

# Ephesians X

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From chapter 5:1-14 Paul makes suggestion of how to train each believer to raise up the glorious church. Let's look at the introduction in verse 1 "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." The goal of training the believers according to the Book of Ephesians is to imitate God. In another word, we want to reach the full measure of Jesus Christ. The imitators of Jesus Christ! One thing to take a note of is "as beloved children." Children are born as a result of love of a couple. Likewise we are born as a result of God's love. Children who are loved by parents grow up to be healthy, and love other people. If we don't accept the creation account out of God's love for us, we don't have His love. When we don't have His love, it is impossible to love others. We are born by the love of God. Just like the Lord loved us we ought to imitate Him with His love. That's the reason the base of a church should be the highway of love. The word "love" is not a theoretical word, especially when Apostle John firmly said, "Love is keeping the commandments." In order for the church community to truly serve one another and to consider others better, a pastor should present the action plans in detail. If love in a church is theoretical and unclear, then a church becomes like a park filled with a thick fog. Here are some examples of action plans that I present to my congregation. "Don't forge a give and take relationship. Don't do business with other believers in church!" Love is concrete not theoretical. The foundation of all ministries in a church is love. The members of a church should feel much love enough to confess their sins and reveal their weaknesses to each other. This should take a place at least in a small group or cell group they belong to. The true goal of a church is to become a community of love.

The reason for the collapse of Ephesian Church is the love grown cold. Satan is so clever with his strategy. Although Ephesian Church was so powerful according to Revelation, we see Satan's strategy in 2:4 "but I have this against you, that you have left your first love." They did not leave spiritual gifts or power but love. Next verse is more important "therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first." In order to restore their love Jesus instructs them to do the deeds they did at first. That means to restore or recover the concrete action plans of love. Jesus was implying like "You prayed so fervently when you loved me but your prayer has grown cold. Restore your prayer. Where is your devotion to help others and to save the poor by considering others better than you? You have embezzled and corrupted with greediness. Help the poor again." This is the first action plan of restoring love. The strong bond that holds up the Ephesian Church is the bond of love. Keep building the highway of love that runs underneath the Ephesian Church! Pave the spiritual system over it! Then, spiritual gifts and power can travel over them. However, if the road/highway is ruined, we can't do anything. Satan clearly knew how to bring down Ephesian Church. He used a strategy to grow the love cold. The community we serve or a church is crippled when love grows cold and when grace grows cold. No matter how dirty the world is when snow covers it, it looks white and clean. Likewise when a church is covered with grace, everyone looks so beautiful. The members of a church say about their pastor, "He looks unique and he is neat." However, when snow melts away, everything is revealed again. Everyone is surprised to see what is revealed. We are all dirty and filthy. If the grace of God does not cover us up and if the love lacks in a church, she will be ruined. On the other hand, more grace covers up more beautiful everything looks. Man having grace or not makes a world of difference.

Paul speaks in verse 2, "And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us." We can love others because we receive the amazing love of God. You cannot love someone by yourself. Since you receive love from God, you can love your children, your spouse, and the community with the love of God. Someone may say, "I love without the love of God." That is impossible! It doesn't work like that! Jesus Christ gave Himself up and offered the sweet aroma of sacrifice and offering to God out of His love for us. Jesus loved us so much that He gave up everything for us on the cross. It was like a burnt offering of lamb in Old Testament that lamb was thoroughly sacrificed. That's how Jesus gave Himself up; He gave up everything He had. That's

the kind of love He loves us with. Hence, it is obvious for us to give everything we have for others. The fundamental of pastoral ministry is living for other people. We should exist for the sake of others. They should be blessed through us and the church members should see the ministry of their pastor. It is always giving, benefiting others, and blessing them; considering others better than me. That's the direction of ministry. We simply give because we have received the love of God. We should make a habit of serving others.

Paul speaks of action plans in detail beginning with verse three. First, in order to live by the love of God, you must first "immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints." "Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you" means that do not even think about it. Do not receive any type of worldliness which will in turn corrupt your structure of mind and spiritual system. According to Romans 8 if your mind is over the flesh, your desire of flesh opens up which will prosper your old man. This is how spiritual system works. Therefore, it is best to put your mind on God and focus on Him. When you do that, desire of the Holy Spirit will open up in your soul and it will also prosper your new man. It is important to always fix your mind on God. The reason you don't hear the voice of God is not lack of skill to hear but because your mind is not fixed on God. Only when you focus all the aspects of your life, you can develop an ear to hear His voice. This is the first step of developing an ear that can hear the voice of God. When you read the Bible, when you pray, and when you discipline your child, your focus on God should spread over all the aspects of life. Listen with your ears! When your soul focuses on God and hear the voice of God in all aspects of your life, your spirit will be filled and sensitive! If you haven't been listening to His voice, you can start asking God and focus on Him. You will naturally hear His voice. This is the reason why we shouldn't even think about immorality or greed.

