

EPHESIANS
CHAPTER FIVE

1. Who deserves imitation?

“Therefore be imitators of God” (Ephesians 5:1). Too many actors, authors, musicians, athletes, or politicians are admired to the point of emulation, but it is the Almighty alone who deserves to be copied. Among men, those worthy of imitation (1st Corinthians 4:16; 1st Thessalonians 2:14; Hebrews 6:12), are those who are already imitating the Lord (1st Corinthians 11:1).

2. How ought Christians imitate God?

“As dear children” (Ephesians 5:1). The way we need to copy God is the way little kids copy their parents. It is sincere, pure. We prove whom our Father is by the way we conduct ourselves (1st John 3:10).

3. Whose example should we follow regarding love?

“And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Ephesians 5:2). We don’t learn love from a Shakespeare play, a Jane Austen book, or a Taylor Swift song. We learn it from Jesus and it is sacrifice He has taught us (John 15:12-13; 1st John 1:6; Revelation 1:5).

4. Why should certain behaviors *“not even be named among you?”*

It is *“fitting for saints”* to refrain from such (Ephesians 5:3). There is absolutely a standard of behavior set forth in Scripture for Christians to follow.

5. Which behaviors are “not fitting?”

- 1) “*Fornication*” is unlawful sexual intercourse of any variety, including adultery, bestiality, and homosexuality. It should be fled from (1st Corinthians 6:18). One must learn “*how to*” abstain from it (1st Thessalonians 4:3-8). The proper alternative is marriage (1st Corinthians 7:2). Those who refuse to repent of it must be excluded from the church (1st Corinthians 5).
- 2) “*Uncleanness*” is not a complicated word; it means just what it sounds like. The question is one of moral application. The Greek term appears ten times in the New Testament and in most instances, it appears in lists close to words about sexual sins (Romans 1:24; 2nd Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; **5:3**; Colossians 3:5; 1st Thessalonians 4: 7). Thus, we must conclude it has a sexual application. Basically, if we have to ask if something that seems sexual might be wrong, then it probably is.
- 3) “*Covetousness*” is the sinful desire to be constantly gaining in material wealth (Luke 12:13-34).
- 4) “*Filthiness*,” meaning obscenity or baseness, is another fairly generic term. The Greek word is found in the New Testament only in this verse where it is listed with verbal sins. Thus, it refers to any inappropriate conversation, especially focusing on behavior the Lord condemns.
- 5) “*Foolish talking*” is another term used only in this verse. It’s stupid talk.
- 6) “*Coarse jesting*” is ribaldry, joking about immoral things.

6. What is the appropriate alternative to the aforementioned unfitting actions?

“Rather giving of thanks” (Ephesians 5:4). In contrast to all these inappropriate words, disciples of Jesus ought to fill their mouths with gratitude toward God. Thanksgiving is a good alternative to many problems, including worry (Philippians 4:6)

7. What does covetousness amount to?

The *“covetous man... is an idolater”* (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). Obsession with material accumulation places an object before God and is, therefore, idolatry (Matthew 6:24).

8. What did Paul expect the Ephesians to already be aware of?

“For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them” (Ephesians 5:5-7). The New Testament is abundantly clear that the kingdom will not be inherited by immoral people (1st Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21).

9. What had the Ephesians been and what did they become?

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8). The transition from darkness to light is the whole point of being a Christian (Colossians 1:13; 1st Peter 2: 9).

10. What should *“children of light”* be doing?

“Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8-10). Children of light should walk the walk (1st John 1:6-7) and conform their bodies and minds to what is acceptable to God (Romans 12:1-2).

11. How are the *“unfruitful works of darkness”* to be treated?

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light” (Ephesians 5:11-13). It is incumbent upon the sons of light to expose/reprove dark deeds (John 3:20).

12. Which passage is quoted in verse fourteen?

“Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light’” (Ephesians 5:14). There does not appear to be any single text in the Old Covenant which this is referring to, but it’s possible that a few passages are under consideration:

- 1) *“Awake, you who sleep” (Isaiah 51:17; 52:1; 60:1;).*
- 2) *“Arise from the dead” (Isaiah 26:19)*
- 3) *“And Christ will give you light” (Isaiah 9:2; 60:1-3)*

13. Whose responsibility is it to wake up and rise from death?

“Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead” (Ephesians 5:14) is a direct command to those who are sleeping and who are dead to change their condition. Despite the protestations of Calvinists who insist that because the dead cannot raise themselves,

then sinners are helpless to come to Christ of their own accord, this command states otherwise.

14. How must Christians “walk?”

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time” (Ephesians 5:15-16).

- 1) *“Circumspectly,”* in English, is derived from words meaning “to look around” – compare to “circumnavigate,” “circumference,” or “circumcise.” The definition has come to mean, simply, “to be careful,” and that is what the Greek in this verse literally means, and so some versions translate it. Christians must conduct themselves with caution.
- 2) *“Not as fools but as wise”* indicates that most people conduct themselves foolishly and without wisdom. True wisdom comes from God (Romans 16:27) and is expressed through moral behavior (James 3:13-17).
- 3) *“Redeeming the time”* means to buy up the time or fulfill its value. Rather than people who “kill time” with useless waste, we need to fill moments doing good. Since we cannot know how much time we have (James 4:13-17), it is imperative we use the present with prudence.

