



16 Ephesians 5:3-21 ³ *But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints;* ⁴ *and there must be no filthiness or foolish talk, or vulgar joking, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.* ⁵ *For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

⁶ *See that no one deceives you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.* ⁷ *Therefore do not become partners with them;* ⁸ *for you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light* ⁹ *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),* ¹⁰ *as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.* ¹¹ *Do not participate in the useless deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;* ¹² *for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.* ¹³ *But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.* ¹⁴ *For this reason it says,*

*“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.” (partial quote Isa 60)*

¹⁵ *So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise,* ¹⁶ *making the most of your time, because the days are evil.* ¹⁷ *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.* ¹⁸ *And do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,* ¹⁹ *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord;* ²⁰ *always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father;* ²¹ *and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ. (NASB).*

Let us pray.

Sunday, we looked at how we can be imitators of God. Remember how we marveled together that somehow we are supposed to mimic the way God is. We are not just to do what He tells us to do, but we must also do as He does. And so much of that gets into loving one another because God is love. Today we're diving even deeper into how the Body of Christ is to operate. We talk to people about accepting Jesus as Savior, but we often soft sell it and we hold back when it comes to explaining the work that will come after the free gift of salvation.

Walking with Jesus HAS A COST. Coming to Christ has no cost, but becoming Christ-like has great costs. Jesus talked about this. He said things that were very hard to hear, like, "unless you love me more than your father, mother, sister, brother, etc, you're not worthy of being mine" (Matthew 10:37). We tend to read these things without focusing on them very much. A life of living for Christ and putting on the New Man comes at great cost. It is a difficult life. We are faced with huge challenges about what we have to give up.

We are saved FROM the penalty of our sin, but we are saved TO a life that is lived to honor the Lord. This is Paul explaining to us how we work out our faith. This is sometimes referred to by Paul as "working out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Paul expected those who were called to Christ to live in a manner "worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1).

Paul and the Lord have an expectation that those who are called to Jesus and who are saved would live in a manner consistent to that calling. Remember earlier in Ephesians we read, *"4 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* (Ephesians 4:1-3, NASB).

Later, In Ephesians 5:1-2, we are told to imitate his love, being sacrificial in how we love others. We are no longer living for ourselves, but we are living for others. These are tough things to live out.

v. 3 Paul warns us about the fruit of living for self.

But sexual immorality (porneia) or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints;

God created sexual relations to function within the boundaries of marriage. Sex is a gift to humans; a pleasure meant to be enjoyed in its proper place. We've abused it by engaging in sinful lifestyles that do not bring honor to God. This is important to us in the church body. We are not immune from such influences. I recently learned that 30% of pastors have a pornography problem. We must look on each other with a pure love, a brotherly and sisterly love. We are to avoid fornication. That is the sexual contact between unmarried people. We are to avoid adultery. That is sexual contact involving a married person among us. Paul tells us to avoid impurity.

The Ephesians were living in the MIDDLE OF ALL OF THIS. Ephesus presented all that the world had to offer and it constantly pulled new believers from the life-style that should accompany being born again. Paul then talks about greed. Greed is an uncontrolled longing for increase. The Greek word is πλεονεξια (pleonexia) means literally "hunger for more". This includes power, wealth, sex, and pleasure... all of it.

Why do we want more and more and more? Because somehow we think it will make us more secure.

v. 4 Paul then says that there should be no filthiness, foolish talk ("stupid words"), or crude joking among us. Those things don't fit with us when we get together and gather as the Body of Christ. Why? Because that kind of activity is not consistent with the character of God. Because His Spirit is within us, Paul says that such speech just doesn't fit in. We are to be speaking thanksgiving and encouragement to one another.

Do everything without complaining and arguing, (Philippians 2:14, NLT)

Paul tells us to not live in the manner lined out in verse 4, but rather like that shown in Philippians 2:14 above. We're to live out our days speaking thanksgiving and encouragement to one another.

v. 5-6 He says whoever is sexually immoral or whoever is greedy is living a life of idolatry and has no place in inheriting the Kingdom of God. Let's look carefully at this. He is explaining why we, as children of God, should avoid this kind of behavior. Let's talk for a minute about what Paul is NOT talking about.

