

IMITATORS OF GOD
BE FOLLOWERS OF GOD – PART 1 OF 3
EPHESIANS 5:1

BE FOLLOWERS OF GOD!

1. We must never forget that in all our thinking, all our conduct, practice of Scripture, and behavior we cannot be anything else but “**followers** of God” (Eph. 5:1).
2. Christians are a **forgiven** people who are to **practice** forgiveness toward everyone (Eph. 4:30-31).
3. The better translation of “follower” is really “imitator” or even “**mimic**” (Eph. 5:1).
4. Christians can learn about the being and nature of God by becoming familiar with the **Lord Jesus Christ** (John 1:1, 14).

KEY THOUGHT: The Apostle Paul challenged believers to follow his **example** as he **followed Christ** (1 Cor. 11:1).

I. MORE THAN GOOD PEOPLE (EPH. 5:1)

A. **Why** are Christians to be imitators of God (Eph. 1:3-5)?

1. We are children of God **adopted** into His **household** (Eph. 2:19).
2. There is a significant difference between Christianity and mere **morality**.
3. Therefore, because we are **children** of God, we are to **imitate** our Father in what we do and refrain from doing (John 4:34; Mark 10:45).

- B. A Christian is a **child** of God (Eph. 5:1).
1. Christians are not merely **believers** of a particular body of doctrine.
 2. Christians are more than forgiven; we are **transformed**.
 3. There is more than a **rebirth** for a Christian due to the putting on of a “**new man**” (Eph. 4:24).

KEY THOUGHT: God’s interest in His children is not mechanical or passive; His interest is **greater** than the **noblest** of parents (Eph. 5:1).

II. **LIVE TO PLEASE GOD (EPH. 5:1)**

- A. The “**honor**” of the family is in my **hands** (John 13:34-35).
1. My **conduct** as a Christian should **honor** my Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16).
 2. As a child of God, I am a **representative** of the family and as such should be thinking about the family **more than** myself (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12).
- B. The quality of my thinking sets the stage for my **behavior** (1 John 4:7-11).
1. My focus is clear and concise. I am to **love God** with all my being and love “my **neighbor**” (Matt. 22:36-40).
 2. My conduct and conversation is a **product** of my commitment to **loving** God (Matt. 5:48; Eph. 4:30-31).

KEY THOUGHT: Christianity is **dying** to **self** and **living** for **Christ** (John 15:12-14).

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

January 15, 2012

SUNDAY: **We will not get out of this life alive (Eph. 5:1)!** This life is short, and then there is eternity. Live well while we are here on earth, but never forget as Christians to “be followers of God”! We must never forget that in all our thinking, all our conduct, practice of scripture, and general behavior we cannot be anything else but “followers of God” (Eph. 5:1). What does that exactly mean? For example, Christians are a forgiven people who are to practice forgiveness toward everyone (Eph. 4:30-31). It means that we really follow the teaching and instruction of God. The better translation of “follower” is really “imitator” or even “mimic” (Eph. 5:1). Fortunately, Christians can learn about the being and nature of God by being familiar with the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1, 14). Stop in your prayer time and contemplate the vastness of your Great God (Ps. 8). Praise your God for His love and mercy that resulted in your salvation. ***May the realization of who He is become more real and consuming each day this week!***

MONDAY: **Find an example that will help you imitate God (1 Cor. 11:1)!** Faith demands that we accept that which is unseen as the reality of our lives (Heb. 11:1-2). Following God whom we have never seen is not easy in the early stages of our faith life. That is why the Apostle Paul said, “Follow me as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Though human examples will never be perfect, there is some value in following the example of someone you can see. Imitate God in the areas of their life that are worthy to be emulated. In NASCAR racing, fuel and energy can be saved by one car slipping in behind another and following in their slipstream. This practice is called “drafting”. It allows the trailing car to avoid bucking the wind and provides a relatively calm experience sitting in a buffered zone directly behind the forward car. Fuel is saved because the drafting car’s engine is working less diligently. There can even be opportunities to “slingshot” out from behind the lead car to gain a speed advantage coming out of a turn on the straight-away. The practice of “spiritual drafting” is called discipleship. Find someone to “draft” and grow quicker as a follower of God. Pray for wisdom in whom to seek to disciple you in the faith. ***May the decision to be discipled be one in which you follow through!***

