

WHO AM I?

Ephesians



LIVING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

INTRODUCTION

Ephesians 5:1-21

As a father, I have come to understand the tremendous pressure of raising children, knowing that they will inevitably imitate my actions. It brings great joy to see that my children have also caught the same heart for serving children in foster care, just as my wife and I have done (Matthew 25:40). However, it is also sobering to think about how my actions, both good and bad, can be replicated.

This is where Ephesians 5:1-21 comes in. The passage not only helps me to focus on how my children and those around me might imitate my life, but it also helps me to start to have an eternal perspective, looking to our eternal home in Heaven. The passage reminds me that I am not just raising my children for this life but for eternity. It encourages me to live a life worthy of imitation, one that is characterized by love, purity, and wisdom.

Verse 1 of the passage tells us to "be imitators of God, as beloved children." This verse sets the tone for the rest of the passage, emphasizing the importance of imitating God in all areas of our lives. It reminds us that as children of God, we are called to walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (verse 2).

The passage also warns against living in darkness and urges us to walk as children of light (verses 8-9). This means living a life characterized by goodness, righteousness, and truth and avoiding the deeds of darkness. Verse 15 tells us to be wise and to make the most of every opportunity, for the days are evil.

As a father, I take the call to imitate God seriously. I want my children to see Christ in me and to follow in his footsteps. Ephesians 5:1-21 reminds me of my high calling as a father and child of God. It encourages me to walk in love, purity, and wisdom and to keep my eyes fixed on our eternal home in Heaven.

OPEN IT

1. Describe a time when someone imitated your actions, leading you to reflect on the example you were setting.

READ IT

Ephesians 5:1-21

EXPLORE IT

- 2. What are we called to imitate, and how can we do this? (vv 1-2)**
- 3. What specific behaviors are inappropriate for believers, and what consequences might they face for engaging in them? (vv 3-5)**
- 4. How does the passage describe the contrast between living in darkness and living in the light? (vv 6-9)**
- 5. What are some of the things we should do to live as children of light, and how can we do them? (vv 10-17)**
- 6. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit, and how can this be expressed in our lives as believers? (vv 18-21)**

APPLY IT

The Louvre in Paris is perhaps the most famous art museum in the world. It displays originals by such masters as Delacroix, Michelangelo, Rubens, da Vinci, Ingres, Vermeer, and many others.

Since 1793, the Louvre has encouraged aspiring artists to come and copy the masters. Some of our most famous modern artists have done that and have become better painters by copying the best the world has ever known.

An article in Smithsonian magazine tells about Amal Dagher, a 63-year-old man who has been duplicating art at the Louvre for 30 years. Dagher remains in awe of the masters and continues to learn from them. He said, "If you're too satisfied with yourself, you can't improve."

Paul instructed us to be "imitators of God" (Ephesians 5:1). In his first letter to the Thessalonians, he commended the believers because they were becoming like the Lord and setting an example for others.

Like the Louvre copyists, we'll never reach perfection before we get to heaven. Even so, we must resist the temptation to be satisfied with our present imitation of Jesus. We need to keep looking to Him, learning from Him, and asking for His help. Let's copy the Master. —David C. Egner¹

- 7. If someone were to imitate your walk with the Lord right now, what things would you be proud to see in their walk? What things would you hope they wouldn't pick up from you?**

Ephesus was a city in the ancient Roman province of Asia, home to a large and diverse population. The Christian community in Ephesus was made up of Jews and Gentiles, and they faced many challenges as they sought to live out their faith in a culture that was often hostile to Christianity.

Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians to guide them on living a life that honors God and reflects his holiness, even in the face of opposition and temptation. The verses in Ephesians 5:3-5 are a part of this larger message. They remind believers, both then and now, to avoid immoral and impure behaviors and cultivate an attitude of thanksgiving. By following these guidelines, the Ephesian Christians could live lives that were pleasing to God, and that would serve as a witness to the surrounding culture.

