

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Ephesians 5:1-14

Sunday, December 23, 2012

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What might happen to Christians and to churches if they promoted only the Bible's teachings on belief and faith?

They might not also teach the practical application of faith, and that true faith in Jesus Christ will lead a believer to love and serve Jesus Christ and others. They might not also teach that Jesus expects His followers to obey Him and God the Father, just as He always obeyed His Father. Some might mistakenly think that they could practice poor ethics; such as, cheat or steal, and as long as they believed in Jesus it did not matter how they behaved.

2. What might happen to Christians and to churches if they promoted only the Bible's teachings on moral and immoral behavior?

Some might think that as long as they "lived a good life" that it did not matter if they had faith that God exists or believed what God taught in the Bible. Some might think they could earn their salvation or deserve salvation based on the way they behaved. Some might think that as long as they obeyed the laws it did not matter what they believed. Some might think that there was no hope for them or God would never help them because in the past they had done some things that were wrong.

3. How do Paul's letters and the Bible teach about belief, faith, and behavior in the best ways?

Paul most usually taught about faith in Jesus, about the promises of God, and about the grace and peace that comes from belief in Jesus before teaching about how best to live as a Christian or as a Church or correct behavior. The Bible teaches first about God and then teaches about how best to relate to God; for example, we learn about God creating the world and how wonderful God was to create people in His image before we learn about Adam and Eve disobeying God in the garden of Eden and the consequences of disobeying God and God's solution to sin. The Bible first teaches about God and what God does and what God has done before the Bible teaches about our responsibility to God. The Bible first teaches about the right foundation of faith upon which to build our lives and then teaches more specifically about how best to build our lives day by day.

4. According to Ephesians chapter 5, what will distinguish a beloved child of God from others?

A beloved child of God will live and love in many ways as his heavenly Father lives because he will have God's character imparted to him by the Holy Spirit who lives within him. He will have the desire and help from God to imitate God, his Father. A beloved child of God is a child of light (or truth) and will live differently from those in the dark.

5. Where can you find the fruit of the light (see Ephesians 5:9)? Where else might you find the fruit of the light?

A person can find "the fruit of the light" in a child of God. They will find what is good and right and true in a child of God. You will find "the fruit of the light" in true Christian churches, in the Bible, in Christian homes, and in Christian businesses.

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