

## God Wants You to Be a Good Imitation

### Reader's Guide

is God's will that you be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you ask him to fill you with a heart yielded to him, he will fill you—guaranteed.

Bill Bright teaches this concept on spiritual breathing: As we go throughout the day, becoming aware of impurities in our life, we “exhale” them by confessing them to God. And then we “inhale” his presence in our lives by surrendering ourselves to his control, asking to be filled with his Spirit.

[Q] How can you live each day carefully and cautiously? Give practical examples.

[Q] How can you live each day immersed in God's will? What does that look like in daily life?

[Q] How do you know when you are filled with the Holy Spirit? How does your life reflect his presence?

### Optional Activity:

**Purpose:** *To help us understand what it means to live daily in God's presence.*

**Activity:** *Break into three groups. Assign each group one of the following: Live carefully and cautiously. Live immersed in God's will. Live filled with the Holy Spirit.*

*Ask each group to come up with two short skits. The first should illustrate the opposite of the thing they were assigned (for example, someone who lives carelessly and takes risks all the time). The second should illustrate that person converted into the Ephesians 5 way of living. Perform both skits for the entire group and discuss.*

### Teaching Point Four: You imitate God by being good to your spouse and family.

Read Ephesians 5:22–6:4.

**There are at least three ways to be a good husband:**

**1. Accept your role as a leader (vv. 22–23).** This reference to Christ is a comparison, not a job description. You're the leader of your family, not their Lord and Savior. This is what it means: Your wife needs (and wants) you to be a strong and courageous leader. Not a bully, not a dictator, not a caveman, but strong and courageous. There is not a woman in the world who wants to be married to a weakling. There is not a woman in the world who wants to be married to a coward. She needs you to be strong. Your family needs you to be strong. They need to be able to look to you for leadership. This has nothing to do with chauvinism; it has everything to do with character.

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### Leader's Guide

You're the leader. Do you know what an effective leader does? Here's a great quote: "Good leaders inspire people to have confidence in them. Great leaders inspire people to have confidence in themselves." When Sam Ewing made that statement, he was talking about business—but he could have been talking about marriage.

This is your job as a leader: bring out the best in your wife and your children. Inspire them to be the very best that they can be.

**2. Accept your role as a lover (vv. 25–29).** Paul tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. How much did Christ love the church? Enough to die for it. Who makes the sacrifices in your household? Do your wife and kids structure their lives around yours? Do they have to yield their wants and needs to yours? Are you the center of your little universe? Who makes the sacrifices at your house? If a sacrifice is to be made, you're the one to make it. You do without, not them.

Men, if you were to make a list of all the words you hope would describe your personality and character, the word *nurturing* probably wouldn't make the top five. But it should, because there is no other way to describe the way you take care of yourself. When you're hungry, you eat. When you're tired, you sleep. When you've got a headache, you take an aspirin. When you get a chance to watch a ball game, you watch it. That's nurturing in a nutshell. In the same way that you take care of yourself, you need to take care of your wife. In the same way that you love yourself, you need to love your wife.

Think about what your wife needs. Her needs are different from yours, and they're every bit as important. You might not need conversation at the dinner table, but maybe she does. You might not need to have your hand held, but maybe she does. You might not need to hear the words "I love you," but maybe she does.

**3. Accept your role for a lifetime (v. 31).** It is clear that God takes this matter seriously. Marriage is a lifetime commitment. You want to be a good man, a good father, a good husband? Then you've got to recognize that this is the role of a lifetime. That means you've got to be willing to stay.

**[Q]** If your wife is present in this group, get together with her and discuss the following. If she is not present, take time to answer these questions yourself and then find a time to discuss them with your wife.

- Is there any area in which I am abdicating my leadership?
- I need your help in fulfilling my role in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How can I better love you? What would make you feel loved?