

Ephesians Part 5 – Walk This Way!



Ephesians 5



Ephesians 5 handles some challenging topics that will need to be discussed sensitively and without judgement, creating an open space for the young people to converse freely. Paul calls us to walk through our lives as Christ did, and points to the kinds of actions that keep us walking in darkness when we should be walking in the light. This Bassline session walks us through Paul's teaching and helps us navigate its relevance today.

You will need:

- Paper and felt-tips
- Ephesians 5:21–33 MSG handout



Beat

Watch:

LEAKED! Impressionist Switches Voices from Ariana Grande to Celine Dion on the Spot! – Talent Recap (2:51)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8g6qs9PJul>

Ask:

Which was your favourite impression from the clip? Explain why you chose it.

Leader's notes:

Ask the young people if they can do any impressions and if they are willing to share them. If not, they could suggest the names of famous people for you to try together.

Say:

Today we dive into Ephesians 5, which starts with these words.

Read:

'Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.'

– (Ephesians 5:1 RSV)

Say:

Let's hope that Paul's teaching helps us to be better imitators of Christ than we were impersonators of the rich and famous!

 **Bridge****Leader's notes:**

See if anyone in the group can impersonate one of the Bassline leaders.

 **Amplify****Leader's notes:**

Some of the verses in Ephesians 5 may be difficult for the young people to hear. For some, this may be a positive experience as they feel challenged to change the way they are living. For others, they may have heard these verses used in a harmful way, spoken in judgement rather than love. The language used to describe marital relationships (vv22-33) must also be sensitively handled. Throughout this passage of Scripture, Paul is not describing relationships motivated by control. He calls us to live in the light and walk the same way as Jesus Christ.

Say:

Ephesians 5 starts with a clear message: 'Walk this way'!

Read:

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love [walk in the way of love], just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

— (Ephesians 5:1-2)

Ask:

- What do you think Paul means when he says, 'Walk in the way of love'?
- What areas of our lives does this teaching relate to?

Say:

After outlining how followers of Jesus should 'walk in love', Paul challenges those who may not be living this way. Paul's words are motivated by love to a church community he had established. His aim is to build up the people of this church in Christ.

Ask:

Read Ephesians 5:3-10 from *The Message* translation. What behaviour is Paul asking the people of Ephesus to avoid?

Read:

³⁻⁴ **Don't allow love to turn into lust, setting off a downhill slide into sexual promiscuity, filthy practices, or bullying greed. Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, those who follow Jesus have better uses for language than that. Don't talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn't fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect.**

⁵ **You can be sure that using people or religion or things just for what you can get out of them – the usual variations on idolatry – will get you nowhere, and certainly nowhere near the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God.**

⁶⁻⁷ **Don't let yourselves get taken in by religious smooth talk. God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him. Don't even hang around people like that.**

⁸⁻¹⁰ **You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! The good, the right, the true – these are the actions appropriate for daylight hours. Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it.**

– (Ephesians 5:3-10 MSG)

Leader's notes:

The following questions aim to provoke a discussion about whether Paul's teaching is relevant to us today, and if so, how. It will help the group to consider how following Jesus should change the way we live our lives and challenge them to think about the areas where they are not walking in love.

Ask:

- Do you feel that Paul's comments are relevant today, or do they represent a different time and way of thinking?
- Is it OK to throw out the odd swear word or join in the occasional bit of gossip? Does it really hurt anyone?
- What is your personal response to Paul's directions? Do they challenge you to live like Jesus, or make you feel like you are being told what to do?
- Why is the seemingly simple instruction, 'Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it', often challenging?

Say:

This section of the letter goes on to describe the difference between walking through life in the dark (without Christ) compared to walking in the light (with Christ).

Read:

¹¹⁻¹⁶ **Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ.**

**‘Wake up from your sleep,
Climb out of your coffins;
Christ will show you the light!’**

So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

¹⁷ Don’t live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.

¹⁸⁻²⁰ Don’t drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God, huge drafts of him. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.

