

Ephesians 5:8**Walk in Light**

Back in 2008, an experiment was done on 6 individuals who volunteered to stay in total darkness for 48 hours while scientists monitored their behavior. At first, it wasn't bad, but after a while things got difficult. Adam Bloom, one of the participants, said after about 18 hours, he got paranoid, and his mental alertness slowed down. After 30 hours, he began to break down mentally, and at the 40 hour mark, he began to hallucinate. He said "I felt as though the room was taking off from underneath me... I felt nothing but numbness, as though I was losing the will to live." When it was done, he said "I'm glad I did it, but no amount of money would convince me to do it again." We take light for granted, don't we?

There is a reason the comparison between *darkness* and *light* is so common in Scripture when it comes to spiritual truth exploding on the scene. The fall of man cast this whole world into a *deep, insanity-producing darkness*. A darkness Christ came to dispel. *He* is the Light.

The idea of bringing people *out* of darkness and into light was the cornerstone of Paul's ministry. You know of his conversion. Paul is on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians. A *light* shines from heaven, and Jesus appears to him. This is a defining moment in Paul's life, and right away, Jesus gives him his commission. He sends them to the Gentiles "to open their eyes *so that*... they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

That is our hope, that the *Light* has come. John wrote much about this in his gospel and his epistles. 1 John 1:5 says “This is the message that we heard from Him and proclaim to you that God is *Light*, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Jesus Himself said “I am the *Light* of the world. Whoever follows me *will not* dwell in darkness.” For those of us who, like Bloom, can *feel* the oppression of the darkness around us, this is good news, amen? This is what Christ has done for us. We have been *made alive*, and have left the darkness to embrace the light, and this light dwelling in us changes *everything*, doesn’t it? At least it should.

I. The Principle

So, in 5:8 we have laid out for us a very important principle: “at one time you were darkness, but *now* you are light in the Lord.” Darkness is who we *were*. This same principle is laid out throughout the book of Ephesians. You *are* light in the Lord. He has made you so. Because that is who you are, *walk* in the light. Let your conduct and behavior reflect the *light*, and not the darkness. That’s the command.

“Darkness” is not the opposite of “Light.” Darkness is the *absence* of light. The two are not opposing forces. In fact, darkness cannot overcome light. Light does not fight *against* darkness. Light *dispels* darkness. Jesus came as the “Light” of the world and exposed the darkness.

The Bible talks about the figurative use of “Light” in two aspects: *intellectually* and *morally*. Intellectually, it represents *truth*, and morally, it represents *holiness*.

Darkness, on the other hand, intellectually represents *ignorance* or *falsehood*, and morally it represents *evil*. So, both darkness and light have an effect on us intellectually (what we know and believe) and morally (how we think and act).

Don't let anyone tell you there is no difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. Not only is there a fundamental difference in *identity*, Their ought to be a difference *intellectually* (what we know and believe) **and** morally (how we think and act). A Christian sees the world differently. We see *life* differently. As a result, we *behave* differently. Why? *Because we are Light in the Lord.*

The world is confused, unjust, wicked, corrupt, and hopeless. You may have very nice neighbors. They seem like fine, upstanding people. Maybe they were "raised right," and have developed some semblance of civility. That is all fine and good. They may not be as unjust, wicked, and corrupt as some (at least not the side you see). Even if they mask that, without the light, *they are confused and hopeless.*

Ask them about what happens when they die. Ask them what they can tell you about their Creator, about Jesus. In America, its likely your conversation won't be the first time they've heard of Jesus, but they still don't have a clue, why? *They're confused and hopeless.* They're foolish, disobedient, led- astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing their days in malice and envy, hated by others, and hating one another. Those characteristics describe *everyone* without the light, at least in some measure. Paul says this in Titus, "*such were some of you.*"

What happened? “When the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Savior appeared, *He saved us*, not because of deeds done in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the *washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*”

Christian *do not miss the implication of this.* Paul is *not* simply speaking of our *justification* and reconciliation to God. He is saying those behaviors *used* to characterize us, *but* because of God’s mercy, *we do not do those things anymore!*

When we were in darkness, what characterized our behavior was *ignorance, falsehood, and evil.* Then something happened. You were “delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son.” (Col 1:13)

Your eyes were *opened.* 2 Cor 4:6 “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” When the light was turned on, we *saw* in the Scriptures, the futility and wickedness of darkness. We see now where that leads. You can order a *delicious* steak, and just before you bite down, you hear that it was prepared by someone infected by the Corona virus. What happens? Suddenly, you lose your appetite. Why? Did the taste of the steak change? No. You learned something. The light was turned on.

