



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Living Out Who We Are 'In Christ'

Bible Reading: Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-14

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

[Join our post-sermon discussion on Zoom at 11am](#)

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SUMMARY: New Testament directives can sound like they are demanding the impossible, e.g. 'Be imitators of God.' But such directives are always based on what God has done for us. Technically, this is 'the indicative-imperative relation.' Some use the slogan—'Be what you are.' But that neglects our new creation status. It's better rendered: "*Become (in Christ) what you already are in Christ.*" You're God's 'beloved child,' which equips you to 'imitate your Father.' We are loved by God, so we can 'walk in love.' We are 'light in the Lord,' so we can 'walk as children of light.' This week we examine what that means. It's not asking for the impossible; it's not an unattainable ideal. Paul gives practical pointers. Plus we will consider the puzzling saying: "*Awake, sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*"

The Indicative-Imperative Key —“God’s done this, so you should do that”

A. Indicative—'indicates' what God has done for us; Imperative—what we're directed to do (e.g., Gal. 5:25)

- "In every other religion the indicative flows from the imperative. Which means: 'Because I do, therefore I am accepted... Because I do this, therefore I'm a child of God.' But *only in Christianity does the imperative flow from the indicative.* 'Because I am in Christ all these things [are mine], therefore I obey.' Exactly the opposite."—Tim. Keller

B. The Indicative & Imperative Key Summarized

1. "God has done this, therefore you should do that."
2. "What Christ has done is the basis for what the believer must do." —James Dunn
3. "Be..." or, "Become what you are" [or better...] "Become in Christ what you are in Christ"

4. *'Being precedes act'—our actions flow from our being*
5. *Indicative...points to a new reality...the imperative...a new behavior*
 - *"The indicative...points to a new reality...the imperative points to a new behavior...possible because believers live [as] a new humanity...created in Christ"— Frank Matera*

The Indicative-Imperative Key in Ephesians 5 (Eph. 5:1-2a)

A. Imitate God & Walk in Love (Eph. 5:1-2a)

Once Darkness, now Light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8)

- A. God created Light (Gen. 1:3)
- B. Jesus—the Light of the World' (John 1:4-5; 8:12)
- C. Paul's 'Damascus Road' Experience (Acts 26:12-16)
- D. Our Experience—God shined in our Hearts (2 Cor. 4:6); We're 'Children of Light' (1 Thess. 5:4-6; Eph. 5:8)
 1. God shined in our Hearts (2 Cor. 4:6)
 2. Transferred out of darkness into Light (Col. 1:12-14)
 3. We are 'Children of Light' (Col. 1:12-14; Eph. 5:8)
 4. We are (collectively) the 'Light of the World' (Mt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15-16; Rev. 1:20)

The Indicative-Imperative Key in Eph. 5 (Continued) (Eph. 5:8-14)

- A. You are Light; Walk as Children of Light (Eph. 5:8)
- B. A Literary Pattern—the "Chiasm" [~sandwich]—symmetry which highlights the center, e.g. Eph. 5:8-11a
 1. ⁸ *You were once **darkness**, but now you are light* o *in the Lord.*
 2. *Walk as children of light* — *goodness,*
 3. ⁹ *for the fruit of the light consists of all righteousness*
 4. ¹⁰ *testing [discerning] what is pleasing & truth—* o *to the Lord.*
 5. ¹¹ *Don't participate in the fruitless works of **darkness**...*
 6. The Chiasm "leads the interpreter...to appreciate the...*importance of the central thought*"—Brad McCoy
- C. Shine as Lights in the world, holding to the Word of Life (Phil. 2:15-16)
 1. The believers' "lives are to embody before the watching world the signs of the new creation, including kindness, generosity, abstinence from anger & malice, &...sexual purity (...in marriage or in celibacy). This...way of life, of community, was...unknown in the ancient world. [Thus,] the church was, for Paul, the sign & symbol of the...new creation." —N. T. Wright

Not living out who you are in Christ? —"Awake Sleeper..." (Eph. 5:14)

- o "Therefore it is said: '*Awake, sleeper, & rise up from the dead, & Christ will shine on you*.'" (Eph. 5:14) A. The Source of this Quote (Eph. 5:14; Is. 26:19, 60:1-3)
- A. Practical Applications
 1. Being awake, aware
 2. Restoring Compromised Believers
 3. Believers' exposing 'works of darkness' needs Christ's shining (Eph. 5:11-14)