

Community Group Discussion Guide

Theme: Imitating God Together

Main Idea: The way we treat one another — forgiveness, holiness, gratitude — is our most powerful witness.

Opening Question (Icebreaker)

- Who is someone you've spent so much time with that you started picking up their habits, phrases, or humor?
- What does that tell us about how imitation works?

Transition: Paul says we imitate God the same way — by proximity and relationship.

Read Scripture

Ephesians 5:1-14

Optional supporting texts:

- John 5:19
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
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Observation Questions (What do we see?)

1. What connection do you notice between **forgiveness at the end of chapter 4** and **imitating God in chapter 5**?
 2. According to these verses, what does it practically look like to imitate God?
 3. Why do you think Paul emphasizes identity (“children,” “light,” “new creation”) before behavior?
 4. What stands out about Paul telling believers to be **thankful** in the middle of warnings about sin?
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Interpretation Questions (What does it mean?)

1. Why is forgiveness central to Christian community rather than optional?
2. How does remembering we are **new creation people** change the way we fight sin?
3. In what ways can our speech reveal what's happening internally?
4. Why might Paul focus on the church's internal life rather than telling believers to fix the outside world?

Key idea to surface: **Community is apologetics.**

Application Questions (What do we do?)

Personal Reflection

- Is there someone I need to forgive in order to imitate God?
- What patterns in my speech need to shift toward gratitude?
- Where am I living from old identity instead of new creation?

Community Reflection

- Does our group feel like a place where people can be honest about struggles?
- How do we currently practice forgiveness with one another?
- What would it look like for gratitude to shape our gatherings?

Missional Reflection

- If someone watched how we treat each other for a month, what would they conclude about Jesus?
 - What is one counter-cultural practice we could intentionally live out together?
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Group Practice (5 minutes)

Choose one:

Option A — Gratitude Round

Each person shares one way they see God working in someone else in the group.

Option B — Prayer of Release

Invite members (silently or verbally) to name someone they need to forgive and pray to release that person to God.

Prayer Focus

- Ask God to make your group a visible expression of the gospel.
- Pray for courage to forgive.
- Pray that gratitude would replace negativity.
- Pray that hidden things would be brought into light with grace.