



LC STUDY GUIDE: DONE IN SYNC WITH THE SERMON SERIES “S7CK”

The Passage – Ephesians 5:1-14

For LCs meeting 3.23.14 – 4.6.14

These LC studies complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and are not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation). Not all of these questions need to be used in your LC meeting. Best to consider this a head-start to customize for your LC.

Big Idea: Learning to love

Ephesians 5:1-14 (NIV © 2011)

¹ Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Discussion Questions:

In the second half of chapter 4, Paul was telling the Ephesian believers to live out their new life that they gained when they began to be "in Christ," including the new ways in which they should relate to one another. The passage we are studying today describes a bit of what that new life looks like.

Why can it be difficult to relate to others the way Paul is exhorting believers to in this passage? *(Relating to others this way as a lifestyle—walking in love, living a pure life, avoiding coarse joking, obscenity, greed, etc.—is counter-cultural and completely radical to those who do not follow Christ. Those who are not following Christ may put us down, insult us, degrade us, etc. if we are trying to live in such a counter-cultural way)*

Think about the truth that Christ, in His love for us, gave Himself up sacrificially. In what way is relating to others in the way Paul describes imitating that kind of sacrificial love? *(When we live in a way that is counter-cultural, it will be difficult at times to “go against the grain” and to do what is right according to God. We must give of ourselves sacrificially to put aside our selfish desires/fleshly desires/etc. to put others before ourselves and love them more than we love ourselves. Fleshly desires may be the desire for sexual pleasure outside the context of marriage between one man and one woman, the desire for comfort, the desire to have one’s own way, the desire to complain, the desire to fit in with others or with society, etc.)*

Think of a situation in your life in which you had the sense that the Lord was calling you to “walk in love” in a way that called for sacrifice on your part. How did that make you feel? Is someone willing to briefly share about that?

If God's kingdom is alive in someone, the transformation that has occurred in them makes it so that they cannot continue in habitual sin patterns, such as fornication, uncleanness or covetousness (verse 5). Why is this the case? *(When we are transformed by Christ, we begin to increasingly want to please God through our attitudes and actions. The Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out and we begin to have victory over sin)*

Paul says in verse 8, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." In what ways can we live as children of light? *(See verse 9—the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth; growing in the knowledge of Christ and in holiness. *Ask group members to flesh that out—what does it look like on a practical level to live as children of light?)*

Read through verses 1-14. List all the positive phrases or words that describe followers of Christ and what they mean to you.

(Dearly loved children, God’s holy people, light, children of light)

What do these names say about our identity?

The exhortation that Paul gives in verse 14 is to Christians. What are the signs that a Christ follower is asleep? As you have been walking with Christ, can you remember a time when you were asleep?

(He or she falls into sinful patterns—aware or unaware, lack of goodness, righteousness, etc.)

How can the sleeping Christian be awakened? What wakes you up?

(The sleeping Christian may be awakened by the work of the Holy Spirit in their life—possibly through another believer in Christ: their words or prayers, maybe through Scripture reading or meditation or hearing the Word preached.)

In summary, what are some ways that the particulars of this passage help you “walk in the way of love?”

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- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
 - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
 - e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
 - f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.