

# SEPARATE FROM DARKNESS

## Ephesians 5.3-6: Walk as a child of light—separate from darkness.

**Theme:** You are a child of light, so walk like it. Wake up and separate from darkness!

**In Ephesians 5 Paul exhorts us to walk as children of light.**

- We need to walk in a way that is worthy of our vocation (Eph 4: our "job" to be and make disciples).
- And that means: (Eph 5.8) We need to walk as the children of light that we already are in Christ.

**(Eph 5.1-2) In order to be that light God wants us to be in this dark world we need to be godly (v1) and Christians—Christ-like (v2).**

- What follows is a passage about how to do that...

**(Eph 5.3-14) To walk as children of light, we need to wake up (!) and...**

- Separate from darkness (v3-6) so we can separate to the light of God (v7-14).
- And God calls us to a separation that goes beyond the superficial and touches our reputation.

### **I. (v3-4) The Reputation of the Saint**

#### **A. A Spotless Reputation: Blameless**

##### **1. The Contrast: "But..."**

- a) (v1-2) The Bible says we ought to be followers of God (godly) and of Christ (Christians).
- b) (v3) The very next word ("but") shows us the contrast of that: If we are not following God in Christ, this is what we are doing...

##### **2. The Commandment: Blameless!**

- a) Notice how Paul goes beyond just not doing these deeds of darkness, and he touches on our reputations with regard to these things.
  - (1) We should live in a way that these wicked deeds cannot even once be named among us.
  - (2) We should so separate from sin that people around us cannot even see a hint of these things in our lives.
- b) This goes well beyond the shallow superficiality of legalistic "separation."
  - (1) Since we are talking about "separation," it's worth mentioning "legalistic separation."
  - (2) Your separation has very little to do with your "standards" (a term used for rules and regulations about dress, hair, music, etc.).
  - (3) Your separation goes far deeper than that because it deals with your dedication and commitment to the Lord (personally; to a Person).
  - (4) The world can see right through the superficial legalism of the "separatists" who have their lists of rules and regulations to control what they perceive as bad behavior.
  - (5) But, God wants our hearts, our affections; and when He has that, then the outward conduct will follow naturally.
  - (6) And when that happens, we will be "blameless" in our reputations because our "separation" will not be some superficial legalism but rather the result of our relationship to God as followers of Christ.

3. We need a spotless reputation (blameless) and that means there are certain things that should not even be named among us...

**B. The Spots on Our Reputation ...*hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.* [Jude 23]**

1. (v3a) Fornication should not spot our reputations.
  - a) Fornication refers to any and all illicit sexual relationships outside of marriage.
  - b) The Bible is clear: Don't do it! And don't let it even be once named among us!
  - c) This prohibition goes beyond just not fornicating; it touches on our reputation. Examples:
    - (1) In dating or courtship relationships, there should not even be a *hint* of fornication.
    - (2) In dress (especially the women), there should not even be a *hint* of fornication.
      - (a) Remember: We are *not* talking about *superficial legalistic* "standards."
      - (b) We are *not Amish*. The instruction in the Bible is to be modest, not dorky.
2. (v3b) Uncleanness should not spot our reputations.
  - a) Obviously this is a general term and so it refers to anything that is dirty and morally impure.
  - b) Any and all types of "uncleanness" (dirty, impure things) should be avoided.
  - c) (2Pet 3.11) Opposite: We should strive to be holy and godly in all areas of our lives.
3. (v3c) Covetousness should not spot our reputations.
  - a) To covet is to wrongfully desire things (stuff, money, etc.) or to be unbalanced in your desires.
    - (1) A person can desire to make more money or have a better job (to take better care of his family, have more for ministry, etc.), and that's okay. But when that desire becomes an obsession, that's covetousness.
    - (2) And we can covet just about anything: money, cars, houses, a spouse, prestige...
  - b) This "spot" of the flesh should be especially troubling for us today in our society.
    - (1) Our society and economy is based on covetousness (which is why it works: a sinful system works perfectly because it's based on the sinful nature of the people in it).
    - (2) We are consumers; we are materialistic. We are bombarded daily about all the *stuff* we just *have* to have in order to be fulfilled, successful, and happy.
    - (3) Oftentimes, without us really even knowing it's happening, covetousness leads us into idolatry: Keeping up with the Joneses, wanting this, wanting that, never satisfied with "good enough" in our material possessions.
  - c) (Php 4.11-13, 19) Whether we are well-off or struggling, we should *not* be known for wanting more and more (covetousness), but rather for being *content* with what we have.

