

# Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 18

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “A Life That Pleases God”

*Ephesians 5:7-14 ~ July 10, 2011*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help believers understand that their faith is to be lived out in life now – not just for eternal life.

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Missions Month – Dale Beyer
- Quarterly business meeting – July 17

## Opening Prayer

What physical condition are you in? Are you in good physical shape, or are you in need of some exercise to improve the condition of your body? We have enjoyed watching some of the TV shows that follows people who are in terrible physical condition, and over the course of the show, they are transformed into a much healthier version.

They find out that the process of losing 100+ pounds and learning new eating habits, when they reach their goal, the battle is not over...it has just begun! They must continue to exercise and eat right in order to maintain their new physical condition!

## Read Ephesians 5:8-14

Our condition vs. 8 (*our spiritual condition*)

Spiritually speaking, Paul reveals us a very dramatic truth about our spiritual condition – both before Christ, and after coming to faith in Christ.

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Notice that there are no prepositions used in the description. Before putting your faith in Christ – before you became a Christian, you “were darkness”. You were not only *in* darkness, but you *were* darkness!

Biblically speaking, you need to know that ‘darkness’ and ‘light’ have figurative uses. There is both a moral and an intellectual meaning behind these terms.

	<u>Darkness</u>	<u>Light</u>
Moral	evil / sin	Holiness
Intellect	ignorance (of truth)	Truth

Paul makes it clear that before Christ we weren’t simply victims of darkness...pulled down as a victim of Satan’s work against our soul. We were by nature darkness!

Remember 2:3

“Like the rest, we were *by nature* objects of wrath.”

“...but now you are light in the Lord.”

You see...when someone becomes a believer in Christ, they are moved from the domain of darkness...the domain of Satan...to the domain of light...the domain of Christ! Being a Christian is not simply about trying to seek a better way – trying to live a better life...it’s about being transformed by the grace and truth of Christ into a totally new creation! From darkness to light!

When you place your faith in Jesus, then you are not only *in* the light, you *are* light!

1 John 1:5

“...God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.”

We see this figurative use of darkness and light all throughout Scripture.

Isaiah 5:20

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”

1 Peter 2:9

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

What is your spiritual condition? Are you darkness...or are you light?

There is no middle ground here! You can't have part darkness and part light...you're one or the other!

### **Our command** vs. 8b-11

Remember vs. 1 of this chapter... “Be imitators of God...”

We imitate God by loving. Paul now expands on that truth – and helps us understand how we, as Christians, are to live.

**Read vs. 8b-11**

Living out the holiness of God – living in a way that pleases God – is theologically called our *sanctification* – our cleansing...being set apart, distinct from the pattern of the world...of darkness.

Westminster Shorter Catechism – question #35

Q: What is sanctification?

A: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

So, we are to “live as children of light”. God has adopted you as one of His own – you are in His family...the family of light!

Matthew 5:14

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

So, we “...live as children of light” by making sure our light is visible – that we don't hide our light.

Psalms 27:1

“The LORD is my light and my salvation...”

John 1:9

“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.”

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

This makes perfect sense doesn't it? Live according to your name. When you're in a family, you live according to the rules, traditions, and principles of the family. Since we have been adopted by God into His family (1:5), and we are now not only *in* the light, but we *are* light, we need to “...live as children of light.”

How is this done?

Well, the parenthesis (vs. 9) gives us some details...we need to practice goodness, righteousness, and truth.

“Goodness” - be a good person! The word for ‘goodness’ here refers not to quality (something that is made well or tastes good) but to the moral component of something. So Paul is simply saying, be a good, moral person.

“Righteousness” refers to our obedience to God’s commands. So, live a life that is full of righteous thoughts and actions.

“Truth” has to do with our honesty...our personal integrity...our reliability – can people rely on us to tell the truth? We need to live the truth of God each day.

These three things give us some detail as to what Paul means when he commands us to “live as children of light.”

