

## Following God's Example

**Opener:** Who's been a role model for you? How have they influenced you?

**Scripture:** Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup>and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. <sup>3</sup>But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup>Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup>For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup>Therefore do not be partners with them. Ephesians 5:1-7

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15-16

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. <sup>8</sup>Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup>Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:7-9

He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Acts 16:30-31

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

### Discussion Questions

1. Paul says to "follow God's example," but that's a high bar. Knowing that discipleship requires following God's example, why do we still prefer to compare ourselves to others? Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:15-16
2. Although non-believers want us to act like them, when we do they're the first to point out our hypocrisy. Identify ways we compromise in regard to sexual conduct, impurity, and greed. Why does God consider that behavior unloving and improper? How does it discredit our witness? Eph. 5:2-3; Galatians 6:7-9
3. Obscenity, foolish talk, and coarse joking are commonplace, even in the church. When have you seen these types of speech backfire or harm someone? Why would Paul single them out? Why is thanksgiving the best alternative and what should we be thankful for? Ephesians 5:4
4. How do immorality, impurity, and greed constitute idolatry? Ephesians 5:5
5. How do you reconcile Paul's statement that there is no inheritance in God's kingdom for those who are immoral with verses like those in Acts 16:30-31 and Romans 10:9 which say that all we need in order to be part of God's kingdom is to believe in Jesus? Ephesians 5:5
6. What's an example of empty words that deceive us into being disobedient? How do we partner with those who are disobedient? How can we be an influence without partnering with them? Eph. 5:6-7

**Wrap Up:** To say the first-century church was a growing church would be a major understatement. The early church didn't merely grow; it exploded. Those early Christians were disciples of Christ in the truest sense—they had a faith that produced obedience and a passion that was magnetic. As Paul explained, following Jesus requires a willingness to take yourself on and challenge the assumptions you currently live under. Being a disciple is not for the faint of heart nor is it the path of least resistance. Maybe it seems impossible. But what if, as God has promised, it is possible?