

# Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

## Glorious Church: A Church Imitating God (Ephesians 5:1–21)

### Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Can you do an imitation of something? If so, demonstrate. If not, do you have a favorite imitation or impression you’ve seen or heard someone do?
- Tell us about the best boss you ever had.
- What is the darkest place you have visited? What was it like?

### Dig

After reading Ephesians 5:1–21 together, discuss these questions.

1. Verses 1–2 summarize the main idea of the entire text. How are “imitating God” and “walk[ing] in love, as Christ loved us” similar or related ideas? What do you notice later in the text that you can identify as imitating God or walking in love?
2. Verse 3 brings together “sexual immorality” and “impurity” (also a word for immoral sexual activity) with “covetousness” or “greed.” What do you think these have in common? How are they opposed to imitating God or walking in love?
3. Verse 5 adds “idolatry” to immorality and covetousness/greed, and verse 6 adds deceit with empty words. Again, how are all these alike and opposed to God and God’s kingdom or reign (also verse 5), and walking in love?
4. Verses 7 to 14 made a contrast with light and darkness. Note verse 14 especially: this may be from an early Christian hymn sung at baptisms. How is baptism a reminder of new life in Christ that means we “rise from the dead”? How does it remind us of our new pattern of behavior?
5. Verses 18 to 21 focus on what controls us and how we express what controls us. What is the main contrast here? What is the emphasis here about a life under the control of the Holy Spirit?

*Summary: Like “walk in a manner worthy” (4:1) and “put on the new self” (4:24), “be imitators of God” grounds our daily lives in the supreme reality of who God is and what he has done for us in Christ, who supremely shows us who God is. The gospel, empowered by the Holy Spirit, reorients our minds and hearts away from selfish grasping and toward loving generosity. With Christ as king, we love and serve others as he loved and served us.*

### Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- What characteristic of God as revealed in Christ most impresses you (or maybe makes the top five; the choice can be hard)? How does that impact how you see yourself, your priorities, your actions?
- What is something that you notice people who don’t know Christ taking for granted about their lives that you find incompatible with your life as a Christ follower? What do you think makes the difference in their perspective and yours?

- Near the end of our text Paul talks about singing as something that builds one another up in our faith. Is there a song that is especially encouraging or challenging for you? Tell us about it. You don't have to sing it!

## Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- If you feel the need for light to shine in a dark area of your life, share it as you are comfortable doing so, and we will pray with you about it.
- What are some old models or patterns that God is changing in your life for which we can give thanks and ask for God's ongoing power to change?