



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N1 January 2, 2022

A NEW DAY

"Rise and Shine"

Ephesians 5:8-17

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-Mindedness

I focus on God and his priorities for my life.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
Matthew 6:33



How are those transformed by the light to live?

Paul makes it clear that believers, those who were once "darkness" but are now "light" (Eph 5:8), are to live a distinctly different way of life as "children of light," bearing the fruit of light consisting of "goodness, righteousness, and truth" (v. 9). But obedience to Paul's command is *relative* rather than *absolute*. Each individual bears different amounts of fruit. Some are more fruitful than others; some become more fruitful over a lifetime. Like transformation and sanctification, discipleship, that is, "living as children of light" is a progressive matter. We shouldn't be *discouraged* by our shortcomings; we should be *motivated* by them. We can always live more like "children of light."

Dallas Willard has written with much insight on discipleship; here's what he has to say about good and bad apprentices of Jesus.

"It is almost universally conceded today that you can be a Christian without being a disciple. And one who actually is an apprentice and co-laborer with Jesus in his or her daily existence is sure to be a 'Christian' in every sense of the word that matters. The very term Christian was explicitly introduced in the New Testament — where, by the way, it is used only three times — to apply to disciples when they could no longer be called Jews, because many kinds of Gentiles were now part of them.

"Now, people who are asked whether they are apprentices of a leading politician, musician, lawyer, or screenwriter would not need to think a second to respond. Similarly for those asked if they are studying Spanish or bricklaying with someone unknown to the public. It is hardly something that would escape one's attention. The same is all the more true if asked about discipleship

to Jesus.

"But, if asked whether they are good apprentices of whatever person or line of work concerned, they very well might hesitate. They might say no. Or yes. Asked if they could be better students, they would probably say yes. And all of this falls squarely within the category of being a disciple, or apprentice. *For to be a disciple in any area or relationship is not to be perfect. One can be a very raw and incompetent beginner and still be a disciple.*

"It is a part of the refreshing realism of the Gospels that we often find Jesus doing nothing less than 'bawling out' his disciples. That, however, is very far from rejecting them. It is, in fact, a way of being faithful to them, just as chastisement is God's way of showing that someone is his child (Heb. 12:7-10). A good 'master' takes his apprentices seriously and therefore takes them to task as needed.

"Following us on what has already been said, then, a disciple, or apprentice, is simply someone who has decided to be with another person, under appropriate conditions, in order to become capable of doing what that person does or to become what that person is . . . And as a disciple of Jesus I am with him, by choice and by grace, learning from him how to live in the kingdom of God. This is the crucial idea. That means, we recall, how to live within the range of God's effective will, his life flowing through mine. Another important way of putting this is to say that I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were I. I am not necessarily learning to do everything he did, but I am learning how to do everything I do in the manner that he did all that he did" (*The Divine Conspiracy*, 282-83, italics added).

Ephesians 5:8-17

(7 *Therefore do not be partners with them.*)

8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light* 9 *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)* 10 *and find out what pleases the Lord.* 11 *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.* 12 *It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.* 13 *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible – and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.* 14 *This is why it is said:*

*“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

15 *Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise,* 16 *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* 17 *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

Read in another Translation

8 *You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light,* 9 *for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth.* 10 *Try to learn what pleases the Lord.* 11 *Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, things that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light.* (12 *It is really too shameful even to talk about the things they do in secret.*) 13 *And when all things are brought out to the light, then their true nature is clearly revealed;* 14 *for anything that is clearly revealed becomes light. That is why it is said,*

*“Wake up, sleeper,
and rise from death,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

15 *So be careful how you live. Don't live like ignorant people, but like wise people.* 16 *Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days.* 17 *Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do. (GNT)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box “For” indicating *reason* in v. 8.
- Circle “darkness” and “light” in v. 8.
- Circle “live” in v. 8
- Box “but” indicating *contrast* in vv. 8, 11, 13, 15, 17.
- Underline “goodness,” “righteousness,” and “truth” in v. 9.
- Circle “expose” in v. 11.
- Bracket “everything that is illuminated becomes a light” in v. 13.
- Box “then” indicating *result* in v. 15.
- Circle “unwise” and “wise” in v. 15.
- Box “because” indicating *reason* in v. 16.
- Bracket “making the most” in v. 16.
- Box “therefore” indicating *result* in v. 17.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Describe the *relationship* of verse 8 to verse 7.
2. Believers were “once *darkness*.” How so?
3. But believers are now “*light in the Lord*” (v. 8). Put what that means in your own words.
4. Believers are to “live as children of light.” List three traits of those who do so (v. 9).
5. Believers are to “*find out* what pleases the Lord.” Why — doesn’t the Bible reveal what pleases him?
6. Children of light are to “expose” the “fruitless deeds of darkness” rather than engage in them (v. 11). How do they do that?
7. Verse 12 mentions “the disobedient.” Is Paul referring to *unbelievers* or *disobedient believers*? What do you think and why?
8. According to this passage (v. 13 NIV; v. 14 GNT; cf. NET), everything made visible by the light becomes light. Do you think light not only illuminates but also transforms? Explain. (See note on v. 13.)
9. Paul uses three *contrasts* to describe how believers are to live. Identify the two found in verses 15 and 17.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about how Christians are to live, according to Ephesians 5:8-17.

