

Ephesians 5:9—(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

This verse (a parenthetical expression) is inserted between verses 8 and 10 to provide clarity. “*Fruit*” (*karpos*) is the same Greek word used in Galatians 5:22 for “*fruit*” of the spirit. Just as spirit-led believers exhibit “*the fruit of the Spirit*” (“*love, joy, peace,*” etc.), “*children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8) exhibit “*the fruit of the light*” (Ephesians 5:9). “*The fruit of the light*” is “*goodness and righteousness and truth*” (Ephesians 5:9).

“*Goodness*” (Ephesians 5:9) can also be interpreted, “profitable, generous, beneficial, upright, or virtuous.” Thus, those who exhibit “*the fruit of the light*” live in such a way as to “profit” and “benefit” others. They are “generous” toward others. No wonder Paul wrote:

See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. (1Thessalonians 5:15)

Don’t overlook the fact that “*goodness*” is also a “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:22).

A saint of God desires to walk in “*righteousness*” (Ephesians 5:9). Romans 1:17, 4:5-6, Galatians 3:11, and 2Corinthians 5:21 confirm that God grants righteousness, not through “*works*” (Titus 3:5), but “*through faith in Christ*” (Romans 1:17; Philippians 3:9). One who is born-again will demonstrate a lifestyle of righteousness (Romans 6:18; 1John 3:7), but will sin at times (1John 1:8). However, his overall lifestyle will be characterized by godliness and holiness.

Because God’s Word is both light and truth (Psalm 119:105), “*children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8) walk in (know, understand, and apply) “*truth*” (Ephesians 5:9). A combination of “*truth*” (Ephesians 5:9) and “*light*” (Ephesians 5:9) are required for a believer to practice God’s nearness (Psalm 43:3)—to walk in intimacy and fellowship with Jehovah. Therefore, passionless saints live fruitless lifestyles. “*Truth*” (Ephesians 5:9) sets the believer “*free*” (John 8:32) to exhibit the “*fruit of the light*” (Ephesians 5:9), a thrilling adventure indeed:

so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:10)

Ephesians 5:10—trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

The phrase, “*trying to learn,*” can also be interpreted “*proving,*” while “*pleasing*” can be rendered “*acceptable.*” Thus, saints who “*walk as children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8) prove “*what is pleasing*” (Ephesians 5:10), or “*acceptable,*” “*to the Lord.*” They have the delightful privilege of “*proving*” to believers as well as unbelievers what satisfies God. In the process, they also prove (to the world) that they are “*children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8) through their living by the life of Another.

Ephesians 5:11—And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

“*Participate*” means “*fellowship*” or “*to become a partaker together with others.*” Hence, the believer must not “*participate,*” “*fellowship,*” or “*become a partaker together with*” individuals involved “*in the unfruitful deeds of darkness.*” Such “*deeds*” are to be laid aside (Romans 13:12) due to their unprofitable (“*unfruitful*”) nature (Ephesians 5:11). Paul described some of these deeds in Ephesians 4 and the early

portion of Ephesians 5.

Instead of participating in the “*unfruitful deeds of darkness*,” God’s people should “*expose them*” (Ephesians 5:11). “*Expose*” is from the Greek *elegcho*, which can also be interpreted “*reprove*” (Matthew 18:15; 2Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:15; Revelation 3:19) or “*convict*” (John 16:8 and Jude 1:15). Consequently, the behavior of the “*children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8) both silences and convicts the lost—as was the case with Paul (before he met Christ) while observing Stephen, a child of light (Acts 22:20). Yes, the Holy Spirit convicts the hearts of the disobedient (John 16:8), but He many times uses believers as the conduit through which He generates the conviction. Sometimes error is made evident through a rebuke (Matthew 18:15-17; 1Timothy 1:20; 2Timothy 4:2), while at other times a godly lifestyle generates the same result (Acts 22:20; 1Peter 3:1-2).

Ephesians 5:12—for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

“*The things...done...in secret*” (Ephesians 5:12) by the children of darkness must be exposed (reproved—Ephesians 5:11), for even speaking of such behavior brings harm to God’s people (Ephesians 5:12).

Ephesians 5:13—But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, (5:13a)

Because God’s Word is “*light*” (Psalm 119:105), it exposes the true character (Ephesians 5:13; Hebrews 4:12-13) of everything it makes “*visible*” (Ephesians 5:13). Thus, truth not only exposes error, but also the motive behind the error. It, as well, allows children of darkness to recognize their sin (in the midst of their depravity) and come to the light.

for everything that becomes visible is light. (5:13b)

Whatever “*light*” makes “*visible*” becomes “*light*.” Note the following quote from Vincent:

Therefore, whatever is revealed in its true essence by light is the nature of light. It no longer belongs to the category of darkness. (Vincent, 1985)ⁱ

Those content with darkness hate the light (John 3:19-20). Only when they (while depraved) allow truth’s light to expose their error (Ephesians 5:13a) and follow by repenting and believing does God make them children of light. So sin, when exposed by the light, becomes light in the sense that it is revealed as destructive.

ⁱ Vincent, Marvin R. (1985). *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA. Used by permission.