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Ephesians Bible study

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Study of Ephesians Chapter 5

Bible Study: Ephesians 5

Walking in Love, Light, Wisdom & Covenant

Ephesians 5 moves from **identity into lifestyle**. Paul teaches that because we belong to Yahweh, our lives should increasingly reflect His character. The chapter addresses love, purity, speech, light and darkness, wisdom, the filling of the Ruach HaKodesh, worship, relationships, and marriage as a picture of **Yeshua and His people**.

1. Walk in Love — Ephesians 5:1–2

Ephesians 5:1–2

Therefore become imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father]; ² and walk *continually* in love [that is, value one another—practice empathy and compassion, unselfishly seeking the best for others], just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God [slain for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance.

Paul calls believers, as Yahweh's beloved children, to **imitate Him**. We are to “*walk continually in love*” just as Messiah loved us and gave Himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God.

The starting point is important: Paul does not say, “*Become worthy so that you can become beloved children.*” He begins with **belonging**. Because we are beloved children, we learn to resemble our Father.

Yeshua becomes our model of love. Biblical love is therefore more than emotion. It involves sacrifice, obedience, service, truth, forgiveness, patience, and sometimes laying aside our own preferences for another person's good.

Supporting Scripture

John 13:34–35 — Yeshua commands His disciples to love one another as He loved them.

1 John 4:10–11 — Love begins with Yahweh loving us, and His love becomes the foundation from which we love others.

Romans 5:8 — Yahweh demonstrated His love through Messiah while we were still sinners.

Reflection Questions

- Do I truly see myself as a **beloved child**, or am I still trying to earn Yahweh's acceptance?
- What would “walking in love” look like in my relationships this week?

- Is there someone I struggle to love because of disappointment, hurt, or resentment?
- Where might Yahweh be asking me to choose sacrificial love rather than self-protection?
- Does my understanding of love come primarily from my experiences with people or from the character of Yeshua?

2. Purity: What We Allow to Grow in Us — Ephesians 5:3–7

Ephesians 5:3–7

³ But sexual immorality and all [moral] impurity [indecent, offensive behavior] or greed must not even be hinted at among you, as is proper among saints [for as believers our way of life, whether in public or in private, reflects the validity of our faith]. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse [obscene or vulgar] joking, *because* such things are not appropriate [for believers]; but instead speak of your thankfulness [to God]. ⁵ For be sure of this: no immoral, impure, or greedy person—for that one is [in effect] an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God [for such a person places a higher value on something other than God].

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty arguments [that encourage you to sin], for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience [those who habitually sin]. ⁷ So do not participate *or* even associate with them [in the rebelliousness of sin].

Paul warns that sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscene speech, foolish talking, and crude joking should not characterize Yahweh's people. Instead, our mouths and lives should increasingly express **thanksgiving**.

He also warns believers not to be deceived by words that make darkness appear harmless.

This passage is not merely a list of forbidden behaviors. Paul is contrasting **two kingdoms and two ways of living**.

The question becomes:

What am I allowing to shape my appetites, thoughts, conversations, desires, and values?

Supporting Scripture

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 — Our bodies belong to Yahweh and are temples of the Ruach HaKodesh.

Philippians 4:8 — We are encouraged to intentionally dwell on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise.

Psalms 51:10 — David asks Yahweh to create a clean heart within him.

Matthew 12:34 — Yeshua teaches that the mouth reveals what fills the heart.

Reflection Questions

- What has been feeding my thoughts lately?
- Are there things I have gradually normalized that Yahweh may be asking me to reconsider?
- What does my speech reveal about what is happening inside my heart?
- Is there an area where I have confused grace with permission to remain unchanged?
- How could thanksgiving replace complaining, crude conversation, jealousy, or dissatisfaction in my life?

3. You Are Light — Ephesians 5:8–14

Ephesians 5:8–14

⁸ For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light [live as those who are native-born to the Light] ⁹ (for the fruit [the effect, the result] of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ trying to learn [by experience] what is pleasing to the Lord [and letting your lifestyles be examples of what is most acceptable to Him—your behavior expressing gratitude to God for your salvation]. ¹¹ Do not participate in the worthless *and* unproductive deeds of darkness, but instead expose them [by exemplifying personal integrity, moral courage, and godly character]; ¹² for it is disgraceful even to mention the things that such people practice in secret. ¹³ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light [of God’s precepts], for ^[a] it is light that makes everything visible. ¹⁴ For this reason He says,

“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine [as dawn] upon you *and* give you light.”

Paul makes a remarkable statement. He does not simply say that believers **have** light.

He says that although they were formerly darkness, now they are **light in the Lord**, and therefore they should *“walk as children of Light.”*

The fruit of light is seen in goodness, righteousness, and truth.

