? Should you say nothing and just walk away?

These are the difficult, real-life situations that the apostle Paul addresses in our text. He is answering the question of how we, as children of light, should relate to a morally dark world. He doesn't give us specific directions to follow when we face these difficult situations. But he gives us comprehensive guiding principles. By understanding these principles, each of us can think through how to respond when these situations arise, as surely they will.

Historically, there have been two wrong extremes in how Christians have responded to these kinds of difficult issue...

2 Wrong Christian Responses in Morally Questionable Situations:

- (1) **Watering down truth and accommodating wrongdoing (sin)** - Some, in attempting to relate to the lost, have become so much like the world in its attitudes and behavior that

there is no appreciable difference between them and worldly people. These folks emphasize Paul's comments about becoming all things to all men. Rightly, they try to minimize differences that are merely cultural. But they often err by playing down certain biblical truths that are offensive to worldly people, such as sin and judgment. In so doing, they compromise the gospel. And, they often dodge biblical standards of morality, becoming like the world in its sinful aspects. In my judgment, the emergent church movement often errs in this regard. *What's wrong with this approach?*

- (2) **Shunning and retreating from all contact with those deemed not Christian** - Other Christians have over-emphasized the need to be separate from this evil world by withdrawing from almost all contact with worldly people, worldly activities, and what they think is worldly appearance. One prominent example is the Amish. Not wanting to become assimilated into our godless culture, they withdrew and held to their own ways. Over time, they have become a cultural oddity. They are so distinct from the culture that they have no impact in terms of reaching the lost. Monasticism errs in the same way. *What's wrong with this approach?*

Where is the balance in these?

The Lord Jesus plainly stated the biblical balance in His prayer in **John 17:15-18**...

"¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

So we are to be *in the world* as Jesus was in the world, yet also *not* to be *of the world*, even as Jesus was not of the world. The way to keep this fine balance is to be sanctified (set apart) by God's Word of truth.

In our text, the apostle Paul is dealing with this issue as it concerned a church in a very pagan environment (Ephesus). How do we relate to our godless culture without becoming tainted by it? His answer is:

KEY TRUTH: *We are to walk as children of light in this dark world, exposing the deeds of darkness.*

The theme of light and darkness is prominent throughout the Bible...

- Darkness symbolizes Satan's evil domain and the sinful deeds of those who do not obey God.
- It also represents the spiritual ignorance of those whose sin has blinded their eyes from the light of God's truth (Eph. 4:18; 2 Cor. 4:4).

- Light pictures the knowledge of the truth that comes when God shines into our lives. As Paul wrote (2 Cor. 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.”
- Light also pictures the holiness of God (1 John 1:5), who dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16).

So as believers, we are called to walk in the light, just as He Himself is in the light (1 John 1:7), living with every area of our lives exposed to God.

2 Ways to Relate to our Godless Culture Without Becoming Corrupted By It:

- (1) We are to **walk** as children of **light** in the dark world (Ephesians 5:8-10)
- (2) As children of light in this dark world, we are to **expose** the **deeds** of **darkness** (Ephesians 5:7, 11-14)

WE ARE TO WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT IN THIS DARK WORLD (Ephesians 5:8-10)

“⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.” -Ephesians 5:8-10

Note two things:

2 Things to Know About Walking as Children of Light:

1. **To walk as children of light, we must be children of light** (Ephesians 5:8a) – *“⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord...”*

Paul does not say that we used to be *in* the darkness, whereas now we are *in* the light, although this is true (Col. 1:13; John 8:12; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:9). Rather, he says that we used to *be* darkness... *“For you were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord.”* Being *children* of light implies that this profound change comes from God’s power in the new birth. It is an act of His creative power. Just as He at the first created light out of the darkness, so now He has changed us from being darkness itself into being light in the Lord.

3 Things Being Children of Darkness Signifies:

- (1) It signifies a **state of ignorance** – We not only didn’t see God’s glory and truth, we didn’t have the ability or desire to see such things. We didn’t sense our need for the Savior, because we thought we were good enough to go to heaven and we didn’t understand the absolute holiness and justice of God.

- (2) **It signifies a moral corruption** – We lived entirely for ourselves and our own pleasure, avoiding the thought of death and eternity.
- (3) **It signifies a lack of spiritual insight** - Most of us have had the experience of visiting a cave where the guide turned off all of the lights for a few seconds (which always seem like minutes!). You can't even see your hand in front of your face. For a few awful seconds, you realize what it would be like to be totally blind. Paul says that we formerly were darkness. We were spiritually blind.

