



Ephesians

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Therefore do not be partakers with them. Ephesians 5:7

This is referring to all of the negatives he has introduced, both in the last chapter, and in this. "Therefore" is the conclusion which he brings in concerning those things. As a reminder, these are the negatives from the previous four verses –

"But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; ⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."

To "be partakers with them" means to share in their behavior. To share in their behavior then means to share in the wrath which comes with it. Having said that, "the sons of disobedience" is referring to the unregenerate. Paul has made a distinction between the unsaved and the saved. Because of this, his words in no way negate the doctrine of eternal salvation. The sons of God already have their inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (see Ephesians 2:4-7). The sons of disobedience do not have this.

Thus, the wrath of God on unbelievers will be worked out in condemnation; the wrath of God towards our sin as believers will be worked out in a loss of rewards. As we have moved into the heavenlies and been seated with Christ, we are not to be partakers of unholy living, but in that which is just, righteous, and holy.

Life application: There is nothing wrong with associating with the unregenerate. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 5 that if we were to not do so, we would have to “go out of this world.” However, in associating with unbelievers, we are not to partake with them in any conduct which the Bible forbids. The only way to do this though is to know what the Bible says. Read your Bible.

For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
Ephesians 5:8

The Bible is literally filled with the concepts of light and darkness, even from the first verses to the last. A contrast is being made, but it is more than just a literal light and darkness which is spoken of. Rather, it is quite often speaking of these in a figurative sense. This is what Paul is referring to here. The verse is highly emphatic, and it is contrasting what has just been spoken of concerning the “sons of disobedience.”

He begins with, “For you were once darkness.” Here, and in the clause to come, he uses the abstract to speak of the concrete, thus showing the emphasis. In that his readers “were once darkness,” it implies that it was their very nature. The word “darkness” is *skotos*. It signifies darkness, either physical or moral. Here it is referring to the moral darkness previously mentioned. It is “the *principle of sin with its certain results*” (HELPS Word Studies).

The darkness was our nature. We were infected with sin and could do nothing but pursue sin. We were bound by the law. Paul explains what that means in Romans 7:8-11 –

“But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.”

The “darkness” can be equated with the death which results from the law. However, Paul next says, “but now you are light in the Lord.” The Greek word is *phos* and indicates “light, a source of light, radiance.” It speaks of light, but “(especially in terms of its results, what it manifests); in the NT, the *manifestation of God's self-existent life; divine illumination* to reveal and impart life, through Christ” (HELPS Word Studies).

This “light” then can be equated with the “life” of Paul’s word in Romans. In fact, John shows this close connection to the two words when speaking of Jesus –

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:4, 5

The life that we have is given to us in place of the law which brought death. How did this happen? It is because Christ fulfilled the law for us. When we receive His gift of fulfilling the law, we die to the law; new life has come. The darkness of death is defeated, and we become light; children of light. In this new state, Paul admonishes us to therefore “Walk as children of light.”

We are shown to not just reflect light, but we actually are radiating light. This is why, even in the Old Testament, it was understood that we Gentiles would so shine forth –

“Arise, shine;
For your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.
² For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
³ The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.” Isaiah 60:1-3

In that we have come to the light of Christ, we now shine forth with that same light. Life has replaced death; light has replaced darkness. As we have been born into new life through Christ’s fulfillment of the law, so we also have been born into light in how to walk in this world. The emphasis of this verse, then, is given to show that just as we once were darkness – like the sons of disobedience – we are now children of light. We are not to participate any longer in that which is contrary to our new nature.

As a fine point of theology, this verse – when properly considered – once again demonstrates the doctrine of eternal salvation. The law is fulfilled for us; we are dead to it. We have taken on a new nature. Paul shows that we can go back and do the things of darkness, but they do not change our new nature. Those deeds are simply contrary to it. We have not gone merely from being “in darkness” to being “in light.” Instead, we have gone from *being* darkness to *being* light. The emphatic nature of Paul’s words are intended to show us this as an absolute truth.

Life application: If you have called on Christ, the light of Christ now dwells in you. Arise! Shine forth! Your light has come! Don’t enter again into darkness, but rather radiate out that marvelous truth that you are now a son of God, fully redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
Ephesians 5:9

This verse is parenthetical as is evident when seen together with the surrounding verses –

“For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.”

It is the work of the Spirit which has brought us from darkness and made us “light in the Lord.” Because of this, light is our new nature. In order to describe that nature, we are told what that means by the words, “the fruit of the Spirit.” Paul says that it is in “all goodness, righteousness, and truth.” These attributes are set in contrast to those negative things detailed at the end of Chapter 4, as well as those noted in the previous verses of this chapter.

Paul gives us a list of the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22, 23 as well –

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control.”

These are the things which come from a right application of the word of God in our lives. It is the Spirit who inspired the writing of Scripture, and so in order to know what is right and appropriate according to the word of God, we need to know what He has detailed for us. This includes Paul’s letters which were given by divine inspiration. Anyone who thinks that they will, by default, have the fruit of the Spirit without studying and applying the word of God is self-deluded. The Ephesians had to be told these things by Paul, a designated apostle of the Lord. How much more then should we rely on those same things that they were told by him!

Life application: Enjoying the fruit of the Spirit comes from understanding what that fruit is, and then pursuing it in the manner in which God says that those things will come about. That is found in studying and applying the word to our lives. Read your Bible; study what it says, and then adhere to those things which it instructs you.