

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 28, Beloved Children of God (Eph 5:1-21) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 28, Beloved Children of God (Eph 5:1-21), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Darko's lecture, Session 28 on Ephesians 5:1-21, encourages believers to imitate God as beloved children by walking in love, modeled by Christ's self-sacrifice. The lecture highlights that this ethical framework is rooted in a loving familial relationship with God, contrasting with ancient views that undervalued parental love. **Darko emphasizes the importance of embodying virtues, especially love and thanksgiving, while avoiding vices like sexual immorality and harmful speech.** He draws parallels with Greco-Roman and Jewish thought to provide context for Paul's instructions. **Ultimately, the passage calls believers to live as "children of light," exposing darkness through their good, right, and true conduct, urging spiritual awakening and a life reflective of God's love.**

2. 7 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 28 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).



Darko_PrisonEp_Session28.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 28, Beloved Children of God (Eph 5:1-21)

Briefing Document: Dr. Daniel K. Darko on Ephesians 5:1-21

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Daniel K. Darko in Session 28 of his lecture series on the Prison Epistles, focusing on Ephesians 5:1-21, titled "Beloved Children of God." Dr. Darko delves into Paul's exhortation for believers to imitate God as beloved children, emphasizing the importance of love, contrasting it with various vices, and using the imagery of light and darkness to illustrate the Christian life.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Imitation of God as Beloved Children:

- Paul's opening of Ephesians 5 with "Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children" builds upon the ethical instructions given in chapter four regarding internal dynamics, speech, and work ethic.
- Dr. Darko emphasizes that this moral instruction is framed within a **kinship relationship**, not a legalistic one. Peace and ethical behavior arise from respect and love within this familial framework.
- He highlights the significance of "beloved children," arguing that this emphasizes the love believers have *received* from God, enabling them to imitate Him. "As beloved children, as receivers and beneficiaries of a great love of God, you are now being urged to emulate the lifestyle of your father, who has so shown this love towards you."
- Dr. Darko challenges the feminist discourse from the 80s and 90s that overly emphasized patriarchal notions and suggested fathers in the ancient world did not love their children. He asserts that the data does not support this and that Paul's analogy relies on the understanding of a loving father-child relationship. "Fathers really love their children. And when fathers love and care for their children, it is highly admirable. Else, when Paul wrote and said to be imitators of God as beloved children, his readers couldn't even relate to that."
- The concept of imitating deities was common in the Greco-Roman world, with each god embodying specific qualities. Paul's call to imitate God resonates within

this cultural context, especially considering the less sharp distinction between the material and immaterial worlds.

1. **Walking in Love as Christ Loved:**

- The primary virtue to be imitated is **love**, modeled after the self-giving love of Christ. "Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."
- Jesus is presented as the practical model for how love should be expressed within the Christian community. "Your big brother Jesus...now he introduces Jesus as the model and the love that Jesus exhibited as the modeled love that should be present in the community of faith."
- This love is characterized by self-giving, mirroring God's love in giving his Son and Christ's giving of himself. "As Christ gave himself, note the verb there. He gave himself out of love. He did not receive love in this expression and this emulation of the father's quality. It's a love that made him give his son, Jesus Christ, and which made Jesus, in turn, give his life for us."
- Such love, when present among believers, is like "a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God," an idiom for an acceptable sacrifice that pleases God.

1. **Contrast with Vices:**

- Paul sharply contrasts this life of love with specific vices that should not even be "named among you, as is proper among the saints": sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, and crude joking.
- Dr. Darko clarifies the term "sexual immorality" (porneia), noting its broad meaning and highlighting that Paul's condemnation applies to both men and women, contrasting it with some Greek philosophical views (like Plato's) that were more lenient towards male infidelity. He emphasizes the Jewish perspective, which strongly condemned such behavior.
- The first three vices are sex-related, and the latter three are speech-related, all deemed unfitting for the identity of beloved children of God.