Believers are encouraged to learn what pleases Yahweh rather than participating in fruitless works of darkness. Light exposes what darkness tries to conceal.

Paul then gives the awakening call:

“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine [as dawn] upon you.” — Ephesians 5:14 AMP

This is a call to **spiritual awakening**.

There may be areas where we are physically functioning but spiritually sleeping—going through routines while losing sensitivity to Yahweh's voice.

Supporting Scripture

John 8:12 — Yeshua declares that He is the Light of the world.

Matthew 5:14–16 — Yeshua calls His followers the light of the world and tells them not to hide that light.

Psalms 119:105 — Yahweh's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

1 Peter 2:9 — Yahweh calls His people out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Reflection Questions

- What does it practically mean for me to **walk as a child of light**?
- Is there anything in my life that I prefer to keep hidden?
- Where might I have become spiritually sleepy?
- What has Yahweh recently been bringing into the light?
- When conviction comes, do I experience it as rejection—or as Yahweh inviting me into greater freedom?
- What would spiritual awakening look like in my life right now?

4. Walk Carefully and Wisely — Ephesians 5:15–17

Ephesians 5:15–17

¹⁵ Therefore see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people], ¹⁶ ^[b] making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish *and* thoughtless, but understand *and* firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is.

Paul tells believers to pay careful attention to how they live—not as unwise people but as wise people.

He tells them to make good use of their opportunities because the days are evil. Rather than living foolishly, they should seek to **understand the will of Yahweh**.

Wisdom requires intentional living.

Not every opportunity is an assignment.

Not every open door comes from Yahweh.

Not everything urgent is important.

Not everything good is something Yahweh has asked **you** to carry.

Biblical wisdom therefore requires discernment.

Supporting Scripture

James 1:5 — If we lack wisdom, we can ask Yahweh, who gives generously.

Proverbs 3:5–6 — Trust Yahweh rather than relying entirely upon your own understanding.

Romans 12:2 — A renewed mind helps us discern Yahweh's will.

Colossians 4:5 — Walk wisely and make the most of opportunities.

Reflection Questions

- Am I living intentionally or simply responding to whatever demands my attention?
- Where am I spending time without producing meaningful fruit?
- What has Yahweh actually entrusted to me in this season?
- Am I carrying responsibilities He never gave me?
- How do I normally make decisions—fear, pressure, people's expectations, impulse, or prayerful wisdom?
- What might Yahweh be asking me to prioritize differently?

5. Be Filled With the Ruach HaKodesh — Ephesians 5:18–21

Ephesians 5:18–21

¹⁸ **Do not get drunk with wine, for that is wickedness (corruption, stupidity), but be filled with the [Holy] Spirit *and* constantly guided by Him.** ¹⁹ **[c]Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,**

[offering praise by] singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ being subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul contrasts being controlled by wine with being **filled with the Spirit**.

A Spirit-filled community is characterized by worship, gratitude, encouragement, and humility. Believers speak to one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody to Yahweh in their hearts and continually giving thanks.

The picture is not simply of one dramatic spiritual experience.

It is a **way of living continually influenced by the Ruach HaKodesh**.

What fills us eventually influences us.

Supporting Scripture

Galatians 5:22–23 — The fruit of the Spirit becomes visible through love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

John 14:26 — The Ruach HaKodesh teaches and reminds believers of Yeshua's words.

Romans 8:14 — Those led by the Spirit of God are His children.

Acts 4:31 — The early believers were filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and spoke Yahweh's Word boldly.

Reflection Questions

- What currently has the greatest influence over my emotional and spiritual life?
- What am I repeatedly “filling” myself with?
- Do I intentionally make room for the Ruach HaKodesh?
- Is gratitude a regular part of my life?
- What changes in me when worship becomes part of my response to difficulty?
- Which fruit of the Spirit might Yahweh currently be developing in me?

6. Relationships That Reflect Yeshua — Ephesians 5:21

Ephesians 5:21

Before Paul specifically addresses husbands and wives, he gives an important principle for the believing community:

“being subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.” — Ephesians 5:21 AMP

Healthy biblical relationships should therefore not be built around domination, manipulation, fear, or control.

They should reflect **reverence for Yeshua**.

This creates a relational posture of humility, honor, responsibility, service, and consideration for one another.

Supporting Scripture

Philippians 2:3–4 — Consider the interests of others rather than living only for yourself.

Galatians 5:13 — Through love, serve one another.

Mark 10:42–45 — Yeshua contrasts worldly domination with Kingdom leadership expressed through service.

