

ONE - Study of Ephesians

Part 7 - Walk This Way

Long before Aerosmith and Run-DMC encouraged us to 'Walk This Way' (if you know it, you're singing it in your head right now!); before Monty Python showed us the Ministry of Silly Walks (if you know it, you're giggling in your mind right now!); long before walking was an Olympic sport (no comment), the Apostle Paul exhorted us to walk a particular way!

Darkness and Light

In a passage like this, there's something for everyone!

Ephesians 4:17-24

There's no distinction when we're all 'in Christ', but for those that are not 'in Christ', there are distinct differences and Paul is drawing them out.

Paul actually takes us into a kind of baptism language. There's this idea that he's trying to communicate that the old ways, the ways of darkness, that was your way of walking before Jesus was on your scene – these ways are not who you are anymore.

The verb for 'put on' can mean literally 'put on' clothes – clothe yourself in the new life of Jesus in the Spirit! This sets the context for this whole section, and actually links us back to the earlier part of the letter.

Context!

Paul is developing an argument throughout the whole of Ephesians; a train of thought, a premise that is building throughout the letter.

See Romans 12 for context.

Everything before this passage in the earlier part of Ephesians is the context for these things that Paul is raising.

Walking in Love

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Paul paints the picture here between the old ways of living without God, and the new ways of living with God. These are the interior things we allow God to touch and restore.

What's God highlighting to you?

Ephesians 5:3-15

Our Inheritance

Be wise, Paul says! Walk as children of the light (third time – I think he means it!).

In this passage, Paul shows us that the world and the enemy (those things in opposition to God and His Kingdom) offer counterfeits of Kingdom life:

- + Sexual immorality in place of God's created sexual intimacy that brings forth life
- + Crude joking that replaces the joy of God which is supposed to be our strength (don't you feel a little worse after crude joking – knowing that this isn't what God has called to be on our minds?)
- + Don't covet what others have – allow God to be your provider, not your own effort – you can't start in grace and end in works!! (remember Galatians?)

What's God highlighting to you?

Be Filled

Ephesians 5:17-21

Paul says, in an imperative, "Hey, as much as you shouldn't get drunk, or shouldn't be sexually immoral, you should be filled with the Holy Spirit!"

"addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" – Ephesians 5:19-20 (ESV)

Application

Maybe, if we let Holy Spirit fill us (to all the fullness of God) maybe our style stops mattering.

Maybe, the things that God is pointing out in my life and yours, the points of compromise and shade that should be light, are specifically because we have not abandoned ourselves to be filled with the Spirit?

Maybe our inhibitions are walls to keep our deeds hidden, to keep the things in my life that God wants to sort out, and they're stopping these issues being brought 'into His light', keeping us captive and locked in our old self?

Maybe we need to let Holy Spirit overcome us, ruin us for our old, dead, sinful life, and let loving care and joyful abandon become our expression of life?

Response

Take whatever point of compromise, conviction, whatever God highlighted to you as I was reading the passages today.

Take that, and willingly (of your own volition) give it to Him.

Pray something like, "God, I choose to give you my: sexual immorality, my stealing, my crude joking, my greed or jealousy, my unforgiveness (whatever He highlighted above)." (Even simply ask God if there's someone that you need to forgive, to release them from what they owe you and give them over to God.)

Say sorry and mean it; acknowledge your wrongdoing (go through the process of repentance).

Then, ask Him to take it from your hands/mind/life. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

Intentionally and specifically ask Him to fill you. Invite the Holy Spirit to come afresh into your life, to fill you to overflowing

Ask Him to take your walls and inhibitions and fears of what others may say, and let thanksgiving and joy come out of your mouth.

If you don't know where to start, start with forgiveness and then thanking God for this time and this season, where we can worship and thank Him!

Discussion Questions

1. If you haven't yet done it, take the time to read through the whole Letter to the Ephesians in one sitting (it should take you about 15-20 minutes).
2. What have you learned from the Letter to the Ephesians so far?
3. What has God showed you about who He is, who you are as an individual, and who we are as His church?
4. In Ephesians 4:25-5:2, Paul talks about interior life issues. What did God highlight to you in your life from this passage? Any area of compromise that He may want to bring into His light?
5. In Ephesians 5:3-15, Paul talks about the culture of the Kingdom of God and the culture of the enemy and the 'world'. What did God highlight to you in your life from this passage? Any area of compromise that He may want to bring into His light?
6. In Ephesians 5:16-21, Paul talks about the essential element of the filling of the Spirit to be able to live and conduct ourselves in the Kingdom way. What has been your personal response to the filling of the Spirit? Have you personally experienced it? Seen it in others? Have you been concerned or apprehensive about that level of abandonment to God?
7. Spend some time reflecting on the 'Application' section of the notes above, and see what God is highlighting as areas in your life that He might want to flood with the goodness of His spirit.
8. Work through the 'Response' prayer time with the areas highlighted above, then spend time worshipping and allowing praise and thanksgiving to be both real in your interior life, and in your words and actions.