1. **The Virtue of Thanksgiving:**

- Paul contrasts these six vices with the single, powerful virtue of **thanksgiving**. "Instead, let there be thanksgiving."
- Dr. Darko points out that thanksgiving, while perhaps underappreciated in Western civilization, was a noble virtue in the ancient world, associated with gratitude and recognizing the kindness of others.
- He emphasizes that Christians should cultivate this virtue, appreciating God's grace and the kindness shown by others, rather than living with a sense of entitlement. "Learn to say thank you. Learn to appreciate other people in other words."

1. **Warning Against Partnership with Darkness:**

- Paul warns believers that those who practice sexual immorality, impurity, or greed "have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ."
- He urges believers not to "become partners with them" and not to be deceived by "empty words" that might excuse such behavior. "Therefore, do not become partners with them or let no one deceive you with empty words. Because of this, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience."

1. **Light and Darkness Imagery:**

- Paul uses the powerful contrast of **light and darkness** to illustrate the transformed state of believers. "For at one time, you were darkness, but you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."
- He emphasizes the shift from "then" (darkness) to "now" (light) that occurs upon becoming a Christian, necessitating a change in behavior.
- The **fruit of light** is described as "all that is good, and right, and true," contrasting with the "unfruitful works of darkness."
- Believers, as children of light, should "try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord" and "take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them."
- Exposing darkness can lead to unpopularity and ridicule, but it is a natural consequence of shining the light of Christ.

1. Call to Awaken:

- Paul's call to "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" urges believers to be alert and live up to their calling.
- Dr. Darko connects this to similar imagery in Romans 13 and 1 Thessalonians 5, emphasizing the need for believers to be distinct from the darkness of the world and to live lives that reflect the light of Christ. "Wake up, all sleeper. Yes. For the beloved children and living as the beloved children, we are urged to understand that we are not just loving children of God, but we are loved to the degree that we are also called to imitate the life of God."

Conclusion:

Dr. Darko's lecture on Ephesians 5:1-21 underscores the profound implications of being "beloved children of God." This identity calls believers to a life of imitation, primarily through self-giving love modeled by Christ. This love stands in stark contrast to various sexual and verbal vices that are deemed wholly inappropriate for those who have received God's love. The cultivation of thanksgiving is presented as a crucial virtue, and the imagery of light and darkness powerfully illustrates the transformed state of believers who are called to expose the unfruitful works of darkness by living lives characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth. The final call to awaken serves as a powerful reminder for believers to actively live out their identity in Christ.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 28, Beloved Children of God (Eph 5:1-21)

Study Guide: Ephesians 5:1-21

Key Themes:

- **Imitation of God:** Believers are called to imitate God, their Father, reflecting His virtuous character.
- **Love as the Model:** This imitation is primarily expressed through love, modeled after Christ's self-sacrificial love.
- **Beloved Children:** The foundation for this ethical living is the identity of believers as God's beloved children, recipients of His great love.
- **Contrast Between Light and Darkness:** The life of a believer is contrasted with the darkness of the world, urging them to live as children of light, bearing good fruit.
- **Virtue vs. Vice:** Paul contrasts the virtues of love and thanksgiving with specific sexual and speech-related vices that are inappropriate for believers.
- **Call to Wakefulness:** Believers are urged to be awake and active in living out their new identity in Christ, exposing the darkness through their light.

Quiz:

1. According to Paul in Ephesians 5:1-2, what primary action are believers called to undertake, and what is the basis for this call?
2. What specific virtue does Paul emphasize as central to imitating God in this passage, and how does he describe Christ's demonstration of this virtue?
3. Why does Dr. Darko address the idea that ancient fathers did not love their children, and what point does he make regarding Paul's use of the "beloved children" concept?
4. How does the Greco-Roman concept of imitating deities differ from the Christian understanding presented by Paul in Ephesians 5:1-2?
5. What are the first three vices Paul lists in Ephesians 5:3-4, and what general category do they fall under?
6. What single virtue does Paul offer as a contrast to the six vices he lists, and why does Dr. Darko emphasize its importance?

