

Ephesians 5:1-4 by Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 5:1-2: BE IMITATORS OF GOD'S LOVE, PART

1

by Dr. Wayne Barber

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5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;² and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Turn to Ephesians 5. We're looking at "Imitators of God's Love." I can't get into chapter 5 unless I back you up. If you don't see this book as a whole, you miss what Paul is trying to tell us. There is a divine flow in this wonderful book.

In Ephesians 1 we find the riches of our salvation. It is important for every believer to know who he is and what he has in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:3 sums it all up. He says He has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. The First National Bank of God is Jesus Christ, and we have everything spiritually that we will ever need in Him. We are rich today in Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 2 we find the reasons of our salvation. Why was all this required? Why did we have to be redeemed? Why did Jesus have to do what He did? Well, we were dead in our trespasses and our sins, totally unable to save ourselves. So the Lord Jesus came down and paid a debt He didn't owe when we owed a debt we could not pay.

The revelation of our salvation is in Ephesians 3. You see, this is a mystery. Nobody could ever understand that God not only loved the Jews but He loved the Gentiles. Not only that, He made it possible in Jesus that the Jew and the Gentile could be made into one brand new man in Christ Jesus. Now the Apostle Paul starts off that chapter wanting to pray but he is overwhelmed. In twelve verses he is just overwhelmed by his salvation. Finally in verse 14 he gets back to his prayer. That prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 is the hinge of the whole book of Ephesians. If you don't relate everything to that prayer, you have missed the point of what is happening in Ephesians. He sums up everything in chapters 1-3 in that prayer and sets up everything in chapters 4-6 in that prayer.

He is trying to show them what they have in Christ. Here is how you tap into it. Here is how you appropriate what you have. You know it is a terrible tragic thing when you can't get to something that you already have. That is what Paul is saying. Here is what you have. Here is how you get to it. He tells them that in the prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21.

Then in Ephesians 4:1-16 you find out the results of when a person lives in light of what he has. You see it in his behavior, Ephesians 4:2-3, in the way he treats other people in the body of Christ. People ought to be able to come in, look at us and say,

"Yes sir, these people are saved. They know how to appropriate what is theirs in Jesus Christ."

You see it in the way we believe.

There are seven doctrines he mentions in verses 4-6. Any time you see a diversion from those doctrines, immediately you have somebody not living in the light of what he has already. He doesn't have to pursue something else. He already has it.

Then in Ephesians 4:7-16, he shows you when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, by being built into the body of Christ, we grow up into maturity. That is what the body of Christ ought to be, each one maturing in his own gift and supplying to others what is necessary for the building up of the body in love.

Then Paul takes a diversion. He has looked at the whole picture and now he starts zeroing in on you and me as individuals. He says in Ephesians 4:17-19 that we are not to walk as the Gentiles walk. These are Gentiles he is writing to in Ephesians and he is saying, "You used to live this way. Don't live this way anymore. The Gentiles are darkened in their mentality, therefore, they are depraved in their morality. You are not to go back and live that way anymore."

Ephesians 4:20-24 say that you are now to put on a new garment. This new garment, this new man is a brand new way of living. We have a brand new opportunity, a brand new potential in our life. Jesus is in us. We can live differently. We can live life on a higher plane, and that is what he is saying. Put on the new man.

Then in Ephesians 4:25-30 he begins to show you how that life looks, some of the fabric of that new garment, that new man, that we

put on. Verse 25 says you have a transformed tongue. You don't lie anymore. He goes on in verse 26 and says you have a controlled temper. Be angry but don't sin with your anger. When you do that, verse 27 says you don't give the devil an opportunity. In other words, you have a frustrated tempter. The word "devil" means one that divides. When you put on the new man, you have frustrated the tempter.

In Ephesians 4:28 we become givers instead of takers. He said, "let him who steals, steal no longer." There are a lot of ways to steal. You rob from others and from God and from yourself when you don't put on the new garment. You become a thief, a depleter rather than a replenisher in people's lives.

In Ephesians 4:29, you become one who builds up not one who tears down. As a matter of fact, everything you say builds up the body. It does not tear the body down. As a result, you do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Ephesians 4:31-32 show you the contrast of the two garments, a beautiful picture here. The cesspool of the old garment is in verse 31:

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."

Then you see on the other hand the wellspring of the Spirit in verse 32:

"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Now in chapter 5, look at the first word. He says, "**Therefore**." Any time you see a "therefore," you always look to see what it is there for. You know what it is there for. I just told you. He says since this garment is this way and this garment is this way, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." He is saying,

"Be an imitator of God."