When we do this, we will “...find out what pleases the Lord.”

Living as light, we will be good, righteous, and truthful, and you will discover that this kind of life pleases God – because He is also good, righteous, and truth.

### **The cure for darkness is the light of Christ!** *vs. 11-14*

You can’t bring darkness into light. Light always dominates darkness! The only way darkness can exist is when light is taken away / covered up!

#### **Read vs. 11-14**

Paul says the deeds of darkness are “shameful even to mention”.

Why is this here? It seems rather stifling, doesn’t it?

Paul mentioned something similar to this in vs. 3 – when he said “...there must not be even a hint of...” sinful things in our life.

We need to understand the radioactive nature of evil.

Those who work with radioactive materials take great precautions to protect themselves because they know how

dangerous the items are that they are working with. They don't have to touch the radioactive material to be harmed. Just being in close proximity to it will allow radiation to damage their body!

In similar fashion, the enticement of sin is very strong...it speaks the same language as our fallen nature...it gives our 'old man' power and ammunition to use against us in our battle for holiness. Even discussing the details of sinful actions can be alluring to our sinful, fallen nature! Our tendency is to get as close to the sin as possible.

*"I would never do that, but tell me all about it!"*

We watch movies and read magazines or books that give the sordid details of sin.

Couples who aren't married always ask, *"How far can we go on a date?"*

This is foolish...and our fascination with brushing against the boundary of sin is the wrong focus. The focus of our life should be on how close we can be to God's holiness...not how close we can get to sin!

Then Paul tells us to expose the deeds of darkness, which are sin / evil.

Two ways we expose sin/evil:

Passively: by our example

1 Cor. 13:5-6

"It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth."

As we love – as we are live good, righteous, truthful lives, the light of our life will expose the evil around us. When someone is kind, in the midst of rude, uncaring people, the kindness stands out. Truth makes falsehood very awkward.

Just by “living as children of light”, you will expose the evil around you. Your light will shine in the darkness!

Actively: by our words / actions

At times, we need to expose sin / evil more directly – by speaking up – by taking a public stand against certain things that will be victorious if the righteous stay quiet and passive!

“The only thing needed for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing.” – *Edmund Burke, 1729-1797*

Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:1

There are times that evil needs to be exposed in a direct, public way.

The evil of abortion needs to be exposed not as a ‘choice’, but as murder.

The evil of extra-marital immorality needs to be exposed not as *freedom*, but as slavery and as a disability to the ability to love.

Isaiah 5:20

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”

At the end of vs. 14, Paul is either quoting one of the early Christian hymns sung in the churches, or it's a hymn adapted from Isaiah 60:1

“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Some believe this is a call to the unbeliever...but I believe Paul is trying to help the unaware Christian who doesn't realize that God calls them to “live as children of light”. Their faith – the forgiveness of their sin is not only for eternity, but to free them from sin now! The quote tells us to wake up from death...from darkness – and reach out to Christ. Call on the name of Christ, and He will shine on you! He will shine His light on you! If you call out to Christ and admit your sin, believe that He died on the cross as payment for your sins, and you choose to live for Him each day...then you will not only be *in* the light, but you will *be* light!

Proverbs 4:18

“The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.”

What a beautiful way of describing the Christian life (Sanctification). As you begin to “live as children of light”, it's like the first gleam of dawn...the first hint of light into the darkness of the night. As we continue to live a good, righteous, truthful life, we will shine more and more brightly as we allow the light of Christ to shine more fully in and through us!

## Application

Are you darkness or light?

**A**dmit your sins

**B**elieve that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for your sins

**C**hoose to follow Christ each day (sanctification – “live as children of light”)

If you are a believer, does your life have pockets of darkness?

“...live as children of light”

One of the greatest obstacles that will prevent you from sharing Christ with your Oikos will be if you have a life characterized by darkness.

Close in prayer