Reflection Questions

- Do my relationships reflect humility or control?
- Can I listen without immediately defending myself?
- Can I honor another person without abandoning healthy boundaries?
- Do I use Scripture to serve others or to control them?
- Where might Yahweh be teaching me greater relational humility?

7. Wives and Covenant Response — Ephesians 5:22–24

Ephesians 5:22–24

²² **Wives, be *subject* ^[d]to your own husbands, as [a service] to the Lord.** ²³ **For the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the church, Himself *being* the Savior of the body.** ²⁴ **But as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives should be subject to their husbands in everything [respecting both their position as protector and their responsibility to God as head of the house].**

Paul addresses wives within the covenant picture of marriage, relating marriage to the relationship between Messiah and His assembly.

This passage needs to be read together with **verse 21** and everything that follows about the husband's responsibility to love sacrificially.

Biblical submission should never be used as justification for coercion, intimidation, violence, exploitation, or tolerating abuse.

The broader picture is **covenant order under Yeshua**, not the value of one person being greater than another.

Supporting Scripture

Galatians 3:28 — In Messiah, male and female share equal standing before Yahweh.

1 Peter 3:7 — Husbands are commanded to honor their wives.

Genesis 2:18 — Woman is created as a corresponding helper suitable for man.

Reflection Questions

- What have I been taught about biblical submission?
- Has that understanding produced peace and covenant responsibility—or fear and control?
- Can I distinguish submission from passivity?
- How does verse 21 affect the way I understand verses 22–24?
- What would healthy covenant partnership look like?

8. Husbands: Love as Yeshua Loved — Ephesians 5:25–30

Ephesians 5:25–30

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives [seek the highest good for her and surround her with a caring, unselfish love], just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify the church, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word [of God], ²⁷ so that [in turn] He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy [set apart for God] and blameless. ²⁸ Even so husbands should *and* are morally obligated to love their own wives as [being in a sense] their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own body, but [instead] he nourishes *and* protects and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members (parts) of His body.

Paul's instruction to husbands is profound:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” — Ephesians 5:25
AMP

The standard for the husband is therefore not worldly authority.

It is **Yeshua's sacrificial love**.

Yeshua does not exploit His bride. He gives Himself for her.

Paul describes Messiah sanctifying and cleansing His people and presenting them in holiness. Husbands are then told to love their wives as their own bodies because nobody who loves his wife should treat her suffering as irrelevant to himself.

Supporting Scripture

John 15:13 — Greater love lays down its life for another.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 — Love is patient, kind, not self-seeking, and does not insist on its own way.

Colossians 3:19 — Husbands are commanded to love their wives and not become harsh toward them.

1 Peter 3:7 — Husbands should live with their wives with understanding and honor.

Reflection Questions

- Does my understanding of leadership resemble Yeshua?
- Do I associate authority with control or responsibility?
- What does sacrificial love look like practically?
- How does Yeshua treat His Bride when she is weak?
- Do my closest relationships experience me as safe, loving, truthful, and honoring?

9. The Mystery of Covenant — Ephesians 5:31–33

Ephesians 5:31–33

³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined [and be faithfully devoted] to his wife, and the two shall become ^[e]one flesh. ³² This mystery [of two becoming one] is great; but I am speaking with reference to [the relationship of] Christ and the church. ³³ However, each man among you [without exception] is to love his wife as his very own self [with behavior worthy of respect and esteem, always seeking the best for her with an attitude of lovingkindness], and the wife [must see to it] that she respects *and* delights in her husband [that she notices him and prefers him and treats him with loving concern, treasuring him, honoring him, and holding him dear].

Paul returns to Genesis:

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined [and be faithfully devoted] to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” — Ephesians 5:31 AMP

Then Paul reveals that marriage points beyond itself:

“This mystery [of two becoming one] is great; but I am speaking with reference to [the relationship of] Christ and the church.” — Ephesians 5:32 AMP

Biblical marriage becomes a **covenant picture**.

The Bridegroom does not abandon His Bride.

He loves her.

He gives Himself for her.

He sanctifies her.

He remains covenantally faithful.

Paul closes by emphasizing **love and respect** within marriage.

Supporting Scripture

Genesis 2:24 — The original foundation of the one-flesh covenant.

Matthew 19:4–6 — Yeshua returns to Genesis when teaching about marriage.

Revelation 19:7–9 — Scripture culminates with the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Hosea 2:19–20 — Yahweh uses marriage language to describe covenant faithfulness.

Reflection Questions

- What does covenant mean to me?
- Have previous relational wounds distorted my understanding of covenant?
- What does Yeshua's relationship with His people teach me about faithfulness?
- Do I approach relationships primarily through covenant or self-protection?
- What does love require from me?
- What does healthy respect require from me?