

## SERIES: 'WALK WORTHY'- -1/12/25 (#10) PASTOR NATE

- One 'centerpiece' of the Book of Ephesians is about 'WALKING WORTHY. In 1st three Chapters, he addressed what God has done in our lives.....saved for eternity and adopted into His family....sealed with the Spirit.....and by His grace (in faith), becoming unified as part of God's people. Amazing and powerful message!
- The 2nd half of this Book goes another step....saying, in light of doctrine/good news....how shall we live.....how do we 'WALK WORTHY' of this Calling? Pastor Rob has introduced us to some of these issues in Chapter 4. This next Passage challenges us, first, in a general sense and then conjures up tough moral and ethical issues.
- In this context, there are three facets that heavily and potentially negatively impact our 'Walk": *Money....Power....and (focus today) Sex*. Sexual ethics is a tough topic, especially in today's culture but Paul addresses it.....that is, God's true Word addresses it (authoritatively).....and is irrespective of anyone's culture-shaped opinions.

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*Eph 5: 1-2 - Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. (2) And walk in Love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

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- We all, to varying degrees, imitated our parents as children....how much more so shall we, as God's children, attempt (in all our humanness) to imitate Him?! God calls us to do just that....its the foundation of our "Walk".
- It is human nature to imitate.....the question is: WHO are you going to *try* to imitate....flawed humans.....or God (our ultimate perfect Model in the form of Jesus Christ)?
- But avoid this trap: one in which you *first and prematurely* step out trying to 'WALK WORTHY IN JESUS" ....rather..... *first*, you need to put your faith and trust in *HIM....then...have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and relying upon our Lord's grace, strength and guidance, proceed to 'walk the walk'.*

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*Eph 5:3-6 (3) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (4) Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. (5) For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. (6) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

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- Harsh words...difficult...as our culture is more and more infiltrated by promiscuity, we lose the sense of what is a sexual sin. Citing a past speaker at our Church (Christopher Yuan) and looking at the subject more positively, he refers to 'holy sexuality' ( a gift from God) versus 'sexual immorality'.

- Then, what can make sex 'holy' and what are the 'keys'? 1. We are to honor God with our bodies; 2. We are not to be 'mastered' by anything; 3. We ought not sexualize relationships outside of marriage.
- Sexual ethics.....see what Jesus says in Mathew 19:4-6: "....."Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
- So, despite culture perspectives, sex is not just a physical act...it is becoming one flesh....it is a spiritual act limited to one man and one woman. By definition, therefore, outside of a Godly marriage, sexual activity is immoral.
- Paul also connects such sexual immorality/purity with covetousness....typically related to greed/envy....but it more broadly means: desiring something that belongs to another person ie. another person's spouse or future spouse.
- He further connects sexual immorality/impurity with idolatry. Again, in the broad sense, idolatry is anything that takes God's place.
- Sexual/moral ethics: 1. Pornography is destructive and greatly contributes toward sexual immorality and even sexual crime. 2. Sex outside the boundary of marriage serves to greatly impinge upon God's gift of marriage and that covenant relationship; 3. Coveting sex, power, money, things, etc. can all take away from our commitment to Him.
- In V-6, Paul says we are deceived by sin....rather than fulfilling lives, they bring hurt/ destruction. Tim Keller, well known author and pastor, said "Our culture values sex but it does not value it enough". That is, society often misinterprets and undervalues the purpose of sex.
- These principles might be difficult and frustrating to some.....but remember V-1...God loves you!....He doesn't want to take away good things from you! The unique relationship between husband and wife are meant to mirror God's relationship with His people (intimacy, permanency, etc.). God is saying: ..the best way to find fulfillment in this life is through Him....IMITATING HIM!!!
- How do we live lives in accord with God's standards of sexual purity? See Passage:

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*Eph 5:7- -Therefore, do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the world. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is founding all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful to even speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ with shine on you." (See Luke 1:78-79)*

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- **Bottomline: We need to pursue God and not seek pleasure outside His boundaries.**

- **Notice that Paul says, in no uncertain terms, that we, ourselves, were- -at least- - once in that darkness in which we were dominated and enmeshed in sin..but now, with our faith and trust in Jesus, now we are children of Light (things that are right and true). READ GOD'S WORD AND LIVE BY IT!**
- **How do we expose 'the deeds of darkness'? 1. By recognizing/EXPOSING them in our own lives (ie 'putting off the old self'; 2. REMOVING sin in our lives and intervening in other believers' lives (1 COR 5:12) as well as exposing it in our culture; 3. By TRANSFORMING... eg. If you are living with another person right now....even with the intent of a future marriage, consider temporarily moving out- -or moving up the marriage date- - and thereby respecting/obeying God's Will until you engage in the marriage covenant. God wants us to commit for life!**
- **Seek out a mentor/accountability partner in the Church....facilitating this transformation!**
- **FIND YOUR ULTIMATE SATISFACTION IN HIM....JESUS WILL NEVER FAIL YOU!!!!**

**\*\*IMITATE CHRIST- - WALK IN THE LIGHT- - WALK WORTHY\*\***