

Ephesians 5:7-14

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[0:00] All right, I'm going to call for a show of hands. Raise your hand if you have a family member, whether immediate or extended, if you have friends, neighbors, co-workers who are presently outside the kingdom of God, who are not Christians, who are living for themselves, they're under God's wrath, show of hands.

That's everybody. So let me ask you this. We've got people whom we love that don't know Christ, and I'm guessing that we regularly interact with them.

So how are we as Christians who are called to be holy, how are we to live among those who are blinded and living for themselves? How are we to do that?

Would you open up your Bible quickly, just to Ephesians chapter 5, verse 7? It reads this.

Therefore, do not be partners with them, them being non-Christians. Therefore, do not be partners, an older ESV version reads, therefore, do not associate with them.

[1:25] What does that mean? Are we as Christians to steer clear of all interactions with non-Christians? I'm not sure if you're going to a Super Bowl party tonight.

That might be out of the question now with all this snow. But let's say you go to a Super Bowl party, and you see a non-Christian walk into the door. Is Paul saying here that if you're a Christian, you need to go out the back door?

At family get-togethers, non-Christian family, whether it's Easter or Thanksgiving, Christmas, you know, the family get-together group, birthday gatherings, you know what I mean?

You see a non-Christian family member walk in. Does that mean you split? Is that what Paul is saying? We're not to associate with them? We're not to partner with them? You've been assigned to serve on a team at work.

And you have non-Christians on that team. Does that mean you've got to say, I can't serve on this team. They're Christians. I can't do this. I'm prohibited. What happens if you have non-Christian children?

[2:31] What happens if you have non-Christian parents? What happens if you have a non-Christian spouse? What is Paul saying here? What does he mean do not become partners with them in verse 7?

Well, verse 11 sheds light on it. What Paul is saying is we are not to do something. What he's not saying is we're to cut off all relationships with non-Christians.

In fact, what we'll see is Jesus actually wants us in relationship with non-Christians. What he doesn't want us doing is participating in sin with non-Christians.

What he does want us doing in these relationships is exposing the sin of non-Christians. We are in the book of Ephesians.

First half of Ephesians is all these truths of who we are. The second half of Ephesians are exhortations of how we are to live. Last week we are in Ephesians 5.

[3:32] Remember, you are a child of God. You're an imitator of God. You are to walk in love as Christ loved. Upward and outward kind of love. We love people to the glory of God.

And then in verses 3 and 4, Paul says, Because you're this, sexual immorality, impurity, greed cannot be named among you now. You're the holy ones of God. Why would you participate in something in which people who don't know Christ live for?

Don't you know that these are the reasons why God's wrath is coming? That's his rationale. And then in verse 7, he says this, Therefore, therefore, do not become partners with them.

So here's what I believe God is saying to us this morning. Our God is essentially saying to us, my children, Light in the Lord.

Don't join the sons of disobedience in the deeds of darkness. Be with them to expose the deeds of darkness. There's no question we've been called out of a lifestyle.

[4:47] But it's more than that. We've been called out of sin in order to shine light onto sin. We are light in the world.

We're to be separate from darkness. And we're to shine into the darkness. God has a holy, redemptive purpose for us in our relationships with non-Christians.

This call to live holy has more to it than living a squeaky clean life. You're going to see that come out at the end.

What I want you to know right now is we are not to partner in sin with non-Christians. We are to expose the sin of non-Christians.

And so here's the command. Therefore, do not become partners with them. And what we see in Ephesians 8, 9, and 10 is one reason why we are not to be partners with them.

[5:56] And then what we read in 11, 12, 13, and 14 is another reason why we are not to partner with them. The first one is essentially this. We are not to partner with them in sin.

Remember who you are. We don't partner with them, darkness, because we are no longer darkness. We are light. That's his rationale. And then the second reason he gives gets at purpose. We are not to partner with them because we are not of them anymore. We don't practice these things with them. We expose these things.

And what you're going to see is God has a glorious redemptive purpose in that. So two reasons this morning of why we're not to partner with non-Christians.

So let's look at this first one in greater detail. You are not to partner with them because you are not darkness anymore. Would you look with me at verse 8?

[6:55] Let me start in 7. Therefore, do not partner with them. For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Paul is making a case here. His reason is don't partner with them. It's not who you are.

Don't participate with them in the deeds of darkness. It's not who you are anymore. You're light in the Lord. Did you notice the then now language of verse 8?

At one time, formerly, you were once darkness. Paul doesn't say here, you were living in darkness. Paul says, you were darkness. This is who we were before we became a Christian. Paul has conversion on his mind.

