

Ephesians Chapter 5 Week 1, Intro & v.1

In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul's focus is mainly on doctrine – the principles of what the church is based on. Chapters four thru six focus on practical instruction – how the truths of the gospel should affect the way we live.

We need to **know** what the Bible says, “talking the talk”, but this has to be in conjunction with **doing** what the Bible says, “walking the walk”. Having knowledge with no action is useless; doing all the right things without the understanding of Truth is useless.

How many of you go grocery shopping? What happens to the ingredients for a specific recipe when you put them on the counter? Do they assemble themselves into something tasty for dinner? Just having all the right items is not enough. Action on your part is necessary for preparing a meal. Faith without action will leave you hungry. Your ingredients will sit on the counter and never be a part of the dish it was meant to be.

Do you have or have you used an imitation of something? Who or what did you imitate as a child? Perhaps it was an action hero or your parents or a sibling. Maybe a teacher or cartoon character.

An imitation is a realistic copy of something made to be as much as possible like the real thing. It is a behavior whereby an individual observes and replicates another's. If you search the internet for imitations, lists of things like jewelry, handbags, watches, shoes and food products come up. Actors, politicians and musicians have others imitating them.

The first verse of Ephesians 5 says to be imitators of Christ. Before we look at this more closely, notice the very first word of this chapter - ‘therefore’. **Where does this word direct us?**

Therefore: accordingly, likewise, now then

The first two verses of chapter 5 continue the thought at the end of chapter 4.

Eph 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

In these verses, we were warned against bitterness and anger and told to be like Christ. **What does “God in Christ also has forgiven you” mean?**

What have we been forgiven of? How? What did it cost?

Consider who we are without Christ, what we truly deserve and what we have been granted because of His grace. We are completely forgiven – past, present and future. It cost God his Son. What does it cost us to forgive others?

In light of this truth, we should be extending favor to one another, excusing mistakes, misunderstandings, wrongdoings or our perception of inappropriate behavior “just as God in Christ also has forgiven” us.

Col 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

What does this truth look like when we apply it to our daily lives? What character qualities does it require?

Eph 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

Have you seen a child imitate their parents? So much time is spent in each other’s lives that it is not uncommon to see a grown child have some of the same mannerisms of one or both of their parents.

Are there people that you look at now that you desire to imitate? This means that we adopt somebody else’s behavior; we follow their example, using them as a model, we try to be like them, to copy them.

If we consider the word follow, it means to take the same direction, to obey instructions given by someone else.

We are to follow God’s example. We are to obey His instruction. We are to imitate Him because we are His children.

Mt 5:48 "Therefore **you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

The idea here is that we *will be* complete or perfect in Christ;
perfect <teleios> complete (in mental and moral character)

*We cannot be perfect here on this earth in our flesh, but, as we strive to be like Christ, we are in the process of becoming complete or perfect in Him.

Lu 6:36 "**Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**

To be merciful means to be compassionate – showing feelings for the suffering of others with a desire to help.

1Pe 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, **be holy yourselves also in all [your] behavior;**

To be holy in all behavior means to be physically pure, morally blameless

Look back again to Eph 4:32: **And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

Remember the popular acronym that came out in the 1990's? WWJD – What would Jesus do? I don't have the power, wisdom or authority to *do* what Jesus does but I am called to act in a way that represents His love. Perhaps a good question to ask ourselves is "How am I to show God's love in my thoughts, words and actions. **Is His love being demonstrated in my life, right now, in this situation, towards this individual?**

Next week, we will begin with Ephesians 5, verse 2 which says, "walk in love, just as Christ also loved you..."

As we imitate Christ and His love for us, we will be challenged to learn that there should be no limitations of our love towards others.

As a Christian, my life should point others towards Christ.

Application Questions

Week 1, Eph 5:1

This week: Read Ephesians 5. Consider the questions below and use the "Apply It" bookmark and your journal notes to guide you. Ask God to show you His will for your personal application. You may want to record additional insights in your journal. We will use these questions as a quick review next week. Begin memorizing Eph 5:1-2 in the NAS version.

-- Does your "talk" (knowing God's word) match your "walk" (doing God's word)? Where do you see weakness? How can this be strengthened?

-- Read Eph 4:32 and Eph 5:1. What are two reasons we are to imitate Christ?

-- Take a moment to consider your need for forgiveness in the past, present and future. Spend some time in prayer and thanksgiving for His mercy.

-- How are you at forgiving others? Excusing mistakes? Letting go of misunderstandings? Look up Col 3:13. Is there someone you need to forgive?

-- Who or what are you following? Where do you spend the majority of your free time? What are your thoughts, words, and actions centered on? If you are God's child, you should be striving to imitate Him. Is it possible to correctly imitate someone you don't know very well? "Imitating is a behavior where an individual observes and replicates another". Do you need to make any adjustments? If so, what are they and how will you implement them?

How is God's love being demonstrated in your life towards others?