

Ephesians 5:3–6 | “Unfitting Behaviors”  
*Preached on October 5, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown*

You can turn in your Bible to Ephesians 5, verses 3 to 6 today. *[pauseeee]*

When something doesn't belong, we say that it doesn't fit, or that it's out of place. *[pause]*

Let's say that you planted a garden full of only tomato plants, but as time went on, a random apple tree began to grow in the garden. *[pause]*

You would say that the apple tree doesn't fit, or that it's out of place in your tomato garden. *[pauseeee]*

We say this when something is incongruous or out of line with what is supposed to be there.

We all know that there are things that are unbecoming to certain circumstances, places, or positions. *[pauseeee]*

Wearing pajamas to a wedding is unsuitable for a wedding because a wedding is a high and sacred time, so pajamas just don't "fit". *[pause]*

It's inappropriate to tell constant jokes at a funeral, or to continually say negative things when someone is celebrating a major milestone in their life. *[pauseeee]*

More relevant for this morning—there are also certain behaviors unfitting for certain positions or identities. *[pause]*

If a judge continually makes light of crime during a trial, and makes jokes the whole time, we all know that that's unsuitable for a judge to do.

A judge is to be serious and to take the law seriously. *[pauseeee]*

If a pastor treated everyone he interacted with with utmost rudeness and talked about God as if He didn't exist, then we'd think, "This isn't right! It's incongruous with who he is to be!" *[pauseeee]*

A judge and a pastor are supposed to think, act, and behave in a certain way that lines up with who they are.

So also, Paul makes it clear that there are certain behaviors that are *unfitting* for a Christian. *[pauseeee]*

Right before this passage, Paul told us about the things that we should do—we should imitate God and walk in love, but now he will tell us what we shouldn't do.

So let's READ the passage to see what he says. *[READ 3–6]*

*The first thing that Paul teaches us is that...*

## I. There shouldn't even be a hint of certain sins among us.

Sadly, the church in America has been more and more light on sin, but that ought not to be.

We ought to take sin seriously, for here Paul gives us some specific sins to make sure to avoid. *[pauseeee]*

The fact that Paul has to say something about not committing these sins shows us that it's possible for a Christian to be caught doing these things. *[pause]*

None of us is beyond a fall, but each of us is capable of great sin.

And so may we be humble enough to realize that, and be on guard that we, too, do not get caught up in these things. *[pauseeee]*

The mentioning of these sins also shows us that these sins truly *are tempting* to us at times. *[pause]*

If anyone says that sin is never tempting, then they are dearly mistaken or flat-out lying.

Sin can be tempting, and the mention of needing to avoid these sins shows us that the temptation can be *strong*. *[pauseeee]*

Knowing that sin is tempting and that we are capable of a fall, we do not look down on others in prideful disgust, but we look humbly to our hearts with reliance upon God. *[pauseeee]*

Now let's get into the list of sins—the first set of sins speak of *sexual* sins, and the second set references *speech* sins. *[pauseeee]*

Paul says, “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you.” *[pauseeee]*

‘Sexual immorality’ is a general term for all sexual sin—it is all sexual acts outside the bounds of Biblical marriage. *[pauseeee]*

We must understand that God has laid the right and proper place for sexual relations and it's in a one-woman and one-man marriage.

So to deviate in any way, shape, or form from that prescribed way is to commit sexual immorality. *[pauseeee]*

The next term, ‘impurity,’ highlights the corruption and dirtiness of sin, and is often connected to sexual sin when it's used. *[pauseeee]*

Paul's third listed item is the word “covetousness.”

And this is a word for “greediness,” and some people think that it may have some sexual connotations because it is linked with words that have to do with that.

But even if it's not, we know that greediness is wrong—it's the excessive desire for more, more, and more. *[pauseeee]*

All of these sins show a person who is “me-centered,” and so they give into self-indulgence.

They picture someone who thinks, “I want, so I will get.” *[pause]*

Their fleshly desires drive them above all, rather than God and His Word. *[pauseeee]*

If you think about it, Paul just called us to love like Christ, and the contrast with that others-focused love with the me-centeredness of these sins couldn't be more stark. *[pause]*

Contrary to love's sacrificial nature and others focus, this way of life is all about my pleasure *right now*. *[pauseeee]*

As you reflect upon your life, are any of these sins present? *[pause]*

Is there any sexual immorality going on in any way, shape, or form? *[pause]*

Is your life characterized by purity or by impurity?

