

**Walk Worthy (pt 2): Walk in *His* Love to Walk in Love**  
Ephesians 5:1–21 | 11.24.2017 | More Than You Can Imagine

Sometimes the command to WALK is not as easy as we might think . . .

I am reminded of this in the case of a young man by the name of [Larry Prout](#).

Larry is 16-YO, a HS student from Michigan . . . who in his short life has had 100 surgeries to correct all sorts of problems with his body.

Born with Spina Bifida, Larry entered this world without a colon, without multiple vertebrae, and with clubbed feet . . . .

He was told early on . . . he'd never walk . . . yet through constant surgeries to keep him alive . . . and surgeries to strengthen his body . . . his 75-pound body is now able to walk.

Sure . . . his walk is hampered by many physical ailments . . . and every step is difficult . . . but he walks with an infectious joy . . . . that lifts up others . . . and displays incredible strength.

In so many ways . . . his physical story pictures our spiritual story.

That is . . . we who've been made alive in X . . . have been called to WALK in Christ.

But lest we think . . . that walking w/ X is an easy task . . . devoid of rehab and surgery . . .

We are far more like Larry Prout . . . where every step requires strength from outside ourselves.

The command to WALK worthy . . . is not an invitation to some victory lap around the Olympic stadium . . . instead . . . it is a daily battle . . . to take the next step with Christ.

Indeed . . . walking with Christ may sound sweet and serene . . . and it is . . . **SOMETIMES!**

But often . . . it is a battle . . . and one that takes more power than we can supply ourselves.

**When we come to Ephesians . . .**

It might help to remember . . . we are all born enslaved to various passions and desires.

Without Christ . . . we are addicts to sin . . . manifested in 1000 different idols.

But when God saves us . . . he makes us alive in Christ . . . and he empowers us to live a new life,

And now . . . Christ's body . . . learns how to walk in a way that pleases him.

We who ONCE walked in the passions of our flesh . . . are NOW learning how to WALK in a manner worthy of the God who called us to himself.

That's exactly what Ephesians 4–6 describes.

As we've observed . . . in chapters 4–6 . . . Paul uses the word WALK 5x.

It is the repeated command that serves as a refrain in these chapters.

Importantly . . . he doesn't call us to run . . . and he doesn't invite us to walk alone . . .

Rather . . . Paul calls the church . . . to walk together like our Lord in the power he supplies.

Throughout the Bible . . . walking is a rich metaphor for living life . . . with God . . . and for God.

**Gen 5:24** says Enoch walked with God and was no more . . .

Likewise Noah (6:9), Abraham (17:1), and David (1 Kgs 9:4) all "walked" with God . . .

And now in **Eph 4–6** . . . the Spirit of God calls us to walk with God as new creations in Christ.

This is the thread that holds Ephesians 4–6 together . . . but I think it would be helpful to see more clearly how Paul is making his argument.

That is to say . . . we will know best HOW to walk with God . . . when we see HOW God empowers us broken sinners that we are to walk in a new way of life.

So before digging into **ch. 5** . . . we need to see how chapters 4–6 fit together.

We do this because this is how Paul wrote this letter . . .

When he wrote Ephesians . . . he did not use chapters and verses.

Those showed up about 500 years ago.

Therefore, to understand Paul's argument we need to see the way he wrote . . . and we find that by looking for clues in the text . . . which reveal the shape and emphasis of his letter.

That's why . . . . instead of proceeding through the text . . . verse 1, verse 2, verse 3 . . .

We need to see the WHOLE of Paul's argument . . . and how every verse fits into the shape of his Spirit-inspired message.

## So here my best effort at giving the shape of Ephesians 4–6.

First, in 4:1–16 . . . Paul outlines the way in which X's diverse community is unified & matured.

He explains that each part of Christ's body is given by God and necessary for growth . . .

He says that when each part is working properly, the body of Christ builds itself up in love – v. 16.

The key verse is found in Ephesians 4:15 – **READ**

Importantly, this verse reveals a key part of the framework for . . . **Eph 4:17–5:21.**

Broken into three section, Ephesians 4:25–5:5 stands at the center of Paul's instructions.

And in **Eph 4:25–5:5**, he gives 6 pairs of commands – i.e., 6 couplets where he combines a positive command w/ a negative command, and he motivates each pair with some truth.