TUESDAY: **Christian living is far more than being good (John 4:34)!** The vast majority of Christians encountered are content with being “solid citizens” . . . of this world. The concern for us is if we are really being good citizens of heaven while we are on earth . . . that is the lifestyle of a Christian. Why are Christians to be imitators of God (Eph. 1:3-5)! First, Christians are the children of God, adopted into His household (Eph. 2:19). Our personal behavior reflects on the honor of the family name. There is a significant difference between Christianity and mere morality. We are children of the God of heaven and earth! Our God is worth imitating. Therefore, because we are children of God, we are to imitate our Father in what we do and what we refrain from doing (John 4:34; Mark 10:45). What are you living for? What is your supreme purpose for living your life? Pray for clarity about what it means to live for God. Ask for conviction to live as a follower of God. ***What is Jesus worth to you?***

WEDNESDAY: **Christians are transformed, not just improved (Eph.4:24)!** A Christian is a child of God (Eph. 5:1). Christians are adopted into the family of the Almighty God. Christians are not merely believers of a particular body of beliefs or doctrine. Christians are forgiven of

their sins and the penalty of them. However, Christians are more than forgiven; they are transformed. There is to be more than a spiritual rebirth, there is to be the putting on of a “new man” (Eph. 4:24). This new man is far more than just a better version of who the person was before becoming a Christian! Ask God if you are the person He wants you to be. Seek the conviction of the Holy Spirit to help you surrender the areas of your life where you are being selfish and rebellious. ***May your openness before God bring honor to His name in the areas where you are currently dishonoring Him!***

THURSDAY: ***Live to make a difference (Matt. 5:16; Eph. 4:1)!*** Live to please God (Eph. 5:1)! As a Christian, you are a member of the family of God. The honor of the family is in your hands (John 13:34-35). Our Father expects us to care more about the other member of our family and even those outside our family than ourselves. My conduct as a family member (Christian) should honor my Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). As a child of God, I am a representative of the family and as such should be thinking about the family more than myself (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:16). Is your Christian life about service, or being served? Do you begin each analysis of what you should do as a Christian by thinking “what’s in it for me?” When are you going to grow up and start thinking more about the family than yourself? Ask the Father to forgive your selfish, consumer-minded living that is an embarrassment to Him. Repent of self-centered thinking and seek the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit to live to please your God. ***What is Jesus really worth to you?***

FRIDAY: ***My mind sets my behavior (Rom. 12:2)!*** Stop thinking like someone who is a citizen of this world! You are a citizen of heaven (Phil 3:20). Therefore, start thinking with the transformed mind that was given to you at the moment of your adoption into the family of God (Rom. 12:2). Remember, the quality of your thinking sets the stage of your behavior (1 John 4:7-11). My focus is clear and concise. I am to love God with all my heart and also love “my neighbor” (Matt. 22:36-40). This next statement can be very convicting. Your conduct and conversation is a product of your commitment to loving and following God (Matt. 5:48; Eph. 4:30-31). Is your mind filled with spiritual things? Do you think about how to please God constantly throughout your day? Do you act upon the impulses the Holy Spirit prods you with to honor God, or do you push them aside with counterfeit promises that you will do it later? Tell God you are done playing games. Profess your love for God and commit to follow Him. Stop playing mind games and doing theological gymnastics, and start serving God for His honor and glory. ***May you become an imitation of the Lord’s choice servants who have preceded you on earth!***

SATURDAY: ***Christianity is dying to self and living for Christ (John 15:12-14)!*** Are you dead to self? This was the question that Jesus was asking the rich young ruler (Mark 10:20-22). The realization was that this young man enjoyed being a citizen of earth way too much to surrender his life completely. Remember, Christianity is dying to self and living for God (John 15:12-14). Dying most of the time means to live to please God by placing Him first and others before you. Ask the Lord to do a heart check-up. Ask God to reveal whatever has taken up first place in your life before living to please Him. ***What is Jesus worth to you?***