What about covetousness—is it present? *[pause]*

Are you greedy for more and more of what does not belong to you? *[pauseeee]*

If any of these sins are present in your life, then repent of them, and rest in the forgiveness of Christ! *[pauseeee]*

The next round of listed sins are speech-related sins. *[pause]*

Paul says, “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking.” *[pauseeee]*

In the previous list of sins, the person didn't restrain their sexual desires, and in this list, the person doesn't restrain their tongue. *[pauseeee]*

The sins listed here refer to someone who uses filthy, foolish, or crude talk, and so a person like this has a vulgar, foul mouth. *[pauseeee]*

I'm sure all of us have heard examples of filthy talk in our lives, and Paul is saying, “May that kind of talk not come out of your mouths!” *[pauseeee]*

Filthy talk may be funny to the world, but it ought not be funny to us, and may we not be guilty of it. *[pauseeee]*

What is your speech like—could it be characterized as filthy, foolish, or crude? *[pauseeee]*

How do you talk among your closest friends—is it filled with foul talk? *[pause]*

How do you talk among your unbelieving co-workers—do you make them laugh with your crude jokes?

Put these things away! Let there be NONE of it in your life! *[pauseeee]*

No matter how much the people around you are doing or saying these things, may it not be so in your life.

Be different in the way that you speak. *[pauseeee]*

In fact, in relation to the sexual sins, Paul says that these things “must not even be named among you.” *[pauseeee]*

Those sins shouldn’t be mentioned or verbalized when it comes to us, meaning, people shouldn’t be able to relate those sins with us in any way. *[pause]*

When they think of any of us, they shouldn’t think, “Yeah, that guy’s really caught up in sexual immorality.” *[pause]*

They shouldn’t be able to say, “She’s so greedy.” *[pause]*

There shouldn’t even be a hint or whiff of this kind of behavior among us.

It should be so far from how we conduct our lives that no one can legitimately tag it to us. *[pauseeee]*

They say that Billy Graham had a policy of never meeting with, traveling with, or spending time with a woman alone who was not his wife.

That’s a great example of someone who demonstrated this truth. *[pause]*

Sexual immorality couldn’t be named in regards to Billy Graham because he took a passage like this seriously. *[pauseeee]*

This should be the case for all of us—there shouldn’t even be a hint of these things when it comes to us.

For when these things are named among us, they tarnish the reputation of Christ and the church. *[pause]*

They do damage to what we are called to be like in this world, for we as a church are to be a holy temple to the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

When those in our community think of the people of First Baptist Church, what is named? *[pause]*

It ought not to be these sexual sins, nor should it be any filthy talk, but it should be our holiness and our love, really, our Christlikeness. *[pauseeee]*

In our world that is wallowing in filthiness, may we shine as good and beautiful examples of those who imitate our Lord. *[pauseeee]*

Now what are the *reasons* for why we should avoid or put away these sins? *[pause]*

In verse 3, Paul says that these sins NOT being named among us “is proper among saints,” and then in verse 4, he mentions that those speech sins are “out of place.” *[pause]*

So a main reason for why we avoid these sins is because they are *unfitting* for a Christian. *[pause]*

Like a candy wrapper in a jewelry box, so these sins are out of place in a believer’s life. *[pause]*

They do not fit, they are not suitable, they are out of line with who we are in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Every Christian is actually a saint, which means ‘a holy one’ or ‘set apart one.’ *[pause]*

Our identity is a holy one of God, so to be caught up in these filthy sins is out of line with who we are...

God has set us apart to live a holy, righteous life for Him, reflecting His character in this world. *[pauseeee]*

When you are tempted by sin, how often do you remind yourself, “No, I will not give in, for I’m a saint, I’m called to be a holy one of God”? *[pauseee]*

Remember who you are, and remember who you belong to! *[pause]*

Remember who you represent, and who you are to imitate! *[pauseeeee]*

What’s interesting is this...

If you notice, Paul isn’t saying to avoid these sins in order to be saved, but that you are to avoid these things because they do not line up with who you are. *[pause]*

You are a saint, so live in a way that lines up with your identity! *[pauseeee]*

These sins relate to our old life before Christ, for as it says in 1 Corinthians...

“Such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> *[pauseeee]*

There are certain things that do not fit the identity and position of a believer, for we were saved out of sin in order to live righteously for the Lord.

