

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"Imitators of God" (1)

Ephesians 5:1

Jan 10, 1982

INTRODUCTION

1. The life of the believer is to be distinguished from Gentiles (4:17-19). Indeed, a child of God has learned differently (4:20-21).
2. Key items in the new life in Christ include "putting off, being renewed, putting on" (4:22-24). Specifics in this are provided (4:25-32). The only way to accomplish this is by the spirit of God (4:30).
3. Failure to live up to par, the believer will "grieve the Spirit." This is the same Holy Spirit by which the believer is "sealed" (cf. 1:13, 14; 26 or 1:22) until the "Day of Redemption."
4. This naturally leads to the exhortations of this chapter to walk in harmony with our position.

1. BECOME FOLLOWERS OF GOD v. 1

a. Process

The verb "be" is "become." Being the present middle imperative, it exhorts to consistency and progress (cf. 4:32). There is change expected (cf. John 1:14).

b. Practise

"Followers" is the word for "imitate" and can be rendered "mimic," hence calls believers to act like God (cf. 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; Heb. 6:12).

c. Pattern

This is the key. "Children" notes our "new birth." "Dear" notes we are "beloved." To mimic God is to give evidence of being an object of His love.

2. BECOME WALKERS IN LOVE v. 2.

a. Command

The verb "walk" is a present imperative. Constancy is the concern. In this walk are items already mentioned: 1) Forgiveness (4:32) and 2) imitation (5:1).

b. Sacrifice

Walking in love will involve the pattern of our Lord. We are to love as He loved. Such love is sacrificial (cf. v. 25; John 15:13; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 3:16). His death was both substitutionary and

beneficial "for us." It was self-denying.

c. Devotion

Christ's sacrifice was also "to God." This brings out the God-gratifying aspect of His death. It was thus satisfying to God (cf. Lev. 1-5; Phil. 4:18).

3. BECOME REJECTORS OF IMPURITY vv. 3-6.

a. Appeal

The verb "named" in the negative suggests total and utter rejection. The reason is given: 1) It does not "become" saints (v. 3) and 2) it does not "befitting" for saints. The former has idea of "resemble" and the latter "come up to." God's call is for a clear break with the past (4:17-19).

b. Account

Items listed as inconsistent with Christian purity include: 1) Fornication here is a term with probable reference to premarital sex. Prostitution is related. The English "pornography" is rooted here. 2) Uncleanness. Context suggests bodily all cleanness of whatever sort. 3) Covetousness. Linked with uncleanness, it means sensual greed. 4) Filthiness. This is not merely obscenity, but what excites disgust, physical or moral. 5) Foolish talking. This refers to frivolous and senseless talk. 6) Jesting. Reference here is to flippancy and scurrility.

c. Concern

1) Thanks The opposite to all the useless talk listed is thanksgiving.

2) Knowledge The three evils previously noted (v. 3) are repeated. The Greek construction here also underscores the knowledge assumed. Only the covetous man is the idolator (cf. Col. 3:5). Those who practice the evils mentioned have no claim on eternity (cf. Gal. 5:21). Christ's deity is affirmed by His link with the Father.

3) Deceit In every age there are those who down play the sins listed. God warns here that such are "empty words." They have no truth, but are false. God's wrath will come on those who disobey His obvious truth (cf. 2:2; John 3:36).

CONCLUSION To those who profess salvation, a life consistent with that profession is expected. To be saved means to be an imitator of God. Amen.