

Ephesians 5:1-6

There is a primary command that guides the interpretation of this initial section of chapter 5. We see it in verse 2 when Paul says, “walk in love...”. The exhortation to walk in love is the key to organizing our thoughts on this passage. What we will find is that these commands include instructions regarding how to walk in love toward others and, most importantly, toward the Lord.

1. Walking in love towards others
 - a. In many ways, these commands are a recapitulation of the previous chapter
 - b. They do remind us, however, that our obedience is not a matter of duty alone
 - i. Instead, we demonstrate our love of others by our righteous acts towards them
 - c. There is an “earthiness” to Christian holiness
 - i. Many in our day seem to claim to love God and others without living righteously
 - ii. This is a grave error and non-sensical
 1. To love the Lord is to obey Him and to love others is to heed God’s righteous decree in our interactions with them
 2. The last several weeks have detailed many of the ways that we are to embody love in our interactions with others!
2. Walking in love towards God
 - a. The sins that are named are not ultimately an affront to others, they are acts of rebellion against the Lord
 - b. This explains why Paul writes as he does... particularly in v. 4
 - c. Perhaps you are like me and when you read this little section you wondered, how does thanksgiving go with avoiding filthiness and foolish talk?
 - i. The answer, I believe, is that men and women who are thankful for God’s grace and love Him as a product of His kindness are intent to honor Him with their words
 - ii. Stated differently, if we utilize the breath and abilities God gives us to make a mockery of Him, we are not mindful, nor thankful, of His kindness and power in our lives
 - d. When I’m truly thankful towards another I will:
 - i. Seek to honor them with my words and actions
 - ii. Love them deeply and, therefore, avoid anything that might bring them to shame
 - iii. Attempt to paint them in the best light with my peers
 - e. In this way, our love of God is the ultimate remedy against sin!

- i. If I love God, I won't love the world
 - 1. In fact, Jesus says I can only love God OR something else (in an ultimate sense)
 - 2. This means that my thankfulness to the Lord (which breeds love) is the grand substitute for the sin that otherwise plagues me
 - ii. Folks, if you are playing with sin, your heart has grown cold towards the Lord
 - 1. The greatest way to fight sin therefore
- 3. A final exhortation
 - a. I believe the last subpoint explains the command given in v. 6
 - b. How does it fit that we are to avoid foolish talk and coarse jokes, be thankful AND not be deceived?
 - c. Well, I am to avoid foolish talk because of the love and thankfulness I have for God and I am to avoid being deceived by false doctrine because the truth is what leads me to intimacy with the Lord which increases my thanksgiving and motivates me to obey the Lord in the fulness of my being
 - i. Stated differently, it is impossible to love a God you don't know
 - ii. It is impossible to truly know God intimately through falsehood
 - iii. If we don't know God intimately, we will not grow to love Him truly
 - iv. If we don't love Him truly, we will stumble into sin
 - v. Furthermore, if we don't know Him truly, we cannot imitate Him genuinely which means that we can't obey the first command given in this text either!