The immorality refers to adultery and etc. Satan corrupts God's church with this problem. There is no good way to deal with the issue of immorality. No one is immune from this. All we can do is watch out for it. When solitude and loneliness come, the immorality always comes. Always be with your wife and love her. It is impossible to be in ministry when a couple doesn't love each other. In Book of Ezra Hebrews married Gentile women. However, upon the revival they kicked out their Gentile wives. It was impossible to do in ordinary times. How can a husband kick out a wife that gave birth to his children even though she is a foreign woman? However, that's what happened. They didn't have to go through this to begin with. They could have rejected whenever they see Gentile women and crucified the immorality. Time will pass and they will get old, too old to pay attention to women. Let us guard ourselves with purity and holiness.

Next, Paul speaks of greed. It is desire to live according to one's desire rather than relying on God. We shouldn't even think about doing that. That's how a saint should live out his life. What I mean by "a saint should live out his life" is that it is not a matter of choice. It is obvious! A saint should not even bother to think about it. Paul further speaks in verse 5, "For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." People like that do not receive an inheritance. That means they will go to hell. We need a pure heart committed to live always by the provisions of God removing what is impure, what is immoral, and what is covetous from us. The best thing is purity.

Second, let's look at a second point in verse 4 "and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving thanks." Filthiness refers to dirty jokes, words of worldliness, and words that have nothing to do with Jesus. Whenever we gather, refrain from speaking words that do not have anything to do with Jesus. For example, "This new product is good. This department has a big sale going on. New model of refrigerator is good." We want to refrain from speaking these words. Whenever we gather, we should share the truth like "The message from last Sunday was very blessing to me. I am trying to live by the word and it is so

difficult.” Whenever we gather, speak about God. This is all about sharing revelation and fellowship. Next, silly talk refers to unbeneficial jokes. I make a lot of jokes myself and it is ok to joke to change the mood and to stimulate others in positive ways; however, we should stay away from corny jokes that are so flat. What I mean by “corny jokes” is the jokes that are not beneficial to anyone but rather they hurt others’ feeling. Paul contends us to “rather give thanks.” That happens naturally when you talk about the grace of God in your life; thanksgiving overflows. “God did it! The Lord spoke to me like that!” These words should be the main words in our conversation with others.

Third, let’s look at verse six, which is still part of the training over words, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Paul is speaking against Gnosticism and the false teachers of it. We shouldn’t let people speak of false gospel and different gospel. For example, we shouldn’t say, “God does not give us suffering.” The cheap gospel without the cross is very dangerous. If it is will of God, we should choose the suffering, we should gladly sacrifice for God, and we should give up ourselves. In short, the followers of Gnosticism or the sons of disobedience are full of their will and ways to live rather than obeying God. Paul provides us with remedy in verse seven “therefore do not be partakers with them.” It is best not to associate with those who live with the false gospel. I am not even moved to give them the words of admonition. Again, it is best not to hang around with them. I spoke to you about three things so far. First, it is love. It is the goal of our training in this community to imitate Jesus by the love of God. We must first receive the love of God. Second, in order to imitate Jesus, we do not want to even think about immorality, impurity and greed. Finally, do not speak filthiness, silly talk or coarse jesting. Don’t let others deceive you with empty words! These are practical action plans.

Now we see the result of the training from verse eight to verse 20. It is better to see it as motivation, reason or conclusion not confining it to conclusion. Paul says in verse eight, “For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.” Do not expose your spirit to the world and do not allow ungodly things corrupt your structure of mind. That’s darkness! Since you are the children of light, you should always see the light. You are supposed to be “Lordflower” (like sunflower) because your spirit faces the Lord all the time. In our spiritual training the most important first step is to always open our spirit and the structure of mind to God with all heart and soul. Like in the gospel of John we are supposed to open up our spirits to the Lord. John said in 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” We should make all the preparations we need to receive Jesus who comes to us continuously. This is the alpha and omega of spirituality. The fact is the Holy Spirit builds up in us according to His plan. The primary problem of our spirituality is that we do not open our spirit to God but open up our concern to other things.

Please take time to examine your day with some questions. How much time out of 24 hours a day is my spirit is facing God? How much time am I listening to hear the voice of God asking Him questions? How much time am I taking to ask God what I should pray for? How much am I allowing the Lord of history of nations and individuals to use me through the prayers originated from Him to move them? How much time am I opening up my spirit to God out of 24 hours a day? It may not be much. You probably speak according to your thoughts without acknowledging God in many instances. I fellowship with God even in my sleep through dreams. You are distracted a lot. This is characteristic of legalistic Christian life. The most important thing is to focus on God. The rest is up to God and He shapes you as long as you open your spirit to Him!

Let’s look at verse nine “for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.” Vegetables and fruit trees bear fruits when exposed to light. That’s natural! The

reason they don't bear any fruit is because they don't have sun light. When we are exposed to the Light, our fruits are goodness. It means a good heart; a humble heart. It cannot withstand the weight of a seed thus embracing it. It is a humble heart. It is a good soil. As you work on your spirituality you become good. You become soft. The difference between the suffering of a child of God and the suffering of a worldly man is that as a child of God suffers, he becomes soft. When you are weak, you are strong. Paul said in 2 Corinthians that through suffering he realized how weak he was which led him to thoroughly rely on God. On the other hand, the worldly man develops stubbornness as much as he suffers, so he becomes hardened. When you live with God, the first thing people notice is that you become good. The malice is removed. His eyes look like a little child. Those that let go of their own strength their eyes are filled with goodness. We are not looking at the condition of physical eyes. When we look at them spiritually, their eyes are good and there is no malice. When I touch them spiritually, they are so soft like the back of babies.

