

Imitators Of God

Introduction:

- A. {Series: Life in Christ}
- B. [Parents & Kids]
- C. How are we to be imitators of God?
- D. Ephesians 5:1-21
- E. *“To be imitators of God we must be mindful of how we live.”*
- F. Paul calls for us to follow God’s example. (1)
 - a. *“imitators”* = KJV – *“follow”*
 - b. GK – mimetes, idea – *“to mimic”*
 - c. Thus we as God’s children are to imitate our Heavenly Father’s examples...
 - d. [Not Mormon Thinking...]
- G. How?
- H. 3 Actions of imitator:
 - I. We are to walk in love.
 - a. Live by Christ’s example of love.
 - i. Practice unconditional love [2a]
 - 1. Jesus gave Himself on the cross for us.
 - 2. He is the example of unconditional love, because He was willing to become our salvation and forgiveness, even though we didn’t deserve it.
 - 3. *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* – Rom. 5:8
 - 4. We too must follow God’s example and show love to other, even when they don’t deserve it.
 - ii. Practice sacrificial love [2b]
 - 1. Christ sacrifice was for our salvation, but also for an example for our lives.
 - 2. He is the supreme example of sacrificial love.
 - 3. *“sweet-smelling aroma”* – Jesus on the cross became a pleasing offering to God.
 - 4. This is an O.T. idea...
 - 5. *“And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”* – Lev. 1:9b
 - b. Keep away from the counterfeits of love.
 - i. Wicked ways to abstain from. [3-4]
 - 1. The world twists love in to physical, perverse, and unchecked cravings...
 - 2. *“fornication”* – sexual immorality & promiscuity
 - 3. *“uncleanness”* – impurity & indecency
 - 4. *“covetousness”* – greed
 - 5. Not only are these actions unfitting for Christians, but we must also keep our mouths pure from filthiness, obscene, & foolish joking...
 - 6. We must be careful not to let our love turn to something subpar!
 - 7. Instead the pure mouth gives thank...it should be our dialect!
 - ii. The dangers of such actions. [5-7]
 - 1. Notice that Paul makes it clear that those who live a lifestyle of practicing such sins will not inherit the Kingdom of God.
 - 2. *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”* – 1 Cor. 6:9-11
 - 3. People will try to deceive us with their empty words & excuse their sins...
 - 4. [If it feels good... It’s my body...]
 - 5. However, God’s wrath will come upon those who are the children of disobedience!
 - 6. Therefore we shouldn’t join in any sinful lifestyle of an unbeliever!

“2nd imitating action...”

- II. We are to walk in light.
- a. Live out the light of Christ.
- i. Living in the light produces fruit. [8-9]
1. At one time we too were people of darkness...
 2. We lived void of the truth and of virtue.
 3. But now we live in the Lord's light
 4. Thus we must act like it!
 5. *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."* – 1 Jn. 1:5-7
 6. *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."* – Matt. 5:14-16
 7. If we are truly in the light there will be fruit to prove it.
 8. *"Spirit"* (9) is better rendered *"Light"*
 9. Fruit is a common result of growth...
 10. **[Sweet Potato]**
 11. We will be characterized with goodness, righteousness, & truth.
- ii. We learn a lot by walking in the light [10]
1. *"finding out"* – NASB – *"trying to learn"*
 2. Lit. – *"to prove what"*
 3. As we walk in the light we will learn what is and isn't truly pleasing to the Lord in this life.
 4. **["Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it." - The Message]**

5. This is natural, since God wants us to learn more and more about Him.
 6. *"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"* – Ps. 34:8
- b. Uncompromisingly expose darkness to the light.
- i. Have no part with darkness. [11-12]
1. Instead of doing the unfruitfulness of the world, we need to expose sin for what it is.
 2. There is a time to keep our distance...
 3. *"But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us...And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed."* – 2 Thess. 3:6&14
 4. We must be careful not even speak of these horrific actions...
 5. **[be mindful of prayer request]**
- ii. Instead shine the light! [13-14]
1. If we live in the light, we will see our lives affecting others.
 2. Just as real pure light leaves not shadows, nor does the light of Christ leave dark places untouched.
 3. Paul quotes a phrase that reminds us of the value of saving light in the lost man's heart.
 4. **[Could be an ancient church hymn]**
- "3rd imitating action..."

- III. We are to walk in wisdom.
- a. Live after the wisdom of the Lord.
- i. Have a watchful wisdom. [15-16]
1. We are to live "circumspectly" – to be cautious, diligent, watchful...
 2. Not to be foolish...
 3. But be wise
 4. *"Professing to be wise, they became fools"* – Rom. 1:22

5. **[not a ranking of intellect]**
6. We are to have watchful wisdom about the times we live in.
7. “redeeming that time” – to make the most of every opportunity we live in...
8. Living with purpose in these evil times.
- ii. Have an understanding wisdom. [17]
 1. Unlike the ignorance of the unregenerate...
 2. We are to understand the plans of God for mankind.
 3. We come to understand what God wants for us from God’s word.
 4. We seek to follow the Father, like Jesus did...
 5. *“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”* – Jn. 5:30
- b. Seek the full influence of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. It is wise to be under the full guidance of God. [18]
 1. Paul calls a contrast between being drunk on wine...
 2. And being filled with the Holy Spirit
 3. Wine leads to “dissipation” – a ruined and debauched life...
 4. However, Paul here is calling for us to live under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
 5. To let Him have full access and control of our lives.
 6. Thus again following the example of Jesus
 7. *“Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness”* – Lk. 4:1
 - ii. Being filled with the Spirit will be evident in our lives. [19-21]
 1. The Spirit will lead us to public and private worship
 2. “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”

3. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* – Col. 3:16
4. Being filled with the Spirit leads us to have hearts and utterances of giving thanks
5. **[Thanksgiving]**
6. *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* – Heb. 13:15
7. But also being filled with the spirit will cause us to proper view of humbleness to those around us.
8. Thus we are to submit, reverence, & respect others...
9. *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* – Gal. 3:28
10. **[More on submission to come]**

Conclusion

- A. Who have you been imitating lately?
- B. Have you been made a child of God?