


Ephesians

Motivations for Godly Living
Ephesians 5:5-21

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Pastor Doug spoke of "inconsistencies" in our lives (see the **Sermon Summary**). Tell about a time when your children or a friend gave you an inconsistent alibi that didn't pass the "smell test".

How about you—when have you given an explanation of your actions that "just didn't add up"? In retrospect, what do you now wish you'd done in that situation—and why?

- Rank these inconsistencies in terms of seriousness of their consequences ("4" being most serious):

___ It is inconsistent to adopt a sinful lifestyle, knowing that it will bring God's certain judgment.

___ It is inconsistent to live in a way which is contrary to your true identity.

___ It is inconsistent to claim to be wise yet live in a foolish manner.

___ It is inconsistent to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit yet allow worldly influences to control you.

Compare your ranking with that of others. Where your rankings disagree, try to argue **your** case.

Which statement received the overall highest rating from the group?

Review the portion of today's passage which served as the basis for that particular statement.

Make a list of the phrases which teach that consequence. **Why** are those consequences justified?

Does that consequence concern you **personally**? Why or why not? **Should** it?

Extra Credit Question: Re-rank those inconsistencies in terms of how serious you think **God** views them from **his own** perspective—how they impact **him** personally. (Need help? See Matthew 22:36-38.) Did your rankings change? If so, what does that tell you about your perspective on the universe?

Application-Challenge

- **Live in a way that is consistent with who you are in Christ.** Remember, you are not who you used to be, so you must not live the way that you used to live.
- **In your walk of faith, draw upon the power of the Holy Spirit.** Allow him to express his life through you. And remember, the Holy Spirit always draws upon your knowledge of the Word of God.

Sermon Summary

In this portion of his letter Paul, has been talking about the importance of living in a manner that is consistent with who we are “in Christ.” To encourage us to live this way, Paul gives us **four motivations for godly living**.

I. It is inconsistent to adopt a sinful lifestyle, knowing that it will bring God's certain judgment (v. 5-7).

While it may be true that many immoral people get away with their immorality on earth, they will not escape the consequences of their choices forever, for God is a righteous judge. Such people will have no share in God's future kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9–11); all true believers have an inheritance in Christ (1:3–14). Just as God will judge sin in the unbeliever, so God will judge sin in the believer—it just doesn't impact our eternal destiny (Hebrews 12:5–11). If someone tells you that God is so loving that he just overlooks sin, don't listen to them. God will judge such people. Yes, God is love, but he also is holy. Out of his love, he sent a savior; out of his holiness, we need a savior! It is inconsistent for the objects of God's love (v. 2), that's us, to become fellow partakers with the objects of God's wrath (v. 6) by joining in their immoral conduct. Don't partner with such people! Now, certainly we associate with those who don't share our faith—in fact we must. We are to act as agents of light towards them. What we must not do is join them in their ungodly lifestyle and choices.

II. It is inconsistent to live in a way which is contrary to your true identity (v. 8-14). Believers formerly *were* darkness, but now *are* light in the Lord, and therefore we must walk as children of light. Note that Paul *doesn't* say, “Formerly you *walked* in darkness, but now you are to *walk* in the light.” No, what he says is much more instructive, as it ties into our identity, both then and now. Our behavior reflects who we are. And in v. 9 we learn what this “light” behavior looks like: “all goodness and righteousness and truth”. This is in contrast to v. 5 where “dark” behavior is “immorality, impurity, covetousness and idolatry”. Believers must “learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (v. 10). We cannot consistently do God's will if we don't know it. Are you trying to learn what is pleasing to God? Are you spending regular time with God in his Word? It is in his Word that God reveals his will. Paul takes his admonition a step further: not only must we refuse to participate in evil, we must expose it for what it is (v. 11-13). Non-participation in evil is not enough; we must have the courage to call it what it is—in a loving way. Too often, Christians don't expose and rebuke evil because they don't have their own moral and spiritual houses in order. We are too much like the world and we don't want to be out-of-step with our culture. Christian parents often are reluctant, if not unwilling, to call premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion and transgenderism what they are. But calling something “sin” does not negate God's love for the one committing it.

III. It is inconsistent to claim to be wise yet live in a foolish manner (v. 15-17). Wisdom and godly living should go together. Wisdom is practical, teaching us how to behave: no longer be according to the dictates of the world, the flesh and the devil (2:1–3), not as our non-Christian friends do (4:17), but instead in a “worthy” manner, “as children of light” (4:1; 5:1; 5:8). We are to be ready to learn about future dangers or needs, with the implication of preparedness to respond appropriately. Living as we do in an evil world, wise Christians must make the most of their time. Wise Christians understand God's will. We understand God's specific will (who to marry, which job to take, etc.) through careful thought and prayer while consulting with mature believers. God's general will is the same for all of us: that we become like Christ, that we love our neighbor, that we forgive as ourselves have been forgiven. If you'd like to read about knowing God's will, any of these books would serve you well: *Knowing God's Will* by Blaine Smith; *Decision Making and the Will of God* by Gary Friesen; *Just Do Something* by Kevin DeYoung; or *Step by Step* by James C. Petty.

IV. It is inconsistent to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit yet allow worldly influences to control you (v. 18-21). God gave us the Holy Spirit to empower us to live godly lives. But for that to happen, we must allow Him to control us rather than things such as alcohol. The Greek verb “be filled” is present, passive, imperative. The present tense means “keep on being filled by the Spirit.” The passive voice means we submit to the control of the Holy Spirit. The imperative mood means that this is a command, not a suggestion. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not an option for believers. It is a mandate. It is God's general will for all believers. We cannot fulfill God's will for our lives apart from being filled with His Spirit. John MacArthur notes: “If we do not obey this command, we cannot obey any other—simply because we cannot do any of God's will apart from God's Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is resident in every true Christian (Romans 8:9), but He is not president of every Christian's life. The control of the Holy Spirit leads to a joyful life (5:19), a thankful life (5:20), and a submitted life (5:21).

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic.
Let's use it to learn about motivation in the Christian life...

Monday—Read John 4:34 & 8:29. What do you learn from Jesus' motivation in life?

Tuesday—Read Philippians 2:5-8. What is the connection between Jesus' motivation and ours?

Wednesday—Read Proverbs 16:1-3 & 2 Corinthians 5:15. Are you free to live your own life?

Thursday—Read Proverbs 4:21 & 24:12. Do we "make" Jesus Lord, or *is* he Lord of all?

Friday—Read Mark 7:20-23 & Proverbs 4:23. From where do your motives originate?

Saturday—Read Philippians 1:21. To what are you giving your life? Is it worth it?

Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: _____ Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]