

A Daily Devotional Study Guide



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The Epistle to the **EPHESIANS**



WEEK 6

“Imitations”

Study: Ephesians 5:1-2

Reading: Romans 12:1-3, Ephesians 5

Memory: Romans 8:27

When I traveled on a missions trip to Mexico, our group stopped at a market on one of the border towns. This market was filled with all types of items from fruit to electronics. Whenever I wanted to buy something, I asked the person selling the item what their price was. Most of the time they told me a higher price than what they really wanted and I had to bargain with them to find the lowest price. In the market there were all types of name brand items, but most of them were not the real thing. Shirts that would say Nike on them weren't actually from the Nike factories. They were cheap fakes. Why do these places sell imitations? Because they know people will buy them. They don't make imitations of unpopular things, but name brands that people think are important.

Today, we are going to see how we need to be imitators of Christ. If He is important to us, we will desire to imitate Him.

What Does the Bible Say?

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery?” Many times that statement is right. When children want to grow up to be just like their parents, the parents are doing something right. Verse 1 reminds us that we are children, and as children, we need to be followers (imitators) of God. The more time we spend with God, the more we will know what He is like. The more we see what He is like, the more we will desire to imitate Him.

Verse 2 is not the only place in the Bible where it tells us to live our lives in love. Love should be the platform on which we live our Christian lives. In verse 1, Paul tells us that we need to imitate Christ, and then, in verse two, he explains how. We need to love just as Christ loved us. How did Christ love us? He gave His life as a sacrifice for us. How should we love others? We serve others by choosing to sacrifice for others, just as Christ sacrificed for us.

This does not mean that we will have to die on a cross someday, but it does mean that we will have to give up our selfish desires at times. Maybe the Lord might call you to give your life as a missionary or a spiritual leader. It might be that God just wants you to serve Him unselfishly in a profession. Wherever God places us, He wants us to live a life of sacrifice to Him. This means that we will not always get to do what we feel like doing, but what God commands us to do. That may not sound like a lot of fun, but the Bible tells us that if we live for Him, His commands are not hard for us to follow.

The words “pleasing aroma” (vs 2) mean that our personal sacrifice of love is pleasing to God. God is pleased with our lives when we imitate Christ and love others.

How Does this Apply to Me?

How is your life an imitation of Christ? Are you continually striving to be more like Him everyday? If someone asked your friends or family these questions about you, what would be their answer? It is so important that you make it your goal to please Christ in everything that you do. Is your life characterized by unselfishness? Do you put others first only when it is convenient for you or do you put others first even when you know that it will inconvenience you? Search your heart today to see how you are living and who you are living for.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Ask God to show you areas of your life where you are not an example to others.
- * Thank the Lord for the great sacrifice He made on the cross.
- * Ask God to help you put others first throughout the day.

Thought for the day

What are you told to do in verse 1?

What do you think it looks like to imitate God?

Why do you think you are told to imitate Him in all that you do (vs 1)?

What reason did Paul give for you to imitate God (vs 1)?

Why does Paul emphasize many times that we are children of God?

What is your life to be filled with (vs 2)?

Who set the example of love (vs 2)?

How did He set this (vs 2)?

How did the sacrifice of Christ show His great love?

Why is it important to realize that He chose to offer Himself (vs 2)?

What does it mean that the sacrifice of Jesus was a “pleasing aroma” (vs 2)?

****The Old Testament sacrifices that the Israelites offered up to God were also described this way. This indicated that God is so pleased when you choose to sacrifice your selfish desires for the plan He has for your life.*

Describe what it looks like in your life to offer your life as a sacrifice for others.

What are some areas you struggle to sacrifice in? Why do you think that is?

“A Hint of Sin”

Study: Ephesians 5:3-5

Reading: Romans 13:11-14, I Corinthians 6:12-20

Memory: Romans 8:27

When I was a teenager, I was caught up in the lusts of my flesh. I developed two types of languages. One language was used around my parents and at school. I only spoke what I knew would be acceptable in those places. I also had a second language. My second language was used when I was out with my friends or at work. It was a language that was pleasing to my fleshly desires. To this day I look back and regret the way I talked and acted when I was younger, and wonder how many people I turned away from Christianity because of my actions.