So do not go back to that sinful way of life that you were saved from! *[pauseeee]*

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:11.

Another reason that's closely related to the "unfittingness" of these sins is given in verse 5.

*[pause]*

Paul says, "For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

*[pauseeee]*

Paul is talking to Christians, and reminding them that people who sinfully live these ways are the type of people who have no inheritance in Heaven. *[pause]*

So the point is this—why would you live your life the same way that an unbeliever does?

It's not fitting; it doesn't line up with who you are!

Discard that sinful way of life, and pursue holiness! *[pauseeee]*

We are those who have been promised an inheritance in the kingdom, and have been sealed with the Spirit as a guarantee of that inheritance.<sup>2</sup>

So do not live as those who have no share in the kingdom, and who live lives of sinful rebellion against God. *[pauseeeee]*

Christian, you have been graciously saved by God through Christ. *[pause]*

It was not your works that saved you.

It was not your getting your life together that made the difference, but it was all of grace.

*[pauseeee]*

When you were still a sinner, Christ died for you.<sup>3</sup>

He delivered you out of death, out of condemnation, and out of sin, forgave you and gave you new life.

So now live in light of that gracious and glorious new standing! *[pause]*

Live in a way that is in line with who you are—be who you are! *[pauseeee]*

That's why after telling us what NOT to do, Paul says, "but instead let there be thanksgiving."

*[pauseeee]*

A Christian ought to be a person overflowing with thankfulness—who else has *more* to be thankful for? *[pauseeee]*

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<sup>2</sup> See back in Ephesians 1:13–14, 18.

<sup>3</sup> A paraphrase of Romans 5:8.

It's actually a deep gratitude that helps us to battle the sins that were just listed because if I'm thankful, then how can I be covetous? *[pause]*

If I'm thankful for what I have, then I don't give into the desire for pleasure right now, and in a wrong place, outside of where God has ordained it. *[pause]*

If I'm thankful, I'm prone to speak about things with gratitude and with substance, rather than with crudeness or silliness. *[pauseeee]*

You see, thankfulness to God for what He has done in my life, and for what He has given to me in my life leads to joyous obedience. *[pauseeee]*

I don't avoid these sins as if some mean ogre commanded me to do something unpleasant.

No, I avoid these sins because my heart is filled with joyous thanksgiving towards the One who has given me *everything*. *[pauseeee]*

I can find contentment, joy, and satisfaction in the identity, circumstance, and path that He has laid before me.

I don't need to go looking for more, and I shouldn't, because I'm grateful for what I have in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Believers ought to be characterized by deep and constant gratitude—now that's fitting for a Christian! *[pauseeee]*

*So Paul just mentioned that there shouldn't even be a hint of certain sins among us, but he doesn't stop there, for we see what he says next, and it's this...*

## **II. Don't be deceived by those who say otherwise.**

Verse 6 says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." *[pauseeee]*

What a counter-cultural truth for our day! *[pause]*

In our culture, you are looked down upon, if you hold firm to the fact that these sins are wrong. *[pause]*

In many cases, you are laughed at for believing that sexual immorality is wrong, or called a "prude" for not wanting to join in with their crude jokes. *[pause]*

Some people call Christians, "holier-than-thou," or a "goody-goody" because we hold firm on the sinfulness of these things. *[pauseeee]*

Likewise, conservative Christians are bashed because we simply quote and believe verses like verse 5 here, which says that there are people who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. *[pauseeee]*

Well did you know that Paul speaks to that type of situation?

He knows that there will be people who make fun of you for believing that sex outside of a one-man, one-woman marriage is wrong. *[pauseeee]*

He knows that people will call you self-righteous because you do not join in with their filthy talk.

And he knows that there will be people who come along and say, “How dare you say that there are certain people who will not go to Heaven!” *[pauseeee]*

He knows that they will try to twist Scripture to say what it’s not saying.

And that there will be people who excuse verses like these away, and say, “But God is love, and He wants people to be happy.” *[pauseeee]*

And what is Paul’s instruction when it comes to that situation? “Let no one deceive you with empty words.” *[pauseeee]*

Those who say those things are not innocent people, who just love people so much.

They are deceivers, trying to mislead you into error, for they are not holding firm to Scripture. *[pause]*

In fact, what they are spewing are “empty words,” Paul says. *[pause]*

Their words are empty because they have no basis in truth, and therefore no substance.

