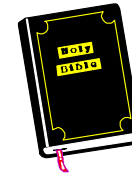


WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST



“every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

IMITATORS OF GOD

“Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children” - Ephesians 5:1 (ASV)

Christianity is not some type of unattainable ideal. It is an ideal but one which is both attainable and practical. In the above text, Christians are described as "dear children" and are urged to imitate their Father.

When people become children of God, there should be a change in the way they live. The verses which follow our text, Ephesians 5:2-13, address this subject. From them Christians can learn how to "be imitators of God."

Walk In Love (Ephesians 5:2): One's "walk" is their manner of life. Christians should be characterized as loving individuals. The standard for the Christian's love is Christ (John 13:34-35). He should love as Christ loved, sacrificially (Eph. 5:25). This is the principle of esteeming others before self (Phil. 2:3-8).

Reject Moral Impurity (Ephesians 5:3-5): Similar warnings are found in Galatians 5:19-21 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. In the moral quagmire of our time, Christians must stand up for the morality of God. For to reject God's standard is to reject God. Immoral acts should "not even be named" among Christians (v. 3).

This includes rejecting covetousness for it is also immoral. The Christian must not be consumed with "things" (Luke 12:15) but must rather put them in proper perspective (Matt. 6:33).

It also includes "filthiness" and "foolish talking." Christians must be careful of what they say and how they say it (Jas. 1:26; 3:2). Words reveal what is in the heart (Matt. 12:34). God's children must always speak properly (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6).

Guard Against False Teaching (Ephesians 5:6-7): Every New Testament writer warns of false teachers (cf. Matt. 7:15; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1). The only possible solution to the problem of false teaching is the word of God, the Truth (John 8:32; 17:17). The only way to be imitators of God is to know and obey the Truth. Sadly, that is not always the case even among those who claim to be God's people (Gal. 4:16). Only obedience to the Truth of the gospel will purify one's soul (1 Pet. 1:22).

—Continued on page 3

Choose the Strait Gate in 2008!

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 51 December 28, 2008

RECORDS 12/21/2008

SERMONS 12/28/2008

Sun 10 AM Bible Study: 58
Sun 11 AM Assembly: 105
Sun 6 PM Assembly: 64
Weds 7 PM Bible Study: —
CONTRIBUTION: \$2250

AM: Jerry Manning
LEAVING AND CLEAVING (Heb 6)
PM: Joshua Manning

“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” - Hebrews 5:14

A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
www.WestColumbiaChurchOfChrist.org

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SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided
Bible Classes for all ages

LADIES CLASS
2nd Tuesday of month 7-9 PM

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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Beryl Parks, Nina Ruth Meadows (Marcella Klieves' mother), Jack and Elma Berrier, Lynn Drago (Jerry's sister) and Phyllis Johnson.
- **Lamar Reeves** is in Lexington hospital, (Room 499 North Tower) for a perforated colon due to his Crohn's disease. They are working to combat the very serious infection and surgery might be needed. Pray for Lamar's relief.
- **Carolyn Stidham** is recovering from knee replacement surgery at Richland Memorial Hospital, room 816, her rehab is going well.
- **Remember the Banks** and **Stoyk** families, and **Marilyn Brooks** as they are traveling. **Ron Banks** is to have back surgery 12/31/2008.
- **Betty Mathis** was in Providence NE hospital with fluid on her lungs, but is back in rehab now, doing better.
- **Ruth Raine** is in Minnesota for eye surgery.
- **Jeanette Reeves** continues to struggle with sin. Pray for her repentance.
- Remember all these, our new brothers and sisters in Christ, and brother **Manning** and those he studies the Bible with, in your prayers.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." -Matthew 25:40

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- Next Wed. is **New Year's eve**. Those who wish to welcome in the New Year with the saints may stay after the evening assembly for a time of fellowship - so bring snacks and things to do. **Jerry** will present a slide show of his India trip.
- **Ladies Bible** class now meets monthly, **Second** Tuesday evenings, 7-9 pm.
- **SINGING! SAVE THE DATE!** At the Twin City church in Batesburg Leesville, last Sunday in January (25th) 2-4 pm

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." - Romans 8:18

WORK TEAM SCHEDULE: 12/28—C 1/4—D 1/11—A 1/18—B

You better hurry! There's not much time left to:

Choose the Strait Gate in 2008!

Before you have to:

Let Your Light Shine in 2009!

IMITATORS OF GOD—(continued from page 1)

Christians must continually strive to obey and practice God's word and let no one deceive them.

Be Light In A World Of Darkness (Ephesians 5:8-3): God draws a clear line between good and evil, light and darkness, His children and the children of the devil (Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9). Because He has delivered Christians from Satan's darkness, they must live with Him in light, their lives showing His light (Matt. 5:14). To be like God, one must walk in the light (John 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7).

Those who belong to God must "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (v. 11). If they are children of God, they belong to the light (1 Thes. 5:5-6) and their lives should reflect it.

Conclusion: Verse 14 provides the closing admonition to the text: "Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.'" Life without Christ is a spiritual stupor for it is Christ who motivates and energizes one's life (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:1). Certainly one who claims to wear the name of Christ ought to awaken and live for Him and by His word.

Because they are His children, Christians must let their lives reflect that glorious and sacred relationship. They must be "imitators of God as dear children."

- **Gene Taylor**, Evangelist, elder, Centerville Road Church of Christ, Tallahassee, Florida

Ephesians 5:1-14

1) **“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2) 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. 3) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4) Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.**

5) **For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7) Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8) For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9) (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12) For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13) But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14) Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.**