Commentary On The Text

Ephesians 5:1-21 belongs to an extended section that begins in 4:1 and ends in 6:9. In it Paul applies the doctrines he unpacked in the first three chapters. Major breaks in the section are marked by the command “live” (*peripateō*, lit., “walk”) paired with the word “therefore” (*oun*): in 4:1 he commands believers to “live a life worthy of [their] calling;” in 4:17 to “no longer live as the Gentiles do;” in 5:2 to “live a life of love;” in 5:8 to “live as children of light;” and finally, in 5:15 he commands them to live “not as unwise but as wise.” In 5:1-21 words that indicate the logical relationship of the various parts of his unfolding argument appear frequently – words like “therefore,” “just as,” “but,” “because” and “for.” The long sentences, involved subordination, and logical argument clearly indicate Paul wrote it!

In 5:8-14 Paul commands his readers to “live as children of light.” (Verse 8 is closely linked to verse 7 by the opening word “for,” which indicates that the following verses contain the *reason* for telling his readers, “do not be partners with them,” which suggests that the paragraph should begin with verse 7 rather than verse 8.) To get his point across he uses two powerful metaphors, “darkness” and “light.” “You were once darkness,” he tells them. Not only did they walk in darkness, but they also *embodied* darkness! They spread darkness. “But now you are light in the Lord,” he assures them—not in themselves but “in the Lord.” Now, they not only live in the light, but they also embody light, and are in Jesus’ words “the light of the world” (Mt 5:14). As light, they bear the fruit of light, namely, “goodness, righteousness, and truth” (v. 9). Without saying a word, as light they expose “the fruitless deeds of darkness” for what they truly are, too shameful to discuss. And who are the “disobedient” whose deeds are exposed? Most commentators identify them as those unbelievers living in darkness. But one disagrees, saying, “It is all too easy to conclude that it is the deeds of those in darkness. Nevertheless, it is more likely that it refers to believers who are participating in unfruitful works of darkness . . . Hence believers, rather than participating in evil works, are to help those who have fallen by exposing their unfruitful works and showing them that participation in those works is totally inconsistent with light” (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 679). If fact, Paul may be referring to either disobedient unbelievers or disobedient believers. “If the shoe fits, wear it.”

Verses 13 and 14 are difficult to interpret. In verse 13, Paul says light exposes hidden sins and makes them visible. But then he adds, “everything made visible is light” (NET), suggesting that light not only *exposes*, but it also *transforms*, which gives his words an *evangelistic* connotation. One commentator explains: “The question that must be resolved is whether the ‘revealing’ is merely negative (exposing people’s sins) or whether a positive element exists as well, so that people are both exposed and transformed. The context seems to require both, and since the word translated ‘expose’ also means ‘convince,’ this is understandable. The person who is exposed and convinced by the light is transformed. This is confirmed both by verse 8 and the confession in verse 14” (Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, 273). Verse 14 appears to be a baptismal hymn, sung by a congregation as a new convert emerged sacramentally from the sleep of spiritual death into the light of life. Another commentator writes: “If ever the readers of the present letter were tempted to forget that, while once they had been children of darkness, they were now children of light, let them remember their baptism and the words they heard then: they would be left in no doubt about their present status and its moral implications” (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT, 377).

Verses 15-20 are linked to the previous paragraph by “then” in verse 15 (cf. “therefore” NET). In these verses, Paul goes on to tell his readers, “Be very careful how you live,” which reads literally, “Look therefore carefully how you walk.” Does “carefully” modify “look,” that is, “Look carefully, therefore, how you walk,” or modify “walk,” that is, “Look therefore that you walk carefully”? The point seems to be not how carefully one looks but how carefully one walks, which he then explains using three “not . . . but” *contrasts*. “Not as unwise but as wise” (v. 15), defined in terms of “taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil,” not being foolish but understanding the will of the Lord (v. 17), defined in terms of practical wisdom, namely, discerning “what pleases the Lord” (cf. v. 10), and not getting drunk on intoxicants but being filled with the Spirit (v. 18), defined in terms of singing songs prompted by the Spirit (v. 19).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 8 **For** English versions divide 5:1-20 into various numbers of paragraphs that begin at various verses. For example, three paragraphs beginning at vv. 1, 3, 15 (ESV); vv. 1, 6, 15 (NET, HCSB); and four paragraphs beginning at vv. 1, 3, 6, 15 (NRSV); vv. 1, 3, 8, 15 (NIV). “For” introduces the rationale for something previously written, namely, why believers are not to be “partners with them,” which suggests a new paragraph should begin with verse 7 rather than verse 8. “The reason for dividing the outline here rather than between verses 5 and 6 (or between vv. 7 and 8) is because of the resumptive inferential particle (*oun*, ‘therefore’) that marks the beginning of each new section: 4:1, 17, 5:1, 7, 15” (Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 638).