But, when God saved us, He opened the eyes of our understanding so that we saw “the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). We saw our true condition as guilty sinners, but we also saw the all sufficiency of Jesus and His death on the cross to cover all our sins. We had a new understanding of God’s Word and a new desire to know God and His truth more and more. We now hate the sin that we formerly lived in and we long to be like our Savior, holy in all our ways. We now walk in the light, rather than in darkness, because God has made us light in the Lord. While some of us (and I am one) can't say exactly *when* this change took place, you *know that* it took place, because you know that God changed your heart. “You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord” (5:8). To walk as children of light, you must be a child of light by God’s saving power.

2. **Being children of light, we must walk as such in the midst of this dark world (Ephesians 5:8b-10) - ⁸ *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light* ⁹ *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),* ¹⁰ *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*” Just because we are children of light does not guarantee that we will live that way. So Paul says, in effect, “**Be what you are!**” You are light; now, walk that way!**

He describes it in four ways:

4 Ways to Describe Walking as Children of Light:

- (1) **If we walk as children of light, we will be good** - Paul says (5:9), “*for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness...*” (The KJV has, “the fruit of the Spirit,” but “Light” is more strongly supported.) Goodness is one of God’s attributes, so to be good is to be like God. Applied to us, goodness is a broad term for behavior that benefits others ahead of oneself.
- A good person is concerned for the well-being of others, both spiritually and in every other way.
 - He walks in daily dependence on the Holy Spirit, since goodness is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
 - Since it is fruit, it takes time to develop.
 - But over the years, children of light should be growing in all goodness.

- (2) **If we walk as children of light, we will be righteous** - This refers to conformity to God's righteous standards, as set forth in His Word. A righteous person is upright before God and before others. He is just or fair in how he treats others.
- (3) **If we walk as children of light, we will be people of truth** - In the context, the truth stands in contrast to the life of unbelievers, who are deceived (4:22; 5:6). But we have been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (4:24).
- Thus we are to speak the truth in love (4:15, 25).
 - We are to be people of our word, maintaining integrity in all things.
 - We shouldn't have anything to hide, because we walk in the light.
 - We are people of all truth.
- (4) **If we walk as children of light, we will learn what is pleasing to the Lord** – Verse 10 of our passage says, **“¹⁰ Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.”**
- NIV, **“Find out what pleases the Lord.”**
 - NLT, **“Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.”**
 - ESV, **“Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”**

What in your thinking “pleases” the Lord? How do you please the Lord? What things must to do to live in such away to please Him?

Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:9**, **“My only ambition is to please the Lord...”** but how was he going to go about doing so?

Verse 9 is a parenthesis, so verse 10 goes back to verse 8 and summarizes what it means to walk as children of light, namely, that we prove by our experience what is pleasing to the Lord. “Trying to learn” translates a single Greek verb that is translated “prove” in Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” As our minds are renewed through God's Word, we prove in our experience what pleases God. We do not determine what pleases the Lord by our own feelings, which fluctuate, or by what the world or other Christians say or think. We don't even determine it by our own conscience, in that our conscience may be improperly informed. Rather, we learn what pleases the Lord through growing to understand His Word. Living to please the Lord is a fundamental difference between the believer and the unbeliever. An unbeliever may be a good man and even be somewhat righteous or upright, at least outwardly. He may be truthful. But, he does it all out of selfish motives, for his own self-respect, or so that others will think highly of him. But, only believers live to please the Savior. We have a new personal relationship with this One who snatched us out of a horrible pit. We now evaluate everything we do by the question, “Does this please the Lord, who loved me and gave Himself for me?”

In the Christian faith, pleasing God is a central pursuit for believers who seek to live a life that honors Him. The Bible provides guidance on how to achieve this through various teachings and examples. Below are practical steps derived from Scripture that can help believers align their lives with God's will and find favor in His sight.