[7:54] This is who you were then. Spiritually blind. Spiritually dead. Spiritually ignorant. Spiritually hardened of heart. Ephesians 4.18 We had no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

We were sons and daughters of disobedience. We were under God's wrath. That's who we were. We were darkness. What were we living for? What? Well, we were living for ourselves.

And it showed up in things like sexual immorality. All kinds of impurity. Greed. Trash talk. That's what characterized our lives. We definitely weren't living for God.

We weren't imitating God. We weren't living like Christ. Upward and outward. That was far from our minds. And what Paul does here, he summarizes it all up with one word.

You were once darkness. Spiritually dead. Engaging in the deeds of darkness. But then we read in verse 8 those great words, but now.

[8:56] You were darkness. But now. I love that. But now. In that but now is God's grace manifest through the gospel to us.

Radically changed. We're no longer darkness. But now. You are light. In the Lord. We've been transformed by the grace of God.

We went from being darkness. To being light. And Paul uses that darkness light language very intentionally. It draws a sharp contrast.

We were not that anymore. We are light in the Lord. Light is distinct from darkness. Light is separate from darkness.

It's one way or the other. This maybe a year and a half ago. Two years ago. My son Mark and I. We got in the car. And we traveled to Cave of the Mounds. Outside of Madison.

[9:59] And it was on a Monday. And so all the kids were. Everybody was in school. So just Mark and me. And we got this tour of the Cave of the

Mounds. Just he and I. And this lady tour lady guy.

Lady person. And she brought us back all the way to the end of the cave. And you know what she did? She turned off the lights.

And so I was like. I cannot see my hand. I can feel the wind my hand is making. But it was pitch black. Couldn't see anything. And then she flipped the switch.

Lights on. I knew how to get out. I was so grateful that she flipped the switch. And the lights were on. It was no longer darkness. It was now light.

And I was overjoyed. Paul has conversion on his mind here. We were darkness. And God flipped the switch. In Christ we are now in the light.

[10:59] Which brings me to another thing I want you to see. Not only is it this but now language. Then now language. I want you to see the source of light.

We were darkness. But now you are light in the Lord. Light in the Lord.

You see the difference of being in darkness and being in the light is whether you are in Christ.

That's the difference. So if you are in the darkness you are outside of Christ.

But if you are in the light you are in Christ. His light shines through us. The moment you believed in Christ.

The moment you were united to Him. You were placed into Christ. Now this is where I want to help you make some connections. In John chapter 1.

[11:59] John talks about Jesus this way. In Him Christ was life. And the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus is the light. At your conversion. The moment you became a Christian.

You were formerly darkness. Darkness no more. You were placed into Christ. The light of life. Or He radically changed you.

John 8.12 Jesus says this. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me. Whoever is placed into me. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness.

But will have the light of life. When you first became a Christian. You were placed into Christ. And He lit you up.

[13:02] With His light of life. So Christian. You are now light in the Lord. Here's what that means.

Having been made alive with Christ. Christ is going to radiate His holy life through you. Anybody here of Thomas Kincaid?

He's a famous painter. And He has painted these pictures of little houses. With these warm lights shining through the window. It's very inviting.

Light shining through. The moment you believed in Jesus. He lit you up. Lights went on. You were made alive in Christ.

To shine in the darkness. On a cloudy day. You know the kind of cloud. Patchy clouds. Sometimes you can see beams of sunlight coming through.

[14:09] And it's like you can see the actual beam of sunlight. You know what I'm talking about? I want to take a picture of it. Christ in us.

Shines through us. In the radiant beams of holiness. We are light in the Lord. And so when we read that.

We are light in the Lord. And then when we read in the second part of verse 8. That we are to walk as children of light. We realize that it's a call to holiness. It's called a Christ likeness.

Now when you read that. Walk as children of light in verse 8. It can be a little confusing. Because it seems like Paul might be mixing his metaphors a little bit. But he's not. What he's saying is this.

We've been born of the light of life. We are of God now. Born of him.

[15:09] Which means this. You've got to let your little light shine. We are to live out the light in us. Christ in us.

We're to walk in holiness. If darkness is death and sin. The light that Paul is talking about. Is life and holiness.

Holiness. So Jesus has given us new life. In which we are to walk out in holiness. And in verse 9 we see what that looks like.

Instead of sexual immorality. All kinds of impurity and greed. Verse 3. What we read here is the fruit of life. The produce of holiness.

Goodness. Righteousness. Truthfulness. We see that other places in Ephesians. Ephesians 2.10.

[16:08] We are created in Christ Jesus. Made alive. For good works.

Ephesians 4.15. That we were made.

Created in the likeness of God. For true righteousness. And holiness. In Ephesians 4.15. We have been made.

Built in together. Knit together. As part of this living body of Christ. Under the head of Jesus. Our life. And we are to speak the truth. In love to one another.

