

# Walking In Love

Ephesians 5:1-10



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Ephesians 5:1-10 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (2) **And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.** (3) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; (4) **Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.** (5) **For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** (6) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. (7) Be not ye therefore partakers with them. (8) **For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light:** (9) (For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) (10) **Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.**<sup>KJV</sup>

**Why does “sin” matter? In fact, why would I care about “sin” in myself or in others? Isn't “sin”, after all, just a *cultural* concept? Live and let live should be our motto. Jesus died and rose again to save us. Let's preach this and move on, ignoring all else. Truth is relative – sin does not exist.**

The preceding paragraph contained statements that are all too commonly spoken and thought in today's world. People have begun to believe that sin doesn't matter. In

fact, many have begun to believe that there is “no such thing as sin”. As long as it feels good, it is entirely acceptable in our world today. Many Churches and professing Christians believe that “sin” is a concept whose time has passed. As a result many local Churches spend their time singing, dancing, and generally entertaining one another. The message of the Cross has been diminished, and in its place we have “feel good” and “power of positive thinking” speeches. Has this type of Church impacted our society? Has America become better through the dumbing down of the Gospel message?

If the gas gage on my car is pointing to the letter “E”, I can approach the problem from several directions. I can either ...

- (a) **Fill it up with water** – after all, water is cheaper than gasoline. The apparent result is the same. The gage will point to “F”, and I'll save a whole bunch of money!
- (b) **Ignore the problem** – after all, isn't “E” just a state of mind? My life will be bettered when I just “live and let live”. If my car wants to be on “E”, what do I care?
- (c) **Fill it up with gasoline**. Yes, I have to focus on the problem to fix the problem, and yes, it costs much more to resolve the problem this way. Yet this is the only solution that will bless my life in the near future – that is, unless I want to get used to running across America like Forest Gump!

If I want to get anywhere in my vehicle, I *must* put gasoline in the tank. This is what the gas tank is designed for – GASOLINE! If I ignore the problem, dance around the car, think “positively” about it, or do anything else other than put gasoline in the tank, sooner or later both I and that vehicle will stall.

In America today the media will tell us that the concept of “sin” is an archaic notion best suited to the “olden days”. If two people “love” on another they have every right to live together in sexual harmony as long as they love one another. If these two people happen to impregnate one another the obvious solution is to abort that pregnancy. After all, this “thing” that has come between them will only sully their love. Get rid of it, and move on. When the two people become dissatisfied with one another, go and find another relationship. If disease should occur because of your promiscuity demand that medical science find a solution. After all, “love” means “whatever makes me happy at this moment”. If what the media promotes was true, America would be a virtual Eden – yet it is not. The more we “love” according to the “Gospel According to Television”, the more miserable we become. The solutions that George Clooney, Tom Hanks, and other Hollywood gods have offered have not blessed us as a nation.

Our blessing will only come when we turn back to God and His Word. What does God's Word tell us to do?

**1. The Christian Is Called To Walk In Love  
According To The Standard of Christ**

**FOCAL** Ephesians 5:1-2 **Be ye therefore followers<sup>1</sup> of God, as dear<sup>2</sup> children;** (2)  
And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

I know a number of holier than thou, rigidly righteous "Christian" people that, quite frankly, I can't stand being around.

1. The Christian was not designed by God to be *holier than thou* - nor was the Christian supposed to be a *blatant and open sinner*. The Christian is something else. He or she is to be a **follower of God**.

The word translated "follower" literally means to *mimic or imitate*. We are to imitate God "as **dear children**". Another translation states:

**Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children<sup>NIV</sup>**

I like that - **dearly loved**. Good has loved YOU and I, **dearly loved us both** - and we are to imitate or mimic Him and Him alone! Yet another translation states:

1 G3402, μιμητής, mimētēs, *mim-ay-tace'*, From G3401; an imitator: - follower.

2 G27, ἀγαπητός, agapētos, *ag-ap-ay-tos'*, From G25; beloved: - (dearly, well) beloved, dear.

**Ephesians 5:1 Do as God does. After all, you are his dear children.<sup>CEV</sup>**

Do as God does. Not *to be saved*, for salvation is by faith alone in Christ, but *because you are saved*. You were saved the day you believed on Jesus:

**Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

For our Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth ...

**1 Timothy 1:15 This [is] a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.**

2. Imitate God as Jesus has shown us how. Hate sin, but *love sinners* (**Matthew 5:44-45**).

Do you remember the time that Jesus went to the house of the tax collector **Zacchaeus**. The religious but unsaved world murmured and complained. "How dare Jesus go to such a person? If He were a great Prophet He would know this man to be a great sinner!" The tarred Jesus with the same brush that they tarred Zacchaeus with. Yet look at what happened. After Jesus talked with this sinner and presented Himself as the Only Way to God (**John 14:6**) **Zacchaeus** told Jesus:

**Luke 19:8 ... Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore [him] fourfold.**

Our Lord replied:

**Luke 19:9-10 ... This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**

Be a *follower of God, not a follower of sin*. Imitate God in Christ, be like Jesus in all things! You may say, "But Brother David, I cannot be like Jesus. I'm a sinner saved by grace, and Jesus was perfect". I know, dear friends, but *strive to be like Jesus anyway*. The Olympic racer may have an impossible standard set before him, but he strives anyway.