In what way? In the fact that we walk in His love. We are to be the imitators of God's love.

Do you know what the word "**imitate**" means? It is the word *mimetes*. It is the word from which we get the English word "mime." Have you ever seen somebody mime? They don't say anything, do they? They express it and when they express it, it is so exaggerated that nobody misses what they are trying to say. They haven't said a word. In other words, what Paul is saying is,

"Don't talk about His love, walk in His love, live it, express it. Don't tell everybody you have it, show them that you have it. Do as God does. Mime. In other words, live it out before the world."

This word is important for us to understand.

Look in 1 Corinthians 4:11-16. We find Paul using this same word and it is very critical to understand it. I just want to make sure you have a real good grasp on what it means to imitate God, particularly God's love. Paul is going to give you a little context here and then we are going to find the word. He says,

"To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet *you would not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I exhort you therefore, be **imitators** of me."

In other words, do as I do. Express it. Don't tell me that you love Jesus, show me. I have shown you. I have become the scum of this world because I want to be only one that loves Jesus Christ. You now show me that you love Jesus. Do as I do.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he says it again:

"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."

First Thessalonians 1:6 says the same thing.

6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

So does 1 Thessalonians 2:14,

14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

1 Peter 3:13

and who is he who will be doing you evil, if of Him who is good ye may become imitators? (Only in Textus Receptus, this is Young's Literal translation)

and Hebrews 6:12.

12 that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Mimetes means "do as I do."

So what we are seeing here in Ephesians is, do as God does. Imitate God. Mime Him. Don't talk it, walk it. Express God's love to one another. That is what the new garment is all about. It shows itself in relationships.

Now I am sure somebody is saying,

"Now wait a minute. Hold on. How in the world am I going to imitate God?"

The word "love" that we are looking at in verses 1-2 is a love that is far beyond what any man could ever attain. No man, regardless of how sincere he is, can work up this kind of love. This is God's love.

To be an imitator of God is not something you do for Him. It is something God has to do through you. Let me show you this. There are two things that are very critical that we need to understand in this text. First of all, in order to imitate God's love, we have to be His child. The verse is very clear. He says in verse 1 again,

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."

This is a command, present imperative. We never have an option in this as believers. Since we have all that we have in Christ, we are never to have an option. It is a command.

Let's look at the word "**children**." There is a word for child in the Greek that means an infant that has just been born. That is not the word mentioned here. There is another word for child that means one that is grown up and matured, *huios*. That is not the word that is used here. The word that is used here is the word **teknon**. It is the word that means an offspring of someone. It is a child, but it has to do with the fact that you bear the characteristics and the nature of your father.

"Oh, you mean to tell me to love as God loves, I am going to have to have His nature within me?"

That is exactly right. That is exactly what happens when you receive Christ into your life. His very nature comes into your life. His spirit unites with your spirit and my spirit, and therefore, we have the potential now out of that nature to love as He loves.

Look over in 2 Peter 1:4. I want you to see this.

"For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

In other words, I partake of the divine nature. His Spirit living in us gives us that brand new nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. So when we are commanded to love on a supernatural level, we have the potential of doing it if we are His children and bear His nature.

I can't be like Him until His nature is within me. I must be His child before I can be an imitator of God's love. His Spirit in me is His nature in me. Look back in Ephesians 3:16:

"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power [*dunamis*, which means ability that is beyond yourself] through His Spirit in the inner man."

Why is the Spirit of God within me? The Spirit of God is in me to enable me to live on the plane that God commands me to live. He strengthens with His power. What is the fruit of the Spirit? The fruit is the manifestation that His Spirit has enacted in my life. The fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22 says, is love. That love is a divine, supernatural, unconditional love that is only from the nature of God that is within me. So therefore, before I can be an imitator of God's love or even put on that garment, I have to be His child. I have to possess His nature. Like Father, like son.

The second thing not only must I be His child, but I must choose to obey His command. I want to share something with you, loving on this level is not a feeling. It is not something that is going to happen to you because you had your quiet time. It is not something that is going to happen to you because you sincerely want it to happen to you. It is something that is going to happen when you choose to love others around you. The very fact that this is an unconditional love means there are going to be people out there who aren't going to deserve it and you are not going to want to love them. It is a command. We have to say,

"God, I in my flesh don't want to do this, but in my spirit I know that I am commanded and I choose to do it. I

don't feel like it."

