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Imitate God

EPHESIANS 5:1-20

Ephesians 4:32

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake
hath forgiven you (KJV).

Ephesians 5:1—Imitate God

- If we forgive as Christ did (4:32), then we are imitating God.
- 5:1 is also closely related to 5:2, which gives us another way to be like God: to walk in love as Christ loved us & gave Himself for us.
- The word for *love* in 5:2 is *agape*—love that is a choice, an act of the will, that puts the well-being of the beloved before your own.

Ephesians 5:1—Imitate God

- Our being like our heavenly Father should come naturally because we are His “beloved children.”
- 1 John 3:9 says that “God’s seed” (*sperma*) abides in believers. When we’re saved, God changes us from the inside out.
- 1 John 3:14 teaches that “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers and sisters” (NASB). God gives us His nature, so we love as He loves.

Ephesians 5:2—Walk in Love

- Though God gives believers this natural inclination to love, we still need to work on it.
- Thus, He commands us in 5:2 to “walk in love.”
- Though a child born with athletic or musical or artistic ability still needs to develop his talent, practice, and receive instruction, that gift is in him—just as God’s love is in us.

Sexual Immorality or Fornication (*porneia*)

1. Incest (1 Corinthians 5:1)
2. Sex with a Prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:16)
3. Premarital Sex (1 Corinthians 7:2)
4. Orgy (1 Corinthians 10:7; Exodus 32:25)
5. Adultery (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)
6. Homosexuality (Jude 1:7)

Impurity or Uncleanness (5:3)

- Refers to literal physical dirt or to moral filth
- Often listed with fornication in the New Testament
- Impure speech (also 5:4), clothing, entertainment, thoughts, glances, touches
- Broader term than fornication, includes more than sinful sexual acts, includes sins of the heart (Matthew 15:19, Proverbs 4:23)

Greed or Covetousness (5:3)

- Lust for more
- Here it applies especially to sexual lust
- Cf. Eph 4:19: “and they, having become callous [past feeling; don’t see sin as wrong], have given themselves over to sensuality [lasciviousness, shameless promiscuity] for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”

Sins of Conversation (5:4)

- Filthy language—obscenity, shameless talk
- Foolish talk—stupid chatter or silly twaddle (such as from a drunkard)
- Coarse Jesting—turning an innocent word into a bawdy one, innuendo, double entendre

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (ESV).

Purpose of Such Lists of Sins

- They make God's standards clear.
- They make it harder to wriggle out of being identified as a sinner.
- They encourage us to examine ourselves and be sure that we're saved.

Stephen Crane wrote

I was in the darkness;

I could not see my words

Nor the wishes of my heart.

Then suddenly there was a great light—

“Let me into the darkness again.”

How do we walk as children of light?

- Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).
- Light reveals or clarifies things (5:13).
- When we receive understanding, we say we have been enlightened.

How do we walk as children of light?

- The closer we get to Jesus, the Light, the more His light reveals our sins, which we confess and move closer to him, resulting in more light (understanding), more confession, and more Christlikeness (5:9-10).
- This process will enable us to shed the light of Jesus on those living in darkness, prompting them to either avoid us or move toward the Light themselves (5:11).

How Can We Know God's Will?

- “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments” (Psalm 111:10).
- Know God's Word and obey what you know (James 4:17).
- Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).

How Can We Know God's Will?

- Pay attention to circumstances to see God's guidance.
- Seek counsel from godly believers.
- Be patient. He often reveals one step at a time.

Be filled with the Spirit (5:18).

- Being filled with the Spirit is being controlled by Him.
- Be submissive to His leading and obey Him in all parts of your life.
- Be careful not to grieve Him (4:30).
- The Spirit enables us to do God's will with understanding & boldness.

Results of Spirit Filling (5:18-21).

- Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs (worship, edification) (5:19)
- Singing in your heart to the Lord (5:19)
- Giving thanks always for everything (5:20)
- Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:21)—mutual submission, humility

Bear a Family Resemblance to God (5:1)

- Forgive as He did (4:32).
- Walk in love (5:2).
- Be pure in conduct & conversation (5:3-7).
- Walk as children of light (5:8-14).
- Bear the fruit of goodness, righteousness, & truth (5:9).
- Walk in wisdom (5:15).

Bear a Family Resemblance to God (5:1)

- Redeem the time (5:16).
- Understand God's will (5:17).
- Be filled with the Spirit (5:18).
- Worship God & edify others (5:19).
- Be thankful always for all things (5:20).
- Be mutually submissive and humble (5:21).