

## **Walking in Love, Light and Wisdom**

**By Mary Kane**

“Copycat! You’re a copy cat!”

When I was in school, one of the worst reputations an elementary school child could obtain was that of a copycat. As I was considering the stigma of being branded a copycat, my youngest son came through the kitchen where I was writing. I asked Scott the philosophy behind the copycat stigma and why elementary school children are so concerned about someone “copying” them. Scott thought for a moment and responded that when he was in elementary school he really struggled with people not noticing him. Somehow he felt that he lost value if another person was recognized for something he previously had accomplished. I think Scott had a good point. Despite the stigma, God calls us to be copycats. We’re not to copy the behavior of other people, though. As we live out our lives on earth, we are commanded to be imitators, or copycats of Christ.

Please read Ephesians 5:1-21.

**Please give a one sentence summary of Ephesians 5:1-7.**

We are to walk in love as Christ did. The original Greek word used for *walk* in verse 2 is rich in meaning. *Peripateo* the Greek word for *walk* means to live, to walk, to regulate one’s life, of the garment one is clothed in, to associate with one, to be one’s companion, of the standard to which one governs his life.” I love the idea of “clothing” ourselves with Christ. He should be as close to us as the shirt on our back. If we are clothed in Christ, no matter where we go, the gym, work, out to dinner or to the movies, we will be dressed for success. Christ is also our constant companion. Whether we are walking the highway of holiness or the valley of the shadow of death He is with us.

**Which definition of peripateo speaks to your heart the most and why?**

**Ephesians 5:1 gives the key to walking our life with God. Please record the key in the space below.**

In order to walk in love, light and wisdom, we need to be imitators of God. The Greek word for *imitators* is *mimetes*. Do you see a familiar word couched within *mimetes*? Our English word *mime* descends from this word. *Mimetes* means exactly what you think it does, "to imitate or to follow." When we imitate someone we observe their actions carefully and copy what they do, motion for motion. The imitator does not add any original gestures; the imitator copies only what he or she sees.

**According to Ephesians 5:2 how are we to imitate Christ?**

By walking in love. Like Christ, when we love someone we are willing to sacrifice our wants, rights and desires for the wants, rights and desires of another. A life of sacrificial love of others is very sweet to our God because loving sacrifice is the heart of His relationship with us.

**What does a life of loving sacrifice look like?**

**Does your marriage match your description? What needs to change?**

**Does your family life match your description? What needs to change?**

**If you work outside of the home, do your work relationships match your description? What needs to change?**

Please go back and read verses 3-5 again.

**According to these verses what are Christians commanded to avoid?**

**Instead of fornication, uncleanness and covetousness, what should a life of walking in love be marked by?**

It should be marked by thanksgiving. To summarize, in order to walk in love with Christ, we must give up walking in fornication, uncleanness, greed, filthiness, godless talking, course jokes, and every form of idolatry and live a life of sacrifice and thanksgiving. We must choose then between living a life of sin and cursing or a life of love and blessing. It seems an easy choice doesn't it?

**But why do we so often choose to walk in sin instead of love?**

Because of our flesh. As human beings, sin is our default mode.

Now, please reread 8-14.

**After we have learned to walk in love, how are we to walk according to verse 9?**

We are to walk as children of the light. Before we came to Christ we brought darkness to every situation, every experience and every relationship in our sphere of influence. After we become Christians, we have the opportunity to shine the light and truth of Christ into every situation, every relationship, every hardship, trial and adversity that we experience in order to promote healing, growth and maturity. Please do not underestimate the amount of influence one child of the light can have upon the darkest environment. Joseph shined the light of God on the political and social concerns of the dark country of Egypt and saved not only thousands of Egyptian lives but the family line of Christ.

**How can you bring the light of Christ into the present situation you are facing?**

As Christians we have the choice of bringing light or darkness into everything that we touch. We can be part of the healing or part of the destruction. Forgiveness or bitterness, mercy or vengeance, grace or condemnation. Will we shine or shadow?

