



Week **8**

Wise living

Memory Verse:

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

PERSONAL STUDY

Read Ephesians 5:1-6:9

OPENING REMARKS:

A lot of people have idols, heroes they look up to that they want to be just like. They want to talk like they talk; they want to look like they look; they want to have similar hairstyles, similar fashions, similar personalities. But the problem with most of these idols is that they are spiritually corrupt. People either have incredibly low standards or they ignore the moral character and focus on outward looks or success.

As believers, we should be imitators of God. He is the one we should look up to and try to emulate. Why? Quite simply because He is perfect. He is the standard in holiness, love, kindness, righteousness, mercy, justice, etc.

We should model our lives after Christ, who lived a perfect life in this world and showed us how to respond to all kinds of problems and temptations. If we have heroes, they should be Christian heroes who modelled Christ in their

own lives. We should respect them for their character and learn from them so that we can better imitate the Lord ourselves in our lives.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

Read Ephesians 5:1-2. According to verse 2 Christ is the perfect example of imitating God by living a life of love. What would it look like to imitate God? How does the fact that Christ has done it help you in living such a life?

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Read Ephesians 5:3-4. What behaviours does Paul condemn in these verses? How is thanksgiving an appropriate replacement for these behaviours?

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Read Ephesians 5:5-7. Why will immoral, impure and greedy people be unable to inherit the kingdom? Why are such people considered to be idolaters?

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Read Ephesians 5:8-14. In these verses Paul contrasts light and darkness to explain more about holy living. According to these verses, what does it mean to “live as children of the light”? (Also refer to Galatians 5:16-26.) In what ways do you struggle to live as a child of the light?

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Read Ephesians 5:15-17. We often make the mistake to equate wisdom with intelligence. What is the difference between the two? What characterizes wise people according to these verses?

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Read Ephesians 5:18-20. In your own words, explain the characteristics of those who are filled with the Spirit.

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What are the differences between Psalms, Hymns and Songs from the Spirit?

Psalms	Hymns	Spiritual Songs

Read Ephesians 5:21-23. How does verse 21 help you to become willing to submit yourself?

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What statements in verses 22-24 sparks controversy? How will your careful reading of the whole passage help you to address these controversies?

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How can these verses help you to have a better understanding of the God-given roles of husbands and

wives? Why is the marriage bond sacred (Refer to verses 29-32).

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Read Ephesians 6:1-3. What reasons are given for obeying and honouring parents?

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Read Ephesians 6:4. How can fathers and mothers exasperate their children? Why does Paul contrast exasperating your children with bringing “them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”?

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Read Ephesians 6:5-9. How should slaves (employees) do their work?

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Closing remarks:

To be a Christians does not mean that you have a collection of abstract doctrines, it is not religion of the mind. True spirituality always reveals itself in the busyness of everyday life. If our faith does not show itself clearly in our interactions with other people, the world has every right to question the validity of our confession of faith.

This section of our study started with verse 21: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." But when people hear the word "submit" they immediately dismiss the idea as old-fashioned or outdated. No one wants to submit, because we live in an era of portraying yourself as someone great, standing up for your rights, promoting yourself, not backing down or showing weakness. It is the age of 'pride' and 'loving yourself'.

Part of the issue with this word submit or submission comes from a wrong understanding of how it is lived out. We often think of 'submission' in a dictatorial and a legalistic way. A way without love. But it is far from that. Submit means to voluntarily surrender your rights and to be willing to function under another person's leadership. Jesus taught us practically about submission. Though He

was the King of Kings, He came as a servant and taught us to do the same.

It is important to remember the following three biblical qualifications for submission:

- Submission is always conditional upon obedience to God. You do not submit to any instructions that disobey or disown Christ.
- Submission is not mindless. It does not mean that you never hold an opinion or make a point.
- Submission is not about ability or value. Men and women are both made in the image of God. To have a different role does not mean that you have lesser value. God does not love CEO's more than cleaners, or pastors more than church members.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

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Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 5:1-6:9

Discussion questions

Read Ephesians 5:1. What does it mean to be an imitator of God? Discuss in the group.

Read Ephesians 5:8-14. What is the significance of the light and darkness metaphor used by Paul? What does light do? How does Galatians 5:16-26 help you to understand these verses? Discuss.

Read Ephesians 5:15-21. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Discuss in the group.

Why was Paul so concerned that the Ephesians live wisely?

Read Ephesians 5:22-6:9 What four relationships does Paul discuss in these verses? Discuss the way submission is relevant to these relationships.

Relationship:	How is submission relevant?

Growing within our culture is a widespread rebellion against and distrust of authority. How can authority be a wise and good thing? How can it be harmful?

How does this week's passage contribute to the theme of the church glorifying God through visible unity? Discuss in the group.

Close in prayer