4. (v4) Improper speech should not spot our reputations.

- a) Observe how Paul lays out three areas of "darkness" and then relates them speech:

<b>The Sin (v3)</b>	<b>The Speech (v4)</b>	<b>The Sinner (v5)</b>
1. Fornication	1. Filthiness	1. Whoremonger
2. Uncleanness	2. Foolish Talking	2. Unclean Person
3. Covetousness	3. Jesting	3. Idolater

- b) (v4) We need to avoid all speech that is ungodly and not Christ-like—speech that does not edify, speech that is dirty, speech that only leads to carnal pleasure.
- c) (Prov 17.22) We're not talking about enjoyable, uplifting conversations (which oftentimes are about superficial things that clothes, food, weather, etc.), or even about a good sense of humor (which is often necessary to get us through the rough times in our lives).

- d) What we are to avoid is the speech that is spotted by the flesh:
  - (1) Sexual innuendos, unclean conversations (dirty, morally "off color"), and the jesting that puts others down to make "me" feel good and be the center of attention.
  - (2) All of that is carnal and wrong. That kind of speech should not stain our reputations.
- e) Rather, we should be known for speech "seasoned with salt"—speech that gives thanks to God in all things because He has delivered us from all this darkness (*grateful* speech).

**C. The reputation of the saint should be blameless—spotless in conduct and conversation.**

- 1. Here is Paul's exhortation: Wake up! Open your eyes to the darkness around you! And get out!
- 2. Separate from the darkness of this world (the fornication, the uncleanness, the covetousness).
- 3. Because your reward is at stake...

**II. (v5) The Recompense of the Sinner**

**A. The Loser is the Sinner**

- 1. The whoremonger, the unclean person, and the covetous person (idolater) is the one who will lose.
- 2. Observe the context, which will define this sinner for you:
  - a) (v3) Paul is address and exhorting the *saints*. Paul is *not* addressing *lost people*.
  - b) (v5) Paul is warning the *saints* about the cost of their not separating from darkness.
- 3. Understand the concern: The "carnal Christian" looks like the "false convert."
  - a) A saved person can be a *covetous* person (Home Depot is full of them after church on Sundays!) or an *unclean* person (given to foolish, raunchy speech) or even a *whoremonger* (as were many of the Corinthian believers).
  - b) What should *concern* these types of "believers" is that they are bearing the same fruit as lost people, and therefore... they might not be saved!
  - c) But in Ephesians 5 Paul is addressing born-again *saints* who are living in sin and who will lose.

**B. The Loss is the Inheritance**

- 1. We are *born* into the Kingdom of God (born-again by the Spirit of God, born as sons of God, made part of the spiritual kingdom of God—we get back what Adam lost when he died in Genesis 3).
  - We do *not "inherit"* eternal life (salvation)—we do *not "enter"* into the Kingdom of God by "inheritance." We enter the Kingdom of God by the new, spiritual birth in Christ.
- 2. However, if you choose to live after the flesh (following your carnal desires, a filthy lifestyle, sexual immorality), you will lose your reward of the inheritance: reigning with Christ.
  - a) (2Tim 2.11-13) We can lose the reward of reigning with Christ (not our salvation).
    - (1) (v11, 13) Our salvation is secure because it is based solely on the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (2) (v12) But, if we deny the Lord and refuse to *suffer with Him now*, He will deny us the reigning with Him later.
  - b) (Rom 8.17) Being a joint-heir with Christ (inheriting the Kingdom—the throne—with Christ) depends on our suffering with Him today—participating with Him today in the work He is doing in the world (making disciples; evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved).
  - c) (1Jn 2.28) If we abide in Him now (be with Him, walk with Him, work with Him in the mission), we will not be ashamed later; if you stray from Him now, you will be ashamed later when He comes for you.
  - d) (2Tim 4.6-8) Our confidence at the end is a life that was dedicated to the mission.

