

FOLLOWERS OF GOD

TEXT: EPH. 5:1-8

Introduction:

1. In life we see that most people are followers and very few are leaders.
2. Men like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln stand out because they were great leaders.
3. Hundreds of biographies have been written about their lives, their military campaigns, their speeches and interesting sayings, and so on.
4. As Christians, we are to follow our great leader – a man who stands much taller than Caesar and Napoleon and Washington.
5. Our great leader is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the image of the invisible God, God manifest in the flesh. He died on the cross for our sins.
6. So rather than follow a mortal man, we are to be “followers of God” (5:1). The only time it is acceptable to follow a man is when that man has been appointed by God over us.
7. As long as that man is following God, then we can safely follow him. That is why Paul said in I Corinthians 11:1, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
8. In tonight’s text, we see that Paul instructs the Ephesians to be “followers of God” (5:1).

I. WE FOLLOW GOD WHEN WE WALK IN LOVE (5:1, 2)

1. “God is love” (I John 4:8). Therefore, His followers are to “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2).
2. “Walk” is a key word in this epistle (cf. 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). God is more interested in our walk than in our talk.
3. This is not to suggest that our talk is unimportant (cf. 5:4, 12). It is just that people pay more attention to our walk than to our talk (cf. 5:13). Sometimes, Christians’ walk does not line up with his talk.
4. In natural life, children bear the family likeness and should seek to uphold the family name. In spiritual life, we should manifest our Father to the unsaved world, and seek to walk worthy of our calling as His “dear children” (5:1).
5. We should resemble the Lord by “walking in love” (5:2). We are to do this by giving ourselves for others as Christ did (5:2).
Amazing love! How can it be that Thou my God shouldst die for me?

6. Because Christ died for us on the cross, we should live for others.
One poet put it this way:

“Others, Lord, yes, others!

Let this my motto be;

Help me to live for others

That I may live like Thee” – Charles D. Meigs.

II. WE FOLLOW GOD WHEN WE WALK IN PURITY (5:3-6)

1. “Fornication” (5:3) usually means illicit sex among unmarried persons. Adultery usually refers to illicit sex between married persons.
2. Here Paul adds “and all uncleanness” (5:3), which would include adultery, homosexuality, pornography, and all immorality.
3. “Covetousness” in this context refers to lusting after immoral sex. Exodus 20:17 says: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.”
4. H.A. Ironside wrote: “The word rendered ‘covetousness’ does not refer here to greed for money. It is, rather, sensual greed. It is that vile, disgusting greed for sensual gratification, the vilest thing of which the human heart is capable.”
5. Paul says in verse 3, “Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.” What a terrible testimony to the world when a professed Christian gets involved in immorality. And yet it happens all too often.
6. Not only must we be careful to avoid immoral behaviour, we must also be careful to avoid immoral talk (5:4). Many Americans were shocked and disgusted when they heard that President Clinton used to get on a telephone and talk dirty to one of his interns.
7. And it amazes me that people spend a lot of money dialing these dirty phone sex numbers. How degrading! How disgusting!
8. “Filthiness” (5:4) includes filthy talk, dirty stories and jokes, obscenity, and indecency. It is all over the television and in the movies and popular music, etc.
10. “Foolish talking” and “jesting” (5:4) refers to empty chatter, which often leads to gutter talk, and crude jokes with double meanings.
11. When some politician gets caught in a sex scandal, the comedians on television have a field day. The Bible says, “Fools make a mock at sin” (Pro. 14:9).
12. One of these silly fools was recently exposed himself. But he is still on TV laughing away. Rather than joke about sin, we ought to

be giving thanks to God for all He has done for us (5:4b). This is pleasing to God and a blessing to others.

13. The Bible makes it very clear that people whose lives are characterized by these sins are lost and on their way to hell (5:5; cf. I Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).
14. “Idolater” (5:5) in this context refers to the “covetous man” who is coveting after illicit sex. He worships the human body. God created the human bodies and God created sex. But when men and women go beyond the parameters God has set up, there is trouble (cf. Rom. 1:24, 25).
15. Unsaved people are always trying to deceive us into thinking that sin is now acceptable (5:6). They use “vain words” to defend and excuse extra-marital sex, pre-marital sex, perverted sex, etc. But the Bible says “the wrath of God” will come down “upon the children of disobedience.”
16. We see this proven true every day: people die of AIDS, and suffer from other STDs. I read that 20% of Americans now have herpes. One of the reasons so many people are having nervous breakdowns and going to psychiatrists, and taking psychotic drugs is because of guilt. Most of these mental, nervous, and emotional disorders result from guilt.

III. WE FOLLOW GOD WHEN WE WALK IN THE LIGHT (5:7, 8).

1. Way back in Genesis 1:18 we read that God divided the light from the darkness.
2. All through the Bible we see the contrast between darkness and light.
3. In John 8:12, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”
4. Not only do unsaved people walk in darkness, they are darkness (5:8).
5. Walking in the light will yield “the fruit of the Spirit” (5:9). Those who walk in the light produce the fruit of the Spirit:
 - (1) “goodness” – moral excellence, in contrast to the moral depravity and immorality of those who walk in darkness (cf. 5:3-7).
 - (2) “righteousness” – integrity in our dealings with God and men.

(3) “truth” – “Honesty is the best policy.” Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). If we are His followers (cf. 5:1), then we must always be truthful (cf. 4:25).

CONCLUSION:

1. The Bible teaches that once a person gets saved, he or she has to make a clean break with the past.
2. Paul says, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).
3. This means separating from worldly friends – “Be not ye therefore partakers with them” (Eph. 5:7).