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THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

STUDY 6 WALK IN THE LIGHT

Ephesians 4:17–5:14

In this study we cover a longer section in the epistle to the Ephesians. It is united by the exhortation to choose to walk in light rather than darkness, given at the beginning and end of the passage (4:18, 5:8-13). Paul wants to impress on his readers the huge difference between living apart from Christ and living in Christ. It is his view that there is a huge gulf between the two. Within this section Paul takes up a number of issues. Paul exhorts his readers:

- Not to live like Gentiles. Today, this means not to live like unbelievers (4:17-19).
- Rather live like Christians (5:20-24).
- Avoid lying, anger, stealing and evil talk (4:25-5:2).
- Shun impurity (5:3-7).
- Live in the light (5:8-14).

Chapter 4:17-19: Do not live like Gentiles ,that is, like unbelievers...

Q.1. Paul lists nine things he believes are characteristic of life separated from Christ. What are they?

Q. 2. Paul speaks as a first century man reflecting on what he sees all around him. Does what he says about unbelievers match up with what we see around us today? Try to focus on issues relevant to the group and society today rather than listing all the terrible things happening all around the world.

Chapter 5:20-24: Rather live like Christians...

Q. 3. Paul lists in verses 22-24 three things they had been taught that are characteristics of living the Christian life. What are they? Are these the qualities we talk about when we encourage each other in our journey?

Q. 4. What does it mean 'to be renewed in the spirit of your minds'? And 'to clothe yourselves with the new self'? Can you express these concepts with more modern phrases?

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Chapter 4:25-5:2: Avoid lying, anger, stealing and evil talk...

Q. 5. *How can we be angry but not sin? And what does Paul advise when we get angry? (4:26). (In considering this question refer to James 1:19-20 and Eph. 4:31).*

Q. 6. *When we let anger control us what are we doing? See verse 27.*

Q. 7. *What is 'evil talk'? (verse 29). Does 'evil talk' come from the mouths of believers? (In answering this question consider Eph. 5:4).*

Q. 8. *Paul held that lying, anger, stealing and evil talk grieves the Holy Spirit (verse 30). What ideas does the word 'grieve' raise in your mind?*

Q. 9. *In Eph. 4:32-5:1-2 Paul gives another list of primary Christian virtues. Do you find it hard to forgive? How can we become more tenderhearted and forgiving people?*

Chapter 5:3-7: Shun impurity. Paul returns to a list of sins seen in unbelievers which he thinks are totally inconsistent with being a Christian.

Q. 10. *Why does Paul say that the sins he mentions in verse 5 are idolatry? What does idolatry mean for us in the 21st century?*

Q. 11. *When Paul says that those who sin in this way (verse 5) have 'no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ', what does he mean? Can such sinners ever be forgiven?*

Chapter 5:8-14: Live in the light. Light is an important metaphor/image in the Bible. Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world' (Jn 8:12) and he spoke of unbelievers walking in darkness (Jn 3:19, 8:12).

Q. 12. *What comes into your mind when you think of unbelief being darkness and faith light?*

Q. 13. *What does it mean to 'live as children of light (verse 8)?*

Q. 14. *What have you learned from this passage? A number of people in the group may like to respond to this question.*

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