

# Living in the Light of Christ

## TEACHING NOTES



### Christ called us out of our darkness (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Walking in darkness (verses 17-19)

The way forward (verses 20-24)

*"It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." – C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory*

Speaking the truth in love (verses 25-32)

### KEY VERSES

Ephesians 4:22-24, Ephesians 5:1-2,  
Ephesians 5:8, 15

### KEY THEMES

Life surrendered to the Spirit  
Imitating Christ

INTRODUCTION

INNOCENCE

CONSCIENCE

HUMAN GOVT.

PROMISE

LAW

GRACE

**Christ called us into His light (Ephesians 5:1-20)**

Walk in love (verses 1-2)

Don't walk in step with the wicked (verses 3-7)

Walk as children of light (verses 8-14)

Walking wisely (verses 15-20)

**Living in the light of Christ**

**Lesson objective:** *To gain a deeper understanding of what it means to live the new life we have in Christ*

## PERSONAL STUDY

### Session 1

#### Prepare your heart and mind

Take a moment to pray Psalm 131:1-2: *“Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don’t concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother’s milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me.”*

#### Reflecting Christ

*“Immaturity is noisy with anxiety-fueled self-importance. Maturity is quietly content to pursue a life of obedient humility.”* –Eugene Peterson, *Practice Resurrection*

Who stands in the spotlight of your life? Many people try to stand in the spotlight of their own lives. They aren’t hard to spot. Often they display their over-inflated egos by being impatient with even the smallest inconveniences. Our culture often praises self-centered behavior as normal and healthy. Yet God has not called anyone to be his or her own center. Our lives are meant to be Christ-centered. A growing Christian is someone who puts Jesus in the spotlight. What we say or do should draw attention to Him. Ephesians 4:17-5:20 shows us the path to Christ-centered maturity, empowered by the Holy Spirit, leading us to love others like Jesus.



#### Read Ephesians 4:17-5:20

How would you compare the morals of Paul’s day with the morals of our culture today?

Christians are not defined by the *negatives* (what they don’t do), but by the *positives* of who God says they are. The *negatives* simply make room in our lives for God’s Spirit to grow us into Christlikeness.

In Ephesians 4:17-5:20, how are believers described?

What *negatives* in the passage stand out to you most? How might the Holy Spirit use these to help you move toward Christlikeness?

Two of the earlier themes in Ephesians 4 were living a life worthy of our calling (v. 1) and the Church growing and building itself up in love (v. 16). What verses or phrases in Ephesians 4:17-5:20 do you see building on these earlier themes?

How have your attitudes, thoughts, and actions changed since turning your life over to God?

If you were to make one phrase or verse from this passage your slogan for the coming week, what would it be?

**Key verse**

Put to memory Ephesians 5:8. Place these verses somewhere you'll see them throughout the day.

*For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!*

**Prayer time**

Spend time thanking God for making you a child of light. Ask for the Holy Spirit to continue to help you live like Christ. Pray for someone you know who is living in darkness.

## Session 2

### Prepare your heart and mind

Begin this time of study with prayer. Ask God to help you understand what He has for you and focus on Him. Ask Him to bless this time by providing clarity and revealing truth.

### Life surrendered to the Holy Spirit

The new life we have been given in Christ is only possible through the life-giving power of God's Spirit working in each of us. Our human effort to become more like Christ accomplishes nothing. Only God's Spirit can produce the life-change we all desire. This is hard for us to understand because in almost every aspect of our daily lives we can only see results by putting in effort. This is not how it works when it comes to spiritual growth. An essential part of our relationship with God is to constantly remind ourselves that He will change us. As we surrender to what He shows us needs to change, we need to depend on His power to live differently.



### Read Ephesians 4:21-24

*Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

How would you describe the process of renewing your mind? What is involved?

What keeps you from renewing your mind on a more regular basis?

### Know, Consider, Surrender

The Holy Spirit will help you in the process of renewing your mind as you work through these steps. He needs to help you renew your mind. Let's try this out with the issue of anger. You may want to use something different that you might struggle with more like being patient or kind. Feel free.

**Read Ephesians 4:26-27****Know**

As believers Christ has set us free from the power of sin. We no longer have to give in to anger. We have a choice: surrender to anger or surrender to the Spirit of God.

What are a few ways that surrendering to anger can be destructive?

What truths can you recall from God's Word about the pitfalls of anger? How do these truths help you deal with frustrating situations? (*An example to get you started is Proverbs 15:1.*)

**Consider**

Think of a situation that triggered anger or frustration for you. Why did you respond in a certain way? What did not happen the way you wanted it to?

Consider what God says about surrendering to the Holy Spirit. How might God want you to respond differently in these situations in the future?

As you consider the issue you struggle with, sit quietly before the Lord asking Him to show you truth from His Word and give you His perspective.

**Surrender**

God wants to change the way we think and then respond the way Christ would. We need to surrender to His Spirit to help us grow in these areas of weakness. As we look to God for His strength and courage to change, we will see growth in our lives. Consider the example Jesus set in Luke 22:42 when He surrendered His will to God's plan.

What areas are you struggling to surrender? Why?



### Read Ephesians 5:1-2

*Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

In Matthew 5:13-16 we are called to be salt and light to a world who desperately needs to discover the hope that Jesus provides for those who will trust in Him.

Here is a neat reminder (developed by C. Mallory) of practical ways we can be intentional about being salt and light in our world.

**L** = Love your neighbor

**I** = Imitate Christ

**G** = Get to know others

**H** = Hospitality - invite people into your home

**T** = Tell them about Jesus

### Key verse

Continue working to memorize Ephesians 5:8. Attempt to write it out from memory:

### Prayer time

Close this time of study in prayer. Ask God to help you see what you have in Christ: love, hope, direction, and purpose, just to name a few. Ask Him to help you remember to depend on the Holy Spirit for the power to live differently as you surrender to Him.

## PARENT GUIDE

### Who We Were/Who We Are

Read Ephesians 5:8-13 together.

Explain to your kids that we are given a choice: we can keep on living in the darkness that once defined us, or we can live in light that matches who we are now. God loves us no matter what, but He wants us to live in the light for our own good and for the good of others.

### Activity *(from Focus on the Family)*

Materials: flash light and smartphone

After sunset one evening, place your phone somewhere not easily found and play some music at a volume barely audible. Turn off all the lights. Lead your child to another area of the house and turn on the flashlight. Ask your child to listen carefully for the sound of the music, as you walk through the house to find the noise. After you have found the source of the music, point out that the flashlight helped you see where you were going.

### Discussion

Ask what would have happened if you didn't have the flashlight. *(Your child may talk about tripping, bumping into things, getting lost or being afraid.)*

Read Psalm 119:105 together.

Share with your kids that living in the light of God's Word is best for us – it guides us and lights our path, much like the flashlight did when navigating through the house.

Read Ephesians 4:32 together.

Share with your kids that God will shine His light through us when our hearts are kind, care for those who are in pain, and can forgive others instead of making them pay for what we think they owe.

Remind your kids that we are children of God, children of the light, so we shouldn't live like we don't know the light. Ask them to think of one way we can be light to someone around us.



**ADDITIONAL STUDY****Read Ephesians 6:10-17****Observation**

*(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)*

**Interpretation**

*(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context?  
What questions do I have?)*

**Application**

*(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)*

