

INTRODUCTION

1. I'm sure you've heard the saying "Like Father like son" – Why? Two things

- A. Children watch their parents and follow their example
AND Children share in their parents nature
- B. Paul builds this section off those truths
 - 1). We have seen what the Father is like on the pages of Scripture through Christ = example
Jn 14:9 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*
 - 2). And we have been given the nature of the Father when we were born again
2 Pe 1:4 (ESV) by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Transition: Built on these truths Paul starts this section on walking in love

- A. By saying Be imitators of God you're Father – follow his example – love like he did

2. Outline

- A. Walk in love – 5:1-2
- B. Walk in the light – 5:3-8

I. WALK IN LOVE

Eph 5:1–2 (ESV) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ⁽²⁾ And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1. "Be imitators of God"

- A. The idea is simple – because your one of his beloved children – there should be a family likeness
What Peter said: 1 Pe 1:15–16 (ESV) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ⁽¹⁶⁾ since it is written, *"You shall be holy, (WHY?) for I am holy."*
 - 1). You've seen what holiness looks like – the example of Christ
 - 2). You have the same nature as your heavenly Father – a holy nature
 - a). Therefore – the logical response is to choose a holy lifestyle – put off sin
 - b). Because he is love – choose to live a life of love
- B. So the logic – you are a child of God with his nature – there MUST be a family likeness

Thought: This raises our Christian duty above mere religion

Religion may be thinking warm thoughts about God – being content with that

- A. But true Christianity calls us to act like him – imitate him – to be godly - Christlike
Eph 4:24 (ESV) and to put on the new self, *created after the likeness of God* in true righteousness and holiness.
 - 1). To live out who you've become – one with a new nature wired for holiness
And a new power to live that holiness out
 - 2). Therefore we begin to pattern our lives after Christ
1 John 2:6 (NIV) Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.
 - a). we will never hit this mark perfectly – but we aim our life at his example

Transition: The last part of this verse – Paul brings in the proper motivation

2. "Be imitators of God, as beloved children"

- A. We don't do this merely out of duty – acquiescing to a mean deity because we are afraid not too
 - 1). We do this as beloved children – those who have been loved so greatly

B. **“Beloved children”** = is the same way God refers to his Son Jesus Christ

"This is My *beloved* Son" ([Matt. 3:17](#)).

1). Did you know the Father loves you as much as he loves Jesus?

Jn 17:23 (ESV) I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me *and loved them even as you loved me.*

Point: We desire to live this way to honor our Father in heaven – to bring him glory

A. It is not to be done out of drudgery – but the delight that flows out of a loving gratitude

B. As we study the grace-saturated truths how we were chosen – saved – adopted – forgiven and kept

1). It moves us – we respond in a way that brings him honor

Transition: Paul becomes specific on how this imitation looks like – it is seen in love

Eph 5:2 (ESV) *And walk in love, as Christ loved us* and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1. We are to imitate God by loving the same way did

A. We do this depending upon the power of the Spirit – context is in Paul’s prayer

Eph 3:16 (NIV) I pray that out of his glorious riches he may *strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

1). Before Paul tells us to live like this he prays we would be strengthened by the Spirit

B. It is the Spirit that produces this love and enables us to live it out

Ga 5:22 (ESV) But the *fruit of the Spirit* is love...

Ro 5:5 (ESV) and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts *through the Holy Spirit* who has been given to us.

Thought: What we have

A. Imitate God the Father by looking at the example of Christ – His example is a carbon copy

Heb 1:1-3 (NIV) In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. (3) *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being...*

B. Then we live out that example by depending upon the power of the Spirit

Transition: So let’s look at the example we are given – what love looks like

The Pattern of Love

Eph 5:2 (ESV) And walk in love, as Christ loved us...

1. Paul says – want to know how to love others – look at how Christ loves you

A. Christ is always the example – saw this in Ephesians 4:32

1). We are told to forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us.

B. So God’s behavior towards us becomes the model for our behavior towards one another

Transition: In Christ we see what real love is – I see two things in this verse

A. Real love is willing to sacrifice for others

B. Real love towards others is an expression of our love towards God – an act of worship

2. Real love is willing to sacrifice for others

Eph 5:2 (ESV) And walk in love, as Christ loved us *and gave himself up for us...*

A. This shows us that love is not just a soppy sentimentalism – merely feeling sorry for somebody

1). Christlike love involves action – sacrifice – love is a verb (action)

1 Jn 3:18 (ESV) Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

B. These actions would include

1). Forgiving others – Eph 4:32

- 2). Giving financially – 2 Cor 8:9
- 3). Spreading the Gospel to the lost – 2 Cor 5:14-21
- 4). Loving those who annoy you – Eph 4:26
- 5). Displaying love to different people groups – Eph 2:11-22
- 6). Aiding those in need – Eph 4:29

Question: How do we grow in our love for others?

