



The Building Block of Moral Purity

Week of August 1, 2021

Intro Discussion Question(s):

- *What have you learned most in your study of God's Word this week?*
- *Other than Jesus, who is a person that has modeled moral purity most in your life? Explain.*

Read Bible Study Summary:

In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul explains the building block of moral purity and its essentiality to healthy relationships. The only way for purity to be achieved is for us to be imitators of God because we are his children. It is easy for believers to fall into a trap of viewing imitating God as “the means” of our acceptance by God. However, imitating God is in actuality “the result” of our acceptance by him. We are accepted by God as his child when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, thereby receiving his gift of salvation. Since our relationship is now pure because of the righteousness of Christ, how then can our relationships be pure with others as we imitate him? Let’s read Ephesians 5:1-14 and find out.

Main Scripture

- *Read Ephesians 5:1-14*

How are we to imitate God as his dearly loved children?

1. Walk in Love (5:1-2)

- **“Just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us”** - If we are ever to imitate God and walk in purity, we must first walk in love, which is the foundation for healthy relationships. Love is sacrificial and if we are to understand the Father’s love more clearly, we need not look further than the cross of Christ. Jesus is our example on how to imitate God in love. Christ Jesus lived perfectly, keeping the law without sin. He was our substitute and died the death we sinners deserved. He rose again from the dead and if you have faith, he will save you.
- So, we need the example of Christ to walk in love, but we also need his redeeming grace. We need the Savior’s forgiveness and his Holy Spirit dwelling in us to empower us to love the world,

demonstrating the same pattern of sacrificial love as Christ. Displaying this type of love, therefore, involves giving ourselves away for the good of others in both sacrifice and action.¹

- **Read Galatians 2:19-20** - 19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- **Ask Questions**
 - In what ways has NOT loving others as Christ has loved you affected your relationships?
 - How do you think loving others sacrificially like Jesus can purify our relationships with others?

2. Walk in Light (5:3-14)

- **Avoid the Darkness (3-7)**
 - It is apparent that some of the same sinful behavior that affected the church in the ancient world is still occurring today - *sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscene language, coarse joking, idolatry*. Today, the passage before us calls for a rejection and nonparticipation in the impurities that compromise our faith and witness as Christians. The only solution is repentance and a Spirit-filled vow not to participate. Paul was clear that there should not even be a hint of participation in them or engaging in them with people that do them.
- **Live in the Light (8-14)**
 - You were *once darkness*, living as enemies of God. You weren't just living in darkness, but you WERE darkness. However, now you ARE light. The reality is you cannot live in the light if you are not the light. We're talking about character, not just actions. Behavior and actions indicate what's on the inside. There will be constant frustration if you try to change behaviors without a character change, because it can't be done. Without the light of Jesus, the light shines only a few hours, then it is back to life as usual.
 - The task of the Christian, therefore, is to resist sin wherever we find it by leaving the light on. To do this, we must live continually in the Lord, aware of him, determined by him, and discerning what is pleasing to him. Fellowship with Christ will continue to expose the darkness for what it is and is and enable us to be light.²
- **Ask Questions**
 - In what ways have your struggles with moral purity affected your relationships with others?
 - How has your fellowship with Christ helped you to live in the light as a Christian?
 - How is it possible for us as Christians to avoid the darkness and live in the light without displaying a holier-than-thou attitude? (Remember we are not "better than" others, but rather "better off" because of Christ)

Closing

- **Ask Question** - What is the greatest challenge you are facing right now? Is there some way our group can help you specifically?
- Pray together over those requests.

¹Content adapted from Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Ephesians* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 119-120.

²Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 279-283.