

April 23, 2017

Who are you?

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness...Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God...For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light."

Ephesians 4:22-5:8

In the scientific world there are many things that we understand, and many that we really don't. One of those things that we really don't understand is light. We do know a lot about light, but we are still not sure what it is and how it works. Among those things that we do know for sure is that light is something; it exists. Contrasting to that we also know that darkness does not exist, because darkness is just the absence of light.

So when Paul writes to the Ephesian believers about what God has called them to be and what that looks like in the world, he uses this metaphor. *"...you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light."* Paul is not teaching that you and I were once literally darkness, but we were living in darkness. As believers we are now living in the light and we can reflect that light into this world.

That sounds beautiful doesn't it. But what does it mean? Paul explains what living in the darkness looks like in our context for today. He writes, *"Therefore each of you must put off*



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falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor...In you anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no more, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...get rid of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice..."

We should begin, I think, to understand that when God calls us to become his children, he is calling us to be fundamentally transformed from what we have been to what he wants us to be. That transforming process can be painful because it requires that we get rid of our old self-serving ways.

As we do that through the Spirit, God transforms us into children of light. That's how he wants us to live our lives day by day. God calls us to live selflessly and in doing so everything we touch is transformed by the light we live. Light, as Paul uses it, is ultimately a life lived selflessly in service to others. When we don't choose to live that kind of life then we choose to live in darkness.

The choice to be transformed from self-serving to selfless by God's power will change every relationship we have. It has to. In fact this change is a great indicator of just how transformed we are becoming. In marriage, for example, selflessness shows up in a wife's willingness to respect her husband and in a husband's willingness to sacrificially love his wife. In parent/child relationships

