

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

How to Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk
Ephesians 4:17-5:14

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Give the list found on the last page of this Bible study and worship guide to the youth as a part of their application time at the end of the Bible Study Time.

Worship Time Leader:

Provide a copy of 2 Thessalonians 2: 16-17 NIV to a reader who will conclude the sharing time.

Music Sources:

Living for Jesus, *The Worship Hymnal* #545, CCLI # 20687, Public Domain

In Moments Like These, *The Worship Hymnal* #451, CCLI #10082

The Joy of the Lord, *The Worship Hymnal*, #569, CCLI #14569

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

How to Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk

Focal Text

Ephesians 4:17-5:11

Background Text

Ephesians 4:17-5:14

Main Idea

Christians are to demonstrate their new life in Christ in all of their activities and relationships.

Question to Explore

What do people see in you that would indicate to them that you are a Christian?

Teaching Aim

To help participants individually decide on at least one action they will take to live the Christian life more faithfully.

Gathering together:

Opening Prayer

Living for Jesus, *The Worship Hymnal* #545, CCLI # 20687, Public Domain

In Moments Like These, *The Worship Hymnal* #451, CCLI #10082

First thoughts:

The reader may tell of the following incident. Recently a lady commented about her trip to Frankfurt, Germany. She experienced that city as being in complete darkness—morally and spiritually. She had been sent there with others in her large metropolitan church to witness for Christ. She believed she had come to the right place because the city was a giant field for her evangelistic work. To her, Frankfurt was totally black. It was an evil city. Her friend had visited the same place some years before. The friend remembers sitting in a side-walk cafe, drinking a coke, and thinking, “What a beautiful city! It is so full of light, and happiness.” How strange that two people would characterize a city so differently.

Measured by the standards Paul lays down in our passage, Frankfurt may not have looked so good. That might be true of any city. However, before one could make that judgment one would need to get to know the people, know how they lived, what their pleasures were, how the families lived, how their children were trained. Short time visitors do not have this opportunity. Judgements are often made too quickly and they may be quite superficial. But today we will examine the culture of Ephesus in the first Christian century. Paul felt it was certainly less than ideal. As we think of that culture, may we examine our own town or city and ask ourselves what would be necessary for our city to be a place which would glorify God.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

How to Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk

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Question to Explore

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Teaching Aim

To help participants individually decide on at least one action they will take to live the Christian life more faithfully.

Introduction to your personal study:

I had a tough genetics class during my junior year at university. I recall asking a classmate whether he thought our genetics professor was a Christian or not. He responded, “I think so, he has done nothing to make me think he isn’t a Christian.” Soon afterward I came across a poster which posed the thought provoking question, “If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?” I had to ask myself which is the correct standard:

- 1) a negative one which assumes that everyone we meet are Christians until they act or speak in an “unchristian” manner; or
- 2) a positive one in which those who claim the Name of Christ demonstrates their new life in Christ in their daily living.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

This section of the letter to the Ephesians builds on the theological foundation Paul set out in the first three chapters. The beginning of chapter four emphasizes the unity in the body of believers and our need to grow to maturity in Him. Paul continues to explore how our belief in Christ will determine the way believers should live.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Ephesians 4:17-19 Show Your Raising!

Paul begins this section of his letter by admonishing the believers in Ephesus on how to live. Much like modern parents advising their children how to act before a public gathering, Paul urges these Ephesian “children” to remember who they are and Whose they are; and the family of God they represent. They are to stop walking like unbelievers in the “futility of their thinking.” Those who are ignorant of God’s grace, insensitive, blinded and confused simply stumble through life. One gets the picture of an endless pursuit but no fulfillment. Like a big bit of cotton candy sinful life doesn’t satisfy. It may provide a brief sweet sensation with a lot of sticky residue to clean up!