#1 – Paul begins with truth in verse 25 . . .

#2 – Paul addresses anger in verse 26–27

#3 – Paul turns to possessions in verse 28

#4 – Paul addresses speech in verses 29–30

#5 – Paul tackles the disposition of the heart in verses 31–32

#6 – Paul finishes by stressing the need for thanksgiving over feeding on idols . . . 5:4–5

This goes over ground from last week . . . but it's important to see how Paul makes his case . . .

And what we learn from these six instructions . . . is that speaking truth in love is far more than just saying TRUE things with smile on your face . . .

**Truthing in Love is shorthand for the way Xians conduct themselves . . . at all times / in all ways**

This reading becomes even more clear as we look at what comes before and after these 6 commands

In **4:17–24** . . . Paul describes the new life of the Christian . . . where we put off the old, and put on the new . . . we do not walk as the Gentiles do . . . but as new creations in Christ.

Likewise, in **5:6–14** . . . we see emphasis on walking in light. That's what Paul says in verse 8 ("for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. WALK as children of light).

In these verses, Paul stresses the need to join with those who walk in the light, and not to join with the sons of disobedience who walk in darkness.

In this way . . . Ephesians 4:17–24 parallels Ephesians 5:7–14 and stresses the newness of walking with X . . . which he then instructs in six double commands in Ephesians 4:25–5:5.

**Still ... Paul's not done** . . . He is going to do more than just give general instructions . . . he's going to turn to the specific settings in life — this what we find in Ephesians 5:15–6:9.

Like the old covenant (in Exodus or Deuteronomy), which listed general instructions for God's covenant people before listing specific applications, Paul also moves from general to specific.

And these specific instructions begin in **Ephesians 5:15**, where Paul calls the church to look carefully how you walk, not as wise but unwise.

In other words . . . it takes Spirit-given wisdom to be able to walk well in the home + workplace.

Thus, wisdom is what he focuses on in **Ephesians 5:15–21** . . . and he concludes by saying that those who are filled BY the Spirit . . . will . . . **READ vv. 19–21.**

This submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ is then picked up in verse 22, as Paul explains what Christ-like, self-giving looks like in marriage, family, and the market.

In these verses . . . Paul tells Christians how they are to walk in love and light among one another

Then, finally, in **Ephesians 6:10–20** . . . Paul explains how to live among unbelievers.

That is to say . . . these words about spiritual warfare tell how Christians enter a hostile world . . . and remain faithful to the Lord.

Now . . . I know focusing on the structure . . . is challenging . . . it's easier to just go v. 1, v. 2, v. 3  
But I'm convinced we won't be able to walk by the Spirit . . . with bits of Bible knowledge.

We need more than knowing the right thing to do . . . we need the power of God, enabling us to do it.  
And this is what God's Word gives us . . . as we understand how God empowers us to WALK.

**So with that in mind . . . here are two practical applications from studying this structure!**

FIRST . . . in seeking to effect change in the believer – in yourself or someone you love – we must learn from Paul . . . he never gives a command without stressing what Christ has done.

IMPORTANTLY: He knows the more a son of God sees the goodness of God . . . the more a daughter of God finds her identity in Christ . . . the more they will want to do what God says.

SECOND . . . Paul never preaches the gospel without calling for moral change.

IOW, after laying out how God saves . . . he calls the saved to live a life worthy of that salvation!

Thus . . . Paul makes some serious demands on the Christian . . . but this is not legalism . . . rather these are the good works . . . God intends his children to walk in.

It is by no means legalistic to call Christians to obedience . . . Rather, it profoundly loving !!  
. . . to spur one another toward love and good deeds.

Now . . . let me say . . .

If you are here today . . . and not a Christian . . . these commands are NOT steps you must take to become a Christian.

Salvation is a gift . . . earned by Jesus Christ . . . and offered freely to you.

In trusting Christ . . . you will find forgiveness . . . and new desires impelling you to live for him.

That's what Paul has outlined in Eph 1–3 . . . but here . . . we are learning how to walk as Christ walked . . . and to exhibit the traits of God given to those who are alive in the Spirit.

And with that in mind . . . let's look in depth at verses 1–5 . . . where we will see what it means to

Walk in LOVE . . . like our heavenly father . . .