10 Practical Steps from Scripture in Living to Please God:

- (1) **Living by faith and trust in God = Hebrews 11:6** - Hebrews 11:6 states, *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who approaches Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."* Faith is foundational to pleasing God, as it involves trusting in His character and promises.
- (2) **Living in obedience to God's commands = John 14:15** - Jesus emphasized the importance of obedience in John 14:15, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* Obedience is a tangible expression of love and reverence for God, demonstrating a commitment to His ways.
- (3) **Living in pursuit of holiness = 1 Peter 1:15-16** - 1 Peter 1:15-16 exhorts believers, *"But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'"* Holiness involves setting oneself apart from sin and striving to reflect God's purity in thoughts, words, and actions.
- (4) **Living a life of love and compassion for others = Matthew 22:37-39** - The Bible teaches that love is a hallmark of a life pleasing to God. In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus summarizes the law, *"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"* Demonstrating love and compassion reflects God's character and fulfills His commandments.
- (5) **Living in humility and repentance = James 4:6** - James 4:6 reminds us, *"But He gives us more grace. This is why it says: 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"* Humility involves recognizing one's dependence on God and being willing to repent and turn away from sin.
- (6) **Living a life of prayer and communion with God = Philippians 4:6** - Regular prayer is essential for maintaining a close relationship with God. Philippians 4:6 encourages believers, *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* Through prayer, believers express their reliance on God and seek His guidance.
- (7) **Living a life of thankfulness and contentment = 1 Thessalonians 5:18** - 1 Thessalonians 5:18 instructs, *"Give thanks in every circumstance, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* A heart of gratitude and contentment acknowledges God's sovereignty and goodness, regardless of life's circumstances.
- (8) **Living a life of service and stewardship = 1 Peter 4:10** - Serving others and being good stewards of God's gifts are ways to honor Him. 1 Peter 4:10 says, *"As good stewards of the manifold grace of God, each of you should use whatever gift*

he has received to serve one another." Service reflects Christ's example and advances His kingdom.

(9) Living a life that seeks after wisdom and understanding = Proverbs 9:10 - Proverbs 9:10 declares, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."* Pursuing wisdom through Scripture and godly counsel helps believers make decisions that align with God's will.

(10) Living a life of endurance and perseverance = Hebrews 10:36 - Hebrews 10:36 encourages, *"You need to persevere, so that after you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised."* Perseverance in faith, especially during trials, demonstrates trust in God's faithfulness and timing.

By incorporating these steps into daily life, believers can cultivate a deeper relationship with God and live in a manner that pleases Him. So, the first requirement for living in this dark world is to be children of light and to walk as children of light, doing everything to please the Lord.

AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT IN THIS DARK WORLD, WE ARE TO EXPOSE THE DEEDS OF DARKNESS (Ephesians 5:7, 11-14)

⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them... ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. ¹⁴ Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." -Ephesians 5:7, 11-14

In Ephesians 5:7, Paul says, *"Therefore do not be partakers with them..."* *"Them"* refers to the sons of disobedience, who are under God's wrath (in Ephesians 5:6).

Not being partakers with them is the same thing that Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18,

(READ: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' ¹⁷ Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.' ¹⁸ 'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'"

Then, in Ephesians 5:11-12, Paul adds, *“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.”* We should not be interested in hearing gossip about the movie stars’ latest sexual sins. Such talk should repulse us. Instead, Paul says, we should expose such sins. What does he mean?

In the context, he seems to mean that by our lives (primarily) and our words (secondarily) we expose the unfruitful deeds of darkness for what they are... disgraceful sin in God’s holy presence. Jesus used this word in John 3:20 when He said, *“For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”* He continues John 3:21, *“But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”*

In other words, by the obvious difference in how we live, our lives expose the sin of those that are engaging in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. As Paul says in Ephesians 5:13, *“But all things become visible when they are exposed [same word] by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.”* That last phrase is difficult, but Paul seems to be arguing that light not only exposes, but also transforms (at least some of the time). J. B. Phillips paraphrased it this way in his translation, *“It is even possible (after all, it happened with you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also.”*

Pastor, Steve Cole tells this story to illustrate... living in Flagstaff, where it’s cold in the winter with lots of snow, our cars get caked with the salt and grime from the roads, so that after a few weeks of regular snowstorms, they look pretty bad. But, everyone else’s car looks as bad as mine, so I don’t think much about it. But, if I have to drive down to Phoenix, where it’s warm and sunny, I am suddenly surrounded by clean cars! Those clean cars expose the filthiness of my car and make me want to go straight to a car wash. Our clean lives expose the sin of unbelievers’ lives. As God works in their hearts, it often drives them to get their sins washed at the cross.

Let me set out the balance of how we expose the deeds of darkness this way...

Again, Paul says in verse 11 of our passage, *“¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”* That last phrase *“expose them”* (the unfruitful works of darkness) beacons the question How? How do we expose them?

2 Ways We Expose the Deeds of Darkness:

(1) We expose the deeds of darkness by living godly lives as we maintain proper separation from the world - If we’re no different in our thinking, attitudes, words, and behavior than those that do not know Christ, we have no message to give them. If you profess to know Christ, but you’re not walking in the light, conforming your life to His Word, then please do not let unbelievers know that you claim to be a Christian! If you’re

comfortable with your sinful lifestyle, you may not be a genuine Christian. But whether you are or not, don't link the holy name of the Lord with your disobedient lifestyle (2 Sam. 12:14). But, if you're walking in the light, you can no longer join in the lifestyle of unbelievers. As 1 Peter 4:3-5 puts it, *"³ For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. ⁴ In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. ⁵ They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; but they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."* As you separate yourself from that kind of sinful lifestyle and live to please the Lord with all goodness, righteousness, and truth, your godly life exposes the dirty lives of those around you.

- (2) **We expose the deeds of darkness by our godly lives and words as we maintain proper contact with the world** - Don't go out of the world, or you lose any contact for witness. The Corinthian church was confused about this. They had mistaken Paul's command not to associate with immoral people to mean that they cut off contact with unbelievers. And yet they were welcoming a sinning believer into their fellowship! Paul didn't mean that they should break off contact with the world. Rather, they should cut off contact with any so-called brother who is immoral or sinning (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Here are four guidelines to follow as you seek to maintain proper contact with this dark world...

4 Guidelines for Maintaining Proper Contact with the World:

1. **Be on guard—bad company corrupts good morals** - You should not be best friends with an unbeliever once you have come to Christ. Your deepest friendships must be with those that share in common a love for Jesus Christ and the things of God. For a believer to enter into a close friendship, business partnership, or marriage with an unbeliever is to violate the clear command that we read earlier (2 Cor. 6:14-18). If you do not distance yourself from your former friendships, those godless friends will pull you back into your old way of life. But, what about witness?
2. **Be alert to your purpose—to win the lost to Christ** - Jesus was known as a friend of sinners, but He did not hang out with them to have a good time. He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). He said that He didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). He kept a fine balance that is difficult to imitate: He maintained His holiness and yet He put sinners enough at ease so that they listened to His message. It is in this sense that we must interpret Ephesians 5:14 (a difficult verse). Most likely it cites an early Christian hymn based on Isaiah 60:1, *"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."* Paul cites it as an example of the directives he has just given. It pictures the exposure of an

unbeliever to the light with a view to his salvation. He is asleep and dead. God calls him to awake and arise, resulting in the light of Christ shining upon him. It does not imply that dead sinners are able in their own strength to arise from the dead, which would contradict the metaphor. Rather, with the command, God imparts the power to obey, just as when Jesus called out, *“Lazarus, come forth!”* (John 11:43). Light not only reveals sin; it also dispels the darkness. So we can call on sinners to awake and arise, knowing that God may impart the power to obey, resulting in them becoming children of light, with Christ shining on them.

3. **Be sensitive to show concern for the whole person** - Jesus said (Matt. 5:16), *“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.”* Often, of course, we must tell people the message of the gospel. But that message must be backed up with genuine concern for the whole person. If someone is hungry, feed him and tell him about Jesus. The fruit of the light consists in goodness, which means, good deeds that show love for people. In that context we are able to give verbal witness to the gospel.
4. **Be bold to identify verbally with Christ when you are pressured to compromise your convictions** - This gets back to how you respond to dirty jokes or to someone who wants you to view pornography or be a party to anything that ought not to be said of a Christians. *Here’s the principle: Be as bold in your witness for Christ as the other person is in his solicitation to evil. If they are bold for Satan, why shouldn’t you be just as bold for the Savior?* Smile and say firmly, “That offends my Lord,” or, “I can’t do that.” If he presses the matter, say, “I used to love that sort of thing, but now I belong to Jesus Christ and I want to please Him.” And share your concern for him, that he is under God’s judgment, but that Jesus offers him a full and free pardon if he will repent and believe in Christ.

CONCLUSION

The church growth movement tells us pastors that we should make the church a place where unbelievers feel comfortable. So, we’re supposed to avoid subjects like sin, righteous living, and the coming judgment. Instead, we’re to focus on how to have a happy family, how to do well in business, how to overcome your addictions, and other upbeat topics. In other words, we’re not supposed to expose the unfruitful deeds of darkness, so that we don’t offend anyone. Just tell them how much God loves them! But Jesus said that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Without that conviction, unbelievers will not see their need for the Savior. Paul’s strategy is better...

Paul’s Strategy for Living the Christian Life and Reaching Other for Christ:

1. Walk as a child of light
2. Maintain proper separation from the world
3. Maintain proper contact with the world
4. Let your godly life and words expose the deeds of darkness

Some will awake from the dead and Christ will shine on them, as He has on you.