

Clearly Illuminated

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 17, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

***This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,
that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.***

~1 John 1:5 (ESV)

1) From Darkness to Light

- A) Walking in love (Ephesians 5:2) is wonderfully exemplified in the self-sacrificial life of Jesus Christ. On the one hand, walking in love (cf. 4:1) means rigorously and vigilantly rejecting participation in self-indulgent actions (5:3-4) which destroy proper worship and lead to God's judgment (5:5-7).
- B) On the other hand, walking in love means living as God's beloved children (5:1) and growing into our newly created identities, leading to Spirit-filled minds of "true righteousness and holiness" (4:23-24). When we are in 'partnership' (cf. 5:7) with Christ, our entire identity is spiritually transformed from darkness to light (5:8).
- C) The comparison between darkness and light is not simply an environmental contrast, like going from a dark room into a room with light. Rather, darkness is a state of being in which all those who are outside of Jesus Christ are hopelessly trapped. Those without Christ are not simply "in the dark," they are darkness (5:8).
- D) Darkness and light are positioned against one another, but by no means is the contrast considered equally balanced. The light is distinguished from darkness as being "in the Lord" (5:8). This is the miracle of what it means to be God's beloved children. We not only saved from darkness, we are entirely and completely changed and joined with the Light, Jesus Christ. 100% identity transformation.

2) Walking As Children of Light

- A) Within this context, the purpose for the detailed listing of numerous sins becomes more understandable. The sins which are listed in Scripture are not meant to be a "do not do these" list, as much as they are a horrific and haunting reminder of the darkness. Remember the darkness, the writer vividly lists, you were saved from all that, but you have been freed from it for walking as God's beloved children of light (5:8).
- B) Once again, the contrast with darkness is not passive. Part of being the "light of the Lord" is the imperative command which comes from our Christ-is-Light identity, "walk as children of light." This is an active walk with Christ, not a passive walk with Christ! This is our invitation to GET ENGAGED AND MOVE FORWARD!
- C) If darkness has self-indulgent "deadly fruit" (cf. 5:3-4), so will those who walk in light produce self-sacrificing "life giving fruit" (5:9). These are the good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them from earlier in the letter (2:10). Against the sinful triads (5:3-4), "good, right, and true" fruitfully shine. After the quick parentheses describing fruitful actions (see also Galatians 5:22-23), it's back to walking again.
- D) Following the command to "walk as children of light" (5:8), and the "fruitful character" which being light produces, is the intriguing "how-to-do-it" by which we fruitfully walk (5:10). Remarkably, as we walk, we also "try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord" (5:10), critically evaluating what we do in living pleasing God.
- E) Trying to discern carries an implicit idea of potential failure, difficulty, making every attempt – efforts to grow through failure. 'Trying to discern' also carries an implicit idea that while Scripture is wholly sufficient (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17), we still actively submit our redeemed minds and bodies to God's Spirit in continual, beautiful, and delightful response to the Gospel (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Philippians 1:9-10; and Romans 12:2).



Growth Group Guide

“clearly illuminated”
ephesians 5:8-10 • may 18-may 22

Ice Breaker!

Share an experience of when you or someone else acted foolishly in a dark setting, like in a movie theater or at night. Would you have acted the same way in the full light-of-day?

Looking Up!

In verse 8 Paul states that at one time we were darkness. Not just in the dark, but darkness itself. Try to recall this time in your life and the events or moments where God’s light invaded your darkness. Share your story of transformation with your group.

Using the Psalms or other Scripture as inspiration, write a short Psalm of praise to God for what He has done in your life (this could be done as a group activity in your Growth Group).

Leaning In!

How has being made light through the work of Christ impacted you? Let Paul’s words in Colossians 1:13-14 help you.

Paul implies that walking in darkness produces disastrous fruit (4:17-19). He goes on to say that walking as children of light will produce another kind of fruit, a fruit defined by goodness and righteousness and truthfulness (5:9). This is more completely fleshed out in Galatians 5:22-23. Write down and discuss how the fruitfulness of walking in the light impacts fellowship with one another.

Stepping Out!

Verse 10 instructs that we should try to discern what pleases God. This knowledge is gained by walking as children of light. In your personal walk, how does God show you what pleases Him? Think of worship in your:
Prayer life

Study of the Word

Witnessing to others

Respond!

This week, look for evidence of the light of Christ in your life. Take action and walk in light so that you may know what is good and pleasing to God. Meditate on Colossians 1:10.

This Week In Action & In Prayer!

Pray for opportunities to be light to those around you who are still in darkness. Pray for our church as we welcome our new youth pastor and his family. Pray for the fast approaching VBS ministry week.

