

1 **Be Imitators of Christ**—a command not a suggestion
Ephesians 5:1-14

There is a saying that *'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery'*. It's true of Christians desiring to imitate Jesus, to be more like Him. Something we can't **fake** by dressing up the outside--it can only be true on the inside--**a work God does in us by Holy Spirit**. Paul ch 1-3 listed blessings we have in our new life as Child of God--putting off the old life of sin & putting on the new life fashioned after Christ Jesus. **1Jn 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.**

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Therefore looks back **4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

What God has done for us is the standard for us to do for others—**kind, tender-hearted, forgiving because God has forgiven us**. **1 Therefore** we follow or imitate God in these things--**not in our nature**. God the example especially in the area of forgiveness. **Copy, imitate Him in this**. Walking in forgiveness, now walk in love. Reminder ch 1-3 our position—seated in heavenly places w/ Christ, Heirs, spiritual benefits & resources, a Child of God, filled w/ Holy Spirit—Now respond ch 4-6 Practice Walking according to God's will & calling. Not a natural but supernatural walk.

Jesus came as a sacrifice for sin. **1Pet 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**

In OT no forgiveness w/o sacrifice & only covered until next sin. Jesus took away sin once for all. **'It is finished'**. John the Baptist *'Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world'* Jesus said **Jn 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.**

2 **Be Imitators of Christ—a command not a suggestion** **Ephesians 5:1-14**

Holding onto bitterness & un-forgiveness hurts us more than the other person—eats away at the soul, a cancer to the spiritual life. Bible over & over tells us to forgive even as we have been forgiven. And if not Jesus said ***But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matt 6:15 NIV***

We are beloved children—even if never known the love of a parent or family you are loved of God, His child—His DNA **divine nature active in us** so **act, imitate** God by walking in love as a lifestyle. Only Christ in us—a close & intimate relationship enables us to walk in love—unconditional & sacrificial. Can't be bitter & un-forgiving and walk in love.

Jesus sacrifice a **fragrance aroma**, sweet smelling—points to OT sacrifices—put whole on altar—**Burnt** offering—total dedication; **Meal** offering—perfection; **Peace** offering—peace between God & man—Jesus Himself is our sin & trespass offering

So we are told to put off or lay aside the old self of sin 4:22; :25 & put on the new self 4:24 – two keys in becoming imitators. **Be** is **to become, do the same** –live as newly born ones- imitate **mimetai** – to mime or mimic—don't talk but act—In theater a mime **uses actions & emotions w/o words, using only gesture, expression, & movement.** Don't just say you're Christian—act like Christ.

Our walk is only possible by HS—Jesus only began His ministry by Holy Spirit ***Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him...And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.***

3 **Be Imitators of Christ**-a command not a suggestion

Ephesians 5:1-14

3 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

Sleazy part of life done away w/-don't go back to these things, sex outside of marriage. To do so is not walking in love—*immorality porneia* illicit sexual pursuit. Corrupting influence & taking advantage of the other person Hollywood calls it making love—giving into lust—our culture is opposed to the mind of Christ & life lived in sexual purity.

4 Off color jokes w/ double entendre--foul mouth—filthy mind a window of soul. Chuck 'Some minds are like race horses they run best of dirt tracks' Instead habit of giving thanks--grateful language to God – act of worship

Welsh Revival of 1904 - "The horses were terribly puzzled. 'The drivers were of a profane class of men They drove their horses by obscenity & kicks. Now these same men who got saved & could hardly get their horses to move because there was no obscenity & no kicks.'"

5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

You know these things by intuition--those who practice these things not inherit K of G. Satan deceives--people think they can get by & won't answer for sins--God will say them that's ok you're a good guy of gal, you're special & get a free pass into heaven. No He is righteous judge only blood of Christ covers our sin. Deceivers use world's logic & balance scales my good against my bad or rationalize how can a good God send someone to hell or if that's the way God really is I don't want to go to heaven. **Would you give your child to die for sinner?**

4 **Be Imitators of Christ—a command not a suggestion** **Ephesians 5:1-14**

Wrath comes because of disobedience to God and what He has done to forgive us our sins His son Jesus Christ death of cross. So they rationalize & justify why God should overlook these things because deep down inside they are a good person. **No you're not...proof: you reject God**

Deceived by empty words w/o substance or truth—making evil seem good and vice a virtue **illus Christ Ambassadors**

Sons of disobedience Hebraism for one who is a rebel, defiant one, irreconcilable a person who refuses to follow the rules God has laid out.

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light 9 for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Walk-habitual behavior, in direction as child of light **phos**, light in itself—once were darkness, sons of disobedience, don't become that again. Because you are a child **teknon** a born one & looking to the one who gives birth. So we are light in the Lord—fellowship w/ Christ is the illuminating factor determining brightness. Light & loves highest expression

9 Fruit **Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.** 10 **Proving** – put to the test for purpose of approving what God accepts and what He rejects.

11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

Don't do them but expose them—Don't talk about them it's a disgrace. Awake spiritual sleepers, get up, repent, arise from deadness and shine again for Jesus.