Paul warns that continued imbibing in sin produces callous unbelievers who are no longer sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Sin hardens their hearts, then darkens their understanding, providing further separation from God in an ever downward spiral. Their lives are marked by a continual lust for every kind of impurity and a growing desire for sin. The Apostle Peter, in his second letter sadly notes that in such a state one becomes a slave to depravity. Once sin has mastered a person, he or she becomes chained to sinful whims. 2 Peter 2:19.

Ephesians 4:20-24 Take Off the Old, Put on the New

In contrast to the deceitful, insidious trap of sin is the good news of Ephesians 4:20-24. Jesus’ way is different! Paul reminds the Ephesian believers that they came to know Christ by the truth in Jesus, the truth that sets them free. John 8:32. Their former way of life, with its deceitful desires must be discarded like a dirty shirt. He calls for a new attitude of the mind, and challenges believers to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Genesis 1:27, Eph. 2:10. The believer in Christ is in fact a wholly new creature, old things have passed away; new things have come. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Ephesians 4:25-32 Practical Advice

Believers must act like the new creatures we are. First, Paul emphasizes the need to be honest with everyone in the body. We must be cautious not to let the devil get even a foothold in our fellowship through unresolved conflict. Dishonesty and theft has no place in the body of believers. Rather, each believer needs to work at something profitable, so each will have something to share.

The most powerful weapon we have, our tongues, need to be harnessed to build up the body (edification) not tear it down. See James 3. We are to be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit by our actions or words. No parent likes to receive those phone calls telling of the wrong doing of his or her child. Yet most parents are very glad to be told so that the behaviour can be addressed. In the same way we need to hold each other accountable when we become aware of a fellow believer's struggles. Paul exhorts believers to get rid of every form of malice and ugly acts which were associated with the old selves. As new creatures in one Body, we are to be kind and compassionate to one another. Colossians 3:12-13. Each believer stands before Christ only because He has chosen to pour His forgiveness on us. Therefore, we are to freely forgive with just such a measure as Christ forgave us. Matthew 10:8; Luke 6:37-38.

Ephesians 5:1-2 Imitate Christ

Paul sums up his charge to believers in this: Be like Christ. Before the world was even formed, God chose each believer as His dearly beloved child. Eph. 1:4-5. Our lives should be characterized by love. In thanksgiving for the life Jesus gave as a fragrant offering and sacrifice on our behalf, each believer is to daily present himself or herself as a living sacrifice to God. Romans 12:1-2. As living sacrifices, we become a fragrant offering both to God and to other people. 2 Corinthians 2:16-17.

Ephesians 5:3-7 Pure and Spotless, No Hint of Impurity

Any animal sacrificed to the Lord had to be perfect, without any defect, to be accepted. Leviticus 22:17-25. Jesus, the Spotless Lamb, died for each of us. 1 Peter 1:18-19. Therefore no impurity should be found in the body of Christ. Paul specifies that not even a hint of sexual immorality, impurity or greed is proper for God's holy people. Paul notes that not only actions, but the believer's words should be above reproach. No obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking is acceptable; rather believers should speak words of thanksgiving. In the words of the Psalmist, "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies." Psalm 34:13.

Paul compares an immoral, impure or greedy person with an idolater. Such a person has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Believers should be on guard against those who try to tempt us into a lesser standard of conduct. We should especially avoid any type of "partnership" with those who have excluded themselves from the kingdom by their impurity.

Ephesians 5:8-14 Live as Children of the Light

As unbelievers we were lost in darkness, not only in darkness but Paul notes we were darkness itself. But now we are “light in the Lord!” The fruit of light is all goodness, righteousness and truth, the total opposites of the fruit of darkness. We are charged to live as children of the light and to discover what pleases the Lord. 1 John 5-7. Paul cautions that we are to have nothing to do with “fruitless deeds of darkness.” Our only focus on such deeds is to expose them to the Light. See John 3:19-21.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Convince your group of the following through teaching this Bible study!