7. What does the Greek word "porneia" generally refer to, and how does Dr. Darko explain the potential misunderstandings of this term based on Greco-Roman culture?
8. What does Paul warn about regarding those who practice sexual immorality, impurity, or greed in Ephesians 5:5?
9. What central metaphor does Paul use in Ephesians 5:8-14 to describe the transformed state of believers and how they should live in the world?
10. According to the passage and Dr. Darko's explanation, what is the responsibility of believers as "light" in relation to the "darkness" of the world?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. Believers are called to be imitators of God as beloved children. This call is based on their identity as those who have received God's love and are now urged to emulate His character.
2. Paul emphasizes love as the central virtue. He describes Christ's love as self-giving, as He "gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."
3. Dr. Darko addresses this to counter feminist interpretations that overemphasize patriarchal notions, arguing that the available data suggests fathers did love their children. This is important because Paul uses the loving father-child relationship as a relatable model for the believer's relationship with God.
4. In the Greco-Roman world, imitating deities often involved emulating specific qualities associated with each god. Paul's concept focuses on imitating the one true God in the relational context of a loving Father and His beloved children, primarily through the virtue of love as demonstrated by Christ.
5. The first three vices are sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness (or greed). These fall under the general category of sexual sins or desires.
6. Paul offers thanksgiving as a contrast. Dr. Darko emphasizes its importance as a noble virtue, a sign of gratitude, and a characteristic that should be present in the Christian community in contrast to the listed vices and entitlement.
7. "Porneia" generally refers to sexual immorality of any kind, often translated as fornication. Dr. Darko explains that Greco-Roman culture had unfair views on sexual morality, sometimes placing blame primarily on women, which can lead to misinterpretations of Paul's condemnation.

8. Paul warns that those who live in sexual immorality, impurity, or greed have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.
9. Paul uses the metaphor of light and darkness. Believers were once darkness but are now light in the Lord and should walk as children of light, producing good, right, and true fruit.
10. Believers, as light, have a responsibility to expose the unfruitful works of darkness. This means living in a way that reveals the nature of these dark deeds, even if it leads to opposition or unpopularity.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Explore the significance of Paul's emphasis on believers as "beloved children" of God in Ephesians 5:1-21. How does this identity serve as the foundation for his ethical exhortations in this passage?
2. Analyze Paul's use of the metaphor of "light" and "darkness" in Ephesians 5:8-14. What does this imagery communicate about the transformation of believers and their role in the world?
3. Discuss the contrast Paul draws between the vices listed in Ephesians 5:3-4 and the virtues of love and thanksgiving. Why does Paul consider these vices particularly unfitting for "saints" and "beloved children" of God?
4. Examine the influence of the cultural context of Paul's audience on his teachings in Ephesians 5:1-21, considering the Greco-Roman understanding of imitating deities and Jewish moral principles regarding sexual ethics.
5. Evaluate the ongoing relevance of Paul's exhortations in Ephesians 5:1-21 for contemporary Christian living. In what ways do the calls to imitate God, walk in love, and live as light challenge believers today?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Imitation of God:** The call for believers to pattern their lives after the character and actions of God, their Father.
- **Beloved Children:** The identity of Christians as those who are deeply loved by God, forming the basis for their ethical behavior.
- **Love (agape):** The self-sacrificial and unconditional love modeled by Christ, which believers are called to emulate.
- **Fragrant Offering and Sacrifice:** An idiom referring to an act of love and obedience that is pleasing and acceptable to God, as Christ's sacrifice was.
- **Anachronism:** Applying a modern concept or understanding to the ancient world where it did not exist or was understood differently.
- **Porneia:** A Greek term generally referring to sexual immorality of any kind, often translated as fornication.
- **Thanksgiving (eucharistia):** A virtue of gratitude and appreciation, which Paul contrasts with the listed vices and emphasizes as important for believers.
- **Light:** A metaphor for the transformed state of believers in Christ, characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth.
- **Darkness:** A metaphor for the state of the world without Christ, characterized by unfruitful works and sin.
- **Expose:** The action of light revealing the true nature of darkness, implying that believers should live in a way that makes sin evident.