Today, we will look at a passage that not only deals with our language, but deals with other impure actions as well. Many times we become impure in our speech and even some of our actions without realizing it. We let the influence of the world creep into our lives, and sin becomes acceptable to us.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul challenged the Ephesians to live as imitators of Christ by giving ourselves as a sacrifice for the good of others. In verse 3, he transitions to sins that were opposite of what Christ wants for our lives. He declared that these sins have no place among the people of God. The NIV translates it by saying there should not even be a hint of these things in the life of a believer. This does not mean that the temptation will be gone for believers or if you give into the temptations you are not a believer, but is a challenge to all believers to make the choice not to have these sins as part of their lives. The first one he listed was sexual immorality. This is a broad definition for any type of sex outside of marriage. The next sin he stated was “impurity.” This is another broad term for sensuality. Sexual desires, thoughts and attitudes that are outside of the marriage relationship. The third sin was the sin of greed. This probably had more to do with sexual greed rather than financial

greed. Desiring to have someone or some sexual experience that God has not designed for a person to have (vs 3).

Verse 4 carries the list a little further by describing the language we use. Not only should a Christian’s actions be pure, but his speech should be pure, also. This means that obscene jokes or sexual innuendoes should not be a part of our speech. Instead, our lips should be filled with thanks to God for all that He has done for us. Many times we do harm to the cause of Christ with our lips. Our lips should be used to help people see Christ in us, not to reveal our sin nature.

Verse 5 adds to what has already been said in verse 3&4. He emphasizes the fact that the things already mentioned in the previous verses are sin and not to be taken lightly. God hates sin so much that He will send people to hell because of the sins they commit. The end of the verse makes it clear that these sins are not associated with God. This does not mean that if a person commits a sexual sin they are not a Christian, only the fact that the sexual sins listed are sins. The society during the time Ephesians was written was an immoral society. Many times they would mix sexual impurity with their religions. Some of these ideas would sneak into the Christian church and defile the church. Sexual impurity was all over and many of the Christians had been saved from that lifestyle. When we are saved, God gives us the ability to live righteous lives, and not be servants to sin.

How Does this Apply to Me?

How does your speech represent Christ? Do you tell or participate in off-color jokes? Do you allow impure thoughts in your mind through the things you browse online or watch on TV? We live in an immoral society. You would have a hard time watching TV for two hours and not see something that is sexually impure. Many times we become so used to it, it doesn’t bother us anymore. Remember that God hates these sins. They are not a laughing matter before Him. They are serious offenses against a Holy God. The next time your friends or people you work with begin talking about impure things, take a stand. Either walk away, or let them know that as a Christian you do not want to talk about that subject.

God has designed sex to be a special and sacred thing in marriage to be enjoyed by a husband and wife. The enemy wants to pervert sex and make it something God never intended for it to be.

What are the three things that Paul said should not be a part of the life of

a believer (vs 3)? Briefly explain what these things are.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think Paul stated that these things should not have a place among God's people (vs 3)?

Do any of these things have a place in your life? If so, what do you think you can do about it?

What three things did Paul mention in verse 4 that should not be a part of the life of a believer? Briefly define each.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Have you ever had these as part of your life? Explain.

What should come out of our mouths (vs 4)?

How is thankfulness the opposite of sexual talk (vs 4)?

What did Paul say we can be sure of (vs 5)?

Does this mean that if you commit a sexual sin you are not a believer (vs 5)? Explain.

What does Paul say a greedy person is (vs 5)?

What point was he trying to make?

“Partakers of Evil”

Study: Ephesians 5:6-10

Reading: Proverbs 1:10-19, II Corinthians 6:11-18

Memory: Romans 8:27

Have you ever said, “I could never get used to that.” Though this phrase sounds good, we as people are often very good at adapting and the more we see something, smell something, hear something, the more we can find ourselves getting used to something. This is often a good characteristic because it helps you accept change, but it can also be negative if the thing that you are getting used to is sin.

Today, we are going to read how Paul warned the Ephesians not to be deceived by the world into thinking that sexual sins were okay. We will be challenged to choose to allow good things to be part of our lives and not the evil of the world.

What Does the Bible Say?

Satan is a deceiver. He has been deceiving men for over 6,000 years so he is very experienced. There are many ways he attempts to use the world's system to deceive Christians. Verses 3-5 tell us we need to stay away from any form of sexual impurities. Verse 6 describes how it is easy to be deceived into thinking something is okay to do even though God says it is not. This warning is given in specific reference to sexual sins. It is easy to justify many things in our lives and this is one area that Christians make many excuses for. Paul warned believers not to make excuses for sexual sin. This is what the world does and God chooses to express His anger towards those who are disobedient to His principles (vs 6).

Believers should not participate in sexual sins even though the world tries to make them common. More and more in our society today, sexual sins are pushed on us through many different directions as the world wants us to view these things as normal. Believers should be different though. We once walked in the same darkness before we met Christ, but now that we are followers of Him, we should live as people of light and not as people of darkness (vs 7-8).

