



**SERIES: Beyond Nice**

<b>Week 3: Walk In The Way of Love</b>	
<p><b>Connect</b></p>  <p>5 – 10 min</p>	<p><u>Question option:</u> Where do you like to walk? Tell us about a great walk you’ve done or dream of doing. (If you can’t walk or have difficulty walking, tell about a scenic place you like to visit.)</p> <p><u>Intergenerational/Interactive option:</u> Set up a mini obstacle course. Guide a blindfolded partner through the course using EITHER words only (no touching) or guiding by the elbow (no words). Walk in the way of love... don’t let your partner get hurt!</p>
<p><b>Gratitude</b></p>  <p>10 – 15 min</p>	<p>“From the rising of the sun, to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised” Psalm 113:3 (NIV). Read Psalm 113 aloud in The Message version (and a more traditional version if you wish).</p> <p><i>Song Suggestion:</i> 10,000 Reasons (Matt Redman or Rend Collective have recorded versions.)</p> <p>Have kids or artistic people in your group draw a sunrise on one piece of paper and sunset on another. (Or use pictures from a magazine.) Place the two pictures some distance apart. On slips of paper have everyone write things they want to give God praise for, or that they are thankful for this week. As each person reads out their slip(s) to bless the Lord, place them down to build a connecting ‘path’ between sunrise and sunset (or east and west).</p>
<p><b>Discover</b></p>  <p>25 min</p>	<p>Read Ephesians 5:1-21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verses 1-2 ask us to follow God’s example and walk in the way of love “just as Christ loved us...” (NIV). How exactly did/does Christ love us? What does that mean? (check out v1-2 in The Message version. Also Romans 5:6-8 in any version.)</li> </ul> <p>Walking in the way of love involves relationship with God and others, including submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (v21). As we have discussed previously, the way we speak, think, act and interact matters to God and reflects our relationship with him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to the “Digging Deeper” notes re verse 3. Think about some of the types of sexual immorality that are common in our society today. Consider the impact these have on relationships (with God and others).</li> <li>The old adage “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is not true. Read verse 4-7 and the “Digging Deeper” note on verse 4. Take a moment to reflect privately on how you use words. Is there anything you need to repent of and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help to change? Now is a good time to do that.</li> <li>Read v 8 - 20 and the “Digging Deeper” notes re verse 18 &amp; 20. What place does alcohol play in your social interactions and/or way of dealing with life? Could it be hindering you to “make the most of every opportunity” to live wisely and be a light to others? Is alcohol (or something else you rely on) fulfilling a function that should be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Act</b></p>  <p>10 min</p>	<p>What action is God asking of you in response to what you have just discovered in God’s word?</p> <p><b>Dare To Go Beyond</b></p> <p><i>Each week of this series we ask you to accept a challenge “dare to go beyond” in your daily relationships. Give it a go during the week, and report back next week.</i></p> <p><b>The Dare:</b> Write and send three thank you or appreciation notes this week.</p>

## Digging Deeper

*Adapted from Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, "Ephesians" by Francis Foulkes.*

### Ephesians 5

Verse 3: In verse 3 we are suddenly turned from the contemplation of the self-giving, sacrificial love of Christ, to love's perversion in adultery and sexual abuse. Paul knew the dangers to which his readers were exposed in the life of their society, and so spoke frankly about them.

Commentator C.L. Mitton says that "sexual immorality" (Greek = *porneia*) involves "any sexual indulgence outside the permanent relationship of marriage, in circumstances where the sexual appetites are used merely as a means of pleasure without any sense of responsibility or care for a partner." Immorality is uncleanness or impurity because purity means the control and direction of sexual powers and impulses in accordance with the laws and purposes of God. It is 'ruthless greed' because it is selfish indulgence at the expense of others.

Verse 4: Here Paul wants to insist that thanksgiving is the best use of speech. He does not prudishly forbid speaking about sex, nor austere debar humour, but he would have none of the 'flippant talk' that harms the spiritual life. Rather, he would demand that if conversation is about sex, or possessions, or people, it should be directed by the spirit of thanksgiving and praise, towards seeing and acknowledging the loveliness and beauty of God's gifts. (See also verse 19 – 20). If this is the case then speech will be kept pure and uplifting.

Verse 18: Scripture never demands total abstinence from intoxicants (except for those who had taken special vows. That must be a question left to the individual conscience, but the Bible often speaks against drunkenness. The specific objection here to being drunk with wine is that it involves debauchery. The word involves not only the uncontrolled action of the drunken person, but also the idea of wastefulness. Both the wastefulness and the lack of self-control implied by this word are things which should not be seen in the lives of those who have found in Christ the source and way of wisdom.

There is the implication here (and in Acts 2) that the Christian knows a better way than by alcohol of being lifted above the depression and the joyless monotony of life, a better way of removing self-consciousness and quickening thought and word and action than by the use of intoxicants. It is by being filled with the Spirit.

Verse 20: Whether in song or in other ways the Christian should constantly be giving thanks. This "presupposes a deep underlying faith that God can produce good out of even the most unpromising situation, and that thankfulness therefore, can be felt because of the confident hope that in some wonderful way God will make disaster and suffering an occasion for later blessing." (CL Mitton).