

Ephesians 5:1-21

EPHESIANS GC DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Walking in Love, Light, and Wisdom

Big Idea

Those who have been made new in Christ are called to imitate God by walking in love, walking in the light, and walking in wisdom. The gospel transforms not only what we believe but also how we worship, speak, think, and live every day.

Main Theme

The Christian life is a continual pursuit of becoming more like Christ as we are filled with the Holy Spirit and submit every area of life to His lordship.

Opening Icebreaker

Who is someone you've admired enough that you've found yourself imitating some of their habits or mannerisms?

Transition: Whether we realize it or not, we're always becoming like someone. Paul calls Christians to imitate the One whose character is perfect—our heavenly Father.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Paul mean when he says, "Be imitators of God, as beloved children" (vv.1–2)?

Leader Notes: Children naturally imitate their parents. Paul reminds believers that they are already God's beloved children before calling them to imitate Him.

Notice that imitation flows from identity, not the other way around.

Application: How does knowing you are already loved by God motivate obedience differently than trying to earn His love?

2. According to verse 2, what does it practically mean to "walk in love"?

Leader Notes: Paul immediately points to Jesus' sacrificial love.

Walking in love means choosing self-giving over self-serving.

Cross Reference: John 13:34–35

3. Why does Paul move from talking about love to warning against sexual immorality, impurity, and greed (vv.3–7)?

Leader Notes:Counterfeit love often disguises selfishness as freedom.

Sexual sin and greed both involve taking rather than giving.

Paul contrasts Christlike love with self-centered desires.

4. How does our culture's understanding of love differ from the biblical picture presented here?

Leader Notes:Culture often defines love by feelings or personal fulfillment.

Scripture defines love by holiness, sacrifice, and truth.

5. What does Paul mean when he says believers are "children of light" (vv.8–14)?

Leader Notes:Christians have experienced a change of identity.

Living in the light means:

- Pursuing holiness
- Living transparently
- Exposing sin
- Reflecting Christ

6. Verse 10 says, "Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord." How can we grow in that kind of discernment?

Leader Notes:Growth comes through:

- Scripture
- Prayer
- Wise counsel
- Christian community
- Obedient practice

Discernment is developed over time.

7. Paul tells believers to "look carefully then how you walk" (vv.15–17). What does wise living look like in everyday life?

Leader Notes:Wisdom involves intentional living.

Discuss:

- Time management
- Priorities
- Entertainment

- Relationships
- Decision-making

8. What does it mean to "make the best use of the time because the days are evil" (v.16)?

Leader Notes: Paul is calling believers to steward every opportunity for God's glory. Discuss practical ways Christians can redeem their time.

9. What is the difference between being controlled by alcohol and being filled with the Spirit (vv.18–21)?

Leader Notes: Both influence behavior, but only the Spirit produces holiness. Being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing dependence upon His control rather than our own desires.

10. According to verses 19–21, what are some evidences of a Spirit-filled life?

Leader Notes: Notice the results:

- Worship
- Gratitude
- Encouragement
- Mutual submission

Paul emphasizes character more than emotional experiences.

11. Which of the three "walks" in this chapter challenges you most right now?

- Walking in love
- Walking in light
- Walking in wisdom

Leader Notes: Encourage personal reflection and honest discussion.

12. How can our small group help one another live more intentionally as Spirit-filled followers of Christ?

Leader Notes: Discuss practical ideas:

- Accountability
- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Encouragement

- Honest conversations

Digging Deeper

Notice Paul's progression:

- Walk in love (vv.1–7)
- Walk in light (vv.8–14)
- Walk in wisdom (vv.15–21)

How does each build upon the previous one?

Leader Notes: Love shapes our motives. Light shapes our holiness. Wisdom shapes our decisions. The Spirit empowers all three.

Gospel Connection

Jesus perfectly:

- Loved sacrificially
- Walked in perfect holiness
- Lived in perfect wisdom

Through His death and resurrection, believers receive both forgiveness for their failures and the power to grow in His likeness through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- Greater love for Christ
- Wisdom in daily decisions
- Victory over temptation
- A Spirit-filled life
- Hearts marked by gratitude
- Opportunities to reflect Christ