And then next week . . . we will pick up in verse 6 to see what it looks like

To walk in the LIGHT . . . of our Lord Jesus Christ

And To walk in WISDOM by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So here's the one point message: **Walk in LOVE, as Beloved Heirs of God's Kingdom (vv. 1–5)**

In Ephesians 5:1–2 . . . Paul gives two powerful commands

FIRST: Be imitators of God, as beloved children.

SECOND: Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Like every other command Paul gives . . . both of these commands come with a motivating truth.

The first roots its command in who we are . . . BELOVED CHILDREN

The second roots its command in what Christ has done . . . HE LOVED US & GAVE HIMSELF UP

In both of these verses, LOVE is mentioned, and so we should read them together.

Yet, we must also see how they relate to each other.

First, the command to be imitators of God is best understood in relationship to **Ephesians 4:24**.

In context . . . Paul isn't saying we should be try to be gods. **Mormonism** teaches that you will become a god. **New age** says you have the spark of the divine. The Bible says nothing of the sort.

We are creatures . . . not gods. But the Bible does say we are made in the image + likeness of God

And importantly, **Ephesians 4:24** picks up the same idea – **Paul says to, "Put on . . . READ**

Paul is not saying that the unbeliever is not made in the image of God.  
Truly, all men and women, old and young, born and unborn are image-bearers.

But he is saying . . . that we are marred images until God redeems us. Only when we are made new in Christ . . . do we begin to rightly reflect the righteousness and holiness of God.

And only those who are new creations in Christ . . . are children of God.

**Therefore** . . . the command to imitate the Father is only given to those who are children of God.

The world & many in the church . . . think that all people are God's children, **but this is not so**.

John 1:12 makes it clear – only those who have believed in the Son have the right to be called children of God.

Thus . . . only those who have been adopted into his family . . . can imitate the Father.

**So let's consider what this means . . . as God's children . . . we have a special relationship the Father.**

Verse 1 says we are his beloved children . . .

Verse 2 says the Son gave his life as a sacrifice for our sins.

In this we come to realize that God has a special love for his children that he doesn't have for non-children.

Just as a good man may be kindly disposed to all children, he has a unique love for his own.

So it is with the Father . . . he has a general love for all his creation . . . but he has a special, covenantal love for those whom he predestined to be adopted in Christ.

J. I. Packer has said – God loves all in some ways, but he loves his own in all ways.

Child of God . . .

Do you know this? . . . God loves you deeply, passionately, eternally, personally, perfectly.

His love for you is seen in the pages of Scripture and most clearly in the sacrifice of his Son.

In Christ's death . . . he has proven his love . . . B/C it is thru the infinite price of God's Son, that he purchased you.

In truth . . . we weren't SO precious that God HAD to send his Son . . . in our sin, we were wretched enemies . . . We were not diamonds in the rough, but sinful worms deserving death

Oh . . . but God who is rich in love . . . while we were still sinners . . . gave his Son . . . to redeem us from our sins . . . and make us part of his covenant family.

Child of God . . . feed on this gospel truth . . . that God loves you, knowing all your sins and shortcomings

Walk in his love . . . feed on his faithfulness . . . meditate on his mercy . . . grow in his grace.

And as you do . . . your heart will be filled with love . . . empowering you to do what Paul says:

**Imitate the Father . . . and Walk in Love.**

Church, we walk in love . . . by learning our Father's ways . . . spending time with his Son.

Thus . . . as verse 2 teaches . . . we love others by laying down our lives for them.

And how do we do that? By living our lives overflowing with God's eternal, endless love.

That's the stress of verses 1 and 2 . . .

We must know how loved we are . . . so we can love others. But that's not all Paul says.

In verses 3–5 . . . he lists six things that should never be present in the church.

First . . . he names sexual immorality (*porneia*) . . . that is any kind of sexual activity outside marriage btw M & W . . . this includes adultery, fornication, pornography, homosexuality, etc.

These things probably were present in the church, as they were rampant in Ephesus.

Sadly . . . they're still present in the church . . . yet they have no place in the life of God's children.

They are not the ways of God the Father or his sinless Son . . . or the spotless bride of Christ.

Thus . . . he will say later (v. 11) . . . we are to expose these sins . . . when they arise in church.

