

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

May 2013

Ephesians: God's Plan for His Church

Lesson #9: Be Imitators of God

INTRODUCTION

How has your circle of friends changed since becoming a Christian?

EXPLORATION

Read Ephesians 5:1-21

1. What does it mean to be a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God? v. 2; Heb 10: 6-17; 2 Cor 2:14-16

Note: In the Old Testament, the offering of a sacrifice pleased the Lord so much that it was described as a pleasing aroma. Gen 8:21. "When Alexander the Great discovered a coward in his army who also was named Alexander, he told the soldier, "Renounce your cowardice or renounce your name." Those who carry God's name are to be imitator's of His character. By His grace it is possible to reflect Him even in our present limitations.¹

2. Why would it be important to not give the impression (hint) of immorality as a Christian? v. 3

3. How do you balance truth (i.e. confronting sin) with tact (wisdom to know what to say when)?

4. If Christians are working so hard on doing everything right, how do they not become "dull"? v. 4

5. How do Christians live normal social relationships with others (like Christ) but not participate in the sinful lifestyle of unbelievers? How can our electronic communication (Internet, e-mail, Face book, texting, etc.) honor Christ? 2 Cor 6:14; Mt 5:14-16

6. How does life in the darkness contrast with life in the light? v. 8-14 Rom 13:12-14, Col 1:12-13

Note: Consider the effect of light on plant growth – it is productive. Those who live in God's light produce fruit of moral and ethical character (Gal 5:22-23) while those who live in the darkness do not. Light, by its nature, exposes what is in darkness. The contrast shows sin for what it really is.

7. What is the contrast between foolishness (unwise) and wise living?

8. Why is being "filled (repeatedly) with the Spirit" a command rather than a suggestion? (v. 18)

Note: the command "be filled" is followed by a series of participles in the Greek: speaking, singing, making music, giving thanks and submitting.

9. Why is it important for Christians to submit to authority?

10. How could others tell if you are living in the "power of the Spirit" instead of your own power?

APPLICATION

What habits do you need to discard now that you are a Christian?

When Jesus controls our lives, the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in us. (John 14:26, 16:13, Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit is given to all believers (1 Cor 3:16).

Not all believers enjoy this power because they resist Him or otherwise sin. Even more, most Christians do not understand how to live in a moment-by-moment, daily fellowship with God. The fruit of God's Spirit belongs to the surrendered man who yields control of his life to the mind of Christ every moment.

If we crucify our own ambition, confess our sins and give Jesus Christ first place in our lives, then the power of the Holy Spirit is available to meet every need.

Patrick Morley, Man in the Mirror, p. 299

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1986). *Ephesians*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (194). Chicago: Moody Press.