

RICH *in* GRACE

Sermon Series in Ephesians

Preparing for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
- (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
- (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
- (4) What does God want me to know?
- (5) What does God want me to do?

“True Imitating”

Ephesians 5:1-21

Main Point: In Christ, we are called to imitate God.

Qualities of God to imitate:

Imitate God’s love (1-2).

- *You are loved!*
- *Live in and share His love.*

In taking off their old, sinful identities and in putting on their new, forgiven identities in Jesus Christ, Paul commanded the believers to “imitate God!” How are believers to do that? Paul started with a beautiful picture that captures the heart of God for His children. Paul reminded the believers that they were “beloved children.” What a wonderful reminder! God loves those He saves, and the starting point of imitating Him is accepting who you are in Christ: God’s beloved child! As a result of who the believers were in Christ, Paul called them to live their lives in the love that they had received from God. Living in God’s love — sharing God’s love through their lives — would be a special sacrifice and offering to God. Today, if you have been saved, then remember that you are a beloved child of God! Accept His love so that you can live in His love and so that you can share His love through your life.

1. In your own words, what does it mean to imitate God? What’s the difference in being an imitation and in imitating within this context?
2. Have you ever struggled with seeing yourself as God’s beloved child? If so, why? If not, why? How does this reality in your heart impact your motivation for pleasing God?
3. Read verse 2. What is the illustration Paul gave to help define what it means to walk in love? What should that look like in practical terms in your lives right now?

Imitate God’s holiness (3-7).

- *Don’t be deceived.*
- *Understand the seriousness of sin.*

Paul was speaking to the church, reminding them about their identity as the body of Christ for the witness for and the work of Christ in the world. As a result, Paul reminded them of the importance of protecting holiness in the church for the witness and work of the church for Jesus Christ. In these verses, God made it clear that He takes sin seriously, and He also made it clear that there are eternal consequences for sin. The call is for believers to not be deceived

and to not compromise by making sin insignificant. The call is for believers to make sure that they aren't joining together or partnering as the body of Christ with those who are participating in on-going, unrepentant sin. The call is for believers to understand the seriousness of sin in order to protect the holiness of God in the body of Christ. The call is for believers to imitate God's holiness in the way that they live their lives and in the way that they view and deal with sin.

1. Why do you think God commands us not to be deceived when it comes to sin? In what ways are we prone to being deceived? What are some of the biggest deceptions related to sin that affect the church today?
2. In verses 1 and 2, why are the actions and words of church members important? Discuss.
3. What does God mean when he commands us to not become partners with those living in sin? What the implications of this for your life and for the church?

Imitate God's light (8-14).

- *Don't participate in sin.*
- *Shine God's truth on sin.*

In contrast to those who walk in the darkness, God's call to those who are His children is to walk in the light! This call is simple to understand. The personal focus of the call is a call to personal holiness, living in a manner that seeks to please the Lord and living in a way that doesn't seek to hide or conceal words and actions from the Lord. However, there's also a responsibility connected to living in the light as a child of God, and this responsibility is that we are to be the light of God in the world. Paul pointed to this responsibility when he called on the believers to expose sin in the lives of others. The concept here is that believers participate in the work of God when they shine God's truth on sin — in their lives and in the lives of others. Imitating God's light means living in the light of God in your life, and it also means shining the light of God into the lives of those around you!

1. In verse 11, God's call in relationship to those producing the fruit of sin in their lives is to "expose them." Is this talking about believers or unbelievers? Both? How do you "expose them?" What does that look like if it's done in a way that's faithful to God's Word?
2. In verse 14, where does this quote come from in Scripture? Look up the passages, and discuss. Are you awake? Have you risen? Is Christ shining on you?
3. Do you know someone that you need to "expose" in love and truth? Take time to discuss and encourage one another. Pray for each other and for those that you will talk to this week.

Imitate God's wisdom (15-21).

- *Look carefully.*
- *Don't be foolish.*
- *Understand God's will.*
- *Don't get drunk.*
- *Be filled with the Spirit.*

These final verses in this passage contain five critical commands, which all connect to the wisdom of God in the lives of His children. Those who are wise look carefully. Those who are wise avoid foolishness. Those who are wise understand the will of God. Those who are wise don't get drunk. Those who are wise seek to fill their lives with the Spirit. Examining these commands from God, are you wise? Imitate the wisdom of God in your life!

1. Discuss the five commands in these verses. Which one stands out the most to you right now in your life? Why?
2. How can you know the will of God? What does God's Word have to do with His will?
3. Why does God repeatedly command His people not to get drunk?
4. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? How do you do this as a believer?