Our lives should display that we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us. The opposite of evil is goodness, righteousness, and truth. Those three things are what we should be partakers in and examples of. When we yield to the Holy Spirit and the light that is within us that will be produced are things that are good, righteous and true (vs 9).

This is why it is important for us to carefully determine what pleases God. We are not left in the dark about what is pleasing to God, because His Word is filled with directives on how to please Him. We have to choose to obey what He says and live in a way that pleases Him (vs 10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are your daily actions pleasing to God? Is your life characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth? Do you find yourself a partaker of evil with the world? The world wants to make sexual sins seem okay and wants other people to accept and live in those same sins. Satan knows how to appeal to the flesh. He knows that if you are seeking to please yourself, you will not be seeking to please God. Don't let him deceive you. Don't be partakers with any form of evil, whether it is a physical action or an action in your mind. Don't follow the path of the world when it comes to the way that you view sexual sins. The more it becomes common in our society, the more believers are pressured to accept ungodliness as a way of normal life. Paul was speaking to the Ephesians who lived in a sex crazed culture and was challenging them to be pure. Our society today is not much different and the same challenged that was given to them applies to you today.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Ask God to show you any areas where you are partaking in evil.
- * Ask the Lord to show you what is acceptable unto Him.

Thought for the day

What are you not to be fooled by (vs 6)?

What are ways that people try to excuse sin (vs 6)?

Have you ever found yourself or someone close to you trying to excuse sexual sin? Explain.

What will happen to those who live in disobedience (vs 6)?

****This appears to be a statement directed at unbelievers who practice sexual sins. Just as you read yesterday, Paul is emphasizing the fact that God hates sin and will judge those who choose to live in it. Believers will be disciplined when they chose to stray from God and participate evil, but this appears to be an anger that is directed at unbelievers.*

What should you not participate in (vs 7)?

What are ways that you think you can participate in the sexual sins of the world?

What were you like before Christ (vs 8)?

What are you to be like after Christ (vs 8)?

Why do you think he uses the illustration of light and darkness (vs 8)?

What do you think it means to live as people of light (vs 8)?

What does the light in you produce (vs 9)?

Does this mean that a believer can not sin? Explain.

What should you be careful about doing (vs 10)?

What do you think it means to "please the Lord" (vs 10)?

How can you practically apply verse 10 in your everyday life?

“Full of Light”

Study: Ephesians 5:11-14

Reading: Matthew 5:13-20, Matthew 18:15-20

Memory: Romans 8:27

Though my kids made fun of me over the years for using it, I believe one of the greatest inventions is the headlamp. Headlamps have progressed greatly over time and with advancements in batteries and LED lights, headlamps are extremely bright and extremely useful. I will almost always wear my headlamp when I am working on something, even if it is in the middle of the day. The light that they headlamp shines on my projects allow me to see much clearer than without a light and the convenience allows me to use both my hands without holding a flashlight. I try not to go anywhere or fix anything without bringing my headlamp along with me.

Today, we will look at a passage where Paul is using light to represent godliness and darkness to represent evil. Our lives should be full of light. When they are full of light, there will be no room for darkness.

What Does the Bible Say?

In Verse 11, Paul took what was said in verses 6-10 a step further. We shouldn't just avoid partaking in evil, but we should expose evil. There are times in our society where we do need to stand against evil and stand for righteousness, though our crusade is not against the world. We need to expose the deceitfulness of the worldly thinking in the church.

So many times we dismiss immoral actions we see or hear and think nothing of it. This passage tells us that we should speak out against evil in the life of a fellow believer to help them avoid being deceived by the enemy. Sometimes we fall into sin because we did not stand against it in the first place.

We should not even speak and talk about sinful acts that the world partakes in. When someone commits an immoral act, we should not try to get all the details and tell someone else what that person did. Though we may view the act as sin, it is easy to let our curiosity about that sin

lead us into thinking thoughts or performing acts that should not be a part of the life of a believer (vs 12).

Instead of speaking about and describing the sinful acts, we need to shine the light of God's Word on the acts that are being committed. The Word of God reveals what God desires and it will be like a bright light that reveals how sinful an act is (vs 13).

In verse 14, Paul is giving an invitation to believers to come and accept the true light, Jesus Christ. This light can be seen through us as believers when we stand against evil. Unsaved people live in darkness and commit evil deeds. Yet, if they compare their lives to the Word of God, the light will show their sinfulness and their need for a Savior. The light of God's Word will also allow believers to see the wickedness of their deeds and to repent from them.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Does it make you sick when you see or hear sinful things? Have you allowed so much sin to cross your path that it does not bother you anymore? God wants you to shine as a light to all those around you. That does not mean that you should do right only when unsaved people are watching. To be the light that you need to be, you need to stand up against wrong, even when no one sees you. The Word of God is what will show you whether something is right or wrong. You need that Light to be a light! When you choose to let God's Word be your guide and reveal to you what is right and wrong, it will help you expose sin for what it really is.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Ask God to show you what kind of light you are being to those who you come in contact with every day.
- * Ask God to give you a greater hatred for evil.

