

# Let your light shine!

# Ephesians

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## Introduction

For your opening turn to **Psalm 101**. Notice how verse one provides the motivation for the godly lifestyle described in the rest of the psalm. We want to thank and praise God for his love to us.

Are you willing to put your faith on display? Is it obvious to others that you are a Christian? The question has been posed to church members: if you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Is your life an open testimony to your faith in Jesus Christ? Is his praise on your lips? Is the glory of his name the goal of your life? God's Word encourages us to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received." Let your whole life be a sacrifice of praise, a humble witness to Jesus!

## Search the Scriptures

### *Active in the world*

**Read Ephesians 4:17-32.** Explain why the lives of "Gentiles" (in this case, unbelievers) are so futile or empty.

Look again at verses 18 and 19. Give examples of this lifestyle in our society today.

Paul tells us to put off the "old self" and to be "made new in the attitude of your minds" (v. 22, 23):

- List personal actions and ideas which flow from your old, sinful self.
- List the kind of actions, ideas and attitudes that Jesus would like to see flowing from his new creation.

In verses 25-29 Paul offers a series of encouragements to resist specific sins. List each specific admonition.

When is it permissible to be angry? (See **Mark 11:15-17** and **2 Kings 22:13**.)

There is a difference between becoming angry and remaining angry. How do you give the devil a foothold when you let resentment build?

Verse 28 admonishes against stealing. Do you need to be warned against stealing? (Think about your expense account, the last time you were undercharged at a store, personal business handled on company time, etc.)

According to verse 28, why are we to be productive members of society—or in other words, what reason is given here for working?

Study verse 29. How might your language and conversation with others reflect your love for God?

Give some practical ways that you can build up others according to their needs. Think specifically of how you can build up . . .

- Your spouse.
- Your children
- Your pastor
- A fellow Christian feeling burdened or burned out.

- Someone struggling with questions and doubts about his faith.

**Read Ephesians 4:32-5:20.** Continuing with the positive side, now let's examine what we are to be like.

What is your motivation for being kind, compassionate and forgiving to others?

We must all admit that we have sinned against God far more than others have sinned against us. God has much more to forgive than we do, yet he has done it freely for Christ's sake. Explain the relationship between *forgiving* sin and *forgetting* sins. Can we forgive but not forget?

The beginning of chapter 5 defines the very high standard laid down for us. What does it mean to you to be an "imitator of God"?

Paul's words in vs. 19-20 express a real joy at being a Christian. How can you express the joy of salvation in your life of worship and praise every day?

## Summary

God has called us to be his light to a world living a futile existence. How can you more effectively work *in the world* to let your light shine and share Jesus but still keep from becoming part *of the world* around us?

## Your walk with God

For this section you may wish to mark your calendar for the upcoming week. That way you can get into the habit of taking time out of your schedule for a personal walk with the Lord.

### **Day one**

Read the story of Jesus healing a leper in **Mark 1:40-45**. Since lepers were excluded from society because of their disease, no one would have touched this man for a long time. Think about someone you know who could benefit from your compassionate, caring touch.

### **Day three**

John chapter 4 records the story of the Samaritan woman. **Read John 4:1-42**. Since the Samaritans were considered unclean by the Jews, and religious teachers rarely spoke with women in public, think of how remarkable it was for Jesus to reach out to this woman. Note the effect this act of Jesus had upon the townspeople in verses 39-42. How can you affect some of the "unclean" people in our society with the gospel? (It might mean leaving your comfort zone!)

### **Day five**

Jesus prayed frequently. See **Mark 1:32** and **Luke 5:15** for some examples of Jesus' prayer life. The most complete example of Jesus praying is written in John chapter 17. **Read Matthew 6:5-14** and **Luke 22:39-45**. How can you strengthen your prayer life?

Prayer is our conversation with God. God speaks to us through his written Word. Since the better part of good conversation is listening (on our part!), look for ways you can combine an active prayer life with an active life of listening and studying God's Word.