It is a choice you have got to make. Husband, wife, are you living with somebody that is unlovable? If you possess the nature of God, you are commanded to love. You have to make your own personal choice to do it. When you choose to do it, and when you choose to be strengthened as 3:17 says, when you start accommodating Jesus in all the rooms of your heart, by your faith, by your obedience, then you begin to experience His power. That is what every one of us lacks. We don't have it apart from Him. When we are His children, we have His nature.

Paul gives us a standard for that love that is incredible. He says, "walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." The standard is the way He loved us. Oh, folks, do you realize what he is saying? We have been much loved. If you are a believer, it cost God a great expense. That same willingness to pay that same kind of price is now asked of us, commanded of us. We are to have that same willingness to love others who don't deserve it in our life, just as He gave of Himself. This is God we are talking about.

As a matter of fact, Paul says that you are to be imitators of God as what kind of children? Beloved children. You know why we should be walking in love? Because we have been loved so much. Now, if Paul had started off in chapter 1 and said that, it wouldn't have made any sense. But since it is in chapter 5 it makes a whole lot of sense. How have we been loved? Look in 1:4, just to remind you. The last two words of verse 4 and on into verse 5 says,

"In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself."

God loved us. Do you think we deserved it? We lost our right to relate to Him when Adam sinned. However, God chose before the foundation of the world, based on information He already knew, that His creation would reject Him. He chose to have us adopted back into His family by being born again, providing Jesus as the sacrifice eternally for our sins. God loved us, so He chose us. We have been loved today. WE are chosen today.

Not only that, look in Ephesians 2:4.

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

You see, it was all His love that did it. We have been much loved. God loves us right now. He has loved us eternally.

Look in 3:17 at the last phrase:

"*and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love."

Not only did God love me, not only did He love me enough to come and die for me, but now when I am saved, He puts me into the soil of His love. He roots me into it. He grounds me upon it. Everything I do ought to spring forth out of that love. Everything I do ought to be built upon that love. I have that kind of potential today. I am beloved as a child. I need to love because I have been loved.

When you understand that, look at how it effects our relationship. Look at Ephesians 4:2:

"with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love."

Do you realize the love that we express to one another causes us to forbear each other? I have to put up with you. You have to put up with me. We have to put up with each other. Do you know why? Because if we walk in love, which we are commanded to do, then we are going to forbear one another, we are going to have patience with one another, we are going to have all the things that make up forbearance. That is what makes relationships last.

Do you realize what that will do to a family? You will forbear one another. Even when things are bad, you will forbear. Why? You have the nature of God within you. You have chosen. You have been loved and you've made the choice to love now with that same love the people that are around you. What is going on in your family? What is going on in your marriage? I want to tell you something, folks, if you will come to Jesus, you will find your solution. That is not a simple statement, that is a very profound statement. If you are a believer, He has given you His nature and you can love when you don't feel like it or when others around you don't deserve it. You'll even forbear one another.

In Ephesians 4:15, look at what it says. The truth is confirmed by this love:

"but speaking the truth in love."

Now you know when we studied this that the word "speaking" is not even in the text. It means to confirm something, to express something. Anytime you express truth or confirm it, it has to be in love. Love is the confirmation of truth. It confirms everything we do when it is a part of our life. It is not something you tell people you have. It is something you mime. It is something you show them

that you have. It automatically confirms the truth that is within you.

Look also at Ephesians 4:16. This is how the body is built up. It's not just by teaching, or just by the gifts being exercised. Oh no. All of it has to be surrounded by one quality:

"from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

The body can't even be built up unless that love is present. It perfects its own building up if we are walking in love.

Look at 5:25. It is the only thing that will purify your family. Husbands, it starts with us. It doesn't start with our wives. It starts with you and me. Paul is very specific about it. He says in verse 25,

"Husbands, love your wives."

You say,

"I can't."

No, you won't. If you are a believer, you can. You can choose to do that and be strengthened in the inner man by His power so that you can imitate the love of God to your wife.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

You know, the description of that love is very clear. He gave Himself as an offering and a sacrifice. So the whole idea here is I die to myself so that Jesus can be Jesus in me. When Jesus is being Jesus in me, my wife, my son, my daughter, my son-in-law, all know they are loved. They are being effected daily by a conscious choice I am making. Most of the time that is without any feelings. But knowing that I have the nature of God and choosing to obey His command, they are automatically built up because of that love. That is the way it works.