Thought for the day

What should you have no part in (vs 11)?

What do you think are ways that you can be a partaker in evil deeds?

What do you think it looks like to expose evil (vs 11)?

How can you put this into practice in your daily life?

What is it shameful for you to do (vs 12)?

What do you think this means?

How can you as a believer be a part in what ungodly people do in secret (vs 12)?

What will the light of God's Word do (vs 13)?

Why does this emphasize the importance of letting God's Word reveal what is right and wrong rather than the society around you?

Describe a time in your life where God's Word has shed light on something you were doing that was wrong.

Why was God's Word so critical to this?

What quote from Psam 60:1 does Paul use (vs 14)?

What point do you think he was attempting to get across?

Why are unbelievers described as being in darkness or being dead (vs 14)?

What will Christ do for those who turn to Him (vs 14)?

Why is having the light of Christ in your life so important (vs 14)?

“Live as the Wise”

Study: Ephesians 5:15-20

Reading: Ecclesiastes 12:1-14, Philippians 4:1-9

Memory: Romans 8:27

Occasionally, I will go on a long bike ride on roads that I have never traveled on before. I normally use an online map to help me plot out the course I plan to travel. This normally works well, but sometimes it doesn't let me know if the road I am going to ride on is going to be gravel or pavement. My road bike has very thin tires and does not do well on sandy, gravel roads. There have been times when I didn't pay close enough attention to my predicted route and have found myself riding a few miles on gravel roads which is quite dangerous for me and never really enjoyable.

Today, we are going to see how we need to pay attention to the route we choose to travel in this life. Many foolish decisions and choices are made when we don't carefully plan to go in the direction God desires for us to travel in.

What Does the Bible Say?

It is very important that you think about and choose how you are going to live. We need to be careful that all our actions are wise and not unwise. It is easy just to follow others and not carefully think about what you are doing and examine your path to make sure you are going the right way. The right way to live is to live in wisdom. The person who is wise doesn't just live for the pleasure of the moment, but thinks about how his actions today will affect him and others tomorrow and many years from now. Those who are unwise are only focused on what is in front of them and often miss out on the great plans that God has for the lives of the wise (vs 15)

One of the reasons that we need to live in wisdom is because life is very short. We don't get to live multiple lives and we don't know when our time on this earth will be up. Paul challenged the Ephesians to remember that there was evil all around them and that if they didn't make the conscious effort to live differently than the world, they would waste

their time just like much of the rest of the world (vs 16).

Since life is short, we are not to live our short lives foolishly, but need to live seeking after the will of the Lord. God reveals in His Word much of what He desires for our lives and will give us the wisdom for specific decisions and choices to make if we seek Him. God has a plan for your life and it is often quite different than the plans of the selfish world around you. Paul gave an example of living in foolishness by describing how we should not get drunk. Drunkenness leads to many problems and many wrong choices. Many people regret what they do and say while they are drunk. Instead of getting drunk like much of the world does, we can make better use of our times when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. Just as wine can control the actions of a person and lead them into harmful ways, we can allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives and lead us into good things (vs 17-18).

Instead of talking to each other in negative ways which wine often leads to, the Holy Spirit helps us encourage each other as we sing “songs, hymns and spiritual songs.” This fills our hearts with thankfulness to God and leads to an encouraging, blessed and full life. This was given as an illustration of one of the many ways we can follow the wisdom of the world or the wisdom of God (vs 19-20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

How does your life show that you are thankful to God? Are you walking as a wise man or as a fool? Are you making the most of your time here on earth by living for God? Is your life filled with praise to God? Are you doing God’s will and being controlled by the Holy Spirit? If you are not controlled by the Holy Spirit, you are controlled by the world and Satan who is the ruler of this world. Choose to walk in wisdom and make the most of your time that God has given you in this world. Choose today to carefully live your life in wisdom rather than following the foolishness of the world.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to lead you through the Holy Spirit in all the decisions that you make today.*
- * *Praise God that He has made you different than the world through salvation.*

What are you told to carefully look at (vs 15)?

What two choices in living can you make (vs 15)?

How can you know which one is the wise choice and which one is the foolish choice?

What are you to make the most of (vs 16)?

How are the days of this life described (vs 16)?