15. Why must Christians so walk?

“Because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16). We must be able to discern good from evil (Hebrews 5:14), and if we are able to do so, then we can conclude, rather easily, that evil is dominant now as it was then. Accordingly, we must be careful, and wise, and make proper use of our time.

16. What is the foremost characteristic of the wise?

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). The wise man understands the Lord’s will by reading Scripture (3:1-5), and then does as Jesus said, but the unwise does not heed (Matthew 7:24-27).

17. What is the problem with being drunk?

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation” (Ephesians 5:18). “Dissipation,” alternately “excess” (KJV), “riot” (ASV), or “debauchery” (ESV, NIV), literally means “unsavedness” in the Greek. Salvation literally depends, in part, on not being drunk.

18. How should one be *“filled”* instead of with wine?

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). The rest of this sentence goes to show, further, how dangerous drinking is. Not only is unsavedness in wine, but wine also displaces the Holy Spirit. Wine is deceptively harmful (Proverbs 23:29-35).

19. How does one submit to the command to *“be filled with the Spirit?”*

The text under consideration is largely paralleled to a passage in the Colossian epistle. Notice them side by side:

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16_a).

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16_b).

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17).

If Colossians 3:17 matches Ephesians 5:20 and Ephesians 5:19 matches Colossians 3:16_b, then Colossians 3:16_a corresponds to Ephesians 5:18, which makes being filled with the Spirit identical to letting Christ’s word dwell in you.

20. Describe the music Christians are to make.

Unlike the Old Covenant wherein Israel was told to play music on instruments, here and elsewhere in the New Testament, Christians are taught to be *“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody”* (Ephesians 5:19). We not only refrain from instruments, but we also avoid humming, whistling, clapping and any other form of music which does not present lyrics.

21. Whom should this music be directed toward?

When Christians sing, there are two recipients: 1) *“one another”* and, 2) *“the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:19).

22. How should prayer be addressed?

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20). Prayer should be addressed to God, in Jesus’ name (Romans 7:25). Jesus, specifically, does not want to be prayed to (John 16:23). Any examples that appear to contradict this should be examined carefully to observe that those who spoke directly to Jesus were people to whom Jesus appeared (Acts 7:56, 59).

23. Besides song and prayer, how does one show himself to be filled with the Spirit?

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21). If we are Spirit-filled people, then we will express it, in part, through our humility (Philippians 2:3). This will mean that, even if someone in the church other than an elder assigns us work, we accept the job (1st Peter 5:5), not because that person is superior, but because we are subject to Christ, and, therefore, to Christ’s people.

24. Whom should wives submit to?

“Wives, submit to your own husbands” (Ephesians 5:22) – not just any husband, but *your own!* Despite cultural changes, submission is an absolute obligation of wives to husbands (Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1st Peter 3:1-6).

25. How should they submit and why?

They should submit *“as to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:22). Submission in general – whether wives to husbands, children to parents, citizens to governors, Christians to elders, or servants to masters – is a form of subjection unto Christ (Colossians 3:23) and an opportunity to develop humility.

This is not some misogynistic bias that favors men over women because this actually places tremendous responsibility on the husband who must be *“head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church”* (Ephesians 5:23). Headship is not an excuse for tyranny, but a call to leadership.

“Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:24).

26. Whose Savior is Jesus?

“Christ is... the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:23). Since the body is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), this means that salvation is in the church. After all, He purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28), which is what washes us from sin (Revelation 1:5); therefore one cannot be saved outside the church! Thus, the church must not be dismissed or diminished in importance. It does matter.

27. How should men love their wives?

Husbands should love their wives in two specific ways:

- 1) *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”* (Ephesians 5:25). Husbands need to sacrifice for their wives and give themselves up for their wives like Christ did for the church.
- 2) *“Husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and*

cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'" (Ephesians 5:28-31). Husbands must perceive of their wives as extensions of themselves, being joined, as they are, to them.

28. Why did Christ give Himself for the church?

"That He might sanctify and cleanse her" (Ephesians 5:26). The church is meant to be pure. Members should not persist in sin and neither should congregations tolerate it.

29. How was the church cleansed?

This cleansing was effected "with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:27), meaning baptism. Washing is accomplished in baptism (Acts 22:16) and baptism requires water (Acts 8:36; 10:47-48; 1st Peter 3:20-21). This is not the only indirect reference to baptism in the New Testament; on several occasions, baptism is mentioned without using the word baptism (John 3:3, 5; 1st Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22).

Baptism is done at the individual level, but the individuals baptized compose the body at large, the church, because each one is baptized into the body (1st Corinthians 12:13). Thus, the church has received the washing of water.

Everything done for salvation is by the word (1st Peter 1:23) since the word informs of salvation.

30. What kind of church does Jesus intend to have?

“That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

Like any husband, Christ wants a glorious bride, free from blemish. When we sin personally or collectively, we bring shame on the church and detract from the glory of Christ’s bride.

31. Why did Paul bring up marriage in this context?

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:32-33).

Although this passage presents excellent and helpful teaching about marriage, that is merely a collateral benefit. The true purpose is to illustrate the relation between Jesus and the church (John 3:27-30; 2nd Corinthians 11:2-3; Revelation 21:2, 9; 22:17).