He is not saying that if you are a believer and you fall into one of these sin patterns you are not saved. He is not saying if you "back slide" you are going to hell. Back sliding means you're a Christian that gets off into the weeds. When you do, you are living carnally.

There are two kinds of people in the world. There are unbelievers whose lives are habitually marked by these carnal things. The Bible says that they are slaves to their flesh. There is a separate group of others who are believers. They have accepted Jesus and have received the Holy Spirit and their lives are no longer habitually marked by sin. On occasion, we believers do fail because we are sinners. But, when we do fail and sin, if we are truly in Christ, we are heartbroken about our sin and our failure. I know at times when I've fallen into sin, I've cried out to the Lord to cleanse me and to strengthen me to the point where I could say no to such temptation.

This is really important. We can be saved and still face challenges again and again. We may walk in the sin temporarily, but we shouldn't ever be wallowing in it or we've got a real problem. When true believers fall into this stuff, we are devastated and we hate it. We want a new start and a reboot. People that habitually do these kind of things without any sorrow or remorse may not even be saved.

v. 7 Paul says "don't be partners with them." Walk as children of light. At one time we were darkness but as believers, we are no longer in darkness. We are in the light. Walking in the light is not automatic. If it were, Paul wouldn't be telling us to do this. Being saved doesn't mean that we don't try to go back and dabble in the darkness. Paul

is telling us to walk in the reality of who we are. Goodness, righteousness, and truth are what are supposed to characterize our lives. That is our fruit.

v. 10 Discern is a verb that has to do with examining metal. It means to discover by examination what is pleasing to the Lord. We should constantly be making sure that our thoughts, words, and deeds are pleasing to the Lord. It is all of those words which we sang last Sunday about "Take my Life and Let it Be Always Only Lord for Thee."

v. 11 When we live differently from the world we are going to naturally expose the darkness. When a light gets turned on in a dark room, the darkness is exposed. When we live differently from the world, it shines light on EVERYTHING. It reminds me of times when the pests get out of control in our farmhouse. I'll get up to go into the kitchen to get a glass of water and when I turn on the light...there it is as big as day on the floor scurrying to get out of the light. Last night it was a big cockroach and when I turned on the light he was exposed. That's just the way it will be when we start living our lives as children of the light. We will come into the dark room, and all is seen. Not only does the light of our lives expose the darkness, but it also brings glory to God. Don't you remember when Jesus said, *"⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16, KJV).

v. 12 The things they do are shameful and not worth even mentioning. Guys, the things that the world engages in are awful. They are so bad that they can hardly be discussed. Some of you no doubt have been pulled into those things through no fault of your own. This is a world seeking selfish, fleshly pleasure over regarding the sanctity of others. It is a rotten world. It is a heartbreaking world. I've had friends who were addicted to crack that told me what when in the crack dens, where they had become so enslaved, they did ANYTHING to get more dope. Can't you see? This is not freedom. This is total complete absolute slavery. IT IS SO BAD AND SO DEGRADING SUCH THINGS SHOULDN'T BE DISCUSSED. I am proud of my son Faber who devotes much of his salary to freeing young women from sexual slavery. He may never have a wife, but in heaven he'll have hundred if not thousands of women come up and thank him for redeeming their lives on earth.

v. 13-14. Things that are in the light become visible. "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5). Jesus says it's like a city sitting over on a hill. It can't be hidden. He instructs us not to cover our light with a basket. When we are different from the world we will expose the world and we'll be seen by all. Even cities in biblical times that had nothing more than little candles or torches lit could be seen from afar. Paul calls out to us to WAKE UP – GET UP. Get out of that darkness and let the light of Christ shine on you and through you.

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not

come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. (John 3:19-21, NIV).

v. 15-16 Be careful in how you spend your days because time is short. We should be deliberate in how we live and how we walk. We should be intentional with what we fill each day with. Don't let life just happen to you. Be productive. Seek God's will and DO IT. Make good decisions daily. Invest in things that have a return. Make the most of what you have. Make the most of every opportunity.