So, we turn *away* from all that once harmed you. All that has brought death and wrath upon us, why? Because we’re a children of *light.* Those things we once did, they were “fruitless.”

Paul says as much in Rom 6 “But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.”

This is what the light has done. It has made us *aware*, and as we grow in our knowledge of God, we become *increasingly* aware of the things that dishonor Him, and increasingly aware of the beauty of His holiness.

It isn't just an awareness of the bad things to avoid, it is a growing appetite for the things that honor God. There is a *beauty* in holiness (JE). As we get to know God rightly, our desire to please Him grows. We are more eager to shed the things about ourselves that dishonor Him, why? *Because we are light in the Lord.*

John 3:16, the verse everyone knows, tells us how we can be saved from judgment and have eternal life. Vs 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.”

This is what has happened to us. We have His life in us, we are *Light in the Lord*. That's what that means. God has united us to Christ. Christ *dwells* in us through His Spirit, *the Light is in us*. Our environment hasn't changed. *We have!* Now, *we are the light!* When a known Christian walks into a group of carnal people telling dirty jokes, what happens? The room gets *really* quiet. Why? Because the light is shining. We *are* Light in the Lord, so what do we do?

II. The Command

Walk in it! Let your light *shine!* What will this look like? Verse 9 tells us “the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.” This is what will characterize those who walk in the light. This is what should fill the atmosphere of a Christian. *Goodness, righteousness, and truth* and people are attracted to that.

There ought to be a peace about us, a generosity that doesn't cling to the things of this world. People admire that. They also admire *integrity*. When we hold firm to our convictions, even if they disagree. When we *practice* what we preach. 1 Jn 2:29 says “everyone that practices righteousness has been born of Him.” This is the inevitable fruit that the world will see in us in increasing measure. We want that, don't we? Don't you? Why do we want this? So we can be admired? No. We want this because *we are light in the Lord* and it *Christ* Who frees us from the prison of darkness and selfishness so that we can love and serve Him.

I don't know why or when all of you came to Christ, but I can tell you this- *Every* Christian desires this. No Christian wants to remain in darkness. It is against our nature. We stumble, sometimes greatly, but there is a pull in us towards the light, towards Jesus. We *know* the Bible is true. We *know* Jesus is Who He says He is. We know, but sometimes the pressure of the world gets too strong, and the longer we ignore the warnings, the harder our hearts become. It's like we keep painting over the light, and grieving the Spirit of God.

I've said for years that the most miserable person on earth is a Christian who refuses to walk in the light, why? Because they're going against their nature. If that is you, I'd implore you to see Christ again. See His *great love* for you demonstrated through His willingness to suffer and die for you. See Him crucified on the cross for your sins. See Him risen from the dead in *power* and *authority*. Trust His promise to redeem you and reconcile you to the Father. *Trust and believe and* be comforted. Jesus promises to save *all* who come to Him. Cling to Him now, *renounce* the deeds of darkness, *and walk in the light that you are* in Him.

As lights, we're immediately put in conflict with the world, and conflict with ourselves. We *breath* an atmosphere of darkness. Christian, God has called us to be *countercultural*. That's why this is hard. To walk in the Light is to go against the grain. This puts us out of step with the culture, and the temptation is for us to compromise. I *marvel* at our ability stay *somewhat* conformed to this world, and yet still maintain some semblance of "light" that appeases our conscience.

We may go to church; we may avoid the more scandalous sins, but still fudge some numbers here there because "hey, *nobody's perfect*." The majority of our thoughts and conversations may be a bit sanitized, but still *very* similar to the world: superficial and trivial. Like the world, we're thinking of our next vacation, our next big-ticket item. Like the world, we're still *very* focused on ourselves. What pleases *us*, what makes us happy. Still, though, we're *nice people*.

Is that all a Christian is? A *nice* person? I don't think so. *Walking* as a child of light, as a *Christian*, means 2 things. 1) We focus effort on discerning what is pleasing to the *Lord*. The implication is we seek to know what *God* wants with our life and *follow that pattern*. To be able to say with integrity regarding any ambition we have "This is what *God* desires. This is what pleases *Him*." That's the first thing. 2) It means *we do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness*, rather, *we expose them*. This makes us *more* than nice. This makes us *different*. Let's Pray