Ephesians 5:8-21

Ephesians 5:8 – “For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light”

1. Just as described in:
   a. Ephesians 2:1-3 –
   b. Ephesians 3:17-24 –
2. “darkness” – at one time these believers not only lived in darkness and did darkness, but they “were darkness”. This was their natural state.
3. “light in the Lord” is their new condition
   a. They are “light in the Lord”
   b. They now need to manifest that light with understanding, thoughts, actions and life style.
   c. It is possible to be light in this dark age, but it is a process that involves learning and maturing after having been brought into the kingdom of God by faith in Jesus.

Ephesians 5:9 – “(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),”

1. Paul adds a descriptive phrase to help identify what he meant by “you are light...walk as children of light”
2. A child of the light will produce “the fruit of the light”.
   a. Just as a child of darkness naturally produces “the things” (5:6) of darkness or “the fruitless deeds of darkness” (5:11)
   b. So, the born again believer (child of the light) should naturally produce “the fruit of light” as they continue to mature with ever increasing glory
3. This “light” is identified broadly with these terms which each have a large category used to identify and manifest them each. These are both specific terms used to identify a character trait, but also title headings for a much larger list of manifestations of each character trait:
   a. All Goodness
      i. Benevolence
      ii. “Goodness” – agathosyne – is moral excellence combined with a generous spirit
iii. “intrinsic goodness, especially as a personal quality, with stress on the kindly (rather than the righteous) side of goodness
iv. Opposite of malice in Eph. 4:31

b. All Righteousness
   i. Fairness
   ii. “Righteousness” – dikaiosyne – “understood by Greeks as giving all their due”
   iii. Justice, justness, righteousness as practically (not positionally in Christ, but manifested as a fruit in life style).
   iv. Opposite of injustice in Eph. 4:25

c. All Truth
   i. Integrity
   ii. “Truth” – aletheia – speaks of genuineness and honesty referring to both speaking the truth but also doing the truth
   iii. Not merely truth that is spoken, but
      1. the truth of idea,
      2. reality,
      3. sincerity
      4. truth in the moral sphere
      5. divine truth revealed to man (natural revelation – Creation; special revelation – Scripture)
      6. straightforwardness
   iv. Opposite of falsehood in Eph. 4:25

Ephesians 5: 10 – “and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”

10 δοκιμαζόντες τί ἐστιν εὐαρέστον τῷ Κυρίῳ.
discerning what is well-pleasing to the Lord

1. This picks up from 5:8
2. “discerning” – dokimazontes – literally means “finding out”. The verb dokimazo is used with the testing of metals and is used to mean “discover by examination, verify or approveal. So, this verse says, “finding out what is well-pleasing to the Lord”
   a. From dokimazo – meaning, “I put to the test”, “I prove”, “I examine”
   b. It means “to test” and, so by implication “to approve” what God’s will is in every situation.
   c. It does not mean test to reject, but to test so as to distinguish the true from the false.
   d. This is going beyond merely using a legalistic list of “do’s and don’ts” for living a Christian life and beyond a religious experience. This will require the mature believer being able to manage themselves in real-time while analyzing and making decisions that are in line with the purpose and intention of the Spirit of God and the Mind of Christ.
   e. Again, the meaning as it is used:
i. I put to the test
ii. I prove
iii. I examine
iv. I distinguish by testing
v. I approve after testing
vi. I am fit

f. Used in:
   i. Luke 12:56 – you know how to analyze the appearance of the sky, but not times
   ii. Romans 1:28 – they did not approve God
   iii. Romans 12:2 – so that you may prove
   iv. Romans 14:22 – in what he approves
   v. 1 Corinthians 3:13 – the fire will test the quality of every man’s work
   vi. 1 Corinthians 11:28 – each man must examine himself
   vii. Galatians 6:4 – each one must examine his own work
   viii. Philippians 1:10 – that you may approve the things that are excellent
   ix. 1 Thessalonians 2:4 (2x) – we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 – examine everything, hold on to the good
   x. 1 Timothy 3:10 referring to appointing deacons – “And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.
   xi. 1 Peter 1:7 – even though tested by fire
   xii. 1 John 4:1 – test the spirits

3. This is repeated again in 5:17, which makes this one of Paul’s main challenges in these verses: “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”
   a. “foolish” now is referring to “darkness” and the “deeds of darkness” the “thoughts of darkness”
   b. “wise” is “understanding what the will of the Lord is” and “discerning what is well-pleasing to the Lord.”

Ephesians 5:11 – “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.”
1. “unfruitful works of darkness” or “the barren deeds of darkness”
2. These are “works” or “deeds” of darkness we are not to engage in. This does not mean we live a separate life or avoid other people. Paul here is not talking about locations or people, but “deeds”. We are to avoid the standards, philosophies and the fruit of darkness, which is described as being “barren”, “unfruitful”, empty or vain.
3. “expose them” is from *elenchete* and refers to the practices (the impersonal objects) not the people.
   a. Two uses of this word and the meaning is determined by the object and the text:
      i. When addressing a person the Greek word *elegcho* means to *convince or reprove*. This is what would be done if a person was the object. This would involve confronting the person with evidence, debate, opinion.
      ii. When addressing an object that is impersonal (a thing, an act, a deed, etc.) the Greek word *elegcho* means to *expose or bring to the light*. This is what would be done if a deed, a lifestyle or a philosophy was the object. This would involve confronting the deed of darkness with the deeds of light or Word of light. This would be a silent process of the believer’s lifestyle or an explanation of the Truth (natural or revealed).

Ephesians 5:12 – “But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,”

1. The pagan deeds of darkness are not to be spoken of.
2. “to speak” or “to mention” from *legein* refers to speech in progress and is defined as:
   a. “I say, I speak, I mean, I mention”
   b. “I call, I name”
   c. “I tell, I command”
3. This verse helps explain “expose” in verse 5:11, where it cannot mean name it from the pulpit, identify the sinful deeds of the pagans to the believers, etc.
4. “shameful” also means “base” and “disgraceful”

Ephesians 5:13 – “For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.”
a. Exposure to the light
b. Manifestation of darkness in life and deed which leads to self-evaluation and self-judgment:
   i. Rejection of the light (Truth) places that person in open rebellion. These people hate the light. (John 3:20 – “everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light. lest his works should be exposed”)
   ii. Reception of the light (Truth) allows the light to expose their wickedness. These people love the light and despise their own darkness. (John 3:21 –“whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
c. Transformed into light

3. John 3:19-21 – “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Ephesians 5: 14 – “For anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

Ephesians 5: 15 – “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,”

Ephesians 5: 16 – “Making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”

Ephesians 5: 17 – “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Ephesians 5: 18 – “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,”

Ephesians 5: 19 – “Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,”

Ephesians 5: 20 – “Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

Ephesians 5: 21 – “Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”