

Lesson 3: Letter to the Ephesians Chapters 5 and 6

Live in the Light, Family Relationships and Constant Prayer

Chapters 3 and 4 revealed to us some of the basic teachings of St. Paul. He wrote of the Church as the "Body of Christ." Jesus Christ is the head of the body and of the Church. He also called the reader to live a life of humility, gentleness, and patience, in unity with the Holy Spirit. He also wrote of the variety of gifts and vocations that were bestowed upon the faithful followers of Christ. Remember that this entire letter would have been read or heard at one time by the early Christians. Today's lesson is a continuation of Paul's teaching that began in Ephesians 4:17. Here Paul writes that we must not only know Jesus Christ, but live by imitating Jesus Christ and we are to walk in His ways. This lesson begins as a study on the difference between the lifestyle of a Christian and the ways of those who are not following Christ.

1. **Read Ephesians 5:1-14 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.**
 - a. **In 5:1, Paul calls us to be imitators of Christ. How do the verses in 5:1-14 suggest we should do this? (Cite verses you are using.)**
 - b. **Reflection: How or why is our language important if we are imitating Jesus Christ? (See 5:4-5)**
 - c. **Rather than obscenity or cursing, what *should* our voices be used for? (5:4)**
 - d. **5:6-10 may be alerting us to false teachers or those who try to make evil actions *seem* acceptable. Where might we encounter these voices today?**
2. **Read Ephesians 5:15-20, Proverbs 20:1 and Catechism # 1809 below.**
 - a. **Wisdom is a gift from the Holy Spirit. How does this gift help us to reject sin and temptation? (Reflect on 5:15-17.)**
 - b. **What do these verses say about over-indulging in wine? Reflect on Proverbs *and* the Catechism here as well as Ephesians.**

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is arrogant, strong drink is riotous; **none who are intoxicated by them are wise.**

CCC 1809 Temperance is the **moral virtue that moderates** the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts **and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable.** (Temperance is a virtue.)

3. **Read Ephesians 5:21-33 and footnotes. Read also Catechism #1605 below.**

CCC 1605 Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone." The woman, "flesh of his flesh," his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help.

- a. **Reflection. What does Paul mean when he uses Jesus as an example of how spouses should love each other?**
- b. **Which verses in this section are most meaningful and/or difficult for you?**

4. Read Ephesians 6:1- 9 and footnotes.
 - a. Share any footnotes of interest with your group.
 - b. Read Catechism 2215 and 2218 below. The relationship between parents and children is an essential element of a community that is to grow united in love and faith.
To what does Catechism #2214 compare the love of a father to his children.
 - c. For adults of elderly parents, what does it mean to honor one's parents. (See CCC 2218 below.)
 - d. Read 6:5-9 again. Slavery was a reality in the first century. Do these verses condone slavery?
(To *condone* something means to regard or treat something as acceptable, forgivable, or harmless.)

CCC - 2214 The divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood; this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. The respect of children, whether minors or adults, for their father and mother is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond uniting them.

CCC 2215 Respect for parents (filial piety) derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom, and grace.

CCC 2218 The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their responsibilities toward their parents. As much as they can, they must give them material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress.

5. Read Ephesians 6:10-17.
 - a. What is the purpose of the "armor of God"?
 - b. If armor is something the Roman soldiers would have used in battle, who is it that we are battling?
 - c. What are the elements of the "armor of God" that are specified in verses 14-17?
6. Read Ephesians 6:18-20.
 - a. How often does Paul say we should pray?
 - b. Paul asks the readers or hearers of this letter to pray for him and the other "holy ones." For what does he say he needs prayers?
7. Read Ephesians 6:21-24.
 - a. Who is Tychicus?
 - b. What news is he to relay to the people receiving or hearing this letter?