

EPHESIANS

Chapter 5

“WARNING: Mature Content”

The Holy Spirit inspired forty men to write the book that reads *us* while we read *it*! In his letter to Christ’s friends in Ephesus, Paul, as no one else has, unveils what our Lord’s death, resurrection and ascension mean to us. When you belong to the Savior, God loads all of your sin on Jesus and declares you as good-to-go with Him as Jesus is! How should we then live?

Paul replies, *“Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives”* (Colossians 5:25).

God’s principles equip His saints (aka followers of Christ) to live in the confused, spiritually-blinded, morally-sick, 1st century world which essentially hasn’t improved in 2,000 years. Hang on tight now as we read Ephesians 5:1-33, p. 1176 NIV.

Imitate Not Imitation

5:1-2

We’re to imitate (Greek is *mimic*) God. Submitting to His Father to be the only acceptable sacrifice for your sin, Jesus proved He loves you. When you give Him your life, you can begin imitating Him by loving others, even the unlovely, as God does (Romans 5:8, 13:10).

DISCUSS: Describe living from God’s approval, not for His approval.

Slippery Slope

5:3-7

No longer sin's captive, believers can, with the power of the Holy Spirit, opt to live godly lives. We can also let foolish things co-opt God's best for us. Bad choices lead to destructive actions whose dire, natural consequences we suffer in this life BUT not afterwards. When Christ's people sin, do they forfeit heaven? Paul answers, having been taught this by the risen Lord: Romans 6:8-18, 7:18-8:4, 8:31-39, 11:29; 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Paul cautions about false teachers and "partnering" with unbelievers (1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

DISCUSS: What does this warning imply about business relationships, marriage and getting close enough to tell others that God loves them?

Light Years

5:8-14

Before turning to Christ, Paul says you *were* darkness! You were not illuminated by Jesus, the Light of the world. You weren't a sinner because you sinned; you sinned because you were a sinner. BUT now God's Spirit in you shines His truth on your path, helping you shun darkness and delight God.

DISCUSS: How have you been getting God's light for your path?

"Man Overboard!"

5:15-20

To purge sin from the earth, as He did with the flood while saving His chosen people, Israel, God will allow unthinkable wars and calamities as prophesied in Psalm 83:1-18; Matthew 24:1-14, Jeremiah 3:16-18 and Daniel 9:20-27. Paul urges us to be knowledgeable about and alert to God's plan for the world, giving Him full control of our life (1 Chronicles 12:32).

DISCUSS: Eschatology is the area of theology concerned with the "last days." Why do most believers or unbelievers relegate this to Hollywood?

"If It Fits, You Must Submit"

5:21-33

No part of life is more conflict-prone than marriage. The divine formula for peace is *not* an owner-slave relationship.

Walter Kaiser, writes, *“Christians are a new social order created to express the fullness of Christ in the midst of the old, fallen order. ... the Spirit empowers Christians to exist in relationship with each other in a radical, culturally transforming way, namely through mutual self-submission.”* Considering *“the radical nature of Christ’s earthly life, the total, free submission of Himself as God’s suffering servant, climaxed in His self-giving on the cross, it is reverence and awe toward (Christ’s) self-giving love that is to motivate our mutual self-submission to each other.”*

Spouses are to be subject to one another. God’s order is revealed throughout Scripture, i.e., the wife is under the authority and care of her husband. To gain her respect, he is to love her as Christ loves and gave His life for us (1 Peter 3:1,2,7,8).

Each partner putting the other’s interest first, in obedience to Christ, is a dynamic model of God’s design for marriage. It’s a mutually rewarding, self-sacrificing portrayal of how Jesus loves you. When this occurs, it’s easy for wives to respect their husbands and for husbands to love their wives.

DISCUSS: How could a man submit to and show Jesus’ love for his wife?

“How Deep Is Your Love?”

A religious leader came to Jesus under the cloak of night, seeking to know our Lord who responded, “You must be born again.” Have you said “I do” to Jesus yet? He yearns to hear that from you today.

His Deal

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