5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 28, Beloved Children of God (Eph 5:1-21), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Ephesians 5:1-21

- 1. What is the central theme introduced at the beginning of Ephesians chapter 5, and how does it connect to the preceding chapter?** The central theme introduced is the call for believers to be "imitators of God as beloved children" (Ephesians 5:1). This directly builds upon the ethical instructions given in chapter 4, which focused on virtues like tenderheartedness, controlling anger, edifying speech, and a strong work ethic. Paul argues that the transformation in behavior he outlined in chapter 4 flows from the fundamental identity of believers as God's beloved children, urging them to live in a way that reflects their divine parentage.
- 2. What does it mean for believers to be "imitators of God," and what model does Paul present for this imitation?** To be imitators of God means to emulate His virtuous qualities. While the concept of imitating deities was common in the Greco-Roman world, Paul specifies that Christians are to imitate God in love. He then presents Jesus Christ as the ultimate model for how this love should be expressed – through self-giving sacrifice, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering to God. This shifts the focus from simply adopting divine attributes to embodying the sacrificial love demonstrated by Jesus.
- 3. How does the concept of believers as "beloved children" influence their ethical conduct, according to the lecture?** The understanding that believers are "beloved children" of God establishes a familial framework for Christian ethics. This framework emphasizes love and respect rather than a legalistic or fear-based obedience. Because believers have already received God's great love, they are now called to reflect that love in their relationships with one another. This understanding counters the idea that fathers in the ancient world were primarily harsh and unloving, suggesting instead that the loving relationship between a father and his children serves as a relatable model for God's love for humanity.

4. Paul contrasts the imitation of God with certain vices in Ephesians 5:3-4. What are these vices, and what is the overarching point of this contrast? Paul contrasts the call to imitate God's love with six specific vices: sexual immorality, impurity, greed, filthiness, foolish talk, and crude joking. The first three are related to sexual sins, while the latter three pertain to harmful speech. The overarching point of this contrast is to highlight that such behaviors are completely inappropriate for "saints" (believers) and are antithetical to the self-giving love they are called to embody as imitators of God. These actions stem from selfish desires rather than the outward-giving nature of Christ-like love.

5. What is the significance of "thanksgiving" as a virtue in contrast to the listed vices? Paul presents thanksgiving as a significant virtue that stands in stark contrast to the six listed vices. In the ancient world, thanksgiving was a highly regarded virtue signifying gratitude and appreciation. By emphasizing thanksgiving, Paul encourages believers to cultivate a mindset of gratitude for God's grace and the kindness of others. This contrasts with the entitlement and self-seeking nature that often underlies the vices he condemns. Cultivating thankfulness fosters healthy relationships and reflects a heart that recognizes and values the blessings received, mirroring God's generosity.

6. How does Paul use the imagery of light and darkness in Ephesians 5:7-14, and what are the implications for Christian living? Paul employs the powerful imagery of light and darkness to contrast the former state of unbelievers with their current identity as believers in Christ. He states that "at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). As children of light, believers are called to "walk as children of light," meaning their lives should be characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth (the "fruit of light"). They are also urged to avoid participating in the "unfruitful works of darkness" and instead expose them. This implies that the very lives of Christians should reveal the darkness of sin and point towards what is good and pleasing to the Lord.

7. What does it mean to "expose" the unfruitful works of darkness, according to the lecture, and what potential responses might this elicit? To "expose" the unfruitful works of darkness doesn't necessarily mean aggressive confrontation, but rather living a life of light that inherently reveals the negative nature of darkness. Just as a light makes things visible, a life lived in goodness, righteousness, and truth exposes the sinfulness and shame of ungodly behavior. The lecture suggests that this exposure can lead to negative reactions, such as ridicule, unpopularity, and opposition, as those in darkness may feel uncomfortable or confronted by the contrasting light.

8. What is the significance of the call to "awake, O sleeper" in Ephesians 5:14, and how does it relate to the themes of light and darkness? The call to "awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" is a powerful exhortation for believers to be fully alert and living in accordance with their identity as children of light. It addresses those who may be spiritually drowsy or inactive. Just as physical light dispels sleep and darkness, the light of Christ should energize and illuminate the lives of believers, enabling them to shine brightly and fulfill their calling. This awakening is crucial for effectively exposing darkness and living a life that honors God.