

IMITATOR OR CHAMELEON? **Ephesians 4:17-5:10**

INTRODUCTION:

You do not have to read all the letters of Paul to know that his major concern is that Christians bear Christian fruit. After a week of soul searching, is there any fruit in your life that you are not pleased with? Paul would simply say, "If it is not the fruit of the Spirit...if it does not imitate Jesus, it is rotten fruit and you need to dispose of it."

Think with me about the best Christian you have ever known... a person comes to mind. Think about the person who claimed to be a Christian, but in all honesty, you sometimes wondered...a person comes to mind. With those in mind, let's let God teach us through Paul and his letter to the Ephesians.

I. THE PROBLEM: When the heart is hardened (18), sensitivity is lost (19), the devil gets a foothold (27), and the Holy Spirit is grieved (30).

William Barclay has a good explanation of hardening the heart. The word which Paul uses for the petrifying of their hearts is grim and terrible. It is "porosis." It originally meant a stone that was harder than marble. Then it became a medical term. It was used for the chalk stone which can form in the joints and completely paralyse action. It was used for the callus that forms where a bone has been broken and re-set, a callus which is harder than the bone itself. Finally the word came to mean the loss of all power of sensation; it described something which had become so hardened, so petrified that it had no power to feel at all.

Verse 19, in the heathen world, Paul saw three terrible things. He saw men's hearts so petrified that they were not even aware that they were sinning; he saw men so dominated by sin that shame was lost and decency forgotten; and he saw men so much at the mercy of their desires that they did not care whose life they injured and whose innocence they destroyed so long as these desires were satisfied. How much different are we today? This is why Paul's message is so vital to us.

II. THE RATIONALE: You cannot be that way because you are saved—set apart—different (20-32).

- a. Truth (21)
- b. New Attitude (23)
- c. Put aside evil (25)
- d. Self-control (31)
 - 1. Anger
 - 2. Tongue—Both gossip, slander, foul mouth
 - 3. Bitterness
 - 4. Fighting
- e. **YOU** have to change—you must be kind and compassionate

III. THE SOLUTION: Be Imitators of Jesus Christ (5:1-10).

Just listen to the verses. They are self-explanatory.

One of the main phrases for Paul throughout his works but especially in Ephesians and you probably picked up on it as you read, “THE WILL OF GOD.” Even in chapter 5:17.

Here is where we have to make a serious application of the word of God to our lives. You must understand what the will of the Lord is, but that is not the most important part. “To know to do right and not to do it is SIN.” So knowing what the will of God is secondary to DOING the will of God.

Now Paul goes through all this stuff to help us understand that if there is sin in our lives and we are hardened to sin and we have lost our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and we are grieving the Holy Spirit by not following Him, then we are not going to know what the will of God is and if you don’t know it, you sure can’t do it.

If you have all these sins in your life that he mentions, you will have a hardened heart and you will have lost your sensitivity.

5:3, You cannot even have a hint of immorality in your life.

Here's application: Application comes when you do a survey of your life.

--Do you always keep the law?—do you drive 57 in a 55?

--Are you absolutely sure about every detail on your tax return?

--Have you been anywhere that your husband or wife would oppose your going?

--Have you visited any site on the internet that you would not be proud to stand up right now and say, this is where I have been?

--All your insurance claims are on the up and up?

--All your relationships—every one of your relationships would be pleasing to God?

--Your family would not be surprised if they knew **THIS** about you?

See, I think it is evident that each of us needs to spend some time on our knees in private.

1. We need to apologize to God.
2. Secondly, we need biblical repentance which leads to change.
3. Thirdly, we need to re-commit our lives to the Lord.
4. Finally, we need to leave here this morning with the intent that we are going to be imitators of the Lord Jesus in our living—ALL THE TIME.

Let's bow together for a time of prayer before we respond to the Holy Spirit of God.