

Followers of God – Ephesians 5:1,2

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

- (1) Following God
- (2) Being dear children
- (3) Walking in love
- (4) Following Jesus’ example of loving others
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“Being Followers of God”

Followers of Jesus and followers of God

R3721 (Luke 5:1-11)

Peter’s reaction (Luke 5:8) *“Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”*

Jesus invited these four to follow him and become fishers of men.

The context – Ephesians 5:3-7

Works of the flesh

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them...”

R2299: “True Israelites are supposed to have left or put off all these, when they left Egypt, the world, to become followers of God as dear children...”

(1) We cannot serve God and mammon. (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13)

(2) Our consecration was to do God’s will instead of our own, and in His way.

(3) We can’t do anything perfectly.

The Manna for March 31st: *“The Lord in making His estimate will take knowledge of the spirit which actuated us, rather than of the results secured by our efforts....”*

Eph. 5:8 *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”*

Six related points:

(1) “Believe in the light”. (John 12:36; Psa. 97:11; Prov. 4:18)

(2) Let our light shine. (Matt. 5:16)

(3) “Watch and be sober.” (1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7) [See the Manna for November 19th, R5256 and Q663:3.]

(4) “Love righteousness and hate iniquity.” (Heb. 1:9)

(5) “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Eph. 5:11)

(6) Strive to follow Phil. 4:8 *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

See also the Manna for July 1st.

An important warning in 2 Cor. 11:14 – *“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*

Ephesians 5:15-17 – *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming [i.e. buying back] the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

- (1) Carefully scrutinize our thoughts, motives and intentions in order to “buy back the time”.
- (2) Study the Word of God in order to know and understand His will.
- (3) Make straight paths for our feet. (Heb. 12:13)
- (4) “Receive no other Gospel.” (Gal. 1:8,9)

The result will be wisdom and understanding.

R3720 (page 3721): “However much we have heard of Jesus, however much we have rejoiced in the salvation which he died to secure for us, however much we have trusted in the merit of his sacrifice, we did not become his disciples until we had formally reached the point of giving our hearts, our lives, our wills to him — responding to his invitation, becoming followers of God...”

R836: “In the selection of those who shall be accounted worthy to share the kingdom, a manifestation of faith is required – they must be such as are willing to follow God's leadings...”

See also R5718 – His Servants We Are To Whom We Render Service

“Being Dear Children”

(1) As “little children”:

Matt. 18:3

Matt. 19:14 (See also Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16.)

R1766: “The special characteristics of a little child are simplicity of heart, meekness, truthfulness, freedom from ambition and rivalry, faith, confiding trust, love, obedience, teachableness, indifference to social distinctions and popular opinions, and guilelessness.”

R4658: “Those who will be of the Kingdom of God must be like little children in the sense of being simple hearted, true, honest and trustful of their heavenly Father.”

(2) As “children in malice”:

1 Cor. 14:20

R2062: “not as a little child in stature, nor in blankness of undeveloped character, but in humility, simplicity, guilelessness.”

(3) As “children of light”:

1 Thess. 5:5

Matt. 5:16

E293: “The Apostle Paul, addressing the same body of Christ, says, ‘Ye were at one time darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of the light.’ (Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5) Again he says, ‘For God [the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth] hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.’ (2 Cor. 4:6)”

R5718 and Songs in the Night for January 2nd.

(4) As “obedient children” (1 Pet. 1:14,15):

Manna March 19th: “Some Christians have the erroneous idea that God does all the fashioning, and that His children are to be merely passive in His hand; but Peter does not so express it. He exhorts us to fashion ourselves according to the divine instructions” and “to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.” (Phil. 2:12)

R5481: “If we are obedient children, everything will work well. We shall get the proper tests, the proper chiseling and polishing, everything that will make us ‘meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.’”

Songs in the Night for February 18th:

(1) The Lord and His service must always have first place in our hearts affections.

(2) We cannot serve God and mammon, but must choose to serve God.

(3) We must never “look back” longingly, as Lot’s wife did, to the things of this earth which we gave up in our consecration. These trivial things can never compare to the grand reward held before us.

(4) If we do these things we will be followers of God as dear children.

