

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 14

Introduction: Last week in our study of Ephesians we looked at one verse.

Notice Ephesians 5:11

This was the verse we looked at. In this verse Paul tells us we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Last week we considered how the darkness in our world is increasing from day to day and we must be careful not to allow ourselves to grow accustomed to the darkness. What happens is that because the darkness is all around us every day then we begin to get comfortable with it. The next thing you know it is a part of our lives and it has been accepted by us and our families.

Listen to something we heard last week by an unnamed teacher:

Man lives in the dark and even his nuclear flashlight cannot pierce it. We not only live in the dark, we get used to it. There is a slow, subtle, sinister brainwashing process going on and by it we are gradually being desensitized to evil. Little by little, sin is made to appear less sinful until the light within us becomes darkness—and how great is that darkness! Our magazines are loaded with accounts of sordid crime, our newsstands with concentrated corruption. We are engulfed in a tidal wave of pornographic filth. Television has put us in the dark with Sodom and Gomorrah—right in the living room. We get used to it, acclimated to it. We accept, as a matter of course, its art, its literature, its music, its language. We learn to live with it without an inner protest."

Notice Ephesians 5:11 again.

Instead of adapting to the works of darkness we are to reprove them. This means we are to help other believers get free from the works of darkness.

John 11:43-44

⁴³ *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

⁴⁴ *And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

Notice Ephesians 5:12

Not only should believers not be involved in the works of darkness, but they should not even be spoken of. Listen to the words of Wiersbe on this verse:

"This is a caution. Be careful how you deal with the unfruitful works of darkness. The motto today seems to be, "Tell it like it is!" And yet that can be a dangerous policy when it comes to exposing the filthy things of darkness, lest we unconsciously advertise and promote sin. Paul said, "It is a shame even to speak of those things". Some preachers enjoy reveling in the sensational, so much so that their sermons excite appetites and give to the innocent more information than they need."

Romans 16:19

¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

This now brings us to where we are today.

➤ **Living in the Light**

Notice Ephesians 5:13

This is a contrast to speaking of the works of darkness. Instead of talking about the deeds of darkness we are to reprove them.

Now let us understand that within the body of Jesus Christ sins are to be directly addressed.

Joshua 7:1-13

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

² And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

³ And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

⁴ So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

⁵ And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

⁶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

⁷ And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

⁸ O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

¹⁰ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

¹¹ Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

¹² Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

¹³ Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: **thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.**

There are times when sin must be reprov'd by words.

But there are other times when sin is reprov'd by the way we live.

Notice Ephesians 5:13 again.

Sometimes we just need to be light.

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ **Ye are the light of the world.** A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Proverbs 4:18-19

¹⁸ But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

¹⁹ The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

There are times when people will not listen to our words, but they will watch how we live.

Listen to a story told by J. Vernon McGee:

"I remember a very dear lady in my congregation when I was a pastor in downtown LA. She was a dominant character, however. She came to me and told me that her husband was unsaved and asked me to remember him in prayer. I did so faithfully. Then she came to me and told me that he was coming to church but would never accept the invitation to receive Christ as his Savior. Then she told me this: "At breakfast I talk to him with tears about receiving Christ. Again, at dinner I talk to him and cry." I got to thinking what it would be like to have two meals a day with a crying woman. So, I told her absolutely never to mention the subject to him again. She should fix him the nicest meals possible and be the sweetest person she knew how to be. "Oh," she said, "that would not work. We are supposed to witness." You see she did not really understand what it meant to be a witness. Anyway, she did try the plan. She quit blubbering in his presence, and she stopped lecturing to him. In less than six months that man made a decision for Christ. He had been listening to the wrong preacher before that. She had been preaching to him when she should have been a light. Remember that darkness is not dissipated by lecturing or by preaching. Darkness is dissipated by light."

Let us remember that we are on this earth to glorify God and as we study the New Testament we are instructed as to how to live so that our light will shine, and God will be glorified.

I want to review something from our study in 1 Peter from Sunday evenings.

1 Peter 1:13-14

¹³ Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

¹⁴ As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

When we go out into the world and we live as light I can assure you that our lifestyle will truly expose the sins that are practiced around us. Our lifestyle is used by the Holy Spirit to convict people.

John 16:7-8

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Notice Ephesians 5:14

When I read this verse, it seems as though it was written just for us today!

This is not a call to the spiritually dead to arise but instead is a call to believers who have been lulled asleep and lapsed into some of the "deeds of darkness".

Much of the church is asleep and are like dead people because they are not living as light. Let me show you what the church will be like in the days before the Rapture.

Revelation 3:14-22

¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

¹⁷ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

This is the church today! It is time to wake up and live as children of light.

Romans 13:11-14

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Illustration:

"We ought to be like the little boy whose family clock malfunctioned and struck 15 times so that he rushed wide-eyed to his mother crying, "Mommy, it's later than it's ever been before!" What sanctifying logic! We should also keep in mind that if Christ does not return in our time, He will certainly come individually for us in death. Each ache, pain, gray hair, new wrinkle, or funeral is another reminder that it is later than it has ever been before. It is time to love our neighbors as ourselves. IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK."

You have family members who are not saved. Are you living as light? Are you placing your life into the hands of Jesus Christ so that He can work through you?

The church age is rapidly coming to a close and when the Rapture happens it is too late for, we who are believers to witness to our families anymore.

Conclusion:

Let us be very careful about getting too close to the world and getting caught up in the stuff of the world.

2 Peter 3:9-14

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

¹¹ *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

¹² *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

¹³ *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

¹⁴ *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*