— (Ephesians 5:11-20 *MSG*)

Ask:

- There are a few more ‘don’ts’ in Ephesians 5:11-20. What are they, and why do you think Paul includes them in his letter?
- Where does Paul suggest that we should go for a drink?
- What role do songs of praise play in our walk with Christ?
- Which of Paul’s instructions do you feel most challenged by? If you feel comfortable, then share your reasons with the group.

Say:

Every follower of Jesus is called to walk in love and walk in the light of Christ.

 **Bridge**

Ask:

What is your response to the following quote?

‘I can be happy or unhappy in all situations. I am sure of it, because I have been. I have felt distraught and joyful in situations of abundance as well as poverty, in situations of popularity and anonymity, in situations of success and failure. The difference was never based on the situation itself, but always on my state of mind and heart. When I knew I was walking with God, I always felt happy and at peace. When I was entangled in my own complaints and emotional needs, I always felt restless and divided.’

— Henri JM Nouwen

Sound Check

Leader's notes:

The young people can work in small groups for this activity. Ask them to draw a stereotypical representation of a couple on their wedding day. Once they have done this, share the drawings together. Be aware that this may be a sensitive or triggering topic for some.

Say:

In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul outlines the way that husbands and wives should treat each other. Unfortunately, this passage of Scripture comes with a lot of baggage. This is mainly down to the use of one word, 'submit'.

Read:

²¹ **Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

²² **Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. ²⁴ Now as the Church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**

(Ephesians 5:21-24)

Say:

Paul has a lot of valuable advice about the way people should live within their marriage, but it is often difficult for people, especially women, to get past these few verses.

Ask:

- What do you think Paul meant when he asked husbands and wives to 'submit to one another out of reverence for Christ'?
- What do you think he **didn't** mean?

Leader's notes:

Give the group a copy of Ephesians 5:21-33 from *The Message* translation and read through it together.

Read:

²¹ **Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.**

²²⁻²⁴ **Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his Church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the Church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.**

²⁵⁻²⁸ **Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the Church – a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ's love makes the Church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her,**

dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They're really doing themselves a favour, since they're already 'one' in marriage.

²⁹⁻³³ No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That's how Christ treats us, the Church, since we are part of his body. And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become 'one flesh.' This is a huge mystery, and I don't pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the Church. And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how each wife is to honour her husband.

(Ephesians 5:21-33 MSG)

Say:

If the current divorce rates are anything to go by, then the perfect wedding day doesn't always have a happy ending. Using Paul's words in Ephesians 5:21-33, annotate your drawing of the happy couple with Paul's positive marriage advice.

Leader's notes:

Give the group time to complete this activity and share what they have discovered together. These verses may still sit uncomfortably with some, but help them to focus on the positive aspects of Paul's advice. We always look to Jesus as an example of how we should treat one another.



Ask:

What is your response to the following quote?

'In this climate of thought, for Paul to tell wives to be subject to husbands looks to many like an unfortunate social or cultural gaffe. People who cheerfully ignore traditional morality, and believe in freedom of expression, suddenly become heavily moralistic and say that passages like this are wicked and shouldn't even be read out loud. But - as so often when reading the Bible - there's a lot to be said for checking our natural, and (let's admit) sometimes aggressive attitude to passages that strike us as objectionable, and for thinking through why we react like this, and whether we have really understood the passage or not.'

— Tom Wright, *Ephesians for Everyone*, p66.

 **Selah****Leader's notes:**

Today's Bassline session has contained a lot of thought-provoking material. For our Selah activity, the young people have a moment to stop and reflect. They can do this in any way that they feel is appropriate. They may want to spend time in prayer or use their journal to share their thoughts with God. They could write questions about Ephesians 5 that they still need answered and share them with the group leaders at a later date.

A piece of music, without words, is provided as a background for reflection. When the music finishes, use the discussions from this session as the basis for your prayer. Given the sensitivity of the topics discussed, it could feel appropriate to ask the young people if they have any prayer requests before praying together as a group, or offer the option to discuss this further after the session if they feel they need more support.

Listen:

'Love Me Like I Am' – For King + Country (Piano Cover) The Piano Guys (4:30)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEdOu1Sy-dM>

 **Coda****Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from the fifth chapter of Ephesians?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