Why do you think they are described this way?

What do you think it means to make the most of your time?

How are you making the most of your time?

What are you told not to do (vs 17)?

How can you be foolish?

What is the opposite of being foolish (vs 17)?

What is one way you can live foolishly (vs 18)?

What does drunkenness often lead to (vs 18)?

What did Paul say was the opposite of being drunk (vs 18)?

Why do you think that he said this?

What will happen when you are filled with the Holy Spirit (vs 19)?

Why do you think he mentions three types of music (vs 19)?

What will a Spirit controlled life produce (vs 20)?

Why is this way better than being drunk (vs 20)?

“The Family”

Study: Ephesians 5:21-25

Reading: I Corinthians 13:1-8, Genesis 1:26-31

Memory: Romans 8:27

When I was growing up, one thing that I always appreciated about my mom is that she was there for me. When I woke up in the morning, she was there. When school was over, she was there. My mom did not work outside of the home, but she worked hard inside the home. While we were at school, she worked at the school I attended to help pay our tuition. She always made sure dinner was on the table, our clothes were clean, and the house was clean. If we needed to go somewhere she usually would take us.

Why am I telling you all this? Because this is not normal in our society anymore. In most families, the husband and wife both work and leave their children at daycare, with the grandparents, or with a babysitter. That is the norm in our society, but what is normal is not always best. Today, we are going to look at a passage that is not often accepted well in our society because it deals with the idea of submission.

What Does the Bible Say?

One of the ways that believers reveal that the Holy Spirit is controlling them is revealed by the choice to submit to each other. The term submit is a military term that describes the importance of falling in line under the proper rank. It is vital for the success of any army that the proper chain of command is followed. Today, the idea of submission often offends people. The reason it offends is because of a misunderstanding of what submission is. Men have used the Bible to control women. Church leaders have used the Bible to control their followers. True submission is not about the one who is in control, but deals with the heart of the follower. Submission involves humility, which is a key ingredient of a healthy Christian life. We should humble ourselves before others in the sight of God. Many times we can learn what we have been doing right or wrong when we listen to what others tell us. Christians should be ready and willing to change if the Holy

Spirit, through others, shows us we have been wrong (vs 21).

Verse 21 is easy to understand and apply, but verse 22 is where people began to get confused. The Bible specifically tells us that wives are supposed to submit to their husbands. This does not mean that a husband has the right to boss his wife around. Verse 25 tells us that husbands are supposed to love their wives as Christ loved and gave himself for the church. So how should a wife submit? It is God’s design that men be the leaders of a household (vs 23). That includes making the final decisions in many areas. Though this may not be popular in our society, when it is carried out properly, it creates an incredible bond in marriage. The husband is responsible to submit to God and the wife is responsible to submit to her husband. Though this command is very clear, it is one that many people choose not to follow. Verse 24 describes how the church is subject unto Christ’s commands. Does that mean Christ bosses us around? No. As a church we work with Him to further the gospel. Just as a husband and wife should be a team working together in love.

When the husband truly loves his wife, she will have little difficulty in submitting to him. I Corinthians 13 describes what true love is. When those verses are properly applied, the husband and wife will be one unit working together for the cause of Christ (vs 25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

It is important that you gain a biblical understanding of what marriage is. Do not let society dictate what your marriage will be like. If you look at the divorce rate and the way the children are turning out, you will realize that the world’s way doesn’t work. Determine to follow God’s leading in your life when it comes to marriage. Men, remember that you are to love your wife as much as you love yourself. Women, remember that you are supposed to submit to the God-given leadership of your husband.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to give you wisdom and direction in the finding of the perfect mate for you.*
- * *Thank God for making men and women different so that together they can work as a great team.*

What does it mean to submit to one another (vs 21)?

What does this have to do with respecting Christ (vs 21)?

Why should the “reverence for Christ” be a great motivating factor in much of what you do (vs 21)?

What are wives told to do (vs 22)?

Why is this such a controversial topic in today’s society?

Why do you think Paul added “as unto Christ” (vs 22)?

How does your attitude change when you are doing something for Christ and not for someone else?

What does it mean that the husband is the head of the wife (vs 23)?

What is Christ the head of (vs 23)?

What else is Christ to the body (vs 23)?

What should the church do (vs 24)?

How is this an illustration of what wives should do (vs 24)?

Why do you think the term “submission” often has a negative connotation?

What areas are wives supposed to submit in (vs 24)?

How are husbands to treat their wives (vs 25)?

Why is it important that husbands treat their wives like Christ treated the church (vs 25)?

What happens when these verses are followed? Explain your answer.

Romans 8

10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, In 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.