**That's the first thing.** Then he speaks of all **impurity**. In this word, he may be addressing impurity that comes with temple worship or any other unholy practice.

This is followed by **coveteousness** or greediness. In context, it could refer to sexual lust, but it seems more likely a general word about money and acquiring more than one is due.

To all of these things . . . Paul says they must not even be named among the saints.

And he's not thru . . . in **v. 4** he says . . . **let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking.**

It seems he is focusing on impure activity in v. 3 and impure speech in v. 4.

Whereas . . . some Christians may think salty speech is funny or acceptable . . . Paul reminds us that our speech must always consider how to build others up.

Our speech is a reflection of our hearts . . . and if crude humor is commonplace . . . it raises questions . . . because it doesn't match the holiness of our loving God.

Tragically . . .

When churches gain a reputation for sexuality impurity or a lax view on sexual assault or some profiteering scheme, it ruins the testimony of the church.

Instead of being a community set apart from the world . . . in order to show the world the loving truth of God . . . it confuses the world . . . and convinces them . . . they don't need Christ

This is why Paul stresses the importance of walking worthy of the gospel . . .

None of these things . . . Paul says . . . have a place in the church . . . and thus a loving church must be a holy church . . . and one that grows in all that is good, right, and true – as v. 9 says.



**INDEED . . . True love is holy love . . . love that lasts must be pure love.**

Therefore . . . any sexual relationship that is pursued outside of marriage . . . is by def. unloving.

Our culture and even the American church is confused on this . . . but God's Word isn't.

In our day . . . love has become a plastic concept . . . moldable into a million different forms.

But . . . Scripture says every sexual pursuit that rejects God's design for marriage btw one man and one woman . . . is not just elicited . . . it is not loving. **In time . . . it will become destructive!**

In other words . . . love without holiness is not love . . . even if Hollywood makes it appear lovely

So church . . . don't ruin love with immorality, impure speech, or covetousness.

Instead . . . as Paul says . . . cultivate thanksgiving. THANKSGIVING is what sustains + purifies love.

Now maybe this contrast seems a little odd . . . **Why is thanksgiving the alternative here?**

My answer is that . . . thanksgiving . . . comes when our hearts are full.

Remember . . . fullness has been an important theme for Paul in this letter.

Later in 5:18–19, he will return to this idea of giving thanks when we are filled by the Spirit.

So I think it fair to say . . . that fullness in the Lord is the solution to temptation toward adultery . . . pornography . . . same sex attraction . . . gender dysphoria . . . and every other idolatry.

**To say it the other way . . . when we feel empty . . . that's when the forbidden fruit is attractive.**

When our hearts are empty of love . . . our minds will look for love in all the wrong places . . .

And friends . . . that's how countless Christians have been led astray.

That's why Paul calls covetousness idolatry in v. 5 . . . Look what he says . . . **READ**

This verse literally reads . . . **those who ARE presently, actively KNOWING *porneia* have no inheritance** . . . = that it is those who identify with these sins who are condemned.

It's not those who resist these sins and occasionally fall . . . it's those who fall and are unconcerned . . . it's those who look for ways to indulge their flesh . . . because they are hungry!

Instead of trusting in God's love . . . sons of disobedience look for idols who promise fullness.

By contrast, those who are heirs of God's kingdom that comes in Christ . . . are the ones who have learned to feed on his love . . . and flee from all other lusts.

So . . . if you are here today fighting (or embracing) these sins . . . look to God's love.

His love is the source of your life . . . and the way to walk in this world.

If you have no relationship with God . . . or are uncertain about your standing before God . . .

It is his love that offers you hope . . . and his love that beckons you to know him.

If you have a longstanding relationship with God . . .

It is his love that empowers you to take the next step with him.

Church . . .

Along the way . . . the pressures of life will tempt you to pull away . . . but in your pain don't forget his love.

Satan will work to make you think hard, unhappy thoughts about God . . . but don't believe him. Instead, feed on the promises of God's love.

Your flesh . . . is trained to crave other things . . . but only the bread of life will satisfy you. Feed on him and the fullness of his love.

Child of God . . . be intoxicated with his love . . . and put away all other lovers.

This is how you walk in love . . . by daily walking in HIS love

. . . and fleeing from every other idol lover.