

Ephesians 4:17 – 5:2 ESV

# God Is Calling Us to Be Copycats!

Sunday, August 9 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, August 10 at 7 PM  
 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2015

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: We have all sinned, so God has ♦saved us through Jesus and ♦made us members of the Holy Christian Church. Therefore, we ♦are spiritually alive and ♦will eventually experience the *fullness* of eternal life. So what now, *as we await our transfer from earth to paradise?* God is calling us to be copycats! Since we are God’s children, He is calling us to imitate Him in our lives!

## 1. **Stop Living Like Unbelievers:**

- a. <sup>17</sup> **Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility** [*emptiness, vanity*] **of their minds.** // So don’t live a life that *in the end* is empty!
- b. <sup>18</sup> **They are darkened** [*thus without light, without vision*] **in their understanding, alienated** [*thus separated*] **from the life of God because of the ignorance** [*thus the lack of awareness*] **that is in them, due to their hardness of heart** [*thus their being closed minded to God’s truth*]. // “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved” (2Th 2:10b NIV). So, since God’s truth sets us free from our sins, *let us love God’s truth!*
- c. <sup>19</sup> **They have become callous** [*or dead to feeling*] **and have given themselves up to sensuality** [*to whatever pleases the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching*], **greedy** [*thus desiring*] **to practice every kind of impurity.** // Unbelievers

say, “If it feels good, do it,” but that is *not* to be the attitude of God’s holy children!

## 2. **Basic Instructions for Believers:**

- a. <sup>20</sup> **But that is not the way you learned Christ!--**  
<sup>21</sup> **assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, //** So all Christians should have been taught to ✦live with purpose (*not emptiness*), ✦grow in learning (*not ignorance*), and ✦seek God’s will (*not their own*)!
- b. So you should have been taught <sup>22</sup> **to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,** <sup>23</sup> **and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,** <sup>24</sup> **and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.** // From Adam and Eve we inherited the desire to sin; so, *through our baptism into Christ*, ✦the desire to sin was drowned **and** ✦the desire to do God’s will was given. Now those realities must be renewed every day; Dr. Luther wrote **“that the Old Adam in us should **by daily contrition** [*sorrow for sin*] **and repentance** [*faith*] be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever”** (Small Catechism, Fourth Baptism Answer). So we live each day ✦sorry for our sins, ✦trusting in Jesus, and ✦open to His will for our lives.

## 3. **Specific Instructions for Believers:** <sup>25</sup> **Therefore, having put away falsehood** [*since we are now new in*

*Christ*], **let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor** [*in this writing, his believing neighbor*], **for we are members one of another** [*thus the one body of Christ*].

a. Stop and start:

- i. <sup>26</sup> **Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil.** // Powered by the Spirit: Stop letting your anger lead you into sin. Stop holding on to anger. Stop giving the devil an opportunity to pull you away from Jesus. Start living a self-controlled, God-honoring life!
  - ii. <sup>28</sup> **Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.** // If you are stealing in any way, stop! If you are able to be productive, start; then help others who are not able!
  - iii. <sup>29</sup> **Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.** // Stop speaking things that are rotten, worthless, or false – *which tear people down!* Instead, start speaking things that are fitting and true – *which build people up!*
- b. Give the Holy Spirit joy, not sorrow: <sup>30</sup> **And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.** // God  
 ♦ loves us, ♦ has saved us through Jesus, and ♦ has

given us the Holy Spirit to guide us. When we reject Him in our thinking, speaking, or acting, He is sad. If we *persist* in rejecting, He will leave us. So let us do His will for ♦His joy and ♦our benefit!

- c. <sup>31</sup> **Let all bitterness** [*resentment*] **and wrath** [*rage*] **and** [sinful] **anger and clamor** [*loud shouting*] **and slander** [*abusive speech*] **be put away from you, along with all malice** [*evil*]. // All such things are *not* pleasing to God, nor appropriate for God's holy children.
- d. <sup>32</sup> **Be kind to one another, tenderhearted** [*compassionate, considerate*], **forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.** // How has God acted toward us – *as we deserve* **or** *with mercy*? Our sins have earned us eternal punishment, *but God punished Jesus for our sins*; then He extended His mercy to us😊! Therefore, *being kind and considerate of others*, let us forgive them as God in Christ has forgiven us!

**Conclusion:** <sup>5:1</sup> **Therefore** [since God loves us so much] **be imitators of God, as beloved children.** <sup>2</sup> **And walk** [*thus live*] **in love**, [How?] **as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.** // Since we needed Jesus to live and die for us, *He did it to save us!* Now, *since we are saved through Jesus*, let us take loving action toward others! And all God's people said: **Amen!**

**Response:** How am I living like the sinful world, rather than like a child of God? Lord, open my eyes to see Your precious truth; then move me to repent, to change, to honor You by ♦not becoming sinfully angry, ♦doing honest work, ♦speaking as if You were standing next to me, and ♦forgiving others as You have forgiven me! Amen!

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