



This week Pastor Tim begins part 8 in his series Deconstruction / Reconstruction of the Disciple's life. If you've ever remodeled a house or a room, you know that you have to deconstruct what needs to be replaced before you can begin the reconstruction. The same is true in our spiritual life. To this point in the series, we have learned of the things we must take off and put away so that we no longer look like the "sons of disobedience".

This week we reach a transition in the text. The deconstruction is over and it's time to reconstruct our life in a way that is Christ-like (see last week's message and study). Since we are children of light, Paul is telling us that it is time for us to live like it.

Group Study Questions

Read Ephesians 5:8-14

Ephesians 5:8-14 ESV

8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

1. The passage begins with explaining that the reason we should not associate with the "sons of disobedience" (see v. 1-7 and last week's message). What is the reason why we should no longer act like gentiles?
2. In Scripture, light is often a metaphor for goodness and darkness will often represent evil (John 8:12 and Romans 3:12 are just 2 such examples).
Read 1 Thessalonians 5:5 and Colossians 1:13. What else does light and darkness represent?
3. In Ephesians 5:8a, Paul said that we "were darkness". He did not say we "were in darkness. What's the difference?
4. Ephesians 5:8, Paul tells believers, "but now you are in the light of the Lord." Notice the tense of the verb "are". What does that indicate? See Matthew 5:14. Discuss.

10. Verse 12 gives us a warning to not even talk about these unfruitful works of our past. Pastor Tim explained this as “glorifying our sins of the past”. Sometimes what may seem as giving an example of God’s grace can easily slip into giving glory to our past sins. Why is this unfruitful?

11. In verses 11b, 13-14 we learn that we are to **CONFRONT** and expose unfruitful works to the light. Who are we supposed to confront?

12. In what manner should we confront our brothers and sisters in Christ when they are participating in unfruitful works? See Galatians 6:1 and discuss.

13. Are you willing to be held accountable to your brothers and sisters in Christ? Why is this important?

14. Why is it important that correction and reproof is so important to the health of the believer and the church? Read James 5:19-20 and discuss.

15. In verse 14 we are called to wake up and return to Christ. What can keep us from repentance? Do you ever think your sin is too dark? Read John 8:1-11. Discuss the mercy of Christ.

INTROSPECTION

- Is your life showing fruit that is good, right and true? Are you testing the genuineness of your faith? Ask the Spirit of God to convict you in areas you need to improve so that you can live as a child of light.

- Are you avoiding the things that used make you stumble? This will help you take no part in unfruitful works.

- What may seem as giving an example of God's grace can turn into glorifying the sins of our past. Do you ever glorify the sins of your past?

- Are you willing to be held accountable to other for your sins? Are you willing to confront those you love in Christ on theirs?

- We are called to wake up and return to Christ. Seek the mercy of Christ, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal sins in your life. Repent of those sins and enjoy God's forgiveness and walk as a child of the light.

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE AND STUDY

Commentary on Ephesians 5:8-14*

5:8a. The reason (gar, for) believers should not be partners with the unregenerate is that Christians are no longer part of the **darkness**, in which they used to live (cf. 4:18; John 1:5; 3:19-20) but . . . are **light in the Lord** (Matt. 5:14-16; John 3:21; 8:12; Rom. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:4-5). They have been rescued out of darkness (Col. 1:13). Now, being "in the Lord," who is the Light (John 8:12), they too are lights.

c. *Command: walk as children of light (5:8b-10).*

5:8b-10. The behavior of saints should correspond with their positions. Since they are **children of light**, that is, since their very nature is spiritual light, they are to **live** accordingly (Rom. 13:12). Ephesians 5:9 parenthetically explains that **the fruit of the light**—which is **goodness, righteousness** (cf. Phil. 1:11), and **truth**—reflects God's character in a believer's life. (The KJV rendering, "fruit of the Spirit," lacks good textual support.) Sinners, those in darkness, are characterized by the opposite of this fruit: evil, wickedness, and falsehood. The thought in verse 10 expands on verse 8b in that to live as children of light one must discern **what pleases the Lord** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:9; Col. 1:10). The words **find out** translate *dokimazontes*, which is literally, "putting to the test," "approving," or "discerning" (cf. Rom. 12:2).

2. NOT BECOMING INVOLVED WITH EVILDOERS' WORKS (5:11-13).

Those who profess Christ are to walk in light by not being partners with unbelievers (vv. 7-10). Now Paul mentioned that Christians are not to be involved with unbelievers' deeds (vv. 11-13).

a. *Command: do not get involved but expose (5:11).*

5:11. Christians are forbidden to be "sharers together" (*symmetochoi*, v. 7; cf. *metochoi* in Heb. 1:9 ["companions"]; 3:1, 14 ["share"]; 6:4 ["shared"]) with the sons of disobedience; now they are told not to take part (*synkoinōneite*) with unbelievers' actions. Their ways are **fruitless deeds of darkness** in contrast with "the fruit of the light" (Eph. 5:9). Sins bear no "fruit"; they give no benefits to oneself or others.

Christians, by conducting themselves as "children of light," **expose** the "deeds of darkness." These deeds, however, refer here to the deeds of other believers who are not walking in the light. This is because only God can expose and convict unbelievers' deeds (1 Cor. 5:12-13). Believers, on the other hand, can expose evil deeds among other Christians within the church. This the Corinthians failed to do (1 Cor. 5).

b. *Reason: their works are shameful (5:12).*

5:12. The things done **in secret** are too **shameful even** to talk about. The term **the disobedient** in the NIV wrongly suggests that this refers to unbelievers. However, the Greek has "what is done *by them*," thus indicating that Paul may be referring to believers who commit "deeds of darkness."

c. *Explanation: light shows the true character of works (5:13).*

5:13. When **light** exposes evil deeds, they become **visible**, manifest for what they really are. Seeing them as evil, a believer then cleanses himself of them (1 John 1:5-7), realizing they are detrimental not only to him but also to other believers.

3. CONCLUSION: ENLIGHTENMENT OF CHRIST (5:14).

5:14. The introductory formula, **This is why it is said**, seems to indicate a quotation from the Old Testament, but it is difficult to identify unless it is a combination of passages (e.g., Isa. 26:19; 51:17; 52:1; 60:1). Possibly it is a quotation from an early Christian hymn. A believer who has committed "deeds of darkness," is to **wake up** and **rise from the dead** since he was involved with the deeds of evildoers. Christ's shining on him speaks of His approval, an indication that he is discerning and following what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph. 5:10).

Therefore verses 7-14 deal with church discipline. Believers are to walk in the **light**, and in so doing to expose other believers of any works that are unfruitful so that they too may walk in the light and please their Lord.

*Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures (2:638-639). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.