



[Author Note: I had the lights slowly getting dimmer and dimmer from the beginning until about 15 minutes in, up until the point when I mentioned it.]

Have you ever been woken up suddenly and had to move quickly, and you really were in a fog trying to do something, but because you were half asleep, you might have done something kind of dumb?

Just me? Cool.

Luckily, I am not the only one who has ever looked ridiculous waking up suddenly. However, I can't tell you everyone else's story, so I will share my own.

[LEADER NOTE: I used a funny story from a camp I was leading at. Feel free to use your own.]

For me, it could be dangerous, because I wake up swinging. When I was at camp, and I was leading a group of high school students, I warned them to not wake me up, because my first reaction is to punch.

Well, one morning they all got up and they filmed me being woken up like that, and I literally punched the closest one right in the jugular.

Not even thinking. WHAM! Right in the throat.

Why don't I show you that video? Because I deleted the evidence as soon as I could. From that camp on, I slept like a baby, because no one dared to wake me up.

I am sure we can all agree that it is way easier to be productive, to live a more fulfilled life, when you are fully awake.

Today, we are going to walk through Ephesians 5, where Paul invites us to walk as children of light and live to please God because, He loves us and has called us His children. This is how we will live a more fulfilled life.

But there is a stark contrast here between walking in darkness and walking in the light, and the thing is, we sometimes don't seem to notice the difference between the two. For some of us, we have known and decided to follow Jesus, and it was great for a little bit. We would be walking "in the light," as Jesus would say, but over time, if you are honest with yourself, you have drifted away from light, and you are now drifting to shady areas.

Some of you have seen Jesus from afar, but you never have really begun to explore what following Jesus would look like for you, because you are still into doing your own thing, because you think you have it all together. Perhaps you just think that whatever you are going through or dealing with, you can handle on your own. You might be able to pull that off, but only for a while.

So, how do we know if we are in the light or dark? Our main text sheds some light on what that can look like.

Be honest: how many of you have two sides? You have the side of you that can be nice and sweet, but you also have the side of you that is sketchy. Like for me, when I am hungry, this is the dark side. I am not responsible for what comes out of my mouth, the amount of sass or sarcasm that comes out of me when I am hungry. Anyone else like me in that?

Then once I'm eating, I'm the happiest, most sweet person you will ever know. We have two sides.

This passage shows us the two sides. Paul tells us what darkness would look like in our lives, and he shows us how it should be if we were walking in the light.

Ephesians 5:3-5 (NLT)

3 Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. 4 Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. 5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

I don't know about you, but there are quite a few things in this list that make my eyes widen, because I have done some of the things mentioned. I'm not talking about when I was in high school; I'm talking about participating in some foolish talk on the way up here when some guy tried to pass my car on the two-lane road when it was not a passing lane.

We tend to drift towards the darkness. We are the opposite of moths. Moths are great Christians; they always go towards the light.

We, if we are not aware, will end up drifting towards darkness, and we won't even know it.

In verse 14 in this chapter, Paul calls these people... "Sleepers".

Ephesians 5:13-14 (NLT)

13 But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, **14** for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,

*"Awake, O sleeper,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light."*

In the poem, in verse 14, the idea of walking in darkness is being equated with being asleep: unaware, drowsy, inactive, blind.

How scary is that?

God is calling us to wake up to the reality of all God has created us for. But how do you know if you're one of the sleeping people He's talking about?

Ephesians 4:17-19 (NLT)

17 With the Lord's authority, I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. **18** Their minds are full of darkness;

they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

What would that look like, you like you might ask? Well, we all know the big things that might be keeping us in the dark.

Some of us act out in ways that we know may not be the best or wisest ways, and it can be really easy to point at someone else and say, “Oh man, yeah, those are the sleepers Paul is talking about here. That guy, his jokes and language are so dirty. That girl, she messes around with all of the place.”

But the crazy and dangerous thing about darkness or sleepiness is that it comes slowly. It may creep in so slowly that you don’t even notice it sometimes.

Here are some examples. Maybe you can be open and honest with yourself and admit that some of these sound like you:

Looking good is more important than being good.

- Some of you, your grades matter more than anything. Are good grades bad? No! But it has taken over your identity. All of your effort and energy goes to performing a certain way, either to please parents, or to try and show your worth by getting into a certain school.
- Some of you spend more time picking out the perfect filter for your Instagram picture or Snapchat story to make sure you look the best you could possibly look than spending time with Jesus. Too real?
- Some of you, your main time and focus is on sports and making sure you “make it.”

Believe being alone is better than being around people.

- Sometimes, darkness is the darkest when you feel like you are alone.
- You have believed the lie that “you can do this on your own.”
- You have believed the lie that there is “absolutely no one that will understand” what you are feeling or going through.

 download [youth ministry](#)

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com