As dear children we are no longer aliens, strangers, foreigners. We are longer condemned to death, but on the contrary are justified to life.

We are to “grow up into Him in all things.” (Eph. 4:15)

“Walking in Love”

This verse is talking about the law of love put into action.

It must govern our words.

It must govern our deeds.

It will prompt us to lay down our lives for the Brethren.

It will control our conduct toward all.

We should “do good unto all men”. (Gal. 6:10)

But our priority is to serve the household of faith.

Eventually this law of love will bring us to the point of loving even our enemies – desiring to do them good.

The law of the New Creation actually surpasses the Golden Rule.

The law of the New Creation prompts to sacrifice.

Sacrifice goes beyond doing good unto others.

F378: “The world will not be left to a law of love during the Millennium, but will be ruled with Justice and Mercy under a law of obedience to the Kingdom.”

The law of love is exemplified in the life of Christ.

Submission to the Divine Will in all things.

February 18th Manna

June 21st Manna

December 7th Manna: “*When He was reviled, He reviled not again.*” (1 Peter 2:23)

R5842 (5844) “Submission a Test of Loyalty”

R3733 (3744) “Blessed are the Meek”.

One of Webster’s definitions: “Submission to the Divine will; patience and gentleness from moral and religious motives.”

“The Law of Liberty” – (Jas. 1:25)

(1) The Law of Love governs those who follow God’s Will in all things, not by compulsion, but because of their desire to do so.

(2) The connection between love and liberty therefore becomes more evident.

(3) From F196: “The Lord's plan of granting great liberty is the best plan – the one which most surely tests the heart-loyalty, most fully develops character, and proves the willingness of each to follow with the other the Law of Love...”

F312: “That Law of Love will be sure to urge modesty as respects all innovations or changes from the customs of the early Church...”

There is a great danger in our day.

Viewing principles as “old-fashioned” and “outdated”.

Worship God “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23,24)

Exercise pity and sympathy in regard to the sins and shortcomings of others.

Phil. 4:8 and 9.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16)

Walk circumspectly, redeeming the time.

Eph. 5:15

Jas. 3:17

Heb. 12:13

Eph. 5:16

We are living in the evil day. (Eph. 6:13)

The spirit of the world is more powerful now than ever.

Educational systems of today are promoting evolution and higher criticism as never before.

The liberal mindset; relativistic morality; etc.

Walking in love does not mean that love is allowed to override justice.

We especially need the whole armor of God now.

Eph. 5:17 – *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

This requires study and giving up of our own will to do the will of God.

How much time are we willing to “buy back” from the daily cares of life in order to know God’s will, to understand God’s will, and to do God’s will?

Following Jesus' example

Jesus is the captain of our salvation, our leader, our forerunner, our archetype.

Hebrews 12:2-4: *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself...”*

The author and finisher of our faith.

Greek *archegos* [G747] – “The first in a long procession. A leader who pioneers the way for many others to follow.”

Greek *teleiotes* [G5051] – “The one who brings a process to its ultimate conclusion.”

Five important components mentioned in these verses which relate to Jesus' example:

- (1) Joy – [G5479] “Rejoicing because of a full awareness of God's grace and favor.”
- (2) Endurance – [G5278] “Remaining under the load.”
- (3) Cross-bearing
- (4) “Disregarding the shame” [G2706]
- (5) “Enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself” [G5278 and G485]

Sacrifice to God

R5230

The Ransom-sacrifice could only be provided by Jesus.

We desire to follow in his footsteps. (Rom. 12:1)

The sacrifice of earthly time, talents and influence is like incense or perfume from God's perspective, but is disgusting in the eyes of the world.

2 Cor. 2:15,16

Col. 1:24

Prayer also plays an important role in this matter:

Heb. 13:15

Rev. 8:3,4

R1237: "We must crucify the *justified* flesh, presenting our human wills and bodies a living sacrifice to God; no longer to seek for human pleasure, honor, praise, etc., but to be dead to these and alive to the heavenly ones."

As it was with Jesus, so it should be with us: "*Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.*" (Heb. 10:7)

Concluding thoughts

Eph. 5:1,2 – *“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”*

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