



**"Imitate God"**  
*Ephesians 5:1-21*

**Main Idea:** Believers in Christ are charged to imitate God in their Christian walk.

**Imitating God requires that we pursue Holiness in our lives motivated by love for God and love for others (1-2).**

Paul exhorted the Ephesians, indeed all Christians, in light of what the Lord has done for them (detailed in Chapters 1-3) to live lives that reflect the presence of God in their lives. We are to strive, empowered by the Holy Spirit that resides in us, to be holy and loving like him (See 1 Thess 3:12-13). Our example is Jesus. He lived a sinless life and yet loved so much that he sacrificed himself for us. Yet even while demonstrating such great love, he never compromised holiness or truth and always glorified his Father in heaven.

1. Review the following verses: Eph 1:4, 1 Peter 1:15, Rev 22:11. Are you striving to live a life set apart for God? What in your life is hindering you in this pursuit? Share your ideas with the group.
2. Review these verses concerning love: John 13:35, Rom 12:9-10, Gal 5:13. Is your life characterized by love for your brothers and sisters in Christ? What about your neighbors and acquaintances, how do we show them love? Discuss.
3. Is there someone in your life – a neighbor, a coworker, a family member – who needs to hear of the love of Christ? Will you demonstrate that love by sharing the Gospel with them?

**Imitating God requires that we battle to purge from our lives the sins that so easily beset us (3-6).**

But what does that look like? Paul gave them some examples to consider. First, he provided them with some negative examples. These things, he said, must not even be heard of among Christians. He starts with sexual immorality, as rampant in their day as it is in ours. With the current culture we live in being so polluted with sexual immorality, it is probably best that we look to the Bible to define it. Simply put, sexual immorality is engaging in sexual acts outside of heterosexual, monogamous marriage. But Paul doesn't limit his exhortation to sexual immorality alone. He speaks to all forms of impurity (unholiness) and covetousness (greed), including filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking. He equates these with idolatry. That is worshiping something or someone other than God. No one, he said, that makes a practice of such things has an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Indeed, these are the very things inciting God's wrath in the world. To overcome these sins, we must rely on the power the Holy Spirit gives as he indwells and works to sanctify us. If you see these in your life, and you are content – that is the Spirit of God is not convicting you of this sin – that is a definite reason to examine your salvation to see if indeed you are in Christ.

1. How are the sins listed in this passage idolatry? Who or what is being worshiped?
2. How are you resisting the filthiness and coarse jesting that the world so readily offers? Share your experience with your group, successes and failures.
3. Are you seeking the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer the sin in your life? How? How are you encouraging brothers and sisters in Christ to overcome the sin in their lives?

**Imitating God requires that we bring the Light of the Lord to the dark world around us (7-14).**

In the Lord, believers are children of light! In John 8:12, Jesus said “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Paul once again encouraged the Ephesian Christians to refuse to participate in the sin of the world around us. But rather to walk as those who have come out of the darkness into the light (figure of speech, darkness–sin; light–righteousness). As those who walk in the light, we should be looking for what pleases the Lord, not even speaking of the things of darkness. When we encounter sin in our own lives, or in the lives of a brother or sister, we should expose it. Not meaning to turn the spotlight on and expose it to all, but rather as a surgeon exposes a tumor in order to see its margins and cut it out, removing it from the healthy tissue. We are to follow the process that the Lord has given us in Matthew 18:15-20. If you see a brother in sin go and tell him, if he doesn’t listen, take two or three brothers, and if that doesn’t work, take it to the church. But in all cases, the goal is to help them eliminate the sin and restore them to fellowship.

1. In what way do we knowingly or unknowingly partner with the sons of disobedience? How can we avoid this?
2. How does focusing on discerning what is pleasing to God help us to be light to the world? Discuss practical examples in your own life.
3. Do you know a fellow believer still participating in sin? How can you help?

**Imitating God requires discernment and wisdom enabled by the filling of the Holy Spirit (15-21).**

Paul reminded Christians to watch themselves, be conscious of the path they are on and what they are participating in. The days are evil, he exclaimed, meaning that they live in an evil time. So they are not to be foolish ( stupid, rash, senseless, without reason). They should seek the Lord and comprehend what his will is in this evil time. They are not to be intoxicated or controlled by substances, but rather led by the Holy Spirit who indwells them. This filling of the Spirit leads Christians to encourage and strengthen one another by praise and worship of our Lord with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs and by submitting to one another.

1. What are some ways Scripture tells us we can make the best use of our time so as to walk wisely?
2. Which of the ways of encouraging and strengthening one another described in verses 19-21 do you find most difficult to consistently do? Why?
3. Do you know a fellow believer in Christ who needs encouragement right now? Make a plan to do so and pray for one another before you dismiss.