- 8. How might Paul's message in Ephesians 5:3-5 apply to our modern culture, which often promotes behaviors contrary to God's standards of holiness and purity?**

¹ Admin. Precept Austin. (2003, November 10). Retrieved February 15, 2023, from https://www.preceptaustin.org/ephesians_sermon_illustrations_5

- 9. What steps are you taking to live a life that honors God in the midst of these cultural pressures? Are there any new steps you could be taking to do that?**

In Ephesians 5:8, the writer reminds us of our past lives when we were living in darkness. The word used for darkness is "skotos." In 1 John 1, whenever the word darkness is used, it is always linked with a bad consequence. But [1 John 1:6] means the essence of darkness, which means it characterizes everything we were before we came to know Jesus. This darkness is the domain of Satan, and everything we said, thought, and did was marked by darkness. But when we put on the new garment that Paul tells us about, we won't have to suffer the consequences of darkness because of our choices. We will still have to deal with the consequences of living in a world full of darkness, but we won't have to suffer them because of our actions. So it's essential to walk in the light of Jesus and avoid walking in darkness.²

- 10. In Ephesians 5:6-9, the author warns against the dangers of deception and encourages believers to walk in the light of Christ. What do you think this passage teaches about the importance of discernment and spiritual maturity in the life of faith?**

- 11. How can you cultivate a more profound sense of discernment and become more attuned to the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Additionally, how can you be sure that you are walking in the light of Christ and avoiding the darkness of sin and deception?**

² Barber, W. (2015, February 21). Ephesians 5:7-10 by Wayne Barber. Precept Austin. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from https://www.preceptaustin.org/ephesians_57-10

In our daily Christian walk, we can place a high value on those things that are easy to measure and see. How often do I read my Bible? How many minutes do I spend praying each day? How regular in attendance am I at church? How many Christian conferences did I attend this year? How many connections do I have on my social media platform of choice? How do I appear to others around me? Do people look up to me and praise me? These things are easy to test, and so we value them. However, in Ephesians 5:10-17, Paul encourages us to focus on what is truly important in our Christian lives. He urges us to find out what pleases the Lord and to expose the deeds of darkness. Rather than measuring our success by external markers, we should measure it by whether we are living in the light and following God's will.³

12. How do you think social media and other forms of technology influence your ability to focus on what is truly important in your Christian life, as Paul encourages you to do in Ephesians 5:10-17? Do these tools tend to help you stay connected to God and your faith, or do they distract you from what is truly important?

13. What steps can you take to use technology in a way that aligns with your Christian values and helps you stay focused on what truly pleases the Lord?

14. Paul urges us to "expose the deeds of darkness." What does this mean, and how can you practically apply this in your life? What role does accountability and community play in this process?

³ Windsor, L. (2019, October 8). The test that matters (Ephesians 5:10). Forget the Channel. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://www.lionelwindsor.net/2019/10/09/ephesians-5-10/>

As we journey through the tempestuous waters of life, it is essential that we remain unified and work together as a crew aboard a ship. The apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5:18-21 to be filled with the Holy Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with our hearts, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Likewise, in Colossians 3:16, he urges us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in our hearts to God. We must also embrace a humble and servant-hearted mindset, as Paul emphasizes in Philippians 2:3: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."⁴

Moreover, the author of Hebrews exhorts us in Hebrews 10:24-25 to consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit and live in unity, we can more effectively serve and support one another, even amidst the turbulence and hardships of life. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can we navigate the storms of life and reach our ultimate destination.

15. In what ways can we submit to one another in reverence for Christ, as Paul encourages in Ephesians 5:18-21?

16. How can we work together as a unified body, with the Holy Spirit as our guide, to navigate through the storms of life and fulfill our ultimate purpose as followers of Christ?

⁴ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. This study was compiled and questions were written by Phil Chapman (Sugar Grove Campus)—www.villagebible.church/smallgroup