¹³ Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." ¹⁴ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. For you are just a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away. (James 4:13-14, NASB).

v. 17 Don't be foolish, but be wise to determine the will of the Lord. A fool doesn't understand God's will, but a wise person does. So, understand God's will and do it. Don't follow your heart. Follow the Lord's will for your life. Following the Lord is often hard and often requires great sacrifice. Our flesh is going to fight hard against the will of the Lord. The best way to know his will is to get into the Word.

v. 18 Don't be filled with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. Don't be a drunkard. It leads to debauchery (living to meet sensual needs). This is a really interesting verse warning us to not seek intoxication. The text doesn't use the word "intoxication" but I do because a person that seeks after intoxication is seeking to medicate themselves. In the case of alcohol, it is seeking that euphoria to overcome boredom or to cover up past hurts and insecurities. Paul is saying that it will only lead to more degenerate things. As a person spends more and more time intoxicated, their life falls apart. They can't hold jobs for long. They miss paying the bills. Eventually, the wheels come off.

Paul is not talking about being saved all over again. The indwelling of the spirit and the filling of the Spirit are two different works of the Holy Spirit. When we're saved, we receive the Spirit as a once and for all experience. But, the filling of the Holy Spirit is something that happens repeatedly. It is a work that happens again and again. Now that you're saved, now that you have the Holy Spirit, be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Remember....that's putting on the New Man.) It is the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving and Indwelling of the Holy Spirit contrasted with being "Filled with the Holy Spirit".

This is in contrast to the filling of the Spirit referred to in [Ephesians 5:18](#). We should be so completely yielded to the Holy Spirit that He can possess us fully and, in that sense, fill us. [Romans 8:9](#) and [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) states that He dwells within every believer, but He can be grieved ([Ephesians 4:30](#)), and His activity

within us can be quenched ([1 Thessalonians 5:19](#)). When we allow this to happen, we do not experience the fullness of the Spirit's working and His power in and through us. To be filled with the Spirit implies freedom for Him to occupy every part of our lives, guiding and controlling us. Then His power can be exerted through us so that what we do is fruitful to God. The filling of the Spirit does not apply to outward acts alone; it also applies to the innermost thoughts and motives of our actions. [Psalm 19:14](#) says, "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."¹

When a person is drunk or under the influence of some mind-altering drug (dope, etc); they are no longer in control of what's happening in their life. Most importantly, I believe it creates an opportunity for Satan to have a greater effect in a person's life. *"Be sober-minded and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* ([Matthew 5:16](#), BSB). The counter of being "under the influence" is to be filled with the Spirit. This is done through confession of sin, reading of God's Word, and application of God's Word to your soul.

v. 19 This verse tells us that we should have a "song" in our heart. I think it's interesting that it says "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs". It sort of substantiates the whole idea of worshiping the Lord in song the way we do at Union Grove. We have a combination of Psalms, traditional hymns, and newer type worship songs that we sing. Larry does a good job of helping all to come into His presence in song.

¹⁹ *And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil.* ²⁰ *For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light, so that his deeds will not be exposed.* ²¹ *But the one who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds will be revealed as having been performed in God.* ([John 3:19-21](#), NASB).

v. 20 This verse tells us to be thankful people. Thanksgiving is something we choose. Thankful people are joyful people. Thanks is not something natural. It takes the Holy Spirit to teach you to be thankful in all things. Spend time thanking the Lord for ALL that He's done, is doing, and will do in your life.

v. 21 Submission is the mark of a believer. We're to submit to one another. We need to let others lead without getting upset about it. We're to appreciate what God is doing in each other's life. I should rejoice in you being all you are meant to be EVEN AND ESPECIALLY if it eclipses me. Remember what John said concerning his relationship with Jesus. *"He must become greater; I must become less."* ([John 3:30](#), NIV).

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Spirit-filled.html>

That must become each of our prayers if we are to put on the New Man!

Let us pray.

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