



Life Group Notes: Tuesday 2nd October 2018

Godly living - A Review of Ephesians 5:1-2 & 8-14

READ EPH 5:1-14 (NKJV)

1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma...

Walk in Light

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

INTRODUCTION:

Paul is thought to have written this letter to the Church of Ephesus from a prison cell in Rome. Awaiting trials, Paul wants to deal with some severe issues affecting the Church of Jesus Christ and immediately points his readers to the need for godly living and holiness.

As we read Ephesians 5, we take our focus on scripture from v1-v2 to understand what it means to live godly lives, why it is important to do and also and how to achieve this consistently.

He opens up with the plea that we "Be imitators of God" All Christians should be followers of God and there is no compromise that can justify diluting our obedience as God wants us to be like Him.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

1) Who does Paul address in this book (i.e. Christians or unbelievers) and what evidence would suggest this?

- Paul speaks to believers, those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- Evidence can be seen via the use of “dear children” which denotes affection toward those who are of the family of God.

2) What is the basis of the exhortation from Paul? In other words, what do the “Therefore” in v.1 refers to?

- The “therefore” refers to God’s example of forgiveness as in Chap 4, v32 which means that the verse 1 should be read as “God in Jesus Christ has forgiven us our sins. Now we need to imitate him and forgive one another”. Such action will show we are the children of God.
- Note: Forgiveness is an integral part of love. He (or She) who loves not is unable to forgive as “Love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet 4:8).

3) Why is Paul stressing out the importance of being imitators of God?

- By reminding us that we are the children of God, Paul implicitly asks believers to demonstrate that they are of the family of God.
- In the spiritual, this is necessary as imitating God will help us exhibit the attributes of our heavenly Father to the world, the same way children would in the natural sense, be expected to uphold the family name or demonstrate the family traits.
- Furthermore, it is consistent with the instructions from God to His children so they can:
 - a) **be like Him in holiness** “Be Holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet 1:16),
 - b) **display similarities in character** “But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect” (Matt 5:48)
 - c) **demonstrate the mind of Christ** “Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Christ” (Phil 2:5 ESV)
 - d) **mirror God’s conduct as to evidence Christ in us** “Whoever abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked “ (1 John 2:6 ESV)

4) Can you think of any potential consequences of NOT imitating God?

- “Being imitator of God” implicitly helps believers to avoid mirroring the attributes and character of the world and avoid conformity with it “Do not be conformed to this world...” (Rom12:12a).

5) How realistic is “imitating” God and do you read this instruction from Paul as “mission impossible”? Please, discuss.

- It is possible to imitate God indeed. Many of the attributes of God can be conformed to (John 14:15 “For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son”
 - a) Christ said “What I have done you can do also” John 14:12
 - b) However, there we can only imitate God by the enablement from His Holy Spirit 'Not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit. (Zech 4:6).
- Overall, we should aim at imitating many of the attributes of God so that we can be conformed to Christ. (John 14:15 “For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son”)
- By putting on the Lord Jesus, it is easier to imitate Him. (Rom 13:14 “But put on the Lord Jesus...). At the same time, we also need to die to self which could be described as an offering or a sacrifice to Christ showing we are completely devoted to the Will of God (Not my will, but yours be done)
- However, the Love of God is equally important. Without the Love of our God, we face an impossible task as we cannot imitate Him and give ourselves to others, the same way Christ gave Himself for us.

6) What axes for success is Paul presenting in v8-14? Discuss each.

- **Not walk in darkness, walk as children of the light (v8)** – Through union with Jesus Christ (Him abiding in us and us in Him), we become light and can shine in the darkness like He did. (Remember that Jesus came as Light of the World (John 9:5 “*but while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world*”) and the darkness could not comprehend Him (John 1:5 “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot comprehend it”).
- **Bear spiritual fruits (v9)** - Please, refer to Gal 5:22 for the fruits of the Spirit. Bearing those fruits with consistency.
- **Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord (v10)** – Those who walk in the light do not just produce fruits but also test to ensure whatever they do, think or say is acceptable to God. They put those to the test and seek to clarify from scripture, study, prayer whether it's acceptable to the Lord.
- **Practical test(s):**
- Does the way I dress glorify God? (Being well dress vs fashion)

- Does the way I speak glorify God? (foul vocabulary, swear words...etc)
- Do my eating and drinking habits please God?
- Is my behaviour acceptable to God? (What is my giving like, what is my service like...)
- Are my habits acceptable to God? (Sometimes or often knowing what the right thing to do is and yet failing to do it = sin ; James 4:17)
- Do I regularly confess my sin(s) to God and repent? (1 John 1:9)

- **Notes:**
 - a) Please, note that Godly living cannot be defined or baselined against the worldly standards of doing things.
 - b) Not going against God's standards is not a justification to our actions and habits in that they can still offend our spouse, children, brothers or sisters in Christ.(Rom 14)
 - c) We will all give an account of ourselves to God (Rom 14:12)

- **No fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (i.e. Sin). No trade off!! (v11) – No flirting with, justification or acceptance of sin as sin needs to be exposed for what it is. A believer should never compromise on sin.**

CLOSING & PRAYER

Please, meditate on v15-17 of Ephesians Chapter 5 for a few minutes

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is.