"Oh, that doesn't work for me." No? Then listen, there is something wrong in you. There is not anything wrong with Him. He has given us everything necessary for life and godliness. Peter says that. Paul is saying the same thing. The only reason it won't work is because we won't let it work. The problem is what we look at in the mirror every morning. It is us. Until we learn to die and make conscious choices to let His nature work, it will not function the way it is supposed to function

Ephesians 5:3-4: BE IMITATORS OF GOD'S LOVE, Part

2

by Dr. Wayne Barber

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Turn to Ephesians 5. What I want you to see is what we have been learning in the book of Ephesians. That is, when you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, you become a son of God, a child of God and within you is the nature of God. Now when the life of Jesus comes into us, then there is life inside. We can do things we couldn't do before. You see, before we had no life in us. Now there is life inside of us, and we are to allow the life inside of us to control us so that we might live in a supernatural way.

That is what chapter 3 is talking about in Paul's prayer when he says that you might be strengthened in the inner man by the means of His Spirit with power. The word "power" means the ability to do and to be beyond what you could be in your own strength. Now that is the message we have been getting in the book of Ephesians.

When you come to chapter 5, he doesn't change his pattern. Paul has picked up a pattern beginning in chapter 3 that shows you a contrast of the old garment with the new garment. The more we begin to recognize what the new garment is as compared to the old garment, then the more we are going to be willing to put on the new and cast off the old. I tell you that because we are getting to verses 3-5, and Paul does the same thing. After telling us to be imitators of God's love, Paul is going to show us the opposite of what he has just told us. He is going to show us what we are like when we are not imitators of God's love.

When we receive Jesus in our life, we now can love on a divine level. When you are not wearing that garment or you don't even have it, then you have no capacity to love on the right level. On the one side, when you love as Christ loved, you are going to build up your relationships. On the other side, you are going to tear them apart. If you go back to the old, you are going to rip relationships to pieces. When you put on the new, you are going to build them and unite people with you. You are going to see relationships like you have never seen before.

Now remember, the devil is after us to put on the old garment. Why? Because when we give him opportunity and we grieve the Spirit of God, as we have already seen, then we become one who destroys instead of one who builds up. So now Paul is going to show you the immoral kind of relationships. He is going to show you what happens when you put on the old garment.

Ephesians 5:3-5 read,

"But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and *there must be* no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

You have to agree with me that the context here is immoral people, people who are not living on a divine, moral level. When I put on the old garment, I am living in the dregs of what the old life used to be. But when I put on that new garment, it raises me up to a much higher standard, particularly in my morality and in the way I relate to people around me.

Let's take it apart and see what we've got to look at. First of all he says,

"But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you."

The word "**immorality**" there is the word *porneia*. That is an important word because that word encompasses every immoral, sexual act with another person that you can possibly name. Let me give you some examples.

In 1 Corinthians 5:1 the first thing we look at is the sin of incest. The word "immorality" is associated with the sin of incest. Why is it that so much of this garbage has gotten into the church? Because people evidently don't know or have not chosen to put on the new garment. We have to choose it every day of our life. Whenever we choose the old garment, it is an immoral garment. It's a garment that will drag us down and flush us down that old drain of the cesspool of self. 1 Corinthians 5:1 says,

"It is actually reported that there is immorality [*porneia*] among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles."

Paul is saying,

"Listen, you actually have reported that there are people in your midst who are doing things more vile than what is going on in the Gentile world."

He goes on in verse 1:

"that someone has his father's wife."

There is a relationship here that is illicit. It is an incestuous relationship. Folks, I want to tell you straight out, if you are involved in any kind of sin that would be qualified in the area of incest, you need to repent of that and make it right as quickly as you possibly can. This is a serious matter.

Let me show you the verse again in Ephesians.

"But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you."

The word means don't even let people hint that this kind of sin is among you. Paul is trying to show you to look on one side, walk in love. This is the kind of relationship you want with people. On the other side, if you put on that old garment, it's going to end up in this kind of awful, awful immorality.

Look at 1 Corinthians 6:13-14. Here "immorality" refers to having sexual intercourse with a person outside the bonds of marriage. Here Paul is talking about the importance of the body. He says,

"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body. Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power."

What he is saying here is,

"Listen, any kind of immorality that is illicit, that is outside the bonds of marriage, then that particular sin is outside the body."

God has redeemed the body. That is very, very important to understand. When we put on the new garment of Christ, then He gives us a morality that is divine and we are not going to have illicit sex with other people. It is a sin against the body as well as against the Lord.

