

Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.  
Interim President  
Executive Vice President & Provost  
Criswell College

## Learning How to Walk: Part 2

Ephesians 5:1-6:9

### Introduction

This section returns to the theme "Learning How to Walk," which was the focus of Ephesians 4:17-24. As a quick review of that section, the points were: (1) Walk in Faithfulness; (2) How Not to Walk - the Ways of the World; sub-points (a) The World's Way is Self-centered; (b) The World's Way is Willfully Ignorant; (c) The World's Way is Shameless; (d) The World's Way is Sinful; (3) How to Walk - The Way of Christ; (a) Walk in Jesus' Footsteps; (b) Walk in Truth; (c) Walk in Purity; (d) Walk with a Regenerate Mind. This new section on the "walk" of the believer has four sections: (1) Walk in Love; (2) Walk in Light; (3) Walk in Wisdom; and (4) Walk in Submission.

### I. Walk in Love, 5:1-7

1. What does it mean to "walk in love?" It means that the motive for our walk, in everything we do, is to be love. Christ is the example and He is the standard for our conduct. We are to be imitators of Christ. The word "imitator" is the Greek *mimetes* from which the word "mimic" is derived. A mimic copies the speech, actions, gestures, and the characteristics of another person. It is a good analogy because the imitator is not the person being imitated, but it is clear that the imitator is trying to duplicate the actions and patterns of behavior of the persons being imitated. We are to imitate Christ and reproduce His virtues in our own lives. This is part of the assignment to "put on" Christ, Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10, 12, 14.
2. Is the imitation of Christ an impossible standard? Some might conclude that it is. There are some ways in which we cannot imitate God or Christ. We can't save people, we can't create something from nothing, we can't duplicate the flawless wisdom of God, etc. We might look at all the commands of chapters one to three and conclude that it is impossible. Actually, living the Christian life is impossible in our own strength. Paul makes this clear in Romans 7:18-19, 24-25; 8:1-5 that the impossible is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.
3. The imitation of Christ in our lives will affect the things we do and the company we keep. Though not a definitive list, verses 5:3-5 is another example list of the conduct and persons we should avoid.

Because such persons are under the wrath of God, we should avoid them at all cost.

4. Beware of deceivers who use empty words, such as "I need your money to keep my ministry going," versus "God has given us a ministry of reaching others for Him. Please consider support for the ministry He has given us as you determine where God would lead you to provide support." The difference here is spiritual discernment.

## II. Walk in Light Because You Are Children of Light, 5:8-14

1. You are light in the Lord, walk as children of light, v. 8. This is Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:12-16. We indeed are the children of light, while the lost are the children of darkness. Note the following passages that are a study of contrasts between light and darkness, John 1:5; 8:12; 12:35, 46; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:8, 9, 11; Eph 5:8, 11; 6:12; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 5:4-5; 1 Pet 2:9, 17; Jude 13.
2. The fruit of the Spirit is the product of the children of light, v. 9, and the "works of the flesh" the product of children of darkness, see Gal 5:16-26.
3. Walking in the light is a key to knowing God's will. God's will includes salvation (2 Pet 3:9); sanctification (1 Thess 4:3); spirit filling, Eph 5:15-18; Col 3:16; willingness to suffer, (1 Pet 4:19); self-sacrificing, Rom 12:1-2; then do whatever you want (Ps 37:3-6).
4. Only Christ can give you the light because He and He alone has the light, Matt 5:13-16; Isa 60:1-3; 61:1-3; Rom 13:11-14).

## III. Walk in Wisdom, 5:15-19

1. Being filled with the Spirit is a prerequisite to being filled with wisdom, Eph 5:15-19, see W. A. Criswell, *The Holy Spirit in Today's World*, pp. 108-111.
2. What are the characteristics of the Spirit-filled life? Here are the sevenfold characteristics of the spirit-filled life:
  - Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise - 15a
  - Walk judiciously, redeeming the time - v. 16; Ps 90:1-17, esp 12
  - Walk discerningly, v. 17 and II, 3 above; 1 Cor 2:6-16
  - Walk temperately, v. 18a; don't endorse roadblocks, Rom 14:21
  - Walk spiritually, v. 18b; Col 3:15
  - Walk joyfully, v. 19
  - Walk thankfully, v. 20
3. Walk in the "fear of the Lord," and be wise, Prov 1:7; 9:10; cf. 1:28-29; 2:1-5; 3:5-8:1-36; 9:1-18. To know Christ is to know the Source of all wisdom.