God has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9. Secrecy is a mark of the disobedient’s shameful activity. While sin hides in darkness, we are to shout to the housetops! Paul concludes this passage by quoting what is probably an early baptismal hymn which echoes the call from Isaiah 60:1: “Get up and live in the light!”.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

How to Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.

Focal Text

Ephesians 4:17-5:11

Background Text

Ephesians 4:17-5:14

Main Idea

Christians are to demonstrate their new life in Christ in all of their activities and relationships.

Question to Explore

What do people see in you that would indicate to them that you are a Christian?

Teaching Aim

To help participants individually decide on at least one action they will take to live the Christian life more faithfully.

Connect with Life:

1. Begin with this comment and question: In many places in the world, it is illegal to profess the Name of Jesus.

Ask: If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Encourage a brief discussion on this: What kind of evidence would be indicative of a believer's lifestyle.

Say: How we live makes a difference.

Guide the Study:

Request the class to list various areas of their lives. (Examples: family, work, community involvement, social clubs, sports, political leadership).

Ask: Which of these areas of our lives are not affected by our life in Christ?

Explain: Christians cannot compartmentalize their faith—that is, our faith must guide everything that we do, think, say—in every area of our lives.

Tell the class: Be thinking about specific areas of your lives that you may need to turn over to Christ.

Have a volunteer read Ephesians 4:17-19.

Urge the group to discuss Paul's concept of "futility" of nonbelievers' thinking.

Suggest: Like fluffy cotton candy or some other sweet treats, sinful life doesn't satisfy; it may provide a brief sweet sensation and leaves a lot of sticky mess to clean up.

Involve the group in exploring how the loss of sensitivity and hardening of hearts leads to ignorance and a continual lust or desire for more.

Say: Sin hardens one's heart, which darkens the understanding, which provides further separation from God in an ever downward spiral.

Look for another person to read 2 Peter 2:17-19.

Now, discuss with the participants Peter's depiction of such a person as a slave to depravity.

Say: In contrast to the deceitful insidious trap of sin is the good news of Ephesians 4:20-24. Have a volunteer read those verses.

Discuss the need to discard the former way of life and to put on a new self, with a new attitude of the mind. Emphasize that this may need daily, if not hourly attention.

Ask someone to read or quote 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Remind the class: Each believer is a new creature in Christ, old things have passed away; new things have come!

Have someone read Eph. 4: 25-32.

Share: Paul now explores specific areas that the believer needs to address in our lives beginning with honesty. We are to speak the truth with love to one another. Let us grow to hold each other accountable to our faith.

Add: Sometimes true friendship requires that we point out a fault or failing in another.

Request a person to read Proverbs 27:6.

Comment: This must be done in a loving trusted relationship.

Discuss the need to resolve any conflict and to work so as to have something to share with others.

Ask: How can we guard against sinning when we get angry?

As the group comments:

Write a few of their suggestions on paper or whiteboard.

Note the importance of thinking before we speak.

Discuss how words can “build others up.”

Explore the fact that Paul urges us to guard against even “unwholesome talk.”

Define “malice” as wickedness or hatred.

Explain: Most of us can easily identify several forms of malice and ugly acts associated with a sinful life. Paul urges us to get rid of them all.

Ask the class to identify the three ways we are to respond to each other from verse 32. (Kindness, Compassion and Forgiveness)

Follow up with this: With the same measure Christ forgave us, we are to forgive each other.

Have someone read Eph. 5:1-2.

Note that Paul summarizes his charge as this: Be like Christ!

Encourage the group to discuss the importance of a life of love. Explore the imagery of Christ's sacrifice as a fragrant offering.

Ask a volunteer to read Eph. 5:3-7.

Ask: How much impurity is ok for a believer?

Discuss the meaning of a “hint of sexual immorality”:

Ask the class for suggestions as to how to respond when faced with coarse joking or obscenity.

Note that Paul compares an immoral, impure or greedy person with an idolater.

Explore the ramifications of the charge to avoid any type of partnership with such persons.

