

Small Group Bible Study

EPHESIANS 5 (KJV) · AUGUST 27, 2026

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1. Study Title

Walking as Children of Light: The New Life We Have in Christ

2. Focus Passage

Ephesians 5:1–33 (Key Verse: Ephesians 5:8)

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: Ephesians 5:8

3. Big Idea / Main Point

Because Christ has redeemed us from darkness and united us to Himself, our entire way of living—our speech, our time, our homes, and our relationships—must reflect His holiness and love.

4. Session Overview (for the leader)

- **Suggested time:** 60–90 minutes
- **Goal of the study:** To help group members connect the objective reality of their new identity in Christ to the practical, daily details of how they love God, treat others, and navigate everyday relationships.
- **Special notes:** This passage covers sensitive and deeply practical ground, including marriage and moral purity. Create a gracious, non-judgmental environment where participants feel safe to reflect honestly on their own hearts and marriages. Remind the group that the standard called for here is only possible because of the transforming grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

5. Opening (10–12 min)

- **Leader Welcome:** "Welcome, everyone! It's great to be together around God's Word tonight. Let's dive right in."
- **Icebreaker Question:** "Think of a time when you completely changed how you decorated a room, organized a space, or lived your daily routine because of a major life change (like moving, getting married, or having a child). What changed, and why?"

- **Opening Prayer:** "Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. As we open Your Word, open our hearts. Show us the beauty of what You have done for us in Christ, and give us the grace to live it out in our daily lives. In Jesus' name, amen."

6. Context & Setting the Scene (3–5 min)

The Apostle Paul is writing this letter to believers in Ephesus, a bustling and morally decadent pagan city dominated by the temple of Artemis. In the first half of Ephesians (chapters 1–3), Paul lays out the stunning, unearned grace of God—explaining how dead sinners have been made alive together with Christ. Beginning in chapter 4, Paul shifts to the practical implications: because of who you are in Christ, how must you live? In chapter 5, he specifically contrasts the darkness of the surrounding culture with the radiant, Spirit-filled life of those who belong to Jesus. Let's read the passage together.

7. Read the Passage

Have two different readers read Ephesians 5:1–33 aloud (or read it in two sections if preferred).

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of

water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. Ephesians 5:1–33

8. Observation Questions (“What does the text say?”)

1. According to verses 1–2, what is our motivation and pattern for walking in love?
2. In verses 3–7, what behaviors does Paul contrast with the identity of saints, and what warning does he attach to them?
3. How does Paul describe the fundamental identity shift that has taken place in believers in verse 8 ("For ye were sometimes darkness...")?
4. Look at verses 15–20. What specific practices or attitudes characterize someone who is walking wisely and "filled with the Spirit"?
5. In the final section (vv. 22–33), what earthly relationship does Paul use as an illustration of a profound spiritual reality?

9. Interpretation Questions (“What does the text mean?”)

1. In verse 2, Christ’s sacrifice is described as "a sweet-smelling savour" to God. How does the Old Testament sacrificial system help us understand what Christ accomplished on the cross?
2. Paul says in verse 5 that the greedy person is actually an "idolater." Why does Scripture equate greed and moral uncleanness with idolatry?
3. What does it mean to "redeem the time" in verse 16, especially considering that Paul calls the days "evil"?
4. In verses 22–33, how does Paul elevate human marriage far beyond a mere social contract by tying it to Christ and the church? *(Note: While some cultural traditions view these verses through purely egalitarian lenses, a reformed redemptive-historical reading sees Christ's loving headship over the church as the ultimate pattern for biblical marriage roles).*

5. How do verses 18 ("be filled with the Spirit") and 21 ("Submitting yourselves one to another") act as the foundation for the specific instructions given to husbands and wives?

10. Application Questions ("How should this change us?")

1. Verse 8 reminds us, "ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light." How does remembering your past state of spiritual deadness help you cultivate patience and compassion for unbelievers around you? (*Personal / Real-life*)
2. In a culture full of "foolish talking" and constant digital noise, what does it practical look like for you to "redeem the time" (v. 16) in your daily routine this week? (*Personal / Real-life*)
3. Verse 18 contrasts being controlled by wine with being "filled with the Spirit," which overflows into thankfulness, singing, and mutual submission. Where are you most prone to seek comfort or control outside of the Holy Spirit? (*Gospel reminder / Personal*)
4. Whether married or single, how does viewing Christ's sacrificial, nourishing love for the church (vv. 25–29) reshape how we treat the people closest to us in our homes and local church community? (*Group / Community*)
5. For those who are married, how does looking to Christ's devotion to His spotless bride (vv. 25–27) change the daily atmosphere of your marriage? (*Real-life*)
6. This passage sets an impossibly high standard for our speech, purity, time, and relationships. How does knowing that Christ has already cleansed us and presented us "holy and without blemish" (v. 27) free us from paralyzing guilt while empowering us to obey? (*Gospel reminder*)

This week I will... (*Take 30 seconds of quiet to write down one specific, concrete way you will walk as a child of light this week—whether in your speech, your use of time, or an act of service in your home or church.*)

11. Response & Closing (10–15 min)

- **Reflective Prompt:** Take a moment of silent reflection. Ask the Lord to shine His light into any area of your life or relationships where you have been walking in the shadows.
- **Optional Short Prayer of Response:** "Lord, thank You that You did not leave us in the dark. You rescued us, washed us, and made us Your own. Forgive us for the times we slip back into the fruitless works of darkness. Fill us afresh with Your Spirit today so our lives reflect Your glorious light."
- **Prayer Requests:** Invite the group to share brief prayer needs related to personal growth, family life, or opportunities to witness to others.

- **Closing Prayer:** "Father, we praise You for the profound mystery of Christ and His church. Thank You that Jesus loved us and gave Himself up for us. Empower us by Your Spirit to walk as children of light this week, loving one another, redeeming our time, and bringing glory to Your name. In Jesus' name, amen."
- **Take-Home Memory Verse:**

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: Ephesians 5:8