Now let's address the "righteousness" which is living by the acknowledgment of God. This is being willing to die for the truth. Righteousness means what is right is right and what is not right is not right! It is being just. When God says, "It is right," then it is right. If God says, "It is not right," then it is not right! That's the fruit of light. The reason you lie is because you are in darkness in which you can't discern what is right. If you live in light, you are righteous. Next, let's look at "truth." Truth is the standard of all aspects of life. It is living according to the truth because God spoke it. Paul speaks in verses 10 and 11, "Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them." In darkness without any light there is no fruit. You don't bear fruit by your own will and efforts. Bearing fruits depends on how much you are exposed to God. As much as it is possible do not make any area in you and in your personality where God can't touch. For example, do not abandon the area of finance, prayer, or wisdom where God can't touch. As much as you neglect and abandon them you won't hear the voice of God in those areas. You won't bear fruit in those areas. Keep your eyes open for those areas in your life and work on them. Be transparent! "Be exposed" in verse 13 have two meanings. One is to expose or reveal. The other is to rebuke. Rebuke because it is exposed. We shouldn't take lightly of things that God rebuke us.

Paul speaks in verse 12, "For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." We want to pay attention to the word "secret." When we live as children of God, we have no secret. Everything is transparent. Our lives and everything else should be transparent. We rot as much as things are hidden or covered. We should open up the life of a pastor and reveal how we live according to the word of God. That's the difficult part of ministry.

Let's move on to verse 13, "But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light." "Exposed" means rebuke and reveal. The reason things are revealed to God is because they are exposed by light so they become light. We are in this room right now and it is not dark. Since the light shines in this room, everything is light. If it becomes dark, it blocks off the light. There is no more light but darkness. All our life, personality, spiritual matters and everything should be always exposed to light. I shared with you the alpha and omega of spirituality is leaving one's spirit open to God all the time. However, this is extremely difficult to those who haven't done this. Open up your spirit to God 24 hours a day and ask questions to Him like "God, what is it? Please tell me. Can I do this or not? How will this work? This person responded in so and so way. Today such and such incident took place." We should open our spirit up to God every moment but it is challenging to those who do not live like this. This is all about entering the fellowship zone with God. There is intimacy with God! Suppose I have a child and she wants to do everything on her own. There is not much I can help her with. I would say, "Do whatever you want!" She doesn't discuss anything with me or ask for any advice. Children should discuss any matter with their parents like "Should I do this or not?" Children are supposed to have discussion with parents. We call those children who do things according to their will "undutiful child." In our relationship with God we should enter into the

fellowship zone and live a lifestyle of asking God lots of questions. You may say, "I just can't hear the voice of God!" That's a lie. The reason you don't hear the voice of God and do not sense what He speaks to you is because you have not opened up your spirit to God 24 hours in your daily life. You will know what I mean if you try for 24 hours. God comes to those who desperately seek. God loves those who love Him.

Paul further speaks in verse 14, "For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'" The sleeper is not exposed to the light and thus he is still in darkness. We are supposed to wake our sleeping spirit up and face the light. During the daylight we can't sleep because of the light. Likewise, if we live by light, our spirit won't slumber but always stay awake. This is the alpha and omega of spirituality. If there is darkness and untransparentness, some things will absolutely rot. When the caring hands of God touch the church members, there is no rotting in them. If the light of God does not shine upon certain areas, then those areas will begin to rot. There will not be any fruit, either. This is also true with a church. As much as a church is not exposed to God there would be less fruit. For example, if a church is filled with greed, so God can't touch this church with regard to the financial resources/material, then she will become poor. She will lose the material authority. In addition, the servanthood rots when God's light does not shine on believers who are supposed to consider others better than them. The servanthood breaks down. The relationship among the believers in congregation breaks down. Thus, a church is filled now with the slanderers. The light of God should shine upon all aspects of church in the whole community. Furthermore, a pastor should also be able to see everything God shines upon including himself. His ministry should be transparent as well. When these things take place in a church, the believers continue to live in the light and produce fruits.

So, the conclusion is building the community of love and imitating God. It is loving each other as we love God. In order to do that we have to do three things. First, do not even think about immorality, impurity or greed. We have no lead way when it comes to immorality. Always be careful and put up a good guard so we wouldn't fall by the immorality. Second, cut out filthiness, silly talk and coarse jesting. Dirty jokes, degusting words, any words that do not have Jesus in, and the worldly words have to stop in our conversation. "Empty words" refer to Gnosticism. Never allow false gospel and different lessons into the church. The church members should be willing to die for the truth. That's how far we should train them. As a result, they are exposed to Light; thus, living as the people of Light.