

The Church ... a *Master Planned Community*
Storm Warning... Justice in a Master Planned Community (Eph.5:3-20)
Small Group Study Questions for the week of April 19-25

Getting Started

Do you think we live in an imitative culture or not? On the one hand, there is the constant refrain to “be yourself” while on the other are constant examples of people whom the culture admires (celebrities, sports stars, business successes). Can you think of anyone who acts as a role model to be an imitator of God? What sort of example do most people seem to imitate?

Digging Deep

Read through Ephesians 5:3-20 together as a group. If these verses contained the only available information you had about Jesus, what would you know?

1. Read the verses aloud and notice every time Paul uses a word like “but” or “instead”; pick one or two of these below. Ask some of these questions: What characterizes each side of the “but/instead”? What motivates a person to be one or the other according to the verses here? What are the effects of following after the behaviors on either side of the “but”?
 - a. Be imitators of God...but among you there must not be even a hint.... (5:1-3)
 - b. Nor should there be obscenity...but rather thanksgiving. (5:4)
 - c. For you were once darkness but now you are light (5:8)
 - d. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them (5:11)
 - e. Be careful, then, how you live – not as unwise, but as wise (5:15-16)
 - f. Do not get drunk on wine...instead, be filled with the Spirit (5:18)
2. Paul recommends that we “understand what the Lord’s will is”; what, according to this passage, is the Lord’s will? (v.17)
3. Is there a conflict between “have nothing to do” and “shameful to even mention” (vs 11-12) with “expose them”? What is Paul actually calling us to do in this section?
4. Similarly, what does Paul mean by “do not be partners with them?” Christians historically have interpreted passages like this in many ways; how do you see this recommendation modeled in the life of Jesus?
5. Why do you think Paul does not go into any detail about what constitutes “impurity” or “immorality” or “greed” (this would certainly clear up a lot of modern disputes!)? Do you see the desire to precisely define what is right and wrong as a good impulse or not? Why?

A Matter of Prayer

6. Since you became a follower of Christ, what sorts of changes have you seen that Paul expects in this passage? What about changes in others who have been following Jesus? Take a minute to thank God for these changes.

Next Week: Ephesians 5:21-24