

Ephesians Chapter 5  
Week 2, v. 2-4

What did we learn last week from Eph 5:1? Because of what Christ has done for us and because we are His children, we are to imitate Him. Looking back at Ephesians 4, we are to imitate his forgiveness.

How does understanding and accepting what He has done for us change the way we are able to forgive others?

No one can even come close to hurting us the way we have hurt God – our actions towards Him, our rejection of Him. Yet, he has forgiven us. When we understand our need and His gift, we are able to forgive others.

Eph 5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

We also are to imitate Christ in our love for others.

What do you think Paul means when he says to “walk in love”?

Walk <peripateo> to tread all around; to live [in love]; to be occupied with [love].

Showing love towards others denotes a responsibility that requires action.

Christ is the ultimate example of love – giving His life for us. When we consider His love for us, we should be moved to love others. God demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die for us so that we would have eternal life.

What did Jesus give to love us?

John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Rom 5:8

Christ demonstrated His love toward us by giving up more than just things - He gave Himself.

We are commanded to love one another.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

We have the ability to love because we are loved. However, expressing our love does not just happen. We need to purpose to love others. What is the most important way we can show love towards others?

Our top concern should be to point others to Christ. He is the ultimate expression of love. **How many of us try to express our love towards others by “fixing” them or their situation?** Many of us wholeheartedly want to help others. Yet, sometimes we focus on the superficial solution rather than the eternal solution. We cannot fix anyone and it is not our job. What we can do is love them enough to continue to point them towards God, accept them just as we have been accepted, forgive them just as we have been forgiven and PRAY.

**Have you ever seen someone try to work in a capacity they are not qualified for?** Their success is minimal at best and typically they make things worse, messing up a system they can't fully understand or appreciate. This is what we do when we step into God's shoes. We can't begin to fill them. He doesn't ask us to or want us to. To fix something means to mend or correct, to put something in order, to direct something, to make something more stable or secure. God is the only one who can mend a soul, change our thoughts, direct us towards Him and give us true security.

Think again of the example of Christ's love towards us. **Should any situation be too difficult for us to encourage the eternal destination of others or to promote their spiritual growth?**

The commandment of loving one another comes with the opportunity to sacrifice for the benefit of others. **What does it mean to sacrifice something?**

Sacrifice: giving up of something valued for someone or something else considered to be of *more* value or importance; a loss incurred by giving something away; an offering to honor God.

**What things do we sacrifice to love others?** (time, energy, money, comfort, pride, fairness, recreation, etc.) **Is there anything you have that you are unwilling to sacrifice for the sake of loving others?**

“The greatest expression of love is not that it gives things or even that it gives up things, but that it gives itself.” James Boice, An Expository Commentary on Ephesians

**In what ways can we offer a pleasing sacrifice to God?**

1Jo 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Ga 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

1Jo 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Look again at Eph 5:2. What summary can we make from this verse?

- We are to imitate Christ in our love for others,
- We are to love sacrificially, giving up *ourselves*.

Why is it difficult to give ourselves to others? We are selfish. We are fearful. We become vulnerable and open ourselves to rejection, hurt or disappointment. We may have to lay aside our feelings. We need to follow God's example and love sacrificially even if we feel love is undeserved. Is this cost too great?

The goal is to please God. Therefore, His response is what we are concerned with. His pleasure is what we desire. If it is all about Him – and it should be – we need to ask ourselves, “How would God have me show His love through my life in this situation”. (regardless of others actions or responses)

Is this kind of sacrificial love hard to show? Yes! In our flesh and our own strength it is impossible. Yet, in God's strength we are able to accomplish His command to love others.

Php 4:13 I can do *all things* through Him who strengthens me.

Being an imitator of Christ means there are no limitations to my love for others.

Eph 5:3-4 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and [there must be no] filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

We are God's children, consecrated to Him, set apart for Him, His saints. *Who* we are in Christ, should change the way we think and act. We need to work at becoming holy. We are not to just change behavior but we are to have nothing to do with sinful behavior.

What does it mean to be above reproach? beyond criticism, not subject to blame, above suspicion What does being above reproach look like in practical situations?

1Jo 1:5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

- \* God is light
- \* in Him there is no darkness at all (sin)

If we are His children, what conclusion can we make from this verse?

Refer back to Eph 4:17-20. This section of scripture reminds us who we were when possessed by sin rather than Christ. In verses 3 and 4 of chapter 5, it says that not only are we *not* to walk in the same manner as before but uncleanness in thought and action, love and desire of riches and unwholesome speech or joking should not even be associated with a true Christian.

Who is our Father? What is His character according to 1 John 1:5? Who are we to imitate?

Ro 6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin [as] instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God.

1Th 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

Lu 12:15 And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not [even] when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Php 1:27a Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ;

Eph 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Eph 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such [a word] as is good for edification according to the need [of the moment,] that it may give grace to those who hear.

We are God's children, His ambassadors for the gospel. Is there anything in your thoughts, speech or actions that would even remotely dishonor the name of your Father? **Do our thoughts, speech and actions increase holiness and the faith of others or defile it?** When we get together with others, where is our conversation focused? **Does my tongue profit or pollute others? Offend or bless?**

Are there things you are involved in or connected to that would bring shame to being called a Christian?

Next week we will begin our study with the end of verse 4 which says that giving thanks is fitting to our behavior as a Christian.

## Application Questions Week 2, Eph 5:2-4

**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. Continue memorizing Eph 5:1-2 in the NAS version.

-- What was the ultimate expression of Christ’s love for you? Read John 13:34. We are commanded to love one another. What does Christ’s example of love look like in your life – at home, at work, in your neighborhood, at church, etc?

-- Do you love others by trying to fix their problems or by pointing them to God? How quick are you to share the testimony of God’s love in your life? Are you confident in sharing the gospel? If not, what can you do to remedy this? Are you willing to put the effort towards the solution?

-- Are you afraid to “put yourself out there” for the benefit of others? What was Christ’s example of personal sacrifice? Read Phil 2:3-8. How was He treated? How does your own comfort and pride hold you back from sacrificial love? Read Phil 4:13. Where does the ability to love, and the strength to lay aside ourselves for the sake of love, come from?

-- Eph 5:3-4 warns against sexual sin, covetousness, and unprofitable speech. Could others’ rightly accuse you of association with any of these things? God knows everything. What does He see in your life? What do your actions, thoughts and words say about you? Read Ro 6:13; 1 Thess 4:7; Eph 4:29.