

EPHESIANS

Name:

Year:

Chapter 5: 1-14

This chapter opens with St. Paul instructing the Ephesians to “be imitators of God.” This is an important concept in Christianity and is the foundation of those WWJD bracelets. In verse 4 we read that we should avoid “foolish talk or coarse jesting.” Here St. Paul is asking us to avoid foolish speech. St. John Chrysostom explains: “Let there be no obscenities, either in word or deed, that might quench the flame of the spirit. For words often lead the way to actions. Then, in order that it may not appear that he is a spoilsport Paul gently shows that he is not an opponent of playfulness. For he qualifies this instruction by explaining its reason: You are not to indulge in that form of silly talk that is “not befitting” to this community. Better to offer thanksgiving than to spew out such talk. What good is it if you make an unbecoming witticism? All you have done is raise a laugh. **Tell me, does the shoemaker use any instrument that does not befit his trade? Would he purchase a tool that does not contribute to his craft? Of course not. Similarly, that which is of no use to our purpose is nothing to us....**



Chapter 5: 15-33

This passage contains perhaps some of the most important teachings for us, especially for married life. The bit before that however is probably more relevant for year 12s, particularly those who have finished the HSC. We read in verses 18-19 about two important problems for youth today – music and drinking. St Paul writes: “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”. Again St John Chrysostom, giving a sermon to his congregation hundreds of years ago, is still relevant today. He explains: “Do you wish to be happy? Do you want to know how to spend the day truly blessed? I offer you a drink that is spiritual. This is not a drink for drunkenness that would cut off even meaningful speech. This does not cause us to babble. It does not disturb our vision. Here it is: Learn to sing psalms! Then you will see pleasure indeed. Those who have learned to sing with the psalms are easily filled with the Holy Spirit. But if you sing only the devil’s songs you will soon find yourself filled with an unclean spirit.” And these words are echoed by HH Pope Shenouda today – “He who memorises (or looks after) the psalms, the psalms will look after him.” The concept is a simple one: good stuff goes in, good stuff will come out. Bad stuff in, bad out.



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Chapter 6: 1-9

Having given instruction in the previous chapter to husbands and wives, here St. Paul shifts his focus to the next logical group, which is children. He instructs them to “obey your parents in the Lord.” Notice that the commandment is not just “obey your parents” but “obey your parents **in the Lord.**” Does that mean that there are occasions when we should not obey our parents. Let’s ask St John Chrysostom. “But what if the parents command foolish things? Generally parents do not command foolish things. But if they should, the apostle has a remedy when he says that parents are to be obeyed “in the Lord.” They are to be obeyed in whatever way they are not offending against God.” Basically, if the command of your parents is against the command of God, God takes priority. Of course this is an unlikely situation, but if it happens, we should take the advice of our confession father, Sunday school servants or trusted and responsible friends about how to deal with the matter.



Chapter 6: 10-24

St Paul finishes this epistle with a bang. He uses the vivid imagery of a soldier about to enter battle to illustrate the spiritual challenges before us. We read, “¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[c] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” If our enemy is not an earthly power, then it would be really illogical to try and fight with earthly weapons! For example, some people feel that because of their sin, no one can love them, not even God Himself! This is the sin of despair and one of the devil’s great tricks. Unfortunately though, people sometimes try and fight this with earthly weapons – they distract themselves with music, movies, friends, substance abuse and the list goes on. But remember, if your enemy is not an earthly one, there is no way you can defeat them with earthly tools. You need heavenly ones! And what are they? Read verses 14- 20. These are the armor of God! Prayer, the Holy Spirit, the Gospel (Bible)!

CHILDREN
OBEY
YOUR PARENTS
IN THE LORD
FOR THIS IS RIGHT

EPHESIANS 6:1