

06–17–2020 Ephesians 5:1–14 Bible Study

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Read Ephesians 5.1–14 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.

5:1 Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children² and live in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.³ But among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints.⁴ Neither should there be vulgar speech, foolish talk, or coarse jesting—all of which are out of character—but rather thanksgiving.⁵ For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

⁶ Let nobody deceive you with empty words, for because of these things God's wrath comes on the sons of disobedience.⁷ Therefore do not be sharers with them,⁸ for you were at one time darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live like children of light—⁹ for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.¹¹ Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.¹² For the things they do in secret are shameful even to mention.¹³ But all things being exposed by the light are made visible.¹⁴ For everything made visible is light, and for this reason it says:

“Awake, O sleeper!

Rise from the dead,

and Christ will shine on you!”

Live Wisely

COMMENTS:

The thought of God's gracious activity in Christ leads the apostle to summon his readers (dearly loved children) to be imitators of God. This is the only place in the NT where believers are called upon to imitate God.

Elsewhere, Paul asks his converts to imitate him because they are his children (1 Cor 4:14–16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9) and because he, himself, is an imitator of Christ. Here, the imitation of God is introduced within the context of forgiveness, and the apostle wants to use God's example in Christ as a pattern for personal relationships.

He is not making a distinction between imitating Jesus and imitating God since one can only know God through Jesus. Since forgiveness and love are bound together, believers are admonished to live a life of love. That love finds its example in Christ who gave himself for us.

By implication, the Christian's love is to be expressed as a self-giving sacrifice (cf. 5:25). Love is the essence of God and is to be the main feature of the believer's walk (way of life). By mentioning Christ's death, the apostle recalls words that were applicable to Jewish sacrifices—namely, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Paul also identifies what we should not imitate. We are to abstain from sexual immorality, all impurity, and greed. Also vulgar speech, foolish talk and coarse jesting. Our thought and words are to be full of thanksgiving.

God then warns of vain (empty or useless) words. The useless words and arguments bring God's wrath against us for then we are acting as children of disobedience. Therefore we should not participate with them. That was the way of the old (unregenerated) man when we lived in darkness

Now we know the Light of the World, Jesus, and he lives in us and shines through us. The fruit of the light is goodness, righteousness and truth, all which please God. Don't live in the darkness, but instead shine the light of God on it and expose its lies.

What the unregenerate do in the secret or in the dark, should not even be mentioned among us. Whenever anything is exposed to the light it becomes visible. Living in the light of Christ will make you life wisely.

REFLECTION QUESTION: It no longer uncommon to go on TV talk shows and gladly describe their adultery or other immorality. When people begin to brag about their sin, we are in deep trouble. You also find many instances of it on the internet. Criminals have even been caught because of the information they posted about themselves on the web. Do you secretly have pride in your heart about some of the things you have done wrong and didn't get caught?