

Don't walk in Darkness Eph 5:7-8a 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for you were once darkness,

Therefore do not become fellow participants with them;

Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Ephesus was the third largest city in the Roman empire. The city was home to various artisans, who were considered of lower social status, in part because they worked with their hands, but could gain social status by the wealth they could secure from their craft—which is why we see the silversmiths making little Artemis idols so violently up in arms against Paul for interfering with their trade (see Acts 19:23-27). The Artemis shrine in Ephesus provided the area with a lucrative tourist business from pilgrims traveling to the temple. In addition, the temple served as a financial institution and lent out money from the wealth deposited at the shrine—so it was like their bank. People in Ephesus participated in worship of Artemis (Diana), a goddess of fertility, magic, and astrology. The practice of magic was also popular in Ephesus, primarily among the poor and uneducated. In Greek thought, magic was the belief in a spirit world influenced virtually every aspect of life. Ephesus was known as a place of demonic activity. Because of the popularity of magic in Ephesus, the phrase “Ephesian writings” was used to describe any documents that contained magic formulas and spells. Ephesus was the central location of Paul’s teaching for a long time. Paul taught daily there for two years (Acts 19:9) during his third missionary journey. So, we can see why Paul is warning them Eph 5:5 **5 For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** He’s urging us to have a lifestyle fitting for followers of Christ, to live out the transformation that has occurred in our lives through faith in Christ, to put off their old self and walk in the newness of life that is found in Christ. And he’s doing this because so many who called themselves Christians were not doing this then, and are not doing this now. Because the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience, believers are not to become partakers with them by participating in their sin. The danger is partnering with the world, compromising your principles for gain, partaking with them in sin, going along to get along. It’s one of the dangers that we, as the Church, must continually guard against (see Rev 2:14-15). The Church as the bride of Christ should be pure and devoted to Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:14–15 **14 Do all things without complaining or arguments; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding firmly the word of life, so that on the day of Christ I can take pride because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.** Unfortunately, it seems some members of the church at Pergamum succumbed to spiritual adultery against the Lord, likely stemming from marrying unbelievers, and engaging in idolatry. Those who dabble in sin soon find themselves drifting farther from God. And those who drift, soon find that sin has taken them farther away from God than they wanted to go, and they begin backsliding, and whether through shame or fear, or just rebellion, they don’t come back to God. And the calls of the Holy Spirit to repent become fainter and fainter, and someday they get to the point that they no longer hear the call to repent, and they are lost. Those who chose to walk away put themselves on dangerous ground, and leave themselves vulnerable. 1 Thess 5:2-9 **2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord is coming just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;** So, in the light of this, and of the coming judgment (v. 6), believers should not be deceived into thinking that it is harmless to become participants with unbelievers. Back in Eph 3:6 Paul identified believers as “fellow participants of the promise”. The word participant/partner means one who is a partner or an accomplice in a plot. “It is a participation in another’s rights by becoming somehow identified with that other.” Here speaks of the alternative—to become an accomplice with the “sons of disobedience” in their sin. Because believers

are in a new fellowship with the Lord and his saints, we are not to be fellow participants with sinners who are going in the opposite direction. This does not imply that believers should have no association with unbelievers but that we are not to participate in their lifestyle. We're not supposed to spend all of our time pointing our fingers at them, but be an example to them. We let our light shine. But, those fake-believers, or carnal Christians who want to have it both ways need to understand that there's no having it both ways. The church at Pergamos claimed to be followers of God, but were slipping into compromise with the world. They were trying to "falter between two opinions (1 Kings 18:21). It didn't work for them, and it doesn't work now. Paul is warning the Ephesians, and us against lying to ourselves regarding compromise.

for you were formerly darkness,

2 Cor 6:14-18 14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers; for what do righteousness and lawlessness share together, or what does light have in common with darkness? Paul is saying that you once were walking as unbelievers walk, in darkness, headed for the ultimate in Spiritual darkness—hell. We are to be separate from all of this darkness, and walk in the light. Darkness is the abode of those who are in sin. Those who are in darkness must grope through life without the light of God's revelation (Eph 4:18). Their future will be a continuation of darkness but to an even greater degree.

But God doesn't dwell in darkness—He is light. 1 John 1:5-7 **5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Jesus is the light, and we must be willing to come to Him in open honest confession and repentance. 1 John 1:9 **If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** It's hard to admit that we have sinned, and strayed, but it's through confession and repentance of sin that the light floods in. We do not want to partake with those who hate the light, and we don't want to be judged with them either. John 3:19-21 **19 And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light, so that his deeds will not be exposed. 21 But the one who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds will be revealed as having been performed in God."** Jesus' heart is that we will turn from darkness to light, and not as Lot's wife did, turn back to evil. Jesus' commission to Paul to the gentiles was that Paul would Acts 26:18 **18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'** We have been rescued, saved from darkness by what Jesus has done on the cross, and we should demonstrate our gratitude and love for Jesus by obeying Him. Col 1:13-14 **13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.** And because He has saved us, we want to point others to Jesus, the Light that we have found.