

# Between Light and Darkness

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 18*, July 28, 2013

## Ephesians 5:1-13

<sup>1</sup> **Become**, therefore, **imitators of God** as **beloved children**.

<sup>2</sup> And **walk in love**, as **Christ loved us and gave himself up for us**,  
a fragrant **offering** and **sacrifice** to God.

<sup>3</sup> But **sexual immorality** and all **corruption** or **greed**,  
don't give it the status of a name among you, as is proper among saints,

<sup>4</sup> also **language that brings shame** and **fool's talk** and **sarcastic ridicule**,  
which are out of place, but instead be named by your **gratitude**.

<sup>5</sup> If you know anything, **know this**, that everyone  
who is **sexually immoral** or **corrupt**, or who is **filled with greed** (that is, an **idolater**),  
has no share as an heir in the **kingdom of the Messiah and of God**.

<sup>6</sup> **Let no one deceive you with empty words**, for because of these things  
the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore do not become partners with them.

<sup>8</sup> For at one time **you were darkness**, but now **you are light** in the **Lord**.

**Walk as children of light**

<sup>9</sup> (for the **fruit** that the **light** bears is in every bit of **goodness** and **justice** and **truth**),  
<sup>10</sup> as you discover **what is pleasing to the Lord**.

<sup>11</sup> Take no part in the **fruitless works of darkness**, but instead see them for what they are.

<sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

<sup>13</sup> But when anything is **exposed by the light**, it becomes visible,  
for what truly becomes visible is **light itself**.

## Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>14</sup> **You are the light of the world**. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and  
put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, **let your light  
shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

## John 1:9; 8:12

<sup>9</sup> The **true light**, which gives light to everyone, was **coming into the world**. ...

<sup>12</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will not walk in  
darkness, but will have **the light of life**."

## Matthew 6:24

<sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters, .... **You cannot serve God and money**.

## Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>22</sup> But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness,  
self-control....

## Romans 12:2

<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you  
may **discover what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect**.

## Children of Light – Children of God

Christian life moves from what God has done in Jesus (Gospel) to its effect in our life (transformation as disciples). It's both simple and complex because we are both.

“Walk worthy...” (4:1). “Walk in love...” as loved children of God (5:1). “Walk as children of light...” because you were darkness and now are light in him (5:8), by the gift of Jesus' grace. This doesn't make me better than anyone else, but brings a new power into life and helps us learn to see things with a new reality. The whole section is about the finding truth in the deceptive propaganda of their world/our world. Important to study carefully.

Often read as a great kill-joy. Christianity is against sex and making money and humor – no funny jokes, just sober hymn singing. “Sexual immorality, corruption, greed” – add violence and that's a summary of our movies and novels. We're trained to have our fantasies there.

Paul is not giving a new law of does and don'ts. But he is trying to help us learn a true standard for discovering what is real, what brings actual growth, what is enduring in life.

The center is Jesus – a revolutionary challenge to every society – because he embodies a love that is the heart of God – self-giving, generous, overflowing love, even toward enemies: “Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us...” That light illumines all.

## Broken and Distorted Love

But “love” has many meanings. Most of our “love stories” aren't about that kind of love. They're the “I need you, I want you” love. Romantic passion without everyday commitment. It's the base of sexual immorality in its many forms. “Corruption” or “impurity” has many sides. Here perhaps the developed taste that requires the tang of “wickedness” to stimulate. Or the “love” of my group, family, country that lets me dehumanize and destroy enemies. This grasping, consuming, often betraying, “love” is the opposite of the love seen in Jesus.

Greed (*pleonexia*), the love of more – more money, status, power, influence, things. None is bad in itself. But when they become the center of our love/desire, they are false gods, deeply deceptive, promising life and security, destroying both. The greedy person is an idolater.

Paul says don't let these things stamp their name on you. That distorted love is not you. Beware the propaganda machine around immorality and greed. Huge industries exist to sell you sexual immorality and greed. Our secular economic society is explicitly founded on greed.

## Smashing Love to Bits

But we don't just have distorted loves. We also do things that destroy real love. He's concrete but with words hard to translate. Some translations trivialize: cussing, racy jokes.

Language that brings shame: racist, stereotyping, sexually harassing, violent, demeaning.

Fool's talk: thoughtless, without empathy, hurtful joking, gossiping, dehumanizing.

Sarcastic ridicule. Flippancy, ridicule, cutting, pushing buttons to be hurtful.

## Walking in Love, Walking in Light

This isn't you, Paul says. Rather gratitude links you back to that generous love in Jesus. Real light that makes life fruitful by the power of God's Spirit – goodness, justice, truth.

An ongoing dynamic process of discovering the will of the Lord as Jesus' self-giving love illuminates more and more of life. Seeing through the deception. Living in reality.