



## **Ephesians 5 v 1-20**

### **Living in the light – Leader's version**

#### **For an hour study, just do the starred \* questions**

**Check in** – ask everyone how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. What 3 things did Paul tell us to do in the last study (Ephesians 4 v 22-24)?

*Put off the old self (repent), be made new in the attitude of our minds (believe), and put on the new self (sanctification).*

### **What does the passage say and mean?**

Read Ephesians 5 v 1-20

\*2. What does it mean to imitate God (v1-2)?

*To live a life of love, as Christ did. This is in comparison to the list of unwholesome behaviours seen in 4 v 17-31. (We imitate God in character and behaviour, but this obviously doesn't mean we can do all the things that God can do, or can give our lives to save people from their sins).*

\*3. Why do you think we are told to follow God's example *as dearly loved children*, not just to follow it because we have to?

*As followers of Jesus, we are God's dearly loved children. We live His way because we love Him, in response to His grace and mercy. Obeying God because we feel we have to, in order to please or pacify Him, is not an act of love, and reveals a complete misunderstanding of the gospel.*

4. Jesus showed his love for us by giving his life as a sacrifice for us. What did this achieve?

*Jesus' death was in payment for our sins. He died so that we could be forgiven.*

\*5. Why does it matter how God's people behave?

*God has told us how to live in a way that honours and pleases Him. Disobedience shows little respect or love for God and little desire to honour Him and bring glory to his Name. That said, we are all sinners and the battle for personal holiness is not over until we die (or Jesus comes back). When we repent and believe, we lose our desire to sin as the Holy Spirit living in us gives us the desire for holiness. There is a battle raging between these two desires, Gal 5 v 17 and the process of change is life-long.*

*Our behaviour is also an example to non-believers of what it means to follow Christ and honour God – people quickly detect hypocrisy...*

6. Read Ephesians 5 v 3-5. This is not a complete list of sins, but we all see ourselves in it.

Are there things you tolerate in others that you shouldn't?

*If we allow obscenity, coarse joking etc, to go unchecked around us, we are not defending the gospel.*

*NB Verse 5 refers to 'the one who has given himself up without shame or penitence to this way of life' (Stott 2008, p197). It's not saying that sin disqualifies us from heaven, since there is forgiveness for all who repent.*

**Be careful** not to get into a debate about specific sexual sins or sexual choices which may isolate or upset individuals and potentially cross the boundaries of Diversity – the point is a generic one about sexual sin, of which we are all guilty to some extent.

7. What kinds of talk are 'out of place' for God's people, (v4) and what should we do instead?

*Obscenity, foolish talk, coarse joking (about sex, in the context of v3). (This doesn't mean we can't have a laugh, but it does mean we need to think about what we are laughing about).*

*Instead, we should thank God (for sex, in the context of v3). 'To joke about (God's gifts) is bound to degrade them; to thank God for them is the way to preserve their worth as the blessings of a loving Creator.' (Stott 2008, p193)*

8. Imagine a whole wing of the prison living according to v4. What would it be like?

\*9. Read Luke 6 v 45. What does your behaviour and speech reflect about your heart?

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What kinds of speech do you hear God challenging you about today?

*Encourage the group to pray to God for help to bring their speech under his authority.*

Questions 10-12 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work on them in pairs.

\*10. **SDL** What does Paul mean when he says we were darkness and are now light? (v8)

*Note that Paul doesn't say we were IN darkness and are IN light – on this occasion we read that we WERE darkness and now ARE light! It's talking about spiritual darkness and light, the difference being the absence or presence of Christ in your life. The light of Christ shows us how dark and sinful our lives really are without him. As believers in Christ, we live in His light and reflect His glory and character to others, so we ourselves ARE light!*

\*11. **SDL** Read v8-10. What does it mean to 'live as children of light'?

*Living a life of goodness, righteousness and truth, finding out and doing what pleases the Lord – think about what this means in practice.*

\*12. **SDL** Read v12-14. How does Jesus expose our sin?

*As light makes everything visible in a dark room, Jesus shows up the sin (rebellion against God) in our lives – as we read the Bible we learn more about how he wants us to live. Alongside this, the Holy Spirit is living in us and making our conscience more sensitive to sin.*

13. Read v15-17. How can we live wisely?

*By understanding what the Lord's will is (v17), and living his way. (NB 'the Lord's will' here is his general will for his people – to live in way that brings glory to God, Eph 1 v 11-12).*

\*14. Why is getting drunk (or high or stoned) a problem? (v18)

*Because it 'leads to debauchery' – when we are drunk we are not in control of our behaviour or our words, and we are not in full control of our minds, thus we expose ourselves to sin and weaken our resistance to it.*

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How can you help yourself, and each other, to stop using mind-altering substances (including alcohol)?

*Talk about Drug Support teams in the prison, AA, etc, mutual accountability / sober companions.*

*Maybe we need to stop hanging around with people who influence us badly because we know we are too weak at the moment to resist joining in. We may reach a point where we can go back into that environment to share the gospel, but it takes a long time, and probably requires an external relationship of strong accountability before it's safe. NB 'Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness', not 'have nothing to do with unbelievers'...*

\*15. What does it mean to be 'filled with the Spirit'? (v18)

*To have the Holy Spirit inside you – this is true of every Christian believer, and happens at conversion. In this context, however, Paul is referring to being empowered by the Holy Spirit for worship, being under His influence (in comparison to being under the influence of alcohol).*

16. Read v19-20. This is not saying Christians should communicate with one another only in song! What is it saying?

*We should publicly praise and worship God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit (v18). This leads us to give thanks to God for everything.*

*As we live together in fellowship with other Christians, our conversations should build each other up in Christ.*

**\*?**

What areas of your behaviour is God challenging you about?

What needs to change?

*Encourage practical applications*

**Check out** – ask everyone how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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