Connect Group Discussion Guide

LEADER
EPHESIANS - PT 8
11/1/2026

PASSAGE SUMMARY

This passage talks about the darkness of our old selves--covetous, impure, and foolish. It contrasts these old ways of gratifying our flesh with the new ways of walking in the light.

In the light, we expose darkness, awaken, are sober-minded, and we grow in wisdom. Our speech is full of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Thanksgiving is quick and ready, as is submitting to each other in Christ.

BACKGROUND

Ephesians teaches us how to discern what in our lives is from the old way, which is full of death, and the new way, which is full of life. This week's verses add to that a contrast between walking in darkness and walking in light.

The difference between things of darkness and things of light? Covetousness and thanksgiving.

Either we are living to get for ourselves an endless supply of more, or we are content and thankful and ready to love and give.

WARM UP

Open your group time with casual fellowship/questions. Taking a few minutes to connect before jumping into discussion helps create an environment where people feel known, valued, and ready to engage. See Series Introduction for tips and ideas.

TIPS FOR YOUR CONVERSATION

- You don't have to fill every silence. Ask the question, give people time to think, and resist the urge to answer it for them. Use a simple follow-up like, *"What makes you say that?"* or *"Where do you see that in the passage?"*
- Your don't have to have all the answers, just help your group discover God's truth together!
- Feel free to break down any question into parts, especially when there are terms someone in your group might not understand. This gets everyone on the same page about what is being asked.

READ THE PASSAGE

Ephesians 5:3-5:21

Select 2-3 versions to get an idea for how some of these words are translated. Have someone read from the ESV, someone else from Amplified or NASB, and so on.

What words are translated pretty much the same? Which words are a little more different between versions?

ENGAGE WITH THE PASSAGE

1. **How would you summarize these verses to explain them to someone who hasn't read them in a long time? What are the things of darkness? What are the things of light?**

Answers will vary here. A good summary doesn't just talk about what our lives shouldn't be like, but also what we grow to become in Christ through time spent with Him.

2. **How well are we walking? If the picture in these verses show us deep darkness and bright light, how are our lives matching up with those pictures?**

Be willing to go first here. Most of us, who are all growing in sanctification, are still going to find parts of these verses that challenge us to purer faith. The point isn't to provide a to-do list so that we appear before others as holier than we are. It's for our lives to reflect the picture of light through confession (saying it aloud) and repentance that changes how we think and conduct ourselves.

3. **How is thanksgiving described in these verses? What do you have to be thankful for this year?**

Thanksgiving shows up in v. 4 and v. 20. After people share the things they're thankful for, take some time as a group to pause and lift up prayers of thanksgiving to God for the things He has brought you all through, provided, and given grace in. He is good, and we remember that when we take time to thank Him for the portion of His goodness that we have noticed.

4. **There are lots of scriptures that talk about light and darkness. What are some of them? What are some of the things that go with the images of light and darkness in the Bible?**

New groups: Matt mentioned a couple you can look up: 1 John 1:5, Psalm 36:9, Proverbs 20:27, and Isaiah 50:10-11. Someone can also do a keyword search, but also try to remember some of the teachings of Jesus that talk about light and darkness.
Established groups: Begin with the new group instruction, but dive together into the Isaiah 50 passage a little further. What is this scripture saying in context? How can we heed this warning?

5. **How are we to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Are we?**

Matt mentioned a couple points on this--see if someone in your group noted them. 1. It is a command, not a proposal. 2. It is plural--y'all be filled. 3. Present tense (continuous, ongoing, not a one-time thing), and 4. it is passive (so we let the Holy Spirit fill us--we don't do it ourselves.

Look back at the passage, vv. 15-21. It might be confusing to some that God gives a command we can't do ourselves, but if you look through most of scripture, there are lots of commands of things we can't do without His Spirit accomplishing them. These verses describe sobriety with full joy--there's free expression of emotion as well as intentional truth being exchanged. It is about **filling**. Either we will fill ourselves with something that numbs us, or He will fill us with Himself.

NEXT STEPS

As you consider your next step, reflect on:

1) What things of the dark are still hanging on in your life? Have you put them all away?
2) What things of the light still need to come? Are you walking fully in the light right now?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

Last week: We looked at the sermon's five "house rules for the Holy Spirit" and asked the Lord if there was something we needed to repent of, apologize about, or put off of the old self. Was there something that stood out to you from that exercise?

This week: Let's do a very old practice called "The Examen Prayer." At the end of each day this week, around bedtime, get a pen and a notebook. Settle down before the Lord and ask Him to review the day's events together. Invite Him to show you what brought Him happiness and what could have gone better. Spend some time with Him in prayer as you go to sleep. Remember! If anxious thoughts or ruminating on mistakes threatens to overtake your time with Him, you can leave those at His feet for Him to handle. Make a plan to apologize for anything you need to leave in yesterday, and let Him teach you to walk the path of light.

Here is an article to read more about the practice of "The Examen Prayer."

***Leaders - check in with your group members at least twice this week. Share your own experience with this exercise and encourage others to do the same!

RESOURCES IN THE ROCK BRIDGE APP!

Take a few minutes to explore the Rock Bridge App as a group. Tap **Daily Habits** to walk through the daily devotion, journal, gratitude, and prayer prompts. Then, show your group **Community Prayer**, found in the bubbles at the top of the home page. This feature helps you stay connected in prayer and engage with God's Word throughout the week.

Challenge: Encourage everyone to open the app at least three times this week and spend time praying for one of the requests in Community Prayer.

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