

Changed | Change My Behavior

READ – EPHESIANS 5:1-14

CONSIDER THIS -

Whether you're a character in a Tom Clancy novel or a real-life military sniper, there may be no more valuable piece of equipment than your camouflage clothing, specifically your ghillie suit. A ghillie suit is made to blend in with the surrounding environment. It's made from cloth, burlap, and leaves, and is covered in twigs, grasses, and other vegetation to blend completely with its environment. Vietnam-era sniper Carlos Hathcock once spent 3 full days in the midst of the enemy, hidden in plain sight by his ghillie suit as they repeatedly walked right past him. Unfortunately, the behavior of a lot of Christians bears more than a passing resemblance to a cultural ghillie suit. Rather than following Jesus' teachings and example, we're indistinguishable from the world around us. With the exception of attending church (sometimes), the way we act and the activities in which we participate are much the same as our neighbors and co-workers. Others are more like the chameleon. When they're at worship or with other believers, their language and conduct blend in seamlessly. But when they're with friends outside of church, their behavior shifts to match the group around them. Paul speaks to our behavior in Ephesians 5 when he calls us to total morality, sexual purity, truth, and generosity. Later in the chapter, he reminds us that while we once lived in darkness, now we're different people, called to live in the light and to display the light of Christ to those around us. In his book, "The Culturally Savvy Christian", Dick Staub says every Christian has four possible responses to the current culture. We can cocoon, hiding away from the world. We can combat, going to war on social media and in the political arena. We can conform, behaving much like everyone else in what Staub calls, "Christianity lite". Finally, we can engage our culture, living as we've been called to live, serving as "Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (II Cor. 5:20).

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS -

- What entertainers have you seen or friends do you have that are great at impersonations?
- Is there anyone in your personal or professional life you try to imitate or pattern yourself after? Why have you chosen them to imitate?
- "We are to be Christ-shaped, rather than culture shaped". How would this approach to life affect Christians and the church if we applied it to our lives and relationships?
- How about this quote - "The goal is to look more like Jesus today than you did yesterday". What implications does that have for our faith and lives?
- How might the promises in verses 8 - 10 help us in this area?
- Why would Paul call immoral, impure, or greedy people idolaters? What does God have to say about that title?
- How does a small thing or small sin grow and multiply until it becomes a major issue? Are there really any small sins?

NEXT STEPS -

Track your behavior this week. In what ways are you different from the world around you? How are you the same? How are you acting as salt and light? How about as an ambassador for Christ?

PRAYER -

Father, often we don't want to be different from our friends and the rest of the world around us. We want to fit in, blend in, and not bring attention to ourselves. May we commit to living the life you've called us to regardless of what others do or think.

Let this week's verses encourage and challenge you as you prepare your heart for worship and teaching this coming Sunday!

Monday – I Corinthians 13 **Tuesday** – I Timothy 5:1-8 **Wednesday** – Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Thursday – Philippians 2:1-11 **Friday** – Ephesians 5:15-6:9