Look in Matthew 19:9. We find, not only incest and illicit sex, we find adultery which is illicit sex in a category really by itself. This involves married people who have sexual intercourse with somebody outside of that marriage bond. The Lord Jesus is answering some of the badgering of the Pharisees. They said,

"Moses commanded to give a certificate of divorce."

He said, "Oh, no." It says in verse 9,

"**And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality [porneia], and marries another woman commits adultery.**"

That word "immorality" is not just a man with a woman. It is any kind of illicit sex outside of what God has outlined in Scripture. It is incest, it is illicit sex or adultery, but it goes beyond that. It is homosexuality.

In Romans 1 it talks about God giving the people up to depraved minds. It said these depraved minds cause men to go after men and women to go after women, unnatural desires for one another. God said homosexuality is a sin. God says incest is a sin. God says anything outside the bond of marriage is sin, adultery, illicit sex, wherever you are. Your body is important to God and is one day going to be redeemed. Illicit sex is a sin not only against God, it is a sin against the body that He died for. We have to realize this.

Let me show you another place it is used. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 says,

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger of all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*."

Now this gets into what leads up to that immorality. This is a defrauding. It means to take advantage of somebody.

Secondly, he mentions one that is kind of hard to distinguish. He mentions one that is so closely associated that it is difficult to even bring out a definition. It is the word "**impurity**." He puts immorality right alongside impurity. Every time I found the word immorality it had to do with relationships with somebody else, the actual act. But it seems like when I found the word impurity, it covers all the other bases. You see, there may be somebody saying,

"Alright, I have never done anything with anybody else. I must be pretty good. I am okay. I am clean. I am pure. I can keep on justifying certain things in my life because I have never had an actual relationship with anybody else."

Jesus told the Pharisees,

"**You say that you shall not commit adultery. I say unto you if you have lusted in your heart, you are already guilty of that sin.**"

In other words, it is not necessarily even the relationship. Yes, that is immorality, the actual act, the actual thing that took place. But he covers all the other bases by this word when he uses the word "impurity."

Go back to Ephesians 4:19. He has already used it and shown us the context where it comes from: "and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." Now who are the "they"? That is the Gentile world. That is the people who have darkened minds. That is the people who don't know the Word of God. These are people who have given their bodies over to pleasure. He calls it impurity.

Romans 1:24 gives a perfect definition of impurity:

"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them."

Anything that dishonors the body qualifies as impurity. The word means to be without cleansing, that which is unclean, that which has never been cleansed by God's blood.

The word "**impurity**" is always associated with two other words, "**immorality**" and "**sensuality**." You don't have to go into describing what those words mean. They are always found together. It is like an unholy trinity. When you find one, you'll find the other two. So you not only have the thought processes, you not only have the personal type of situation to where you think you can do something, but you also have the acts involved of one with another. Paul says none of these things are a part of the new garment we put on, which is Jesus Christ.

Then he throws in another one, which to me is sort of surprising. In the midst of all of this, he throws in the word **greed**." "But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints." Now why in the world would he mention greed? The context in verse 5 is certainly immorality. It is talking about relationships that tear down instead of relationships

that build up. Why would he put greed in there? Because a person that is immoral is a person who is greedy and he never gets enough. Listen, that is one of the basic motivations of his life.

This is especially true of individuals who have not found what they are looking for in Jesus Christ, who don't realize all the acceptance and all the love is found in Him. You don't have to find that in a relationship. They want people to want to be close to them and they want a relationship so when a person comes along and says the right words, immediately they give in. Usually, behind what he is saying, he wants something from you that you don't want to give him and don't ever do it. You see, that is a part of the old life. It is never to be named among us.

The word **greed**, *pleonexia*, means basically to never be able to get enough. You always want more and more and more. If you will look over in Colossians 3:5 it tells you pretty clearly what greed is:

"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."

I want you to see something here. There are two strange bed fellows here. You've got **immorality** and you've got **idolatry**. You will always find them together. Now what is **idolatry**? It is worshiping anything but God. When an individual begins to worship himself and serve another master, immediately he becomes immoral. Why? Because he can no longer relate on a divine level. Now he is caught in the trap of wanting more and more and never being satisfied.

I talked to a man one day who had been effected by pornography for years. He said,

"When I first got started, it seemed that anything would excite me. But after a while, I had to have more and more and more. It got worse and worse."

