

March 11, 2018

(Walk This Way Series), Ephesians 4,5

“Reasons Paul Is Against Sin”, Ephesians 5:5-14

In helping believers to live in their new identity in Christ (Eph. 4:23), Paul confronts sin head-on in Ephesians 5 by detailing specifically six sins we should not do, what we should do instead, and explains why (described in 2 previous sermons):

1. Don't speak falsehood — Do speak truth — Because we are all members of the same body.
2. Don't be angry — Do resolve your anger — Because unresolved anger gives the Devil a place to work.
3. Don't steal — Do work hard — Because it will enable you to share with those in need.
4. Don't speak words that harm — Do speak words that encourage — Because speaking harmful words grieves the Holy Spirit, and causes him to be silent in our gatherings.
5. Don't take revenge — Do forgive — Because we are most like God when we forgive.
6. Don't abuse the gift of sex — Do give thanks for it — Because sex is a gift from God to be enjoyed within the bonds of marriage.

In **Eph. 5:5-14**, Paul explains that he (and God) is against immorality and the other sins he has forbidden in this chapter. **Three reasons we should not sin:**

I. Because a lifestyle of sin is contrary to our destiny. (Ephesians 5:5)

A lifestyle of unrepentant sin is recognized and further warned against in Galatians 5:19-21 and I Cor. 6:9-11. Paul reminds the Church at the same time that they are different; a sinful way of living is NOT their new identity (Eph. 5:7, I Cor. 6:11) and not where they are headed. The destiny for believers in Christ is the Kingdom of God both here on earth and later the glory of heaven.

In contrast, those who live a sinful lifestyle face the possibility of not inheriting God's Kingdom. Salvation is certainly not based on behavior, but on the gift of faith (Eph. 2:9). However, your works and the life you lead, ultimately do expose your faith and the condition of your heart. Behavior always betrays belief. Are we leaning to beliefs of darkness or to God's light?

II. Sin brings God's wrath (Ephesians 5:6)

God hates sin! (Gen. 19, Rev. 6) Sin harms what God loves and causes all suffering. Sin is contrary to all that God is. In fact, to destroy our sin, God poured out His full wrath on His Son Jesus (John 19 and Isaiah 53:5,10). Instead of God's final wrath, believers now can obtain salvation through Christ (I Thes. 5:9) — although for our growth, we might also experience His discipline for specific sins.

III. Because we are the light. (Ephesians 5:8)

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light”. (Eph.5:8). This is our destiny — we are the light! It's not about what we do, but about who we are. In our new identity as children of light: we will know what's right and do it (Eph.5:10); we will expose darkness for what it is with our godly lives of goodness, righteous, and truth (Eph.5:11-13); and we will see some people actually become light as they receive Christ and “rise from the dead” (Eph.5:14).

Christians certainly do struggle with sin (Romans 7), but with the Spirit's help we can surrender and expose that sin to God, and He will exchange it for His love, truth, and hope — transforming us daily into the true identity and destiny that Jesus Christ died for all of us to have. May His light shine through us to our families, our friends, and the whole world!

Discussion Questions:

1. What sins are we warned against in Gal.5:19-21 and I Cor. 6:9-11? Do you recognize any of them (or the six in Eph. 5) in your own life? What exactly do we do with our sins??

2. What is the difference between struggling with and ignoring/denying sin?
3. Ever worry about being saved? Check out Rom.8:28-39,John 10:27-29,John 5:24).
4. What might God's discipline look like for our sinning?
5. How can we be the light of God in this world if we are still imperfect sinners?