



GROWING – Power of Imitation & Gratitude 28th June 2020 Mark Wiltshire

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

Connect:

“When I was very young, I started trying to sing like the great tenor Mario Lanza; my family used to play his records. We all learn best by imitating others.”

Andrea Bocelli (Italian Tenor)

Engage:

1. What does it mean to imitate God?
2. Read Ephesians 5:1
3. Why is imitation important?
4. What do you imitate?
- Believers are called to:
 - Imitate God (holiness, loving and forgiving) in all conduct.
 - Be like Him, not as slaves to earn a wage but as children - loved.
- As children imitate their parents, we should follow God’s example.

“And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”

1 Corinthians 11:1

5. How does imitating God relate to discipleship?

Framework:

6. Read and discuss Ephesians 5:2
7. Why is sacrificial love significant?
8. Read John 15:13 & Romans 5:8

“His great love for us led Him to sacrifice Himself that we might live.”

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“Love for others goes beyond affection, to self-sacrificing service.”

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“What we talk about and think about we will eventually live out.”

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9. Read Ephesians 5:3-5

➤ How can we live holy lives?

- When we are in Christ, our talk will change, as will our actions.
- Paul did not say that no one who ever engaged in immorality or greed can enter Christ’s kingdom. Rather he said, that no immoral, impure, or greedy person currently has an inheritance in the kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- **Sexual immorality** - This general term covers all sexual sins, including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, etc.
- There are many issues around sexuality and identity in society. How can we show God’s love but also help people to know what God thinks about what is wrong?
- **Impurity** – (lewd intention, demonic influence, self-obsessed motives)
- **Covetousness** is a jealous longing for what others possess (Exodus 20:17), and amounts to **idolatry** (Ephesians 5:5 & Colossians 3:5).
- **Thankfulness protects us and re-centres us on God**
- Thanksgiving, in contrast to crude joking and foolish talk, is the positive way to speak, and it also counteracts covetousness. The way to avoid coveting others possessions is to concentrate with thanks upon the good things the Lord has given.
- **Idolater** - Covetousness places one's ultimate allegiance in the acquisition of the possessions of others, (1 Kings 21:1–19). Paul says this is tantamount to idolatry (Colossians 3:5).
- Things greedy people desire become their gods (Matthew 6:24).

“I don't have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness - it's right in front of me if I'm paying attention and practicing gratitude.”

Brene Brown

10. Why is Godly gratitude (Thankfulness) so powerful?

➤ The 3 R’s:

- **Recognises (good...):** What good things has God done for me in the past?
- **Reminds (difference made...):** What changes have happened because of God’s work in my life?
- **Re-centres (upwards...):** Why is looking to God more important to me than looking to others for approval?

11. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18
12. Take a moment to think about the personal areas you can be thankful for (for example, friendships, life and health etc).
13. In what areas am I making a difference to others?
14. Am I doing this for my benefit or theirs?
15. Spiritual areas we can be thankful:
 - *Eternal Purpose*: 'Inheritance' in Christ - "...Morning by morning He wakens me and opens my understanding to His will." Isaiah 50:4b
 - *Prayers Answered*: Holy Spirit in us – His Guidance and Strength Psalm 100:4
 - *Financial Potential* – Kingdom Generosity
 - *God's Generosity*: in so many ways – he gives all that is "Good" - God provides "to us and through us."
 - *Help Someone Else Spiritually* – Testimony / Discovery / Prayer - Romans 8:28

Conclusion:

- **Imitate God** – He builds and protects us
- **Thanking God** – is the key to unlock sinful pressures
- Let your prayer to the Father, be **'thank you'**