

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

SESSION 7

Letter to the Ephesians: Ephesians 5-6:9 - LEADERS GUIDE

ICE BREAKER

Start off with an ice breaker to get everyone warmed up.

WELCOME

Welcome back to week 7! We hope you are enjoying your group time and learning from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. This week we'll be in **Ephesians 5** through **Ephesians 6:9**. In our reading today, we'll see that Paul teaches how Christ's work in the believer should produce a vastly different behavior in the Christian compared to the sin that is practiced in the world. This leads to some of the strongest warnings against **sin**. In addition, Paul also provides instructions for living out the calling of Jesus Christ in the home and at work. He emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Spirit for wise living, highlighting the need for Spirit-led wisdom alongside love and submission to fulfill these commands.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 5:1-2**

EPHESIANS 5:1-2

Sometimes we need an example of what our responsibility looks like – in this case “imitation.” So, Paul says we should imitate as **children**. And that is probably one of the best illustrations I have ever read. Children do not only imitate one another, or what they see on television [*how many times did the boys go out in the backyard and try and pull off a last second shot OR a game winning Hail Mary touchdown?!?*] OR what they see in their own homes. Parents will often listen to the words or see the action of their child and say, **“they are just like me!”**

This is the imitation Paul is stating we should have. And then he tells us what we should imitating:

- Walk in **love** as Christ loved us.
- **Sacrifice** as Christ gave Himself up for us.
- And **live** as a fragrant offering, as a sacrifice to God.

QUESTIONS

How can a human being possibly imitate God?

Why is it easier to think of the imitation of Christ? How is imitating Christ the same as imitating God?

What does it mean to walk in love?

- Why is it important for us to look to God, to his Word, and to Christ to know what true love is?
- How might we get love wrong if left to ourselves?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 5:3-10**

EPHESIANS 5:3-10

Paul tells us in **verses 3-7** *what not* to imitate. **Don't imitate** the sexually immoral, those who are impure, Or those who covet. Don't be those who talk foolishly, with filth OR make crude jokes at the expense of others. He said that those who imitate or practice these things will have **"no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."** So, Paul says, don't partner with them.

Instead, **"walk as children of the light,"** with **thanksgiving** in your heart and in your words AND **"try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord."**

QUESTIONS

Why does Paul issue the stern warning that those who live in sin have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ?

- How might a self-righteous person misapply this warning?
- How might someone with a particularly sensitive conscience misapply this?
- What is Paul's intention?

EPHESIANS 5:11-21

In **verse 11**, what's interesting is that Paul states that Christians should not take part in the **"unfruitful works of darkness."** BUT he doesn't say we should **avoid** the people who are in **darkness**. In fact, he instructs that we should be the light in midst of darkness – to make things more visible.

Verses 15-21 helps us to understand how Jesus calls us to be the light of the world – because we have been transformed and because we are working to imitate God – we give a sense of **"direction and bearing"** to help others notice and be led to glorify God.

This includes **submitting** to one another **"out of reverence for Christ."** That is definitely a trait that would stand out in a world that glorifies power, authority and position OVER submission. Culture considers submission a weakness, while Scripture considers it a key trait in the Kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS

How does life in darkness contrast with life in the light?

- How might we mis-apply the command to take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness?

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

- How will a person who is filled with the Spirit show it within the Christian congregation?

Why is our singing important?

- WHO are we to sing "to"?
- Since we are singing to God - worshipping God - why do Christians get so upset about style, or types of music that are sung on Sunday?
- What is the role of those leading worship from the stage? *[Not to sing to but to lead the congregation in worship towards God]*

What does it mean for Christians to submit to one another?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Ephesians 5:22-33](#)

EPHESIANS 5:22-33

In **Ephesians 5:22-33**, Paul continues to reveal how unified Christians should live out their life – to be the **light** in the darkness. In this case, he discusses the roles of husbands and wives in marriage. Wives are to **submit** to their husbands as to the Lord.

For husbands, they are instructed to **love** their wives deeply – even **sacrificially**. Paul states that husbands should love their wives just as Christ loves the church. This means they should not misuse their authority or be controlling. Instead, they should cherish and care for their wives, just as Jesus does for his followers.

QUESTIONS

What does it mean for a wife to “submit” to her husband? Will submission look the same, practically speaking, in every home? Discuss.

- What is the primary motivation for a wife to submit to her husband?

Are there limits to a wife’s submission?

- In other words, is there ever a time when it is right for a wife to go against her husband’s wishes?

What is the simple command that Paul issues to husbands?

- How is a husband to love his wife?
- What should it look like?
- What should his manner be?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Ephesians 6:1-4](#)

EPHESIANS 6:1-4

Paul then moves from the marriage relationship to the relationship between parent and child. His command is simple - **“Children are to obey their parents.”** This not only means that children have the responsibility to obey, but parents have the responsibility to teach their children obedience — one of the most important jobs for a parent.

This command reveals a couple of things:

- Parents are to **teach** their children in the instruction of the Lord, to **love** their children AND not to **provoke** [*deliberately make your child annoyed or angry*] their children.
- When a parent fulfills their **responsibility**, the child’s responsibility is to obey.

QUESTIONS

Why did Paul address Fathers specifically? Did he not think that mothers have a role to play in the raising of children?

What does the phrase “bring them up” mean?

- What does it mean to instruct in the Lord?

What happens when parents fail to instruct children in the Lord?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 6:5-9**

EPHESIANS 6:5-9

In this last section, Paul hits the final frontier in public life – the work place. In the work place, the employee should **“obey”** their employers with **“fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, AS YOU WOULD CHRIST...”** The words **“as you would Christ”** change our entire perspective as workers. It reminds us that our work can and should be done as if we were working for Jesus. That’s because we are![1]

Thankfully, Paul gives the same instruction to the bosses. He writes that bosses should treat their employees with fairness and integrity – just as employees are instructed to work diligently and honestly for their employers. This mutual respect and commitment to Christ and to one another create a work environment centered on revealing the glory of God!

QUESTIONS

What can we learn from Paul’s instructions to Christian bondservants?

What can we learn from Paul’s instructions to Christian masters?

How might this teaching apply to anyone who is in a position of authority over others?

- How does God want us to treat people who are over us? Why?

How can you improve your attitude toward someone you work with?

CONCLUSION

Was there anything that stood out to you from **Ephesians 5-6:9?**

- Was there an “aha moment” for you?

Outline for how we will study Ephesians:

- **April 28th: Ephesians 6:10-24** – *Strength through the whole armor of God.*
- **May 5th: Hangout Night or Content Make-Up**