

## Eph 5:6–10

**Read**, the passage below...

Ask the Lord to open your eyes, that you may behold wonderful things from His Word (Ps 119:18), and that you would receive His Word with humility—putting it into practice in your daily life (Jas 1:21–22).

### Passage:<sup>1</sup>

- 6 <sup>a</sup>Let no one **deceive** you with empty words, for because of these things <sup>b</sup>the wrath of God **comes** upon <sup>c</sup>the sons of disobedience.
- 7 Therefore do not **be** <sup>a</sup>partakers with them;
- 8 for <sup>a</sup>you **were** formerly <sup>b</sup>darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; **walk** as <sup>c</sup>children of Light
- 9 (for <sup>a</sup>the fruit of the Light consists in all <sup>b</sup>goodness and righteousness and truth),
- 10 <sup>1a</sup>trying to **learn** what **is** pleasing to the Lord.



**5:6 deceive you.** No Christian will be sinless in this present life, but it is dangerously deceptive for Christians to offer assurance of salvation to a professing believer whose life is characterized by persistent sin and who shows no shame for that sin or hunger for the holy and pure things of God. They are headed for wrath (2:2) and believers must not partner in any of their wickedness (v. 7).

**5:8 darkness ... Light.** "Darkness" describes the character of the life of the unconverted as void of truth and virtue in intellectual and moral matters (cf. 1Jn 1:5–7). The realm of darkness is presided over by the "power of darkness" (Lk 22:53; Col 1:13), who rules those headed for "outer darkness" (Mt 8:12; 2Pe 2:17). Tragically, sinners love the darkness (Jn 3:19–21). It is that very darkness from which salvation in Christ delivers sinners (see notes on Jn 8:12; Col 1:13; 1Pe 2:9; cf. Ps 27:1).

**5:9 fruit of the Light.** This speaks of that which is produced by walking in the light (cf. 1Jn 1:5–7), namely moral excellence of heart, righteous behavior, and truthfulness (honesty or integrity). See notes on Gal 5:22, 23.

**5:10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.** "Trying to learn" carries the idea of testing or proving to learn by clear and convincing evidence what is truly honoring to God. The point is that, as believers walk in the light of the truth, the knowledge of the Lord's will becomes clear. See Ro 12:1, 2 where Paul says the same thing, stating that it is only after presenting ourselves as living sacrifices to God that we can know His acceptable will. This relates to assurance of salvation also (see 1Pe 1:5–11).

### Context:

Paul continues in 5:3–21, with the practical implications of the instruction of Eph 4:1, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called..."

4:25–5:2 provided practical demonstration for the three-step process of sanctification that consists of: (1) laying aside the sinful patterns of thought and deed, associated with the old self; (2) letting the truth of Scripture renewed our minds; (3) putting on the new self after the image and example of Christ.

In 5:3f, Paul resumes his earlier instruction from 4:17, that we walk no longer just as the Gentiles do. He does so, still loosely employing the put-of-put-off pattern from the previous verses.

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Comments taken from MacArthur, John F., Jr. *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006).



- In vv3–21, Paul supplies a series of negative imperatives, interspersing them with the corresponding doctrinal truth to “renew our minds,” or the corresponding opposite practice of righteousness to “put on” (The first of these commands comes in 5:3 “do not allow immorality, impurity or greed to even be named among you”). List the remaining five negative imperatives, found in vv6–21.

(i).....

(ii).....

(iii).....

(iv).....

(v).....

### Exploring the Text:

As you answer the following questions, please take the time to read all the **cross references** at the end of the questions. These are provided to enrich your study experience.

- To be “deceived by empty words” stands in deliberate contrast to what earlier instruction? How do we obey that earlier instruction, which will guard us against being “deceived by empty words?”

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- Practically, what does this kind of deception look like? (cf. Gal 6:7–8; Col 2:8, 18; 1Tim 2:14; Jas 1:26)

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- vv6 says that “the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” By contrast, the parallel passage in Col 3:6 says that “the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience.” Is this “wrath” referring to a present or future reality? What does/will this look like? (cf. Rom 1:18–2:2, 1Thess 1:10)

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- Who is “them” in 5:7? Where else has Paul mentioned them in this letter?

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6. What does it look like to be partakers with *them*?

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7. Paul gives two reasons why we should not be like the unbelieving Gentiles. The first reason looks back to the previous verses, and the second reason looks forward to following verses. What are the two reasons. Which do you personally find more compelling? Why?

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8. Light is a rich and powerful metaphor that is used in the Bible to describe various aspects of Christianity. Read the verses supplied at the end of this question and list some of those aspects below. (Pr 4:18; Dan 12:2-3; Matt 5:14-16; Jn 1:4, 3:19, 5:33-35, 8:12, 12:36; Acts 26:16-18; Rom 13:12; 1Thess 5:4-8; 2Pet 1:19)

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9. How have the cross-references, supplied in question 8, enhanced your understanding of Eph 5:8-10?

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10. Practically, how can you grow in "*trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord?*"

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### *For Further Reflection:*

11. In which of your relationships (or situations) do you struggle to obey Jesus' command in **Matt 5:14-16**? What practical steps can you take to ensure increased obedience in those relationships (or situation)?

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### *Suggestions for Prayer:*

Thank God for the glorious future that awaits you with the saints in Light. Ask God to give you increased opportunities to proclaim His glory as you live a life that is markedly different to the world around you. Ask God to grant you opportunities to give a defence for the hope that is within you as you sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart (**1Pet 3:15**).

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