- e) (2Cor 5.10) God will reward each and every born-again saint according to his works.
  - (1) (2Cor 5.11) That ought to motivate us to holy living—to separate from the darkness of the flesh and the world, and to *be light* by preaching the Word and living according to it.
  - (2) (1Cor 3.11-15) You can lose your reward of the inheritance if you do not live right...
    - (a) (v11) You cannot lose your salvation (the foundation: Christ Himself).
    - (b) (v12-13) But your works after salvation have a direct bearing on your reward.
    - (c) (v14) If you suffer with Christ now, in the mission, you will receive a reward.
    - (d) (v15) If you live according to the flesh (invest your time, resources, energy, affections... in carnality... in what *you* want), you will lose your reward.

**C. (Eph 5.5) "For this ye know..."**

- 1. (v3-4) You know you should not spot your reputation with carnality.
- 2. (v5) You know that your reward of the inheritance is at stake.
  - a) God's not hiding anything; He told us clearly what He expects and what we can expect.
  - b) And so we need to understand just one more thing...

**III. (v6) The Reality of our Situation**

**A. (v6a) The Reality of Deceptive Words**

- 1. There is a very real danger for the saints in the vain words of men in churches today.
  - a) Vain words are words of no value—words of no importance (they achieve nothing).
  - b) There are men in churches and para-church ministries that will deceive you with their vain words. We should be aware of the danger... and avoid it!
    - (1) There are men (or women, in some cases) who will tell you that you can be saved without being a follower of Christ (easy-believism), rather than speaking the difficult but true words about false conversions (believing in vain, as Paul calls it).
    - (2) There are those who will speak of liberty in Christ and eternal security as if it were a license to sin and live how you want.
    - (3) (Acts 20.29-30) These men with their deceptive, vain words will be from among us (they will be pastors, teachers, leaders in our churches), and they will seek to lead astray God's sheep by their slick, nice way of teaching.
- 2. (Acts 20.28, 31-32) Our God-given protection is a good local church that has pastors dedicated to the study, teaching, and preaching of God's Word (which is able to lead you into a *full inheritance*, nothing lost!).
- 3. So understand the reality of the deceptive words that exist in "Christian" churches and ministries today... because judgment is coming.

**B. (v6b) The Reality of Coming Judgment**

- 1. God's wrath will come upon the lost for their fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness (idolatry).
- 2. (1Pet 4.17) We need to wake up (!) to the reality that judgment will begin with us!
  - a) (Gal 6.7) God will not be mocked by anyone—lost or saved.
  - b) (Gal 6.8) Each of us will reap exactly what we have sown.
  - c) (Gal 6.9) So, let's not be wearing in well-doing! Separate from darkness to be light (do right)!

## **Conclusion:**

**(Eph 5.8) We are children of light, so we ought to live like!**

- (v3-6) That starts with waking up (!) from our carnal, comfortable slumber and separating from the darkness in this world.

**We are not called to a superficial, legalistic, dorky separation from the world.**

- We are called to be in the world and among the sinners of this world (i.e., the Great Commission).
- But, we need to be different. And that starts with a real, genuine, Christ-like separation from darkness.
  - ✓ Separate from wicked behavior: fornication, uncleanness, covetousness (the idolatry of our age).
  - ✓ Separate from the wicked speech that come with that kinds of behavior (control your tongue).
- The reward of our inheritance depends on this, as does the glory we can give Christ at the judgment.
- So, don't be duped and deceived by slick preachers with their vain words. Judgment is coming, and judgment will begin with us!

**Wake up! Separate from darkness! And live right (more on this next week: v7-14)!**