

MESSAGE SUMMARY

You are called to imitate God by walking in love the same way Jesus did with sacrifice, purity, and truth. In a world that defines love by feelings and self-gratification, Scripture teaches you that real love is a pattern you practice daily. Paul reminds you that your identity in Christ (Ephesians 1–3) should shape your actions (Ephesians 4–6). This means turning away from distorted desires like sexual immorality, impurity, and greed, which destroy true love. As you follow Jesus, your life should show transformation, not perfection, as you walk in truth and reject deception.

MAIN POINTS

- 1. Walk Toward Sacrifice (Ephesians 5:1–2)** *“Be imitators of God... walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.”* You are called to imitate God like a child imitates a parent. Jesus defines love through sacrifice, not self-gratification. Biblical love asks, “What can I give?” not “What can I get?” (John 13:34–35; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16).
- 2. Walk Away from Distorted Desires (Ephesians 5:3–5)** *“Sexual immorality... impurity... covetousness must not even be named among you.”* Sin distorts God’s design for love and relationships. Sexual sin, impurity, and greed pull you away from Christ. It’s not about perfection; it’s about direction. A transformed life reflects a changed heart, which is the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:18–20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:5–10; Hebrews 13:4).
- 3. Walk in Truth (Ephesians 5:6–7)** *“Let no one deceive you with empty words...”* Sin always comes with deception and false promises. God’s truth confronts what culture celebrates. You cannot walk with Jesus and walk in sin at the same time. Holiness requires intentional steps, not passive drifting (John 8:31–32; Romans 12:2; 1 John 1:6–7).

Big Idea: Love is not a feeling you follow—it’s a pattern you practice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What does it mean to “imitate God” in your daily life? (Ephesians 5:1)** *Possible Answer:* It means reflecting God’s character especially His love, holiness, and truth in your actions and attitudes. You imitate Him by following Jesus’ example of sacrificial love (1 John 2:6).
- 2. Why does Paul connect sinful behaviors with having “no inheritance in the kingdom”? (Ephesians 5:5)** *Possible Answer:* Persistent, unrepentant sin reveals a heart not transformed by the gospel. True salvation produces a changed life, even though growth takes time, grace and truth (Galatians 5:19–21).
- 3. Where in your life are you tempted to treat love as a feeling instead of a practice? Possible Answer:** You may rely on emotions in relationships instead of choosing patience, sacrifice, and commitment. Jesus calls you to act in love even when you don’t feel like it (1 Corinthians 13:4–7). Emotions do not always validate truth or what should be the right response.
- 4. What distorted desires do you need to walk away from right now? Possible Answer:** This could include lust, greed, unhealthy relationships, or compromising habits. Turning away means confessing sin and choosing a new direction with God’s help (2 Timothy 2:22).
- 5. What is one practical step you can take this week to walk in truth instead of deception? Possible Answer:** You might set boundaries, seek accountability, or replace lies with Scripture. Growth happens when you intentionally choose truth daily (James 1:22).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The call to walk in love is rooted in the gospel. Jesus Christ perfectly demonstrated love by giving Himself as a sacrifice for your sins (Ephesians 5:2). You cannot live this way in your own strength; you need a transformed heart through faith in Him. If you have never trusted Jesus, you are called to repent of your sin and believe that His death and resurrection provide forgiveness and new life (Ephesians 2:8–9). If you are a believer, you are called to continually repent, turning from sin and walking in the new life Christ has given you. Real love flows from a real relationship with Jesus.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Monday – Imitate God

Key Verse: *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” (Ephesians 5:1)*

Reflection: You are not just called to believe in God; you are called to reflect Him. Like a child imitates a parent, your life should mirror God’s love, grace, and holiness. This begins with remembering that you are deeply loved as His child.

Application Question: What is one way you can intentionally reflect God’s character today?

Possible Answer: You can show patience and kindness to someone who frustrates you, choosing grace over biting sarcasm (Colossians 3:12–13).

Prayer Response: Father, thank You for calling me Your child. Help me reflect Your heart in my words and actions today. Shape me to look more like Jesus in everything I do, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Tuesday – Walk in Sacrificial Love

Key Verse: *“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” (Ephesians 5:2)*

Reflection: Real love is not about what you can get; it’s about what you give. Jesus showed you the ultimate example by laying down His life. When you love like Him, you choose sacrifice over self.

Application Question: Where is God calling you to choose sacrifice over self today?

Possible Answer: You may need to give up your time, comfort, or preferences to serve someone else intentionally. (1 John 3:16)

Prayer Response: Lord, thank You for loving me through sacrifice. Teach me to love others the same way, even when it costs me something. Give me a willing and generous heart, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Wednesday – Walk Away from Sin

Key Verse: *“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you.” (Ephesians 5:3)*

Reflection: Sin distorts God’s design for love and pulls you away from Him. The world normalizes what God calls harmful, but you are called to a different standard. Transformation happens when you turn from sin and walk toward holiness and trust the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out.

Application Question: What is one area of your life where you need to turn away from sin?

Possible Answer: You may need to set boundaries with media, relationships, or habits that lead you into temptation. (1 Corinthians 6:18–20)

Prayer Response: Lord, show me where I have allowed sin into my life. Give me the courage to turn away and the strength to pursue holiness. Help me desire what You desire, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Thursday – Replace Sin with Gratitude

Key Verse: *“Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk... but instead let there be thanksgiving.” (Ephesians 5:4)*

Reflection: Your words reveal your heart. Instead of filling your life with negativity or impurity, God calls you to replace it with gratitude. A thankful heart guards you from sin and keeps your focus on God’s goodness.

Application Question: How can you intentionally practice gratitude today?

Possible Answer: You can start by thanking God for specific blessings and choosing encouraging words in your conversations. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Prayer Response: Father, thank You for Your goodness in my life. Help me speak words that honor You and build others up. Fill my heart with gratitude that overflows into my actions, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Friday – Walk in Truth

Key Verse: *“Let no one deceive you with empty words...” (Ephesians 5:6)*

Reflection: Sin often comes disguised as something harmless or even good. But God’s truth exposes the lies and leads you to life. You cannot walk in truth and follow deception at the same time.

Application Question: What lie do you need to replace with God’s truth today?

Possible Answer: You may need to reject the lie that sin is “not a big deal” and instead trust that God’s way leads to life and freedom. (John 8:31–32)

Prayer Response: Father, guard me from deception and help me stand firm in Your truth. Renew my mind through Your Word so I can walk in obedience. Lead me in the path of life, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Sources: John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary); Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary)