

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH
Small Group Study Guide: Ephesians
Week of November 5 (Week 10)
Ephesians 5:1-14



REVIEW OF CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four begins the second half of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. From Chapter 4 on, Paul stresses the practical application based on the theological exposition in Chapters 1-3. "The theme of Chapters 4 and 5 is the integration of Christian experience (what we are), Christian theology (what we believe) and Christian ethics (how we behave). They emphasize that being, thought, and action belong together and must never be separated" (John Stott. *The Message of Ephesians*. 193). In the first part of Chapter 4 - Eph. 4:1-16, Paul dwells on the importance of living in unity in the church with a focus on the believer's growth. In the second part - Eph. 4:17-32, he stresses the important of holy living outside the church in wider society (v. 17). In verses 17-32, Paul maintains that life in Christ demands a radical change in one's behavior. His thought in verses 17-32 can be divided into two sections. In verses 17-26, Paul discusses the new life in relation to self and God. Whereas, in verses 27-32, he talks about the new life in relation to others.

BIG IDEA

As believers we imitate or reflect God's character when we love sacrificially and when we live as light shunning immorality and exposing evil deeds.

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

The theme in Ephesians 5:1-14 is a continuation of Paul's thought from the previous passage, Eph. 4:17-32, particularly, the preceding verse, Eph. 4:32. Paul stated that God had acted graciously in Christ for all the believers. He continues in this section by stating that believers should imitate God and live in love as Christ loved them. In this passage (5:1-14), Paul presents two exhortations. First, he exhorts the believers to "walk in love as beloved children" (5:1-2). Second, after cautioning the believers with negative prohibitions (5:3-8a), he exhorts them to "walk as children of light" (8b). To walk as light is to disengage with the deeds of darkness and expose them.

OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. As you read Ephesians 5:1-14, what do you understand about the character and nature of God?

2. Paul begins Chapter 5 with the word “therefore,” signaling the continuation of his thought from the previous section. Unlike the Gentiles or the unregenerate, believers are “beloved children of God,” therefore, they are to imitate and reflect God’s character and nature as his children. Thus, in Ephesians 5:1-14, Paul presents two exhortations with the word “walk.” What kind of walk does Paul command in verses 1-2? What is the basis for this walk?

3. What are the negative commands listed in verses 3-4 and what does Paul tell the believers to substitute for the negative conduct? What does that tell us of the moral environment of the believers in Ephesus?

4. To what does Paul equate sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness? What is the warning for people whose lives are characterized by these kinds of conduct?

5. Read verses 6-11 carefully and list Paul’s warnings of which to take heed and commands/exhortations to obey.

CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXT

6. According to Exodus 20:17 and Deuteronomy 5:21, covetousness is sin. Covetousness reveals a heart that is unsatisfied with God’s provision (Gen. 3:6, Rom. 1:29). The temptation for covetousness is ever present, therefore, believers must fight covetousness at every turn. Compare what Luke, Paul, and James say about covetousness (Read Lk. 12:15, Eph. 5:3, Col. 3:5).

7. Read 1 John 1:5-7. How does John use the imagery of “light” and “darkness” in these verses, and what truths is he seeking to teach to his audience? In what ways is Paul’s use of “light” and “darkness” in Ephesians 5 similar to and different from John’s use of darkness?

8. The quotation in 5:14 might represent a mixture of lines from Isaiah 9:2, 26:19, 50:9-10, and 60:1-2. Based on Paul’s use of light and darkness, when the “sleeper” awakes, what will be taking place in his life?

APPLYING THE TEXT

9. The moral world we live in today is no different from the moral world of the Ephesian believers. The behavior that Paul warned believers to avoid then is as relevant and pertinent for us today. Is there any way you can more purposefully pursue purity, love and contentment, as well as sexual purity, within your speech?

10. In what ways could you and our community more purposefully endeavor to “expose” the works and thinking patterns of darkness that exist in the world around us (5:11)? What could you do to encourage this exposure to be loving and gracious rather than angry or argumentative?

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

November 5, 2023

Read Ephesians 5:1-14

Paul is writing to believers in an immoral culture, but he is calling for them to live without a trace of immorality. We live with the same pressures today. Many have succumbed to the temptations and live with a trace of immorality saying, "Everyone is doing it." Yet, it's deadly - just as a trace of arsenic is deadly! Allow this prayer guide to snuff out any trace of immorality in your life and prayerfully take action.

Monday: ^{5:1} *Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.* ² *Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ.* Wow! This is challenge. How will you meet the challenge? What is your prayer? Write it on a card and carry it with you today. Let it remind you to *imitate God* and live *filled with love*!

Tuesday: ^{5:4} *Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God.* Are there any changes that need to be made in your *talk* or attitude of *thankfulness*? Think about it! List things which need to change. Write out your commitment to change. Ask God for help and strength.

Wednesday: ^{5:6} *Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him.* What thoughts or behaviors of yours fall short of imitating God? No excuses! Don't be fooled! Take a moment to be still. Let your mind be under the Lord's control. Write your prayer of commitment to be wise and not be fooled.

Thursday: ^{5:10} *Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.* What are you doing that *pleases the Lord*? Write them down and humbly thank the Lord for the privilege. Are you aware of things that are not pleasing to the Lord? Ask for his help as you write out your steps to change.

Friday: ^{5:14} *For the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."* Ponder for a moment how well your light will shine today. Will your life point others to Jesus or expose sin and danger? Are you a "sleeper?" Examine yourself! Are your eyes and ears open to Jesus? Refuse to leave this spot until you are fully awake. What's your next step?

For more resources, visit www.briarcliff.church/ephesians