

Walk in Love – Part 4

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul outlines what it truly means to put off the old self and put on the new self
2. aim – to cause us to desire the pursuit of holiness as the core of the new self in Christ
3. passage – Ephesians 4:25-5:21

b. outline

1. The Contrast of the New Self (Ephesians 4:25-32)
2. The Conviction of the New Self (Ephesians 5:1-2)
3. The Confidence of the New Self (Ephesians 5:3-21)

c. opening

1. a reminder of where we are in *Ephesians*
 - a. **love point #2:** we are to adopt an utterly different view *of ourselves* in order to love others
 1. to put off the “*old self*” and put on the “*new self*” – as “*renewed in mind*”
 2. **IOW:** to truly love one another, we must be in a constant state of *reformation*
2. a reminder of where we are in *this section*
 - a. Paul is showing us, *in very practical form*, what walking in love looks like
 - b. so, in **4:25-5:21 (or 6:9)** Paul will use his apostolic authority to speak directly to how the Ephesian Christians are to live as they purpose to shed the old self and put on the new one
 1. first, he gave some very specific **contrasts** between the old and new self (**4:25-32**)
 2. second, he laid out a specific **conviction** that sits at the heart of this conversion (**5:1-2**)
 3. (**now**) Paul is putting forth a form of **confidence** that should characterize our behavior
 - a. using three descriptive words to describe believers: *saints*, *children of light*, and *wise*
 - b. saints = those separated from the *only* things that the unregenerate take pleasure in: fornication, greediness, and unhealthy talk, by being characterized by *thankfulness*
 - c. children of light = ...

III. The Confidence of the New Self (Ephesians 5:3-21)

Content

b. confident as “*children of light*” (vv. 6-14)

1. “*children of light*” (v. 8c) = those born of God (truth); those who are the result of revelation; lit. the people of God, who have received revelation of truth and have been “remade” by virtue of it
 - a. the N.T. uses “*light*” in a number of symbolic or metaphorical ways: the nature of God himself, the revelation of God in Jesus, the gospel message, and knowledge which comes by faith
 - b. the N.T. uses “*darkness*” as the antonym of light: ignorance of God, rebellion against the Creator, a desire to be “hidden” from his view to do what is sinful
 - c. Paul uses these terms **ontologically** to describe a change of state for the believer
 1. “*you were darkness*” (v. 8a) = you were ignorant of God, you loved your rebellious state, you hid yourself in order to not be seen by him, and you were destined to go to a place of death
 2. “*now you are light*” (v. 8b) = you are now aware of the things of God, you (should) hate your continued rebellion in sin, you come to God in intimate fellowship, and are destined for glory
 - d. thus, “*children of light*” is similar to “*saint*” in that it connotes the idea of being *separate* – separate from what is false and wicked by virtue of an action on the part of God
2. Paul outlines **another category** of sin that believers are to avoid
 - a. the deception of “*empty words*” (v. 6a) = lit. instruction that leads to a place of improper result
 1. **i.e.** the use of words to deceive; specifically (in this context), to use words to steer believers away from the *natural* results of their conversion
 2. **e.g.** words that imply a sense that *nothing else is required of believers but “simple faith”*
 - a. the teaching that “salvation” is simply about praying a prayer and God automatically saves you, irrespective of whatever obedience (fruit) appears in your life thereafter
 - b. note the terms (**see below**) that Paul uses to *prove* this point here

3. **note:** “sons of disobedience” (v. 6b) = a Hebrew-inspired phrase (see also 2:2) often applied to the Israelites who, although joined to God by choice (as sons), were not shown to be the true children of God by virtue of their continuing rebellion against him (as disobedient)
 4. **note:** “unfruitful works of darkness” (v. 11) = a sense in which certain acts are unproductive in the face of what it means to be a follower of Christ
 3. Paul contrasts these behaviors (“do not become partners with them ...”; v. 7, 11)
 - a. **for the unregenerate: to live as one hiding in the darkness**
 1. it is “normal” for the unregenerate to live “away” from the visible presence of a righteous Creator, to “hide” one’s behavior because it is *inherently* wicked and shameful (**note v. 12**)
 2. **irony:** *even to other pagans* (e.g. the sexual revolution creating the #metoo movement)
 3. it is *natural* for pagans to desire darkness, to hide their deeds (**John 3:19-21**)
“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
 - b. **for the regenerate: to live as one exposed to the light**
 1. “discern what is pleasing to the Lord” = the **concern** of those who are born of *light*
 - a. living to discern who God really is, and what his purpose is in our circumstances
 - b. living to discern who Christ really is, and what his position demands in allegiance
 - c. living to discern what the gospel message means, and what it reveals about us
 - d. living to discern what good deeds are ordained for us to do in the light (**Matt. 6:19-24**)
“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and [mammon].”
 4. **application: our confidence (as the adopted children of God) is in belonging to the light – our confidence is in our ability to discern what is pleasing to God and to be able to do it – because we are children of light, our desire should always be to live “in the open” before our Father**
- c. **confident as “wise” (vv. 15-21)**
 1. “wise” (v. 15) = those who properly apply knowledge to circumstances; those who are able to take the *revelation* of God and use it consistently with the nature and *desires* of God
 - a. “foolish” = mindless; egotistic; rash; lit. ignorant – the incapacity to apply knowledge to make the best possible outcome; a self-centeredness that is based on ignorance
 2. Paul outlines **another category** of sin that believers are to avoid
 - a. not making the “best use of the time, because the days are evil” (v. 16)
 1. **i.e.** wasting time getting involved in that which is unfruitful *from an eternal perspective*
 2. **e.g.** “do not get drunk with wine” = the consumption of alcohol *to the point of drunkenness*
 - a. (**briefly note**) there is no *prohibition* in Scripture against the *consumption* of alcohol itself
 1. which implies that church covenants which *impose* prohibition are *extra-biblical*
 2. note that Paul speaks here specifically about *drunkenness*, not *consumption*
 - b. Paul links drunkenness to a **waste of time** = the verse is not intended to be read as a commentary on alcohol itself, but on the *effects* of alcohol when it is used *in a pagan fashion*
 3. Paul contrasts these behaviors
 - a. **for the unregenerate: wasting away the little time they have in this life**
 1. **irony:** the unregenerate waste the “only” time they have in pursuit of that which helps them “forget” about their hopeless condition (e.g. sex, alcohol, drugs, power, etc.)
 - b. **for the regenerate: using the time wisely**
 1. addressing one another in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (v. 19a)
 - a. often pointed to as a part of the *Regulative Principle* of worship = the specific instruction of using only those things *specifically* outlined in Scripture as the framework for proper worship
 - b. (**clearly**) a reference by Paul to the importance of song (in content) in worship
 2. living in general “making melody to the Lord with your heart” (v. 19b)
 - a. (**probably**) distinct from the concept of “formal” music in the church
 - b. the general sense in which the “**soundtrack**” of our lives is one of joy in Christ
 3. giving “thanks always and for everything” (v. 20)
 - a. (**again, see above**) the **characteristic** of those who are born again
 4. submitting to one another “out of reverence for Christ” (v. 21) – **to be continued ...**
 4. **application: our confidence (as the adopted children of God) is in knowing that this life has *meaning* – our confidence is in knowing that our new life in Christ *is simply the beginning* of a life of unending purpose in an eternal state of *worship* – eternal life begins *now*, not at death, and this truth leads us to *wisely* use the time we have for the right kinds of pursuits**