

EPHESIANS
WALK IN LOVE

Saturday, September 26

Reading: Ephesians 5:1-7

Ephesians 5:1 *Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children* **2** *and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

To bear with one another in love (4:2), speak the truth in love (4:15), grow and build up the church in love (4:16), and walk in love (5:2), we must know what love is! Love is one of the essential attributes of God and it was displayed to us by Jesus Christ. His was a GIVING LOVE. He did not give out of what was left; He gave everything. He gave His life to save unthankful, undeserving sinners. It was also a SACRIFICIAL LOVE. The fragrant aroma of the Jewish sacrifices recorded in the book of Leviticus pointed to God's acceptance and pleasure in the sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross pleased God and was accepted as payment for our sins. "Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe." This is the love believers are to show in our daily lives.

The world stands opposed to this loving lifestyle in favor of a self-serving, 'live for yourself' attitude. The world views "love" as merely the satisfaction of their own pleasure. Whether it be a twisting of the physical act of sex to satisfy their own desires or crude humor to make others laugh at their dirty jokes and suggestive language, Paul calls them all "empty words" which dooms the speakers to suffer the wrath of God. Paul warns us not to associate with these types of people.

LESSON ONE: "As Dearly Loved Children." As the children of God, Christians are to be like their heavenly Father. But far too often we indulge in the ways of the world listed in this passage. Like Christ, we are called to lovingly give and sacrifice for others, not to indulge ourselves. How do you show others the love of Christ? In what ways are you giving to others? What are some things in your life that waste time you could spend growing in your faith and reaching out to others?

LESSON TWO: "Do Not Be Partners with Them." The list Paul gives in Ephesians 5:3-8 is a good description of American culture today. The Greek word translated "sexual immorality" is *porneia*. We get our word pornography from this word, a sin that has destroyed many Christian's lives. "Impurity" describes a filthy, obscene action while "obscenity" refers to any thought or action that makes one ashamed. "Foolish talk or coarse joking" describes those whose language and humor is full of sexual innuendo and outright vulgar, sinful speech. (Sound a lot like what America calls "comedy" today). All this is tied together by "greed." The world is greedy for attention, greedy for fame and fortune, greedy to pleasure themselves at the expense of others.

Paul warns Christians not to get involved with these people; not to become part of their world. Why would a child of God want to submerge their mind in the filth of the world? It is easy to get sucked in. We laugh with the group at our co-workers dirty joke or we linger a little too long on that suggestive picture. Would Jesus approve of the movies and TV shows you watch, the things you read, the lyrics you listen to, or the things you look at on the internet? What steps do you need to take to battle the infiltration of the world's filth into your life? Who might you be able to partner with to help you walk in love instead of walking like the world?