

WALK WHOLLY LIKE CHRIST

Lesson Aim: To learn how to walk like Jesus Christ and be true followers of God.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the questions below where they fit your lesson for class discussion.

Introduction: Christians need to be followers of God as His dear children, imitating the life of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. This chapter will show us three ways we are to walk like His Son: walk in love (5:1-7); walk in holiness (5:8-14); walk in wisdom (5:15-33). "Be . . . followers of God, as dear children" (Eph 5:1) and "Walk even as He (Jesus) walked" (1 Jn 2:6).

How can a believer be an imitator (follower in KJV) of God? 5:1

Imitator (or follower) is the Greek word from which we get "mimic." Believers are to imitate God as they follow Him. It is like a child that imitates a father or mother. A child watches what parents do and hears what they say, then imitates them. That is how a child learns to walk and talk. A believer needs to read the Gospels to learn how Jesus walked and talked, because He came to reveal exactly what God, His Father, would do and say. Then he should imitate Jesus to be like God.

What kind of love are Christians to imitate? 5:2-7

There are two kinds of love in the Bible. There is the love from the mind that is determined to love the recipients, whether they deserve it or not. God loved (*agapao*) the world and sent His Son to die for the sins of His enemies (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8). Then there is the love from the heart that moves one to love a family member or a friend. The Father loves (*phileo*) the Son and shows Him all things that He does (Jn 5:20). Finally, there is a love from the flesh that serves to bless oneself. It is an erotic love not named in Scripture, but the fruit of it is named in this passage (5:3-6). The world delights in immoral sexual love and entices others to join them in it, but believers are warned of the wrath of God that will come on such people and are told not to partake of such love (5:7). Walk in the love that sacrifices for the good of others. Love God and your fellow man in this way.

Who are those that will forfeit their inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God? 5:5

Paul names three groups of people that will not be in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Who are these people? First, the ones who are sexually immoral will not be in the Kingdom of Christ. They may profess to be saved, but Jesus does not save people and leave them in their sins; He saves people and delivers them from their sins. If a person defends his or her immoral sexual behavior, he may enjoy it for now, but will suffer in Hell forever. Second, the ones who are unclean will not enter Christ's Kingdom. They are unclean in their hearts and will express it in their words. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). A person with an unclean heart needs to repent and be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Third, the ones who are covetous are idolaters and will have no part in Christ's Kingdom. They love the things in this world, which are their idols. In this context, they crave sexual sins. Christ will not let them into His Kingdom.

What are the responsibilities of a Christian? 5:8-14

The responsibilities of the Christian are fourfold. First, he is to walk in holiness as a child of light (5:8; cf. 1 Pet 1:15, 16). Second, he is to produce the fruit of holiness: goodness, righteousness and truth (5:9). Third, he is to test ("prove") everything he allows in his life according to holiness, so that he can be well-pleasing ("acceptable") to the Lord (5:10). Fourth, he is to reprove the works of darkness (5:11-13) with the intent of converting the sinner through the light of Jesus Christ (5:14). Believers must walk in the holiness of God and depart from the wickedness of the world. Walk as children of light and have no fellowship with the works of darkness. The children of disobedience will suffer the wrath of God, but the children of light will win the favor of God.

How are Christians to walk wisely? 5:15-33

They are to walk alertly ("circumspectly"), watching carefully that their enemies (the world, the flesh and the devil) do not draw them into sin — 5:15; cf. 2:1-3.

They are to walk efficiently, buying up opportunities as they present themselves — 5:16. They redeem the time that God gives to them.

They are to walk perceptively, understanding the will of the Lord. They love the will of God and seek it in the Word of God through the help of the Holy Spirit of God — 5:17; Ps 119:9, 11; Prov 3:5, 6; Isa 8:20; Rom 12:1, 2; Phil 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17.

They are to walk under the control of the Holy Spirit, not alcoholic beverages — 5:18-21. They confess all known sin (Prov 28:13; 1 Jn 1:9). They yield their bodies and all its members to God (Rom 6:13). When they yield themselves to the control of the Spirit, three marvelous changes manifest themselves in their lives: joy (5:19), thankfulness (5:20) and submission (5:21). (Submission is expanded in the verses that follow - 5:22-6:9.)

They are to walk submissively in the home, each responding to the authority and needs of the other members of the family and the work place — 5:22-6:9. The wife is commanded to submit to her husband, even as the church submits to the leadership of Christ (5:22-24). The husband submits to the needs of his wife and loves her with self-sacrificing love. Two standards are given to him to measure his love. First, he is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (5:25-27). Second, he is to love her as he loves his own body (5:28-30). Truly she is his body because he is one flesh with her (5:31-33). His union to her is illustrative of Christ's union to the church; therefore, it should behoove him to keep that union permanent by strong cords of love. To walk in submission and self-sacrificing love is the mark of wisdom that will preserve the marriage of every Christian couple. To sum up the Christians' walk in wisdom, they are to be alert to spiritual danger, redeeming the time, understanding the will of the Lord and yielding themselves to the control of the Holy Spirit. Walking in this wisdom will prove to be invaluable in their spiritual walk.