**When we walk in light what will we discover (verse 10)?**

We will discover what is acceptable to the Lord. The truth of God's word is the only tool we have that will judge our works proving them good or evil. The more of God's word we have in our hearts and minds the closer we will walk with the Lord. As children of the light, we are to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. I used to think that fellowship meant to socialize with someone. However, a deeper look into the definition of the original word for *socialize* proves otherwise. *Socialize* transliterates from the Greek as *koinoneo* which means "to come into communion or fellowship with, to become a sharer or a partner, to join oneself to an associate." When we choose to sin, we are working together with the powers of darkness to spread death and destruction into our lives and the lives of our families, friends and coworkers. When we choose to follow Christ we sow the peace, truth and life of Christ everywhere we go. Instead of fellowshiping with the

unfruitful deeds of darkness we are to expose them for what they are—lies of the enemy.

**What are some ways we knowingly fellowship with darkness?**

**What are some ways we turn a blind eye to the deeds of darkness?**

**In what area of life do you need to let the light of Christ shine truth?**

Please read verse 15-21 again.

**After we learn to walk in love and light how are we to walk according to verse 15?**

We are to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. The word *circumspectly* means diligently, carefully, exactly, accurately. It is derived from a word that refers to the strictest form of adherence to Old Testament Law. From this verse we learn that we will not become wise by accident. We will avoid foolishness only by strictly attending to every detail of our lives.

**What command are we given in verse 16?**

We are to “redeem the time.” To redeem means to buy back. Perhaps like me you have squandered some of the days that God has given in foolish living. Thankfully, God has shown me the error of my way. Now, I try to walk wisely, redeeming my foolish days. The time I used to spend living according to my will (aka foolishness) I now spend trying to live according to God’s will—wisdom. Matthew Henry states, “Our time is a talent given us by God for some good end, and it is misspent and lost when it is not employed

according to his design. If we have lost our time heretofore, we must endeavour to redeem it by doubling our diligence in doing our duty for the future.”

**If you have squandered any of your days, how can you work to redeem them?**

**According to verse 17-21, what are some signs that we are learning to walk in wisdom?**

- 1. We are seeking to understand the will of God:** Where can we learn about the will of God? From His Word. As my favorite Bible study teacher Beth Moore says, “You will not find the will of God apart from the word of God.” Reading God’s word will make us wiser.
- 2. We are seeking to be filled with the Spirit:** The word *filled* means “to be filled to the brim so that nothing shall be wanting for full measure.” We empty ourselves of our own will, wants and desires and fill every part of our lives with God’s will wants and desires. What we read, watch, listen to and partake of may undergo radical transformation as we seek to be filled with the Spirit.
- 3. We are joining others in worship:** It is wise to join ourselves to a group of healthy believers. Fellowship with likeminded Christians will encourage us to continue walking with the Lord.
- 4. We are thanking God in all things:** Once we realize that God will use all things for our good, whether positive, negative, hurtful, or beautiful our lives will over flow with thankfulness.
- 5. We begin submitting to one another:** The mark of a mature Christian is one who can give way to another (this does not apply to areas of character, responsibility or God’s will for your life). Let

someone else choose the color for the new chair cushions or the theme for VBS.

To summarize, there is a progression to walking with Christ. First, we learn that Jesus loves us and we accept Him as our Savior; we learn to *walk in love* instead of the law. Second, after we learn to walk in the love of Christ we are able to *walk in the light* of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling us. Third, after we accept the love of Christ and we allow His light to flood into our lives, we will be able to clearly see and discern truth so we will be able to *walk in wisdom*.

**At what stage are you currently walking: love, light or wisdom?**

Please don't be discouraged if you are still learning to walk in the love of Christ while everyone else seems to be walking in wisdom. Keep walking. Remember, you may be *walking in the light* in one area of your life and *walking in wisdom* in another region. Maturity may not come all at once in every area.

In closing, please read the following verse and be blessed by the many promises God makes available to those who choose to walk with Him upon this earth.

*"You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you,*

*that you may live and [that it may be] well with you,*

*and [that] you may prolong [your] days in the land which you shall possess."*

*Deuteronomy 5:33*

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