He lost his family over it. Why? Because when you are an idolater, nothing but Jesus will ever satisfy you. You go after self or anything else in that immoral tailspin, but you will never find what you are looking for. Don't even let it be named among you. Don't let there be a hint that you permit that kind of garbage in your midst. Greedy persons are idolaters. They do not love God. They do not serve God. They serve themselves.

Remember in Matthew 6:24 it says that no man can serve two masters.

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

He will love one and hate the other. Someone may say,

"No, no, no. I love one and maybe I will kind of like the other."

No way! You will love one and hate the other. You cannot wear the old garment and love the new garment. You cannot do it. You have to make up your mind which garment you are going to put on. That is the key, if you have the garment to put on.

Then Paul moves on. He says,

"None of this is proper among the saints."

The word "proper" means becoming. In other words, you have a garment now that fits you. It is a becoming garment. That garment that is so becoming on you is the garment of the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't put any other garment on because it won't be fitting, it won't be becoming to you.

What are you wearing? What garment do you have on? If you are playing around with this kind of stuff, hey, look at verse 4. This where it really goes home:

"and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

Let me explain these three words to you in the context that we are looking at of immorality. First, the context of the old garment. The context of that which we used to be, not what we are now in Christ Jesus. The word "**filthiness**" means shameful. If you find a person who is wanting to live some kind of life and he is feeding his mind with all the garbage of this world, when you hear him speak it is going to come out of his mouth. Filthy speech here has to do with immoral talk.

One of the things I have found, particularly with young people, has been that when you talk about it and laugh about it, it seems to be okay. It has become the norm in young people's groups today to make filthy talk the standard of what they say to one another. I want to tell you something. If that filthy kind of talk has gotten into church, I want you to know that we are distinguishing it now from the book of Ephesians as nothing but the garbage of the old garment. That is all it is. It comes right out of the pit of hell itself.

Filthiness means talking about stuff that is shameful and letting it be a standard of conversation.

Well, Paul goes on. He is not through. He says,

"Let there be no silly talk."

When I first saw that, I thought,

"Oh no, I can never tell another joke!"

That is not what he is talking about. The context is very clearly immorality. The word **'silly talk'** here making something that is shameful funny. You mean to tell me we have gotten into immorality and impurity and greed and being an idolater? You mean the way we talk has something to do with this whole thing? It has everything to do with it.

He is not through yet. He says, "No coarse jesting." The word **'coarse jesting'** takes that word "silly talk" and stretches it one more step. What it says is, you get a point across and you make your suggestive move on somebody by humor. You take something that is shameful and make it seem as if it is okay. In other words, it is the next step to taking advantage and defrauding an individual.

Paul said,

"I want to tell you something, that is the old garment."

He is trying to simplify it for us. He is saying, "Listen, don't try to figure it all out. Just take it off and put on the new garment. When you put on the new man, you are not going to lust for these things. You are not going to want these things. You are going to find what you are looking for in the Lord Jesus. You don't have to find it in some kind of physical pleasure that is not going to gratify you. That will only lead you to a deeper move later on that is going to cause you all kinds of pain in your life. Put on the new garment. Mimic the love of God. Be imitators of God's love."

Look at verse 5:

"For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

That word "no" is the little word that means absolutely none of any kind. They do not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. What is he saying? If you are habitually living this way, you do not have an inheritance in the kingdom of God. The argument has popped up recently in circles, can a man be a Christian and be a practicing homosexual? Can a man be a Christian and be a habitually practicing adulterer? No way.

Let me show you something. Look at 1 John 3:1-8a and see what you think.

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins [habitually]; no one who sins [habitually] has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning."

The purpose of the book of Ephesians is to raise people's view of salvation.

When you have a low view of salvation, it allows for that view. So when you have a high view of salvation, friend, it cuts it out. There is a brand new life. It doesn't mean you can't sin. It doesn't mean you can't struggle in an area of sin. It doesn't mean that you can't repeat that sin. But you are miserable in the process because the Holy Spirit lives within you. The Holy Spirit is there to convict you and bring you back to the cross to where you can repent and go on and wear that new garment.

Well, we have an old garment and a new garment. But what does 1 John tells us about the one who habitually wears the old garment? The same thing Ephesians says. He in no way has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ or of God. If you have struggles with that, go to the Scriptures and see what it teaches you. That is the key. Don't argue with your experience. Go to see what God's Word has to say. We need a high view of salvation. Salvation means more than just joining a church. It means that something has happened to us and the nature of God has come into us. His Spirit lives in our lives.