

Walk in Love **Ephesians 5:1-2**

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children, and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (NIV)

The letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus is a communication designed to teach and encourage them how to live a life of faithfulness, how to be followers of Jesus, how to live with other believers and even with enemies. It is a letter chock full of instructions, helpful tidbits of life, as well as warnings. The passage that will serve as our guiding theme for the coming year follows a listing of rules for how they are to live this new life. Paul warns them to speak truth (rather than lies), he encourages them deal with their anger quickly and come to a place of agreement; to work hard (rather than steal); to speak words of kindness; to refrain from bitterness, wrath, anger, fussing and fighting, slander, and malice. The key verses that shape our focus “Walk in Love” sums it up by challenging them to be imitators of God and live in love. As God’s beloved children, we are challenged to give ourselves out to others in divine love. And the good news is that our actions of love and kindness will cause us to look more and more like Jesus every day.

The theme “*Walk in Love*”, paints a poignant picture of what it means to walk with Christ as we travel through the seasons of our lives. In the coming year, each month we will explore this theme from a variety of perspectives –

- The school year – showing support for students and teachers,
- The Fall – enjoying and praising God for the beauty of nature,
- Thanksgiving - showing our thankfulness for what God has done for us,
- Christmas - celebrating the amazing truth that “Love Came Down” to earth at Christmas,
- The New Year - and all that 2019 promises,
- Valentine’s Day - and the month of love for our family and friends,
- Welcoming the new life that springs up around us,
- The new life given to us by our Savior,
- Loving our mothers and our fathers,
- Demonstrating love for our country

These topics seem, for the most part, like broad subjects with simple answers. However, they are broad in order to give us creative freedom, but they are not meant to be simple. We live in complicated times, and we want to know how to show God’s love to the world. How can we witness to others, feed the hungry, comfort the dying, help the homeless, minister to those who are dealing with anger, hate, and injustice?

Ephesians tells us to follow God’s example. We are challenged to ask what God would do in every situation we face in our lives; and then do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents (Ephesians 5:1-2).

Mostly what God does is love us, so we seek to keep company with him, and learn to live a life of love. What a high standard Paul sets before us: to be imitators of God. This is tough talk. We are to put off our old self and put on the new self (Ephesians 4:22-24). Paul tells us to stop acting like people of the world by getting rid of bitterness, rage, and anger, and forgiving one another just as God forgives us. We are to submit to one another out of reverence to Christ (Ephesians 5:21).

In the coming year, maybe we grow to look like God by the way we love others and follow the example of Jesus Christ by walking in love throughout the year, all 365 days!