

Living UP TO OUR Heavenly Calling

A study in the book of Ephesians

March 11, 2025
Led by Mary Lowman
Ephesians 5:1-21

Introduction

Questions:

1. Are we as believers in Jesus Christ living under a covenant? What covenant?
2. What is the difference in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?
3. Are we no longer required to keep those Old Covenant laws?
Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."
Galatians 3:24: So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.
4. How much better is the New Covenant over the Old Covenant?
2 Corinthians 3:7 – 11 (ESV)
Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, ⁸will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? ⁹For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. ¹⁰Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

Paul calls the new covenant the ministry of righteousness. He is referring to the declaration of righteousness that God pronounces on us based on the perfect righteousness of Christ, which is put on our accounts when we trust in Jesus alone for salvation.



Pistol Star



3.3 million times
brighter than the sun

Supernova Star



5 trillion times brighter than the sun

This gives a very small idea of how much better the New Covenant is compared to the Old Covenant.

We have it better than Moses did!

Hebrews 4:16: *Let us then with confidence—with boldness—draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

If you are born anew in Christ, you have a far greater view of God's glory in Christ than the old covenant saints ever enjoyed.

5. Are there any New Testament commandments?

Matthew 28:16 - 20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Jesus Commandments

How are the Jesus Commandments different from the Old Covenant Commandments?

- Jesus' commandments begin with your heart.
Ezekiel 36:26: *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*
2 Corinthians 5:17: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
- Jesus' Commandments come with the power we need to keep them—the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus' Commandments are based on love—loving God and loving people.

Matthew 22:36 - 40

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- Our changed heart and the Holy Spirit give us the motivation and the power to love God and love people.

Ephesians 5:1 – 10 (ESV)

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

4:31-32: *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

5:1: *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

We are to imitate our Father—it's as family "thing."

Now Paul is giving them very clear instructions of what is and is not acceptable. He's making the Jesus Commandments clear.

Ephesians 5:3-5

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

- No sexual immorality. What would that include?

Why is sexual immorality so damaging?

1 Corinthians 6:16 – 20

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Why are we to *flee* from sexual immorality?

- No impurity. What would that include beyond sexual impurity?
- No covetousness.
- No filthiness, foolish talk or crude joking.

What should be the distinctive trademark of a believer?

Ephesians 5:11- 21

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 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."

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

This principle of separation of God's people from evil pervades the Old and New Testaments:

- **Psalm 1:1:** *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.*
- **Psalm 26:4-5:** *I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.*
- **Proverbs 4:14-15:** *Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on.*
- **2 Corinthians 6:14:** *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.*

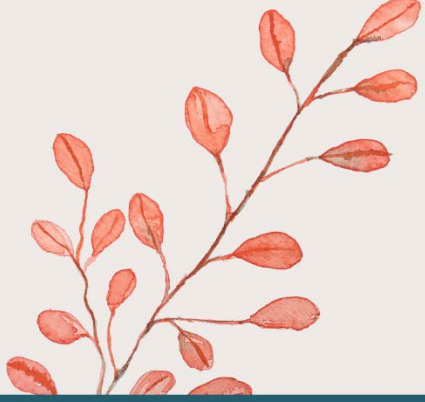

Choose your friends carefully. Be very sure that the people who influence you are godly people.

What are ways that we can enable or appear to approve the sins of others?

How can you expose the sinful works of darkness with people you know?

- By the holiness of your life
- By lovingly trying to convince them of the harm of their sinful ways
- By never compromising your standards

Memory Verse



*Look carefully then how you walk, not as
unwise but as wise, making the best use of
the time, because the days are evil.*

Ephesians 5:15-16

