

## 11 CONFIDENT LIVING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

If you could bring back any fashion trend what would it be?

You're part of the church at Ephesus and you've been asked to send a reply email to the Apostle Paul in response to his letter. What would you say?



### Some background

The Ephesian congregation of believers lived in a godless city surrounded by immorality, ungodliness, and decadence. All of these believers had been saved from such a background, and after reminding them of all the riches they have in Christ (ch 1-3) Paul focuses their attention to the practical ramifications of the Gospel.

**Read Ephesians 5:1-14 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup> Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup> Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. <sup>3</sup> Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. <sup>4</sup> Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. <sup>5</sup> You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. <sup>6</sup> Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. <sup>7</sup> Don't participate in the things these people do. <sup>8</sup> For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! <sup>9</sup> For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. <sup>12</sup> It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, <sup>14</sup> for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

What strikes you and what challenges you?

1. What questions do you have that arise out of this passage? Discuss

2. How is it that Christians can imitate God ('mimic') and what does that mean?

3. What does it mean to 'walk in love'? (cf vv 3-14 1 John 3:18; 4:7–19)
4. What kinds of elements would make a joke evil?
5. Do you tolerate evil and look the other way, or do you confront it gently and in love when you see it in your church or world?
  - a. How do you respond to gossip?
  - b. If someone is telling a racist joke, what do you do?
  - c. If someone in your workplace boasts about their sexual promiscuity, how do you respond?
  - d. If you were to be aware of a situation of domestic violence, what action would you take?
6. Describe a life that is full of darkness and a life that is full of light.

History records that Alexander the Great once discovered a coward in his army, a soldier who happened to be named Alexander. The legendary leader confronted the man and thundered, "Renounce your cowardice or renounce your name!"

The implication for us is clear. We who bear the name "Christian" are to reflect the character of Jesus Christ.

7. So who do you look like? As you reflect on 5:1–14, what commands do you see that you struggle with? What of your behaviour reflects light/darkness?

**Prayer** – Write a prayer to God summarizing your own personal application of this passage to your life.

**Journaling** Take a few moments to record your personal insights from this lesson.