3. The high jumper doesn't look at the bar and quit saying, "I know I can never reach that". It honors the team when you at least *try*, and honors God when you *try to love as Jesus did*. Love *never* condones sin, but it *strives to follow Jesus*.

Can we do this perfectly? Absolutely not! I can neither touch the very bottom of the ocean, nor can I go to the end of *outer space*. Yet I *must strive* to imitate our God

*because I love Him*. His love *constrains* us all, draws us, makes us want to be like Him.

**FOCAL** Ephesians 5:2 And **walk<sup>3</sup> in love<sup>4</sup>, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself** for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

He has loved me enough to save me - can I not try and be like Him? The Apostle said:

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: (15) And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**

This world is literally *filled with unlovely people* - there may even be a few in this room with you at this very moment. Yet

3 Present Active Imperative of G4043, περιπατέω, peripateō, *per-ee-pat-eh'-o*, From G4012 and G3961; to *tread all around*, that is, *walk* at large (especially as proof of ability); figuratively to *live, deport oneself, follow* (as a companion or votary): - go, be occupied with, walk (about).

4 G26, ἀγάπη, agapē, *ag-ah'-pay*, From G25; *love*, that is, *affection or benevolence*; specifically (plural) a *love feast*: - (feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love.

4. Imitation of God requires that I remember *I was unlovely to God, and do unlovely things still*. Since God loved me enough to save me and give me another chance, can't I do the same for you?

Walk like Jesus, live your life like the Savior did. Jesus **hath given Himself for us and offering and a sacrifice to God**. If we spent more time *living for Jesus instead of finding fault with everyone else* think how much greater an impact the Church would have on the world today. Jesus gave of Himself to others *whether they deserved it or not*. *Deserve* has absolutely nothing to do with it.

Now I want to quickly point out that Jesus *never condoned sin* in anyone. Love will *not* diminish sin. The Bible says that

**Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death...**

5. Love will not condone nor diminish sin - the **wages of sin is death**. Sin kills that which hosts it!

This brings us to point number 2 ...

## **2. Walking In Love Does NOT Condone Sin In Self or In Others**

**FOCAL** Ephesians 5:3-5 **But fornication<sup>5</sup>, and**

5 G4202, πορνεία, porneia, por-ni'-ah, From G4203; harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively idolatry: - fornication.

**all uncleanness<sup>6</sup>, or covetousness<sup>7</sup>, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; (4) Neither filthiness<sup>8</sup>, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.**

There is a drive within the realm of Christianity today to *condone* or give the “nod” to *illicit sexual expression*. We are being told that sexual expression and sexual preference are things that do not matter. We are being told that Jesus Christ *so loved people* that He would *never* condemn illicit sexuality. This is not what the Scripture teaches.

6. The Christian is called to reject *sexual immorality* at all levels, to reject *greed*, to deny *obscenity*, and all *vulgar talk*. Jesus walked in love towards all, but He *never* condoned bad behavior.

One of the greatest areas of attack that Satan uses today is *sexual immorality*. The word **fornication** or **sexual immorality** occurs *twenty six times* in the New Testament – and *never* in a positive light. Fornication – and all sin that promotes self while ignoring God – is

6 G167, ἀκαθαρσία, akatharsia, ak-ath-ar-see'-ah, From G169; impurity (the quality), physically or morally: - uncleanness.

7 G4124, πλεονεξία, pleonexia, pleh-on-ex-ee'-ah, From G4123; avarice, that is, (by implication) *fraudulency, extortion*: - covetous (-ness) practices, greediness.

8 G151, αἰσχρότης, aischrotēs, ahee-skhot'-ace, From G150; *shamefulness*, that is, *obscenity*: - filthiness.

counterproductive to both the person engaged in it and to society as a whole. We who believe are called to be **saints**, a people **set apart for God's own use**. We live so that we can glorify God. The Scripture says:

**1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

Walking in love does not mean that we condone bad behavior in ourself and in others. Walking in love means that we imitate Christ Who saved us. When the **woman taken in adultery** was brought before Jesus He told her:

**John 8:11 ... Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

Though our Lord offered forgiveness freely - and offers it still today (Blessed be His Holy Name!) - He *never* condoned sin. **Go and sin no more - do not follow the same patterns of evil.**

7. The life of the *Christian*, just like the life of the *Christ*, should seek to avoid the destructive behavior of sin. Here's the standard: If Jesus can be convicted of doing it, then you should be convicted of the same thing.

