



1/20/26

*So... Sunday night I fell asleep thinking that the Bears had won the game. I don't know... I thought I heard my husband yell, "They won!" Yes... he loves his football. I was kind of going in and out of dreamland, and apparently, I heard that the Bears won. So in the morning, he came down to the basement where I had already started working out. (The Harkness gym is so nice... low cost, low membership, kisses from my doggy.) I said to my husband, "Are you so happy???" I was so excited for him. I was all ready to wear my new Bears shirt that he gave me for Christmas. But he said, "Happy about what?" Happy about what? Isn't this what he had been hoping for??? I said, "Happy about the Bears!!" He said, "Babe, the Bears lost." WHAT??? In the last 15 seconds, they lost. Ugh! It was rough, but we're getting through it. Hahaha. Maybe next year. The good news is... Jesus has already won!!!*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*Ephesians 5:11-21*

*Yesterday, the passage started with the hope filled commands to "be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." The commands are to imitate God and walk in love, followed by the commands to walk in the light and to try to discern what pleases the Lord. The hope is that I'm given these commands as His beloved child, adopted because of the sacrifice Jesus gave in honoring and loving His Father while also honoring and loving me.*

*Now I move on to vs. 11, which will also give me direction that stems from a heart seeking to imitate the Lord and walk in His love. If I forget my motivation to be love, then I will make it about rules... I will make it about judging others... and I will become arrogant. That is the exact antithesis of who God is.*

*Vs. 11-14 ~ Because I want to imitate the Lord and walk in His love as Jesus loved me, I need to not only stay away from the "unfruitful works of darkness," but I need to expose them.*

*Before I look at how to expose the unfruitful works of darkness, let me remember... all the*

works that are not motivated from love are UNFRUITFUL. Romans 6:20-21 says of the works of darkness, "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." How unfruitful are they? They lead to nothing but death. Death of relationship. Death of hope. Death of joy. Death of love.

So.. if I'm to walk in love, how do I expose the unfruitful works of darkness? NOT by talking about them! Then how??? By walking in love, imitating the Lord's love, and walking in the light. This is speaking about how I am with those who walk in darkness... the unsaved. There are other scriptures that tell me how to deal with the sins of a believer... but even then, I am called to handle it in love.

Jesus is my example. He was the light. When the woman caught in adultery was brought before Him, Jesus didn't point out every sin to the accusers. He just gently said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." He exposed their darkness, and they walked away.

Also, Jesus was with Judas for 3 years!!! He knew the whole time that Judas was going to betray Him. Jesus never accused him. Jesus did confront the other disciples about their lack of love and their arrogance... but even with that, He didn't do it all the time, and when He did, He was motivated from love. I can only imagine how much sin He overlooked during those 3 years. If Jesus is perfect, and I am so imperfect, I should not be doing more to point out others' sins than I'm willing to look at my own.

I expose the sin by walking in the light, by modeling a heart of love. It's like walking into a bathroom with fluorescent lights... Every single blemish is exposed without anyone saying a word. If I expose sin with anger or arrogance, not only do I participate in the sin, but I only give the other person reason to be defensive and to hide deeper in the darkness. O Lord, please help me expose the darkness by walking in the light, doing all that is good, right, true, and pleasing in Your eyes... with love. Truly, I can't please You while I'm hating or judging others.

The scripture of vs. 14 is taken from a bunch of quotes from Old Testament prophets as well as the Gospel of Luke. It says, "Awake O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." This is a call for me to walk in the light and let the Lord expose the hidden darkness of the heart so that those who are dead in Christ can see their need for salvation through Jesus, and let His light shine on them. It is like the awesome beauty of the light of the sun shining on my face after being in the darkness throughout the dark winter days. So much joy and peace stir in my soul. How much greater the light of the one true Son shining His everlasting light on the soul!

Vs. 15-21 ~ Vs. 15-16 says, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." True wisdom comes in imitating the One who holds the treasures of all wisdom. True wisdom starts with God's authentic love. Walking in the darkness while proclaiming my freedom to do so is absolutely foolish. Nothing good comes

from that.

*What causes me to walk in foolishness? I forget the eternal perspective. These days are filled with evil. This world is broken. There are people dying without Jesus. Foolishness IS darkness. It blinds me to what really matters. So how do I stay careful and wise, making the best use of the time I have left on this earth?*

- *Understand God's will. This means I have to be intentional about seeking His will. To not do so is foolish. I don't have the ability to understand without His help.*
- *Don't get drunk with wine... or anything that controls my mind and body so that I veer to the things of darkness. These days are evil. The darkness is only death and destruction. The only thing that I need to control me is the love of Christ. The only way that happens is when I allow His Spirit to fill me so that I'm so full of Him there is no room for anything else.*
- *I will know that the Spirit is filling me by how I treat others. I will speak to them, not with filthy, foolish talk or crude joking... but with words of encouragement from God's word... psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs... things that build up and give grace, not things that tear down.*
- *I will know that the Spirit is genuinely filling me when my heart is full of melodies to the Lord... and not to self.*
- *I will know that the Spirit is truly filling me when I am able to give thanks ALWAYS and for EVERYTHING to God the Father in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ. I will be able to thank Him for things that are hard and easy... that are obviously good and that are blessings in disguise... I will thank Him for every circumstance because my God withheld the wrath I deserve and promises that what I face here on earth is temporary. Someday I will see Him face to face and none of the troubles of this world will hold a candle to the sunshine of His love. He says in Isaiah 60:19-20, "The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended."*
- *When I am truly being filled with the Holy Spirit, I will be able to submit to others out of reverence for Jesus. I will be able to put their needs before mine... as Jesus put mine before His. I will be able to pursue peace and reconciliation as far as it depends on me, even if it costs me... because Jesus pursued peace and reconciliation with me, and it cost Him more than I will ever understand. I will never say, "That person doesn't deserve peace and reconciliation with me," because I know I didn't deserve it at all with the Lord, and He did it for me.*

*O Lord, this seems IMPOSSIBLE! If I focus on all things You call me to... to try to DO these things toward You and others, I will be so overwhelmed and hopeless. But You're not asking me*

*to focus on the DO. You're asking me to focus on WHO. My call is to imitate You, to walk in love, to walk in light, to be FILLED with the Spirit. That does not take DO. That takes surrender. That takes humility. That takes me SLOWING DOWN and waiting on You. Please DO this work in me. Please FILL me so full and so perfectly that little by little, from one degree of glory to the next, I will be so full of the Holy Spirit that there's no room for anything else. Let my heart, my "control center", say with full resolve, "Not my will, but Yours be done... no ifs, buts, or limits." Amen.*