#### IV. Walk in Submission, 5:20-6:9

1. Be submissive in marriage, 5:20-33. This precept made national headlines when it was included as part of the *Baptist Faith and Message* doctrinal revisions in 1999 and 2000. Submission was and is considered a dirty word. All the national media discussion was on the attack, along with several national women's organizations, and all of them missed the point and were totally in error about what the Bible teaches on this point. "Submission" is NOT a four-letter profanity. The issue is God's standards versus the world's standards. Note the following:
  - (a) The main point of this passage is that it is about the submission of every believer to the authority of Christ. The main point is about the church, which is the "bride of Christ," v. 32.
  - (b) Christ loved the church (His bride) and died for her, v. 25. The church is to submit to Christ as head of the church, v. 23-24.
  - (c) Marriage is not about competing for rights and dominance. Unfortunately, we live in a culture where the focus is on personal rights. Freedom and rights can only exist when we are willing to cooperate in love and submission [e.g. that is why we have traffic laws].
  - (d) Satan is a master at trying to reverse the God-ordained order in human life, and the home has become a battleground and struggle for rights, see Titus 2:1-10 for the qualities of a godly home and church.
  - (e) Submission is willingly yielding your rights to God and to one another, see 1 Pet 5:5-11. When we reject a submissive spirit in any part of our life, we give place to the spirit of rebellion which is not from God but Satan.
  - (f) Every couple must first submit to the Lordship of Christ. The primary evidence of whether Christ is Lord of the home can be seen in the relation of husband and wife.
  - (g) If you reject God's plan for the home, you are teaching your children and grandchildren that the highest authority is found in meeting your personal wants and doing what "I want to do."
  - (h) Submission is not a loss of identity, personality, and personal desires. Proverbs 31:10-31 is the model of a godly wife.
  - (i) The home and family is to be a small model of the church and Christ. The husband is charged with being the spiritual leader of the home. The husband is to surrender his rights and be willing to lay down his life for his wife and family. The husband is to be the protector, provider, preserver, and head of the family but not a dictator or exploiter.

- (j) Christ never said keep my commandments or else! But He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." If the husband loves his wife and family as Christ loves the church, love becomes the spiritual binding that holds the home together.
  - (k) It has been my experience that when a woman says, "You don't know my husband. I have to take over and I have to be the authority in the home." You take all the pressure off of him to be what God intended him to be, and God will not put pressure on him either.
  - (l) Again, none of this is possible unless all are submissive to the Lordship of Christ.
2. Be submissive in the home, 6:1-4
- (a) Two things: First, how the mother and father treat each other in the home will set the standard for how the children relate to their parents. Second, the word translated "children" is *tekna*, and is not limited to young age. You never get beyond showing honor and respect for parents, as long as they are alive, 6:1.
  - (b) Obey your parents "in the Lord." The Greek word "obey" means "to hear under" or "hear with a mind to obey what is heard." Is this limited to spiritual matters alone? Colossians 3:18-25 is the short form of this whole passage; look at 3:20, "obey in all things."
  - (c) "This is right" i.e., it is the right thing to do. It is what God expects of us, 6:1.
  - (d) "Honor your father and mother," 6:2, quotes and is the goal of the fifth commandment and connects our duties to God in commands 1-4 with our duties to others in 5-10. "Honor" in Hebrew is *chabod*, literally "heavy" or "honor." It represents the highest form of respect and duty, regularly used in reference to God. It is the reason for the severe penalty levied against striking a parent or cursing a parent, Exod 21:15, 17.
  - (e) The fifth commandment is the first one with a promise for those who obey it, 6:3. Actually there are two promises including well-being and a long life, which usually refers to immortality, not many years.
  - (f) The final admonition is that fathers should, first on the negative side, not provoke their children to anger by mistreatment or by unjust treatment, 6:4a. Second, on the positive side, "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord," 6:4b. This is a reminder of Proverbs 20:6, "train" (Hebrew *chonek*) a child means to show them by example what they must do and make them do the right things in the right way, with the right attitude.

3. Be submissive on the job, 6:5-9

In New Testament times, a bondservant would have been part of the household. "Bondslaves" were not slaves in the same sense of slavery as it developed later in Europe and America. "Bondslaves" were either family members or more like indentured servants. They were freed in the Jubilee year, Lev 25:48-49. These were people who had their way paid and worked out the payment over time, then became free. The closest thing in our culture today would be the employer/employee relationship.

- (a) The admonitions are clear and straightforward. First, servants should be obedient to the wishes of the master. Employees are hired to serve their employer. Serve them as if you were serving the Lord Jesus, 6:5. This is especially important if your employer is unsaved.
- (b) Service should not just be a show of obedience or obedience only while the boss is looking, but actual obedience, 6:6-7, "doing the will of God from the heart." A good commentary on this is found in 1 Peter 2:18-25, where we see that Christ is our example, and He will reward you even if your employer does not, 6:8.
- (c) Employers are to do the same good things given in 6:5-8 to their employees. Employers should be fair, treat their employees with respect, honesty, impartiality, and good will, 6:9, see also Col 4:1.