

# Be Imitators of God - Walk in Love

Ephesians 5:1-7

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Review Discipleship Group Bookmarks

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children.

## Be imitators of God

This is a call and a challenge to pursue a course of life that imitates Him. And if He calls us to it, then it is possible to do so.

- 1Pe 2:20-21 ... Christ suffered for you, **leaving you an example**, that you should follow in his steps.
- Joh 13:13-15 ... I have set you **an example** that you should do as I have done for you.

## ...as beloved children

### What we do & what we desire reflects who is our father

- John 8:39-44 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "**If you were Abraham's children,**" said Jesus, "***then you would do what Abraham did.***"
- (41) ***You are doing the works of your own father.*** "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."
- (42) Jesus said to them, "**If God were your Father, *you would love me,***"
- (44) **You belong to your father, the devil, and *you want to carry out your father's desires.***
  
- Matthew 5:44-48 But I say to you, ***Love your enemies*** and pray for those who persecute you, (45) ***so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.*** For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) ***For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?*** Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (48) ***You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.***

APPLICATION: As our Father - God wants to have influence in our lives - so much so that we will pick up His traits and His character & that we would desire the things He desires

## Who are the children of God?

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil,

- Not all are the children of God - some are children of the devil

John 1:12-13 Yet to **all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God-- (13) children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, **but born of God.**

- Children of God are those who receive Him
- Children of God are those who believe in his name
- These are those who have the right to become children of God

## **And walk in love**

He tells us to be imitators of God - then he tells us 3 ways to do this

- vs 2 Walk in Love
- vs 8 Walk as children of Light - key = try to discern what is pleasing to the LORD
- vs 15 Walk in Wisdom - key = understanding what the will of the LORD is

**The walk = a person's path or course in life - how you live -Walking in love is a course of life, or a way of life - motivated by love**

## **as Christ loved us...**

How did Christ love me?

**Jesus loved me when I didn't deserve it**

(Romans 5:7-8) ... But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- **Love others even if you feel they don't deserve your love**

**He went first**

(1 John 4:19) "We love him, because he first loved us."

- **Take initiative to love first - even expecting nothing in return**

**His love never fails**

(Romans 8:35-39) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **Be careful that our love does not grow cold**

## and gave himself up for us

### His love was an act of His own volition - He GAVE HIMSELF

- John 10:17-18 For this reason the Father loves me, because ***I lay down my life*** that I may take it up again. (18) ***No one takes it from me***, but ***I lay it down of my own accord***. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."
- (John 15:12-13) This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
- (1 John 3:16) By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

### It was FOR US

This is the greatest expression of love - SACRIFICE - **for someone else**

Many people can sacrifice for personal gain - an athlete who trains to win a crown for example - but this kind of sacrifice is for the benefit of someone else and ***not selfishly motivated at all***

## a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

This kind of love is like a fragrant offering to God...it is not so we feel good about ourselves - that I did a good deed, it is a much higher purpose - that I am imitating my father - and I in my sacrifice of love am a sweet smelling savor to him (like a burnt offering - totally consumed)

APPLICATION: When it comes to love - do we take initiative? - or are we coerced into doing something? - do we lay it down of our own accord and because of God? or are our motives selfish?

APPLICATION: Take initiative to sacrifice for the benefit of another - for the glory of GOD

### Love your neighbor - The man asked "who is my neighbor" -

- (Luke 10:27-37) And he answered, "You shall ***love the Lord your God*** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, ***and your neighbor as yourself***." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "***And who is my neighbor?***" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "***You go, and do likewise***."

## Jesus said “Go and do likewise”

- The man was an enemy - Jesus calls us to love our enemies
- As he journeyed - opportunities to love will show up in the course of life
- He saw him and had compassion on him - the motivation was compassion and pity
- He went to him - initiative
- He took time - he used his resources
- He was inconvenienced - he walked while the other man rode the donkey
- He spent time taking personal care for the man
- He invested money
- He saw this through to the end - I will repay you when I get back

APPLICATION: When it comes to love am I all in? - Willing to give my life? - What am I willing to sacrifice to love others?