

2nd week of August
“Watch what God does”
Ephesians 4:25-5:2

My Story

Have you ever been in a foreign place where you didn't know what to do and how to act? Most of the time, when we are in places like these, we watch others to see what they do and how they act. Then we do what they do. I visited a Greek Orthodox Church when I was in seminary. It was part of an assignment, and several of us went. The church was gorgeous. We came in, sat down, and opened the worship guide (the Greek Orthodox church uses books that look like hymnals). One side was in English and the other side was in Greek. It seemed like it would be a piece of cake to follow along. But the bishop who was leading the service that morning was Greek with a very thick Greek accent. As a result, it was hard to follow what he was saying in English. I found myself glancing around at others, mimicking what they did so that I wouldn't stand when we were supposed to be sitting and would know when to start singing. Imitation, particularly in situations like that, is how we learn what to do.

Your Story

Have you ever been in a place where you learned what to do by watching others? Perhaps this was in church as a child or maybe it was in a foreign land. Tell your family about that time.

The Bible Story

Read Ephesians 4:25-5:2, emphasizing Ephesians 5:1-2. Here's the passage from *The Message*:
“What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life. Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work. Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift. Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted. Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

5¹⁻² Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

“Watch what God does, and then you do it.” The author of Ephesians tells us what to do, how we are to live. We are to watch what God does and then do it. He doesn’t end there, though. It’s almost as if he has heard our question, “but what does God do?”, because he responds by saying that mostly what God does is love us and everyone around us. God didn’t call us to love others only if they love us. He calls us to love extravagantly, to forgive others when they wrong us, to let go of our anger when others do something wrong, to be gentle with others, and to recognize the gift He has given us. As the writer of Ephesians says, we have a great gift within us: the gift of the Holy Spirit. Part of God is living in us, shaping us so that we can be more like God. God loves us when we are mean, rude, and angry. And God calls us to love others even when nobody else loves them. God wants us to watch Him and see how much He loves others. And then He wants us to do the same.

Discussion

- Ask your family to talk about times when they didn’t know what to do so they watched someone else and did what they did
- Talk about how in worship your children learn how to worship in church by watching you

Prayer

Thank God for how much He loves us. Ask God to help you and your family to see others the way that He sees them.