Our life is to be marked by the fruit of holiness. Goodness. Goodness. Righteousness. And truth.

We live in the light. We've got nothing to hide. That marks us now.

As children of light. We walk in the light. And in verse 10. We see the hallmark. Of walking as a child of the light.

[17:07] You know what your heart's desire is? Your heart's desire is to please the Lord. Look at verse 10 with me.

And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Walk as children of light. And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. I love that verse 10.

It is in my Bible. Try to find out what pleases the Lord, Michael. Try to discern. That word try to discern. It comes from a Greek word that means to approve.

It actually comes from a word that was used of testing of metals. To see what a metal was worth.

Value. Substance. And what Paul is saying here is, Hey, you prove my will.

Walk in it. Demonstrate it. Feel. Taste. Experience the goodness of it. We are always having to ask a question as children of light.

[18:07] And it goes something like this. Is what I'm about to do pleasing to the Lord? I'm a child of light. Is this walking in the light? Is this pleasing to the Lord? Is this TV show I'm about to watch pleasing to the Lord?

Is this song I'm about to listen to pleasing to the Lord? Are these words I'm about to say pleasing to the Lord? Is this internet page I'm about to click on pleasing to the Lord? Is this purchase I'm about to make pleasing to the Lord?

Is the way I am conducting myself in this relationship pleasing to the Lord? Is it upward and outward? Is it walking in the light?

That question reveals who you are. Child of light. You are light in the Lord. Let your light shine.

The first reason that Paul gives for us not partnering with the sons of disobedience in the deeds of darkness is you're not darkness anymore. You are light in the Lord.

[19:11] He has lit you up to be shining holy among darkened sinners. So it's a call to remember who you are.

The second reason we see here is verses 11 through 14. And it gets that purpose. As light in the Lord, this is who you are now, determines what you do.

We don't participate in the deeds of darkness, verse 11. We expose the deeds of darkness. We leverage our relationships with non-Christians.

We love them. We love our God. We walk in holiness and we love them. We realize that our lives will expose them.

Paul is saying here, don't join them in sin. Let your life expose their sin. He assumes relationships.

[20:14] He assumes proximity. He assumes that you're going to be in relationship with non-Christians. And he's saying, live like you are. A light in the Lord.

And it's going to expose the sin in our non-Christian family and friends and co-workers. Would you turn in your Bibles to John 17?

John 17. John 17 is the high priestly prayer of Jesus. In which Jesus prays for his disciples and all who will believe through his disciples' witness.

Us. And so in John 17, Jesus says this. This is verses 15 through 18. He says, he prays, I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Your word is truth.

Cause them to shine. Then he goes on to say, As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them

into the world.

[21:33] Jesus wants us in relationships with non-Christians. And he wants us in relationship with non-Christians so that our lights can shine on them.

How? How do we expose the sinfulness of their sin? Do we need to be the self-righteous police? Blowing whistles?

Slapping hands? Not like that. That's not what Paul is getting at here. What he's getting at is this. Your changed life will be a light of holiness that exposes the deeds of darkness.

By contrast. It will bring it out. And non-Christians know. They experience it. Walking as children of light, Your life will shine into the darkness.

In verse 12. And it will make the shameful things done in secret visible. In other words, Our lives, God will use our lives To bring non-Christians face to face With their own sin.

[22:51] They will realize something. We live lives of holiness. And it has a witnessing effect. It has a convicting effect.

That word expose Means to confront. It means to convict. It's challenging. Our lives are to be challenging To non-Christians.

Let me give you some examples of this. How this works out. And maybe you've already experienced this. And so, I just want to help you see what it is. I have three examples.

If I can get to the third, I will. That's going to take the most time. First example of how Our holy lives Expose The deeds of darkness.

Have you ever been somewhere And Someone swears In your presence Or takes the Lord's name in vain And they're like, Oh, oh, I'm sorry.

[23:58] I didn't know you were there. I'm sorry. Do you know what's going on there? Do you know what's happening? They're aware of you.

They're aware that you Stand for something. And they're aware Of their own speech. That's, It's inconsistent With who you are.

Do you know what that is? Exposing the deeds of darkness. And some people will apologize for it. Oh, I'm so sorry. If you weren't here, I would just be cussing All over the place.

Other people take issue with it. Man, you're holier than thou. What's your problem? Man, can you lighten up a little bit? There's one example.

Speech. Our speech will confront Evil speech patterns. By contrast. Work.

[25:02] Remember we were talking about The fruit of the light Is goodness, Rightness, And truth. Let's say that you are A type of worker That you do good work. It's quality work.

And that you do it rightly. You do it along the lines That have been told to you. And you do it truthfully. Honestly. Have you ever experienced Anything like this?

