



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

EPHESIANS LESSON 5

This week we will be continuing our study in the book of Ephesians by diving into chapter 5. As you read, remember that Paul was writing to the Ephesian believers to remind them of their position in Christ, as well as encourage them in their daily living. Paul exhorted them to "walk worthy of the calling with which they were called." (4:1) Chapters 1-3 show us our position in Christ and the blessings we receive because of our place in God's family. Chapters 4-6 remind us of the responsibilities that accompany the call.

Paul tells the Ephesians that they are children of the light and that they need to maintain a walk of holiness. In the overview of Ephesians, my New King James Bible says, "Ephesians begins in Heaven, but concludes in the home and all other relationships of daily life." I pray that we won't leave these truths on paper, but we, too, will take them and apply them to our daily living.

First Day

1. Let's begin by reading Ephesians 5:1-33. Write a 2-3 sentence summary that expresses the main point of this chapter.
2. Are there any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts?

3. Are there any:

- a. Commands?
- b. Promises:
- c. Warnings?

4. Read and title each section.

- a. 5:1-7
- b. 5:8-14
- c. 5:15-21
- d. 5:22-24
- e. 5:25-29
- f. 5:30-33

5. Verse 1 tells us to be followers or "imitators" of God. How do we do that, according to 5:2, 8, and 15?

6. The word "imitate" means to duplicate, to mimic, or to impersonate. Someone once said, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." What do you think that means? Do you agree?

7. What particular truth or point ministered to your heart? What practical application do you see for your life?

That's it for today. I pray the Holy Spirit would teach us how to imitate Christ. I want to look like my dad, don't you?

Memory Verse of the Week: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ..." Ephesians 5:8

Second Day

Practice your memory verse. Are you a light for the Lord?

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-7. One way to imitate God is to walk in love. How did Christ do that?
2. Since we probably aren't called to die for someone else like Christ did for us, how can we love sacrificially?
3. Although our sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit, what can "we" do in our quest to become more Christ-like?
4. Name some of God's attributes. Are any of these attributes present in your life?

5. According to verse 3, what must we stay away from in order to walk in love? Why is this behavior "not fitting" for the believer?

This letter was written to the Ephesian believers who accepted Christ in the middle of Ephesus, a city full of sexual sin and perversion. The behaviors named in verse 3 were quite common to them. Paul was pointing out that Christians are called to a higher standard.

6. Paul also talks about purity in our speech. What sins does he warn us about in verse 4?

The word "filthiness" refers to obscenities. Foolish talking is from the word "morologia" which implies silliness, buffoonery, or "moronic talk." Coarse jesting refers to a person who uses vulgarity in their witticism.

7. Is there a difference in coarse jesting and humor in general? Read Proverbs 15:2 and Ecclesiastes 3:4. When is the line crossed?

8. What kind of humor do you use? Do you use sarcasm? Do you poke fun at the expense of others? A good test to take is this: what kinds of things make you laugh?

9. According to this section, what should you do if someone begins a conversation in your presence that is inappropriate?

10. Why is a Christian's speech so important?

11. What will happen to a person who habitually practices the sins listed in this section?

12. Verse 7 tells us not to partake with, or be a partner with, people who practice these things. Are we guilty of joining them if we watch adultery or fornication on T.V.? Explain and support your answer.

Tomorrow we'll continue our pursuit to find out how we can further imitate Christ. Let's remember to honor Him in both our actions and our speech. Laughing is good for the soul, as long as the topic is appropriate and edifying. I once heard someone call laughing "inner jogging." Isn't that cute?

Make sure you spend intimate time with the Lord this week. That's how you get to know Him. How can you be like Him if you don't know Him?

Third Day

What's your memory verse? Are you walking in His light?

1. Read Ephesians 5:8-14. Paul tells us another way to imitate Christ is to walk in the light. What does that mean?

2. How does Paul contrast our lives before and after salvation?

Notice they were not "in" darkness, they "were" darkness. They are not "in" the light; they "are" the light. James Montgomery Boice said, "Paul is pointing to a change in them, not merely to a change in their surroundings. Before they were not only in darkness; darkness was in them. And now they not only are in light; they are light and therefore must shine out as lights to their benighted society."

