

IMITATORS OF GOD

EPHESIANS 5 PART ONE

KIDS KORNER

Question One: I have a question for the kids. Have you ever had someone copy you? If so, what happened? How did you feel?

Ok...that is an annoying kind of copying. Let's talk about a good kind of copying.

Question Two: Can you think of a time when you did not know how to do something and you had to copy what someone else did?

Possible Answers: Tying shoes / learning to write cursive /

Question Three: What are some things that Jesus did really well that you want to copy and do just like Him?

---End Kids Korner---

Ephesians 5

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

Often children learn by watching and copying. One of our jobs as parents is to live a life that we want our kids to copy. Our Heavenly Father knew that we learn much of our morality by copying others. Jesus Christ appeared in human form. One of the things that resulted is that he lived a perfect life that was pleasing to The Heavenly Father. If we truly want to please the Father we need only watch how he lived and copy his life.

One of the ways we can copy the life of Jesus is found in verse 2.

²and 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.

SPENDING YOUR LIFE ON SOMEONE

We can copy Jesus by walking in love. Jesus Christ walked in love when he gave up His life for us. What would it have been like if Jesus did not give up his life for us?

If Jesus saved his life for himself he would have been a billionaire. If Jesus saved his life for himself he would have never spoken against corrupt religious leaders making them mad enough to kill him. He would have lived to a ripe old age. Jesus did not save His life for himself. Jesus loved us enough to spend his life on us.

Jesus spent his life on us when he went around healing people. Jesus spent his life on us when he died for our sins on the cross. Jesus spent his life on us when he took the time to teach and train his disciples.

Jesus spent his life on us. We have the opportunity to love him back and spend our lives on Him. We spend our lives on Jesus when we become servants at his disposal.

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

⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Notice the word idolater. Some might think an idolater is someone who lives in the jungle and bows down to statues. But an idolater is someone who loves anything more than God. What does that look like in practical terms?

WHAT ARE MY IDOLS?

If I am willing to give up or compromise my relationship with God for another person then that person is my idol.

If God wants me to spend my money on the poor or to fund a ministry, but I won't do it because I can not give up the new dining room set I have been dreaming of, then the dining room set is an idol.

If God tells me to go help a church that was blown away by a tornado but I am not willing to listen because it will interfere with my hunting or fishing schedule, then hunting or fishing is an idol for me.

If pressure from other people can keep us from obeying God, then the approval of people is an idol.

Idols can even be found in the church. If God puts it on our hearts to let a bunch of kids come into the church but we do not welcome them because they might mess up the building. Then our building is an idol. Anything that stands in the way of God's will is an idol even if it looks religious and pious.

Idols are a clog in the artery of God's great life and power coming into our lives and our church. The truth is we all have idols that we revert back to when we are not getting our life from God.

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them;

False teachers tried to make sin appear less serious. They tried to tell people that it is ok to hang on to their idolatry. If we get our life from our idols we will die with our idols. We must get our life from God.

⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all

goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

I want to key off of verse 10. It says learn what is pleasing to the Lord. This idea is important enough that it is repeated in verse 17, where it says; ¹⁷***So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*** Echoing that thought, The Lord's Prayer in Matthew says; ***Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***

In this life there is one question we can ask our self that will tell us something about the condition of our heart and soul. The question we can ask our self is this; "who is my life for?"

If my life is for me then all I need to do in this life is know what I want to do. My will is what drives my life. In fact I would say that most people organize their lives around what they fell like doing. Their motto even if they never thought about it is; *My Will Be Done.*

But the bible says that we are created For Jesus. We are here for Him. We are here to try to understand God's will and we are here to do God's will. That is the only way to know that we are part of God's kingdom. Thy will be done!

LEARN WHAT IS PLEASING

How do we discover God's will? First, we learn about God's will by reading the bible. Second, when we are born again, the Holy Spirit teaches us how to apply the broad commands of the bible specifically to our lives. The bible tells us to help the poor and The Holy Spirit will tell us which poor person He wants us to help. Third, we learn God's will through the Spiritual gifts and prayer as we seek God together in Christian friendships and gathering. If I cant seem to find God's will, other Christians will pray for us and they might even get a sense in their heart from the Holy Spirit

about what God wants us to do. Sometimes I am too tired or empty to hear from God and that is when I need fellow Christians to hear God's will for me.

**¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,
¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil.**

Making the most of your time. God has given the average person 26,000 days to live. At a point in time all of those days will be gone. The days are evil. And we can spend our 26,000 days going with the flow affecting no change. Or we can show by our life and our words what it looks like to love and be loved by Jesus.

I cannot even name for you how many things I regret in my life. I cannot count how many days I could have been closer to God. I cannot count how many times I knew God was telling me to do something and I did not have the courage to follow through. I have lived more than half of my 26,000 days.

I know good works do not save me. I am saved by God's grace. But I have a chance to make a difference in my little corner of the world that I live in. I want to make the most of the rest of my days. I want God to smile when he sees the way that I live for Him and do His will. *Oh God, help me to love you more and help me to desire your will more.*

¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Paul contrasted getting drunk with wine, which produces a temporary "high," to being filled with the Spirit of God, which produces lasting joy.

"We were all given the one Spirit to drink"(1 Corinthians 12:13 NIV).

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DRINK?

Everyone knows that we are not supposed to get drunk. Look at the damage and even death that results from getting drunk. Paul is urging that we get filled up, yes even intoxicated with The Holy Spirit. When someone is drunk they are considered “under the influence”. When someone is under the influence and they say terrible things, we often say; “that is the booze talking.”

Conversely, when we spend a lot of time with God, The Holy Spirit fills us and at times we even feel a real burst of joy and boldness and love for people that came on like an intoxicant from God. But God’s intoxicant allows us to live by His power and do His will and love people more than we can on our own. Alcoholic intoxication makes us stupid, selfish people who lie to ourselves and do great harm to our family and our community.

BE FILLED

The words, “be filled” in the Greek text is written in such a way that it means to continually be filled. If I fill up my gas tank last week, that is not good enough to drive on this week. If I ate a meal yesterday, that does not give me sufficient energy for today’s work. We must take the time to rest in God’s presence and get filled, yes even intoxicated with The Holy Spirit on a regular basis if we are going to make the most of these days for the Lord.

¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

The result of being filled with the Spirit of God is that we will automatically be singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to the Lord. The Lord is the audience of our singing.

PSALMS AND HYMNS

Psalms and Hymns are the same in this passage. Psalms are the Psalms in the bible that used to be put to music and sung in the churches.

The Psalms in the bible consist of three hymnbooks that were used in the Old Testament temple. Hymns are any type of music that is used in the church for worship.

SPIRITUAL SONGS

Spiritual songs are songs that are made up in the moment. It is music that flows from the Holy Spirit. When my mother came to faith in Christ she sat down at the piano and played a song that God just gave her out of the blue. If you are a terrible singer like me you will only want to try this when you are alone. If you are willing to get past the awkward feeling you will be really blessed. You can make up a song and sing it to the Lord when you go on a walk or when you are working in the garage. If you are feeling lonely and do not have company, you can sing a song to the Lord and you will be surprised at how close that will make you feel to God.

²⁰**always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;**

TAKING IT HOME

1. What are the idols in your life that prevent you from getting closer to God than you are right now? Are you willing to surrender your idols to God?
2. Are you taking the time regularly to become intoxicated by The Holy Spirit of God?
3. What phrase relates to your life best right now; my will be done, or Thy will be done?
4. What would need to happen in your life right now so that you will be making the most of your days? How do you want God to change you or heal you so that you have the spiritual power and guidance to make the most of your days?