It may sound good, look good, and feel good, but it’s not good, for they are empty words. *[pauseeee]*

Anyone who tries to teach you to take these sins lightly is trying to trick you into not taking sin seriously.

And anyone who tries to teach you that there is no wrath of God is trying to deceive you about the reality of God’s judgment. *[pauesee]*

Let no one deceive you!

Don’t take the bait, don’t give in to societal pressure, don’t conform. *[pauseeee]*

What I’m saying is not trying to be mean, it’s not being stuck in old, outdated ways, or anything like that.

What I’m saying is simply communicating what God’s Word is communicating here. *[pauseeee]*

Paul just said that there are sins to avoid, showing us that those things are wrong, they are truly *sin*. [pause]

After that, he shared with us that *we can be sure* that there are certain people, who have no inheritance in Heaven. [pause]

Then he called us not to be deceived about these things, and added this in verse 6, “for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” [pauseeee]

So a very important reason for why you shouldn't be deceived about these things is because God's wrath is *real* and it's *coming*. [pauseeee]

These types of sins are the very reason why God's wrath is coming, so do not be tricked into taking them lightly!

And also, because of this, why would we as Christians get caught up in these sins? [pauseeee]

You see, mankind's problem isn't that we take sin too seriously, but it's that we take it too lightly. [pause]

We don't see it as that big of a deal, but Paul is jolting us out of that mindset with these verses...

These are the kinds of things that God hates and His wrath will come because of such things. [pauseeee]

So if these are the types of sins that are bringing God's wrath, then we should have nothing to do with them.

And any child of God shouldn't want to do such things that God absolutely hates. [pauseeee]

This is not to say that we as Christians will face the wrath of God, for we are no longer condemned because of Christ.

Rather, it's to remind us that we shouldn't be doing such things when these are the very things that God's wrath will come upon. [pauseeee]

A big thing nowadays is to try to avoid talking of God's wrath. [pause]

Some people try to say that God's wrath isn't a thing, yet we see clearly in Scripture that God's wrath is real, and that it's coming...

Therefore, anyone who denies the wrath of God *is* a deceiver. [pauseeee]

God the *righteous* Judge will bring judgment someday upon all those who do not turn to Christ alone for salvation. [pauseeee]

Paul doesn't shirk away from the hard truths, for he is really saying this...

“You can be sure of this”...did you hear that?

You can be sure of this—there are certain people who have no inheritance in the kingdom, and the wrath of God is coming upon them.

So do not let anyone deceive you about the sinfulness of these things or about the fact that judgment is real and coming. *[pauseeee]*

The world and our culture will call you names for believing this...

And they will try everything in order to make their teaching sound so much more pleasant and loving, but it’s all smoke and mirrors. *[pause]*

*Do not believe it, for we are reminded this morning that...*

### **Christians take sin seriously!**

We are not those who act like sin is no big deal, for we are those who have recognized *our own sin*. *[pause]*

We have come to understand that we have sinned against a holy God, and this sin deserves judgment. *[pause]*

We are without excuse, for we sinned against our Lord and Creator.

Yet we are those who also know that God lovingly and graciously provided a way to be forgiven of that sin and not stand condemned anymore! *[pauseeee]*

God has provided a way out of facing His wrath, and it’s through Jesus Christ.

For Jesus, the perfect Son of God, took on flesh and lived a sinless life for us. *[pause]*

He then went and took our punishment—He took the wrath of God for us by dying on the cross for our sins and then rising again.

And all those who simply place their faith in Him are forgiven, and no longer condemned in their sin—we no longer stand under the wrath of God! *[pauseeee]*

Jesus says in John 5:24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” *[pauseeee]*

You see, we take sin seriously because we remember that we once walked in that sin—that was us! *[pause]*

We used to be “children of wrath, like the rest of mankind,” but back in Ephesians 2, it reminded us that...

“God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”<sup>4</sup> *[pauseeee]*

We are forgiven and no longer condemned based simply on God’s mercy through Jesus Christ.  
*[pause]*

And so we let that truth cause us to remember the seriousness of sin—it was because of sin that we deserved judgment and why Jesus had to die. *[pause]*

But we also let that glorious truth remind us of the forgiveness and grace of God...

We are no longer who we once were, but we have been redeemed, and we have been empowered to live holy lives in gratefulness to our God and Father, who loves us so much.

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<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 2:4–5.