

the next step

stepping out and following where He leads

Jesus' summons is simple - 'Follow Me!'

As His disciples, those who have responded to His call, the church is, by definition, a people on the move.

As Ruth said to Naomi, so His church says to Jesus, 'Where you go, I will go.' We are bold, therefore, both as individuals and as a local fellowship of believers, to step out in faith and to follow where He leads. 'The next step' is always the most important one and it's what that 'next step' looks like for ourselves that this series of studies addresses.



You can find the background to this short series here.

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15. Light in the Lord

(Ephesians 5.3-6.9)

[w/b Sunday 14th June 2020]

“.. live as children of the light ..”

Paul’s concern in writing to the believers at Ephesus was to help them understand the better the nature of their new life in Christ. The essence of that new life, as we’ve seen, is essentially this: believers are the family of God.

‘God is light’ (1 John 1.5): and as those born of the Spirit of God, no longer ‘separated from the life of God’ (Eph.4.18) we are, therefore, children of light – and we are to learn to live as such.

[There are 7 questions as ever, all important - but your Community Group may well choose to concentrate on just some of them. Key questions in this study are probably 2, 4 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

There should be, as usual, a video introduction to this study, available under ‘Resources/Live streams and videos’ on the website.

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1. **Read Eph.5.3-6.9.** Although this is a longer passage, and has a number of important ‘stand-alone’ passages within it, it’s helpful to see it as a whole and learn what it is to live as children of light.

Read **Ps.34.5:** can you think of people who display a ‘radiance’? What is it about them that you find most striking – their enthusiasm, their warmth, their kindness, or what?

In what ways do you think/hope *you* light up the lives of those around you?

2. Read Eph.5.3-8a. Something very definite happens when a person is converted: they are brought out of the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of God and a whole new way of living.

Over against everything Paul says is 'out of place', why do you think that the *one* thing he insists on is 'thanksgiving'?

According to what Paul says in v.5, what do you conclude are primary characteristics of those who inherit the kingdom of God?

How is this statement compatible with the gospel of *grace*?

3. Read Eph.5.8-14. We're back to this basic line, which is on repeat through the New Testament – who you are defines what you do: live as children of light because that's what you now are.

What does living as children of light involve?

In practical terms, what does finding out what pleases the Lord involve?

4. Read Eph.5.15-21. Paul is at this point still setting out in *broad* strokes of his apostle's brush what the main features of our living as children of light will be – he gets into the detail shortly!

What does Paul mean by declaring that 'the days are evil', and what will it mean for us to make 'the most of every opportunity'?

How do we fulfil the command to 'be filled with the Spirit'?

5. Read Eph.5.22-33. A key characteristic of the kingdom of God is a submissiveness: Paul proceeds to illustrate how that applies in key areas of life, starting with marriage.

In what ways do both husband and wife 'submit to one another' in terms of what Paul exhorts on his readers here?

How does a marriage provide a 'picture' of the gospel?

6. Read Eph.6.1-4. The second key area of any society's life to which Paul directs the attention of the church at Ephesus is that of family life, the relationship between parents and children.

What are the mutual responsibilities of children and parents which the call to 'submit to one another' places on them?

As children grow from infancy to adulthood, how will these responsibilities of submissiveness vary in their expression?

7. Read Eph.6.5-9. Another key area of life is that of 'work': here, too, as much as (perhaps almost more than) anywhere else, God's people are to live and shine as children of light.

What will characterize the believer as a child of light in the workplace?

How have you been challenged through this study to live in a manner which reverences Christ?