v. 8 **darkness** The term is a *metaphor*. “Interestingly, in this present verse Paul does not say that the believers were *in* darkness but that they *were* darkness itself, that is, the embodiment of darkness. As such, they were held in say by the power of sin and approve of others who practiced sinful deeds (Rom 1:32)” (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 671).

v. 8 **light** “They were darkness but now they are light in the Lord” (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 670). “*Light* pictures an illuminated way of life, where the path of how to live is clear (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; 1 John 1:5)” (Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians*, TNTC, 154). If “light” consists in what is good, right and true (v. 9), then “darkness” by way of *contrast* consists in what is bad, wrong, and false.

v. 8 **live** lit., “walk” (ESV, HCSB, NKJV); cf. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15. The term “walk” is used *figuratively* to refer to a way of living, hence the translation “live” in many modern versions (GNT, NET, NLT).

v. 9 **goodness** . . . “This list of virtues is a short form of Galatians 5:22-23. *Goodness* (*agathōsynē*) is looking after the welfare of and acting on behalf of others (cf. Rom. 15:14; Gal. 5:22; 2 Thess. 1:11). *Righteousness* involves the piety of a morally consistent life, upright behaviour (Mic. 6:8; Matt. 6:33; Phil. 1:11; 1 Pet. 3:14). As we saw in 4:21, 24, the *truth* in view here has both content and ethical dimensions to it, forthright and honest behaviour. It is both thinking and acting in accordance with a true and authentic way of living. These virtues are what comes from

light and drawing on what God has provided (2:10; cf. Col. 1:10)” (Bock, 155).

v. 11 **expose** “When the object is impersonal, *elegchō* may signify to bring to light or expose. This exposure is not effected by what is actually said by way of rebuke, because such repulsive deeds are not so much as to be whispered (vv. 3, 12), but simply by letting the light of Christ shine through and show them up” (A. Skevington Wood, “Ephesians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:70). “It is in the believers’ contrastive way of living, by showing a different path, that such exposure must take place” (Bock, 156). “Whether the confrontation is only by conduct or also verbal is debated, though to suggest this passage has nothing to do with spoken confrontation is overly narrow” (Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, 272; see also Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 679-80).

v. 13 **everything** . . . Cf., “For everything made visible is light” (NET). “First, *when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible*. This is always good . . . Secondly, *anything that becomes visible is light*. Paul’s economy of words makes it difficult to be certain what he means by this statement. But he seems to be describing a second stage in what light does: it actually transforms what it illumines into light. This may mean that Christians who lead a righteous life thereby restrain and reform evildoers, yes, and even convert them. For as their light shines, what it makes visible suddenly *is light*, just as the Ephesians themselves *are light* (verse 8) . . . ‘Exposure’ sounds negative, showing people up for what they are, judgmental, condemning. And it is that. But the light which exposes has positive evangelistic power also, ‘the light of one soul making another light’. For it may bring people, as they see the ugliness of evil, to conviction of their sin and so to penitent faith in Jesus. This, then, is the twofold effect which a Christian’s light has on the prevailing darkness: it makes visible and it makes light” (John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, TBST, 200; see also Snodgrass, 273).

v. 16 **making the most** “The verb translated *making the most of the time* normally means ‘redeeming’ (*exagorazō*), an economic term with the idea of purchasing. The figure of wisely redeeming the time looks at using well the opportunities we have, because the threat to do otherwise is great. Taking advantage of time is the point” (Bock, 161).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Live as children of light bearing the fruit of light – not as unwise but as wise,
not as foolish but as those who know what pleases the Lord.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Think about where you were five years ago. What was happening in your life? Where were you working? Did you even have kids? Now think about where you hope to be in five years. How old will your kids be? Do you think you'll be in the same house? What will change about your parenting? What is your plan for spiritual growth? We're not meant to stay the same. God's free gift of salvation through grace should disrupt our lives and cause us to change not only our hearts, but our course, perspective, desires, attitudes and even parenting style. We shouldn't be wading in the same stagnant and stale water we were in five years ago. If we're training for and pursuing spiritual growth, we should be in an altogether different pond. Several years ago, I recognized some un-Christlike behavior in the way I yelled at my kids. With what felt like moment-by-moment prayer, prompting from the Lord to change my heart and mind, and a ton of deliberate work on my part (reading helpful books, inviting accountability, purposeful growth, and so much prayer) I was able to shed this behavior and pick up a different parenting style more firmly rooted in the fruit of the Spirit. As we turn the page of the calendar and welcome a new year, consider what you want to leave behind and what you want to pick up instead, then pray. Spiritual growth doesn't miraculously happen. We must set our minds on Christ (Col 3:2) and ask Him to create in us a clean heart and renewed spirit (Psalm 51:10). We're praying for your growth this year!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Ephesians 5:8-17.

1. How are we to live as children of light?
2. What should we do with deeds of darkness?
3. How can we make the most of every opportunity?

What Do You Think?

What's the difference between light and dark, fruit and fruitless, wise and unwise?

What Do You Do?

Explore different lights in a dark room (candle, flashlight, lightbulb). What's the difference in what you see? Why is it important that we live as children of the light?

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-Mindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 31:3

"Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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