Our Lord would have never been guilty of sexual immorality, nor of any sin. The life devoted to Christ hates sin at all levels, turns away from it, and presents

*faith in Jesus Christ* as the *only solution* to sin. Our text is clear at this point:

**FOCAL Ephesians 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

These are very strong words. The person who lives as a **whoremonger**<sup>9</sup> or *the person involved in illicit sexual activity* has **no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God**. If you are a Christian involved in this, and *will not repent*, you will not receive reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**1 Corinthians 3:12 ff**). If you are an unbeliever, a person who has not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, your reward for this evil will be eternal punishment. If you are a habitually **unclean person**, turning your mind to the things that are offensive to God, you have no reward. The **covetous man**, always seeking more for himself as opposed to living his life for Christ, loses his Heavenly rewards. The **idolater** who worships other gods rather than **God in Christ** will lose.

If we are the Children of God by faith in Christ, then we are called to share His Heavenly inheritance. But we are also to share His earthly *disposition* – to be like Him. When we strive to be like Jesus is all we say and do, we not only gain reward in Heaven, but we *increase the*

<sup>9</sup> G4205, πόρνος, pornos, por'-nos, From πέρνημι pernēmi (to sell; akin to the base of G4097); a (male) *prostitute* (as *venal*), that is, (by analogy) a *debauchee* (*libertine*): - fornicator, whoremonger.

quality and length of our lives while on this earth.

**FOCAL** Ephesians 5:6-7 **Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.** (7) Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8. I can share in **God's wrath** by participating in the selfish ways of the world, or I can share in **God's inheritance** by following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. One way leads to death, the other to life.

Let no man deceive you with vain or empty words – there is only One Way to God, and that is through Jesus. There is only one Life, and that is Life in Christ. I myself do not want the **wrath of God** to fall on me. I must follow Jesus.

### **3. Walking In Love Means Walking In Light**

**FOCAL** Ephesians 5:8-10 For ye were sometimes darkness, but **now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light:** (9) (For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) (10) Proving<sup>10</sup> what is acceptable unto the Lord.

10 Present Active Participle of G1381, δοκιμάζω, dokimazō, *dok-im-ad'-zo*, From G1384; to *test* (literally or figuratively); by implication to *approve*: - allow, discern, examine, X like, (ap-) prove, try.

The Scripture tells us that **now I am light in the Lord**. This is my design - light! The moon has no light of its own, but reflects the light of the sun back on the earth. The Christian, saved by faith in Christ, has no light of his own, but reflects the Light of Christ back to this sinful world. **Walk as children of light**. How do we do this? We **prove what is acceptable unto the Lord**. That word **prove** means literally to **keep on testing or examining so as to determine the quality of a thing**. In other words, just because something *sounds* good doesn't mean it *is* good. For instance, one day a woman named **Mary** came to Jesus and anointed His feet with *very expensive oils*. **Judas Iscariot** standing nearby made the statement, "**Why wasn't this ointment sold, and the money collected for the poor?**" The Bible tells us:

**John 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.**

You see, that *looked good*, but the motivation was evil. There are a number of Judas Iscariots all liberally peppered throughout every religious institution and Church in America. If Judas was in the Church Jesus Christ Himself pastored, don't you think he might be in yours? We must *prove* or test what is **acceptable unto the Lord**. How do we do this? By doing what the Scripture says:

**Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the**

**renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

I am told that a *banker*, who has constant exposure to *real money*, is the most difficult person to pass a counterfeit bill to. Stores have come out with pen with special ink in them for those who work behind cash registers, but bankers - tellers - and other professional handlers of money need no such tool. They have seen the real, the genuine article so frequently, handling it daily, that they can spot a fake bill almost instantly. The same is true of the *fine art dealer* who has studied the works of the masters - Rembrandt, Van Goth, and so on - her entire life. She has handled the true so much that she knows the brush strokes of the masterpiece artists, knows the look of aged paint. The *diamond buyer* can quickly, with his jeweler's loupe, sort poor and high quality diamonds one from another. He has handled the real so often that the fake stands out nearly immediately.

The same is true of the Christian.

9. If you *study the Word of God and the things of God* frequently, the things that are fake, the made up things, the *traditions of man passed off as the Laws of God* quickly become evident.

The Scripture tells us:

**2 Timothy 2:15-16 Study to show thyself**

**approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (16) But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.**

Walk as Children of Light. Walk in love toward one another and toward the world. Do not condone sin, but test all things. Do not *automatically accept the words of Judas as Gospel* just because he says it. Even the well intentioned can be deceived, but the devil often enters a Church looking like a sheep. Do as a friend of mine says. Ask yourself "**What's the Chapter and Verse for that?**" If you can't find the **CnV**, then it may just be **traditions of man**. Remember the warning:

**Colossians 2:8-9 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**

Only in Christ and in His Word can we find *genuine Christianity*. We are *complete in Him and Him alone*. May God touch your hearts with these words.