Suggest this thought: Your child’s coach uses foul language with the team. How should you respond?

Have someone read Ephesians. 5:8-14. Discuss the feeling of coming out of darkness into the light of the Lord.

Ask: How should we then live?

Ask someone to describe what our response to deeds of darkness should be. (Our only focus on such deeds is to expose them to the Light).

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Review the Main Idea: Christians are to demonstrate their new life in Christ in all of their activities and relationships.

Ask each member to identify (silently, without sharing aloud) one specific area of his or her life in which to focus on living more Christ-like.

Pray for God’s Holy Spirit to guide each member to begin to grow in that area.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

How to Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk

Ephesians 4:17-5:14

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Ephesians 4:25-32: Practical Advice **Good for teens even today—maybe especially today!!!**

Show the copy of this list (found on the final page of this session).
You may include other items not listed here as you think of them.

- Be truthful.
- Don't let your anger lead you to sinful acts.
- Don't stay angry.
- Don't steal.
- Do useful work.
- Share with those in need.
- Don't use coarse language.
- Speak words which encourage others.
- Don't do things which would grieve the Holy Spirit.
- Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, all malice.
- Be kind and compassionate.
- Be forgiving.

Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to list 1-5 the top things they personally need to be concerned to change or improve in their own lives. This information will not be shared with the group.

3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

How to Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk **Ephesians 4:17-5:14**

Beginning the Service:

Sing **The Joy of the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #569, CCLI #14569

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Praise the Lord that many portions of Scripture, including the entire New Testament, have been translated into Kazakh, the language of a Central Asian people group numbering 10 million! Translators continue to work on the Old Testament. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and empower the translators, granting wisdom and insight. Pray for the Kazakh translation to be accurate, understandable and relevant to the Kazakh people.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Darkness and Light – Make a Difference

Ephesians 4:17-5:11

Introduction:

How would you describe the culture of the place where you live? Paul characterized the culture of first century Roman Empire as deluded, in darkness, given over to sexual

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lusts, completely insensitive. Is that the character of our culture? Perhaps the observation of a Christian visiting modern Germany was right. Perhaps she could see the spiritual condition of that great city.

I. Darkness of the unsaved life

The character and quality of life in 65 A.D. was indeed very immoral, from all accounts. If we were able to visit that time period, and suddenly found ourselves in the city of Ephesus, the chief city of the Roman Province of Asia, modern day Turkey, we would be totally out of place, not only in dress but also in conduct. Paul is very graphic in his description of the life at that time. But unsaved life, then and now, can only be described as lost, in darkness, without God, and hopeless.

A. The Gentiles lived ***“in the futility of their minds.”*** Today’s English Version translates the phrase ***“whose thoughts are worthless.”*** Paul could describe his contemporaries in this manner because he begins his words of warning to the Christians at Ephesus with a reminder of the way the people of the day thought. *“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he,”* and Paul knew the life-shaping power of the mind. Their thoughts were worthless and their conduct was also.

B. Their understanding was darkened, and they were alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. In the first century, and in every century, many people were like ships adrift without compass or sail.

C. They had lost all sensitivity, and had abandoned themselves to licentiousness and were greedy to practice every kind of impurity (Ephesians 4:17-24). It is a serious thing when a culture is no longer sensitive to the ways in which people are demeaned by the movies, TV shows, magazines, dress styles and values which are available.

Eugene Peterson puts this into common vernacular in *The Message* ***“And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowds who have refused for so long to deal with God that they’ve lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can’t think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion.”*** (Ephesians 4:17-24) Would you characterize our culture with these words?

II. Contrasting the saved and the unsaved life

In contrast, look at the life of a Believer as Paul describes it.

A. Anyone who knows Christ and has been taught ***“in Him,”*** cannot practice such things: this is not the life of one who is committed to Christ.

B. They had been taught to put away their former way of life (which he has just described), their old self, and to be renewed in the spirit of their mind. That is to say, they had to keep thinking about the right things.

