

Ephesians 5:1–2

Imitating God Through Forgiving Love

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

The word *therefore* points us back to the closing command of the previous chapter: “*forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*” God Himself becomes the model for our behavior. We are called to imitate Him—not as distant servants, but as dear children who reflect their Father’s character.

Forgiveness is not optional in the Christian life. It is essential to spiritual health. Unforgiveness poisons the heart, clouds judgment, and destroys peace. Jesus emphasized forgiveness more than any other request in the model prayer, warning that a refusal to forgive others disrupts our fellowship with the Father.

We are commanded to walk in love, and Jesus Christ is the supreme example of that love. His love was sacrificial. He gave Himself for us, shedding His blood on the cross as an acceptable sacrifice to God. The resurrection declares that this sacrifice was sufficient and that Jesus is God, Savior, and Lord.

Ephesians 5:3–7

Love Contrasted With Self-Indulgence

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints.”

Paul now contrasts true love with counterfeit love. The world often labels sexual immorality as love, but Scripture exposes it as self-centered lust. Fornication, impurity, and covetousness are fundamentally unloving because they seek personal gratification at another’s expense.

True love protects others; lust exploits them.

Filthy speech, foolish talk, and coarse joking are also condemned because they plant corruption rather than encouragement. Words shape hearts. What believers speak should build up, not defile.

Paul warns clearly: those who persist in sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness demonstrate a life ruled by idolatry, not by Christ. No one should be deceived into thinking that God overlooks these things. They invite judgment if they remain uncovered by repentance and the cleansing blood of Christ.

Ephesians 5:8–14

Living as Children of Light

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

Paul does not say believers were merely *in* darkness—they were darkness. But through Christ, their identity has been completely transformed. They are now light, called to live accordingly.

Light and darkness cannot coexist. Fellowship with God requires walking in the light, where truth is revealed and sin is exposed and cleansed. Believers are not called to participate in darkness, but to expose it by living lives shaped by goodness, righteousness, and truth.

The gospel call rings out clearly:

“Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

This is both a call to believers who have grown dull and a summons to unbelievers who remain spiritually dead.

Ephesians 5:15–17

Walking Wisely and Purposefully

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

The Christian life demands intentional living. Time is precious and easily wasted. To redeem the time is to live with eternal priorities in view, asking continually, “*What is the will of the Lord?*”

God created each person with purpose. Life is not accidental. Wisdom is found in seeking God’s plan rather than drifting through life guided by impulse or habit.

Ephesians 5:18–21

Being Filled With the Spirit

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”

Paul contrasts false substitutes for fulfillment with the true source of satisfaction. People turn to alcohol and other escapes because of an inner emptiness. Only the Spirit of God can fill that void.

The command to be filled with the Spirit describes a continual dependence on God’s presence and power. A Spirit-filled life overflows in worship, gratitude, and mutual submission. Thanksgiving flows naturally from trust in God’s wisdom and love, even when circumstances are difficult.

Ephesians 5:22–33

Christ and the Pattern for Marriage

Paul now applies Spirit-filled living to the home. Marriage becomes a living illustration of Christ’s relationship with the church.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

Submission and love are not competing commands; they are complementary expressions of mutual devotion. God gives each spouse one primary responsibility:

- The wife is called to respect and willingly support her husband’s leadership.
- The husband is commanded to love his wife sacrificially, faithfully, and selflessly.

Christ sets the standard. He loved the church and gave Himself for her. Love that gives security produces trust. Trust encourages cooperation. When these commands are ignored, marriages fracture; when they are obeyed, marriages flourish.

Paul concludes by reminding us that marriage ultimately points beyond itself—to the mystery of Christ and the church. As Christ nourishes, cherishes, and sanctifies His people, so husbands and wives are called to reflect that same grace-filled relationship.

Practical Application

- Examine whether your walk reflects Christlike love or self-centered desire.
- Guard your words, knowing they shape hearts and honor God.
- Seek daily to be filled with the Spirit rather than relying on substitutes for satisfaction.

A Challenge for Believers

Do not settle for a superficial Christian life. Walk in love. Walk in light. Walk wisely. Let your relationships—especially in the home—reflect the sacrificial love of Christ, who gave Himself for you.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

This life of forgiveness, light, and love begins with Jesus Christ. He shed His blood on the cross for your sins. God raised Him from the dead, declaring Him to be God, Savior, and Lord.

If you will repent, believe, and surrender your life to Him, He will forgive you, give you new life, and bring you out of darkness into light.

Today can be the day you begin to walk in the love God designed for you.