3. What three things does the light produce?

4. According to John 8:12, who is the light of the world?

5. Read the following Scriptures and write what you learn about the "light."

a. Matthew 5:14-16

b. 2 Corinthians 4:6

c. Philippians 2:15

d. Proverbs 4:18

e. Colossians 1:13

f. 1 Peter 2:9

6. What should you do with the unfruitful works of darkness? Can you explain this in your own words?

7. What do you think Paul means by his statement in verse 12?

We live in a very dark and corrupt world. Because Jesus is the light of the world and He lives in us, we are called to shine for Him. This passage implies that believers should be transparent, open, and honest, hiding nothing. I love the picture of Jesus as the lighthouse and each of us as the Keeper of that light. We are to keep our windows clean so the light can be seen 24 hours a day. If the Keeper of the lighthouse lets the light go out, a disaster could occur. He had many jobs, but his most important task was to keep that wick trimmed continuously. They took their jobs very seriously. As the Keeper of the light of Christ, how seriously do you take your job? Do you keep the window of your heart clean, pure, and transparent so that His light can be seen at all times?

8. Is there any darkness lurking in the corners of your life? Allow the Holy Spirit to turn on His flashlight and shine it deep into your heart.

9. What did Jesus call John the Baptist in John 5:35? Why?

10. How bright are you shining at home? At work? In your neighborhood?

11. How can we light the path towards Christ for unbelievers?

In verse 14, no one is exactly sure what Paul is quoting. Many think he is quoting a fragment of an early Christian hymn, while others believe he is paraphrasing Isaiah 60:1-2, applying it to the church. Either way, Paul's point is the same. If you are an unbeliever, it's time to wake up and allow Christ to shine His light on you. If you are a believer, it's still time to wake up! Many Christians are asleep in the light. They have the light of Christ, but they've fallen asleep and are neglecting, or refusing, to shine.

12. How about you? Are you snoozing in the light? Have you become lazy or apathetic in your walk with Christ? What changes should you make?

13. Last thought for the day. Do you want to shine? If so, you must be willing to burn! (Are you?)

See you later, my fellow Light Keepers! I can't help but hum the old song we learned in Sunday school ... "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!"

Fourth Day

Work on your verse. Are you burning bright?

1. Let's begin today by reading Ephesians 5:15-21. What is Paul's main point in this section? What did we learn in yesterday's lesson that makes it possible for us to "see then"?

2. Define the word "circumspectly." What does it mean to walk in this way?

The phrase "redeeming the time" means to "ransom the time from its evil bondage," or "to make the most of the time." We are called to seize every passing opportunity. Time is precious, and every minute counts. Jonathon Edwards, the great philosopher/theologian in 1734, wrote this just before his twentieth birthday: "Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can." Paul points out that a sign of wisdom is a disciplined use of time.

3. Are you "redeeming the time"? Are you disciplined in the way you spend your time? How can you improve the use of your time?

4. What are some examples of using our time wisely?

5. What's the second characteristic of a wise man in verse 17?

John Stott said, "Nothing is more important in life than to discover and do the will of God." Are you continually seeking His will for your life? That, my friend, would make you a wise woman.

6. Read Ephesians 5:18-21. How does this section relate to the chapter as a whole?

7. What are believers called to be filled with? What are they "not" to be filled with?

8. What are the similarities between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit? How are they different?

Dissipation means "indulgent or wasteful living, especially excessive drinking."

9. What are the results, or the evidence, of being filled with the Spirit, according to verses 19-21?

The word filled has three different meanings. In her book, Ephesians, Discovering the Path to God's Treasures, Lenya Heitzig defines it this way: (1) **Filled**: As wind fills a ship's sail, so God's Spirit fills us with power and direction. (2) **Permeated**: As salt permeates food with flavor and preserves, so God's Spirit provides us with zest and permanence. (3) **Controlled**: As one reins in a horse with a bit, so the Spirit guides and controls a life surrendered to Him."

The Greek word for "filled" means to keep on being filled. This tells us that although the indwelling of the Spirit is a one-time experience, believers are continually being filled.

10. Being filled with the Spirit means that you are under the influence of, or controlled by, the Holy Spirit. What's controlling you? How much of yourself is controlled by you, and how much by the Spirit?

11. What should we be thankful for? Why do we need the Holy Spirit to do that?

12. To me, verses 19-21 imply that being filled with the Spirit also fills you with joyfulness, thankfulness, and submission. Is your life characterized by these attitudes?

We'll stop here for today. I pray that you yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to control and influence you. Let's remember to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us on a daily basis.

Fifth Day

Write your verse from memory.

In our last section, Paul brings his application as close to home as you can get. He now deals with the role of the husband and the wife. Again we see how correct doctrine determines correct living. He reminds us in verse 21 that mutual submission is a result of the filling of the Holy Spirit. In our next section, as well as in chapter 6, Paul shows how submission is to be worked out in the home, as we exercise our God-given roles as husband, wife, children, servant, etc.

1. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. Also read 1 Peter 3:1-8. Paul likens the relationship between husband and wife to the relationship between Christ and the Church. Can you explain that comparison in your own words?
2. What command is given to the wives?
3. What two reasons does he give for this command?
4. Women are called to submit to their husbands. Are there any boundaries or limits on that command? (Colossians 3:18, Acts 5:29)
5. How would you define submission? (Does submission mean that you are a doormat? Does it mean that you are inferior, or that you become a slave to your husband?)

6. Does a Christian woman have to support her husband in sin? (Is that submission?) Is she allowed to disagree or voice her opinion?
7. Verse 33 tells us to respect our husband. What does "respect" mean?
8. How can we practically show our husbands we respect them? How can we show others we respect him?
9. Why is it important for children to see wives honor and respect their husbands?
10. What if your husband isn't respectable? Do you still have to obey that verse? (How can you respect the office if not the man?)
11. Paul uses twice as many words to define the husband's role. That must mean that his job is harder! Can you explain the role of the husband in the marriage in your own words?

12. Should a wife wait until the man is fulfilling his role before she fulfills hers? Why or why not?

13. Do you have trouble submitting to your husband? What changes do you need to make? (Are you willing to relinquish your rights to the Lord and die to self?)

Christ loved the church with a sacrificial love. He gave Himself for us willingly. He prays for us and He is attentive to us. He will be forever faithful to us, His bride. Christ's love sanctifies, or makes us holy. His love is a satisfying and fulfilling love. Kent Hughes said this: "Husbands, let us commit to sacrificial love, to the death of self for our wives, to sanctifying love, that they might grow to be more like Christ, to the liberating self-love of loving our wives as we love our own bodies. This is our holy call."

The Christian marriage is a beautiful thing as both partners submit to God. The loving husband should be like Christ. The submissive wife is like His glorious Church. What a grand mystery this is.

Submitting to our husbands is often misunderstood and unaccepted. It simply refers to accepting the roles that God has given us, accepting the order of authority in the home. Someone has to be in charge, right? The word "submission" means "humble obedience to another's will." "Biblically, submission means willingly relinquishing one's rights to another person based on the order God, in His wisdom, has established."

(Ephesians, Discovering the Path of God's Treasure.) Jesus Christ Himself submitted to His Father, and we are called to follow His example. Wives are told to follow their husband's leadership, while he puts aside his own interests to put his wife first. The man is called to be the spiritual leader, and we know that a spiritual leader is a servant leader. Jesus served His disciples, and the husband is called to serve the wife. I quote the Life Application Bible: "A wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take

advantage of his leadership role, and a wise and Christ-honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband's leadership. Either approach causes friction in marriage."

God is not telling wives that they are inferior, incapable of leading, unequal, or slaves. The husband is not called to be a dictator, nor take advantage of his leadership role. As Christ governs the Church, the husband governs the wife (1 Corinthians 11:3). It is simply an order of authority that God has ordained. The act of submission is not demanded by the husband, but should be freely offered by the wife as a response to his love. Submission is a result of being controlled by the Spirit. We can only submit as we trust God more than our husbands, and more than ourselves. Lenya Heitzig said, "Submission means I get out of the way so God can get in the loop." John Stott said this: "People have equal dignity, but different God-appointed roles."

14. Read Genesis 2:15-24 along with Ephesians 5:30-33. Why does Paul bring up Adam and Eve?
15. Are you fulfilling your role as a Christian wife? Do you submit willingly to your husband or begrudgingly?
16. How is Biblical submission to your husband an act of love for God and a way to honor the Lord?

17. Do you ever try to usurp authority over your husband or undermine his leadership? How can you change that?

18. How does the Lord nourish and cherish the Church? (vs 29)

Verse 31 tells us that a man and woman should "leave and cleave" when they get married. They are supposed to separate themselves from their parents so they can attach themselves to their spouse. Parents are no longer supposed to control their children's lives. The word "cleave" means to adhere, cling, or to stick. Marriage partners are supposed to stick together like super glue ... the permanent kind!

19. When you got married, did you both "leave and cleave"? Is there anything you're still clinging on to, or something you're supposed to leave?

20. Why is sex before marriage wrong, in light of verse 31? (Well, at least one of the reasons.)

It's time to end our discussion. I think we could go on and on on this subject, but unfortunately, we can't. I pray that you are challenged in your role as a Christian wife. I also pray that you take that role very seriously. May we always love, nourish, and cherish our spouses. May we be the catalyst that causes them to grow in the Lord. And may they always see Christ in us.