C. Believers in the first century, and in every century since, clothe themselves with a new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. This is what those committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ will look like. The details of this picture are filled in by the verses that follow.

III. Light in the life of a saved person

Just what does one who is committed to the Lordship of Christ sound like and look like? (Ephesians 4:25-5:1)

A. Telling the truth may sound strange to the ears of modern Christians, but there is strong language against falsehood. Can telling the truth be so difficult to do? Is truth so important? A culture that has to have laws prohibiting the stealing of music from the Internet, laws that make it necessary for one to tell the truth in a court of law, the requirement that makers clearly label what is in their product, and post warnings on the harmful package of cigarettes, is a culture that needs to hear again, maybe for the first time, this injunction from the first century: Stop the falsehoods. Be Truthful!

The reason for honesty is that Christians are members of one another. We belong to one another, but more, we are part of one another, and to be untruthful with our neighbour is to be untruthful with ourselves.

B. The verbal output of a human mouth is also scrutinized; no evil talk should come from the mouth of a Christian (v. 29). The way to prevent evil from coming out is to make sure that the words you speak are words of grace. Paul believed, as a man in Christ, that evil speaking grieved the Holy Spirit of God, the Christian mark that stamped him as belonging to God. We are reminded in another Pauline letter “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

And, of all things, we are to work with our hands or minds, or however we make an honest living, and not be guilty of theft. When the teens of today become the young adults of tomorrow, will there be an aversion to work? God make it not so!

C. One reason why we are to work is so that we will have something to share with the needy. Governments have different ways of attending to the needs of those people who struggle to earn a living. Sometimes a Christian’s heart is on display as they are critical and unloving toward those who are sustained by government help. Such thoughts are foreign to a God who gave his Son for all humans: rich, poor, lazy, or whomever. Good stewardship of the material

blessings we have been given will help us to respond to human need both in times of crisis and in ongoing ministry.

Call to Commitment:

How does a committed Christian look? How does one talk? Can you tell that a young person in high school or university today is a Christian by the way they live? By the way they talk? Can you tell a Christian business person by the way decisions are made in his/her work or by the products which are produced? Can you tell a Christian school teacher by the care and attention they give to preparation and to individual needs of students? Can you tell a Christian auto mechanic by the good job he/she does on your vehicle. Do others know you are a Christian by the integrity and consistency of your work ethic and your personal and family life?

A town or city or country or culture is made up of many individual components. We may not be able to change our whole culture, but we can make a difference by living lives which reflect Christ living in us.

When the theme at a youth camp was “Make a Difference” youth responded both on an emotional and a practical level. The week was spent in deepening relationships, confessing sin and planning how to make changes in their lives back in the real world. Today’s lesson calls on us to Make a Difference this week in our world.

Concluding the Service:

Ask a child or young person or older adult to read this passage with emphasis and meaning. Provide a copy of the reading to the reader with anticipation. (Use the final page of this session for the copy).

**May the Lord Jesus Christ himself
And God our Father, who loved us
And by his grace gave us eternal
Encouragement and good hope,
Encourage your hearts and strengthen
You in every good deed and word. (2 Thessalonians 2: 16-17 NIV)**

Copy for the reader of the blessing on the church at the end of the Sharing Time.

**May the Lord Jesus Christ himself
And God our Father, who loved us
And by his grace gave us eternal
Encouragement and good hope,
Encourage your hearts and strengthen
You in every good deed and word. (2 Thessalonians 2: 16-17 NIV)**

Give this sheet to the youth for their time (Youth!!! Take Ten) to apply the Bible Study.

Be truthful.

Don't let your anger lead you to sinful acts.

Don't stay angry.

Don't steal.

Do useful work.

Share with those in need.

Don't use coarse language.

Speak words which encourage others.

Don't do things which would grieve the Holy Spirit.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, all malice.

Be kind and compassionate.

Be forgiving.