Hey man, Would you just slow down? You're making the rest of us Look bad. You know what's going on there? Your life is having effect.

It's exposing something On other people. They think it's making them Look bad. You're just trying to live For Jesus. You're not trying to make Them look bad. But your light is shining.

Some people will rise to it. You might get promoted for it. Some people like that. Other people don't. Our lives are to expose things Because we are light in the Lord.

[26:05] He has us there for a reason. The third area that I want to bring up Is something that I wanted to bring up Last week. Last week I was explaining The differences between Sexual immorality, impurity, and greed In verse 3.

And when I was talking about Sexual immorality I listed out several different kinds Of sexual immorality. And one I didn't say Was pornography.

Last week I tried to make the case That to understand What is sexually immoral We need to know What is sexually pleasing to God.

And that is this. This good gift of sex That God has given us Is to be experienced In one place In one place alone And that is marriage. The exclusive Lifelong covenant Between one man And one woman.

That is where And only where We would experience This good gift of God. He has got purposes for it. And so anything Outside of that Falls into this category Of pornea Sexual immorality.

[27:16] Do you know what pornography is? It is in the name. Porn Sexual immorality Graphic On display.

That is what it means. Sexual immorality On display. That is what pornography is. And you know what? God hates it. Do you know why?

It is a distortion Of his good gift of sex. His design. He hates it. Our lives Are to be lived In such a way That we expose This evil deed Of darkness.

We don't participate in it. We're not to even have A hint of this. Ephesians 5.3 We live in a Porn Saturated Culture.

Listen to this. Pornography is Is widely available. It's easily accessible. It's affordable. It's alluring. And Often times Most of the time It's anonymous.

[28:31] It's like the perfect storm. In our lives God is calling us to here As light in the Lord Is to Have a sharp contrast To living For pornography.

We are not just Called out of it. We're called to Expose it. Now this is where At the risk of Extending this too far I wanted to give you Reasons why You've got to give up porn.

In a book By Tim Chester It's called Closing the Window Very helpful book. In chapter one He gives 12 Reasons to give up porn.

Here's why I'm going To tell you this. I want to expose it For what it is. And so Out of a heart For that I'm going to list you About these reasons. They're not graphic Because Even the shameful Things done in darkness We're not going to utter.

But here are the effects. Porn will wreck Your view of sex. Porn wrecks Your view Men of women. You will objectify A woman.

[29:44] She becomes a thing Not an image bearer Of God. Porn wrecks Women's view Of themselves. The porn industry Abuses women. It's Sex trafficking.

Porn is sin Against your wife Husbands. It's a kind Of heart infidelity. Porn wrecks marriages. Instead of A father Being a shield To his family This becomes A conduit of sin Into his family. Do you see? Porn is enslaving. It makes A horrible taskmaster. It just sucks Joy out of Christians' lives.

Out of anybody's life. Porn erodes Character. It makes people Liars. Porn Wastes Time Energy And money.

Porn Weakens Your relationship With God. If you are Worshipping At the altar Of porn You are not Worshipping The living God. Porn Weakens Your service In the church.

[30:57] You know That You are struggling And it Undermines Your integrity. Weakens Your service In the church.

Porn Provokes God's wrath. This is Kind of Ephesians 5 6 Do you not Realize That the Wrath of God Is coming Because of Porn He hates It This is Nasty Stuff And what We're called As Christians Is we're called To separate Ourselves From the Darkness It's not Who we are Anymore And then We're to Expose The deeds Of darkness With holiness And so Instead of Wrecking Our view Of sex As light In the Lord We hold To a Biblical View Of sex Instead of Wrecking Our view Of women We uphold A biblical View of women That they are Made like men In the image Of God And intrinsically Valuable Instead of Embracing Something that Wrecks a Woman's View of Herself We hold To something That Breathes Life Into a Woman She sees Herself As God Sees her You see You know What happens When you Start living That way You start Believing These things Your life Takes a Turn It looks Different Instead of Being enslaved By sin You've been Freed from It There's Joy Instead of A weakened Relationship With God There is A vibrant Strong Relationship With God Instead of Weakening Your service In the Truth You are Strengthened In your Service Of the Church It is A sharp Contrast This is

An area In our Culture In which We stand Out We are Not to Participate In the Deeds of Darkness Rather We are To expose That It's not Who you Are It's Not Who you Are Can I Just say This If you're In the Room Right now And you're Struggling With Pornography Do you Know what Porn Isn't Stronger Than God's Grace God If you're If you're God's God's God Can get You Out Of It And if There's A way That I Can help You Just see Me Afterwards There are Men In this Room Right now Who've Been Delivered From It Our Sexuality Our Holy Lives Will Expose The Sexually Perverse Deeds Of Darkness All Around Us We Are Light In The Lord And

