



# EPHESIANS

## 16. THE IMITATION GAME EPHESIANS 5:1-2

Paul will teach us in Ephesians how to work, communicate, speak honestly, and labor well. He talks about relationships, bitterness, and forgiveness. What makes Christianity different from other religions is our motivation. Christian life flows out of a new understanding of who we are in Christ. We can't live the Christian lifestyle *externally* unless we have put on the new self. This "new self" is given to us as a new identity once we are adopted into the family of God through salvation. The Holy Spirit changes us by changing our *heart* so that it begins to want what God wants.

- **What does putting on the "new self" mean?**
- **How has the Holy Spirit changed your own heart?**

Today Paul moves us to see our motivation...*Eph 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God!* Our behaviors flow out of the Holy Spirit's work in our heart—we are transformed internally, which naturally affects our external actions. This is the opposite of what is called moralism: emphasizing external obedience more than internal disposition. Paul gives us reasons for how we should be living, not to earn God's favor, but in response to the Gospel.

- **Why do you want to honor God?**
- **What motivates most of what you do in your life?**
- **Why is looking at motivation even important?**

Read Ephesians 5:1-2.

### 1. As loved children of God, we imitate our dad.

Imitate means act like; it is where our English word *mimic* comes from. Christianity is like a work of art that God is doing in us. We are following the master painter in our own painting and it doesn't make sense without the Gospel. We *must* be imitators of the master and say, "I want to be like Him... paint like Him." We don't imitate God to *become* His children, *but because we are His children.*

### 2. We live lives of love and sacrifice for others because that's what Jesus did for us.

## DISCUSSION NOTES

We live as a response to the Gospel. We show it by forgiving others, serving others, loving our community, meeting their needs, using our time and resources, and telling others about Jesus. Tim Keller wrote, "A life poured out in deeds of mercy is the inevitable sign of a life which has experienced the grace of God." We are a people who are built by and for God's love.

- **How do you imitate God in your own life?**
- **In what ways would you like to grow in imitating Him better?**
- **How are you currently sacrificing for others?**

**Gospel change is fundamentally a change of desire** – We begin to live in truth, because the Holy Spirit leads us to love the truth. The Gospel motivates differently; it creates in our hearts a love of truth.

- **How is Gospel change different from legalism or moralism?**

**Gospel change begins with God.** The Gospel is the good news of God's story, which has been unfolding since the beginning of time! We rely on the Holy Spirit to grow deeper with God as we understand it, and He will see us to the end. The implications of the Gospel, being revealed to us more and more through the Holy Spirit, gives us eyes to see the beauty of God that we would never see on our own.

- **How is the Gospel changing how you see the world around you?**

**Gospel change is a response to grace and not an attempt to earn God's favor.** The Spirit changes us by telling us of God's love and acceptance of us first, and then invites us to love Him in return.

**Gospel change is intimately connected to the Trinity.**

**Gospel change is more than religious change.** The Spirit produces deeper, more genuine, sacrificial love, than simply resolving to "do better" the next time you fail.

**Gospel change is total;** it affects our entire life.

- **How has the Gospel affected your entire life?**
- **As a community, pray together, asking the Holy Spirit to continually transform your heart and change your desires. Thank Him that we have assurance that is taking place!**