

A Life of Love and Thankfulness

Contrasting Pure and Impure

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.” - Ephesians 5:1-7

1. Christians must avoid impure actions or anything that even hints at impurity. (How far can I go and not sin?)
2. Christians must avoid impure speech. These things are “out of place” for those who follow Jesus.
3. Instead, replace inappropriate speech with thanksgiving.
4. And watch out! There are “Christians” who will try to tell you differently! Don’t get too CLOSE to these people!

Contrasting Light and Darkness

“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) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” - Ephesians 5:8-14

- No one was born a believer and so all of us know what it was to be in darkness. (We’ve experienced different levels of darkness!)
- But now, you walk in God’s light, so live like it.

How?

1. Don’t participate in the things done in darkness! (v. 11)
2. Help others understand what is dark and what is light. (v. 11)
3. Don’t talk about the “dark things” that people do. (v. 12)
4. Wake up and realize what you have as a believer! (v. 14)

Contrasting Wisdom and Foolishness

“Be very careful, then how you live — not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” - Ephesians 5:15-20

- If you want to be wise, take advantage of every moment.
- Foolish people don’t know to think about God’s plan.
- If you want to get drunk, then get drunk on the Holy Spirit.
- Speak the Scriptures; sing in your heart; and always give thanks for everything.

The Value of Thankfulness —

1. It helps you replace inappropriate thoughts and speech.
 - What if every time you became angry, you chose instead to be thankful for that person or thing?
 - What if every time you looked at what someone else has, you instead were thankful for what you have?
2. It helps you to “wake up” and count the blessings that you have received as a follower of Christ.
 - *What is the Lord’s will for you?* That you be filled with the Spirit and be thankful!
 - *Can you begin to change the way you view your daily blessings?*
3. It helps you get a proper perspective on life itself.
 - “...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything.” - Ephesians 5:20

There are four kinds of people:

- Those who are not thankful (many Christians in this group!)
- Those who are thankful after a blessing.
- Those who are thankful in the midst of trouble.
- Those who are thankful when it seems that the battle is lost.

“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed... ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all...” - 2 Corinthians 4:8,9,17

*SO, in all honesty with yourself, which kind of person are YOU?
I challenge you to move up one level this year!*

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