- A. Paul would say – think of how Christ loved you – meditate on it – be stunned by it
Then through the power of the Spirit imitate that

Eph 5:1–2 (ESV) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ⁽²⁾ And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- B. Christ was willing to meet our greatest needs even if it required a great cost
- 1). It was unselfish and sacrificial
 - 2). It doesn't mean it's always a huge thing though
 - a). It can be small – a phone call – a cup of coffee together

3. Real love towards others is an act of worship towards God

Eph 5:2 (ESV) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, *a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

- A. What is a fragrant offering?

- 1). When a sacrifice was given as a true act of worship in the Old Testament
It was called a “Pleasing aroma” to God = something that brought him delight

- B. Jesus offering himself in love for us was a fragrant offering of worship to the Father = worship

- 1). So when we love like this – it is an act of worship – pleasing to God

- C. Scripture says all that we do should be done as an act of worship towards God

Rom 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--*this is your spiritual act of worship.*

- 1). Offer your bodies as living sacrifices – consumed by God – Him first

- a). This would include loving others like he desires

- 2). Notice what it says – to do this – is your *spiritual act of worship*

- a). When I choose to love you – first I should view it as an act of devotion to God

“Father I choose to love them, but first I want this to be an expression of my devotion to you. Because you have loved me I want to love them in a way that brings you honor.”

- 3). This is the way we should live all of our life

- a). The way I work as an act of worship – the way I treat my neighbors

- b). Our giving to others – to the church

- 1a). Paul praised the Macedonians generosity – but notice what he says

2 Cor 8:5 (NIV) And they did not do as we expected, *but they gave themselves first to the Lord* and then to us in keeping with God's will.

- 3a). Before they gave financially – they gave themselves to God – an act of worship

“Father I thank you that you have provided for me. I give these finances to you as an act of worship.”

- c). We see the same thing in the letter to the Philippians

- 1a). They had given to support Paul's ministry – notice how he puts it

Php 4:18 (ESV) I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, *a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.*

Point: The more we can see the actions of our life as worship the better

- A. It infuses our relationship with God into everything – it brings him into everything

Transition: Paul now moves from walking in love to walking in the light – a tough section

III. WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Eph 5:3–8 (ESV) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁽⁴⁾ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁽⁵⁾ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no 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. ⁽⁷⁾ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁽⁸⁾ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

1. Paul starts with what we shouldn't be doing

A. Lists things so improper for God's people there must not even be a hint of this in their lives

2. The list

Eph 5:3 (ESV) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

A. **Sexual immorality** = broad word describing any sexual sin

1). It's Porneia in the Greek – we get pornography from it

B. **Impurity** = Another word for “dirty moral behavior” in a sexual sense

1). In these first two words - Paul says “any kind of sexual impurity” must go

C. **Greed (covetousness)** = We'll see this is as the sin of idolatry

1). It is always needed more – never being satisfied – always striving for the next thing

a). We'll see why this is a form of idolatry in a minute

Transition: Now Paul turns to the tongue – what we shouldn't be speaking forth and what we should

3. Improper and proper use of the tongue

Eph 5:4 (ESV) Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

A. **Obscenity - foolish talk – coarse jesting** = refers to those who easily turn every conversation into a joke about sexual matters

1). Everything becomes a sexual innuendo

2). When you hear people speaking in that way – it is a view into their heart isn't it

Mt 12:34 (ESV) For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

a). This is usually the fruit of improper input – Garbage in – Garbage out of the mouth

B. Paul says this kind of behavior is not appropriate for God's holy people

“BUT INSTEAD LET THERE BE THANKSGIVING”

A. This is a habit the Christian should deliberately cultivate

1). God has blessed us so much – the fact we are forgiven and not going to hell

We have so much to be thankful for

2). God who is constantly providing and caring for us – we should be constantly thankful

B. We could go through this congregation – one person at a time

1). The consistent testimony would be – “He has always been faithful – never let me down”

2). Our words should reflect gratitude – our acknowledging his goodness in our life in everything

1 Th 5:18 (ESV) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

a). We do that because we understand he is in control of everything – all for our good

Transition: We come to a very solemn warning

The Consequences of Conduct Not Fitting for Christians.

Eph 5:5–7 (ESV) For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no 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. ⁽⁷⁾ Therefore do not become partners with them;

1. The sexually immoral has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God

- A. Those who have been saved have been transformed – new nature and new power
Therefore they *cannot rest in the habitual practice* of these things
- B. They still may fall into something like this - but they don't stay - *it's different now!*
 - 1). The Christian finds they can no longer enjoy that sin like they used too
 - 2). Now they are convicted and are miserable = *That is evidence of the new life*

Thought: Let's be honest there are some sins we struggle to overcome – cling tenaciously

- A. It's what we call besetting sins – that can defeat us again and again
 - 1). We'll look at some tips at the close of the study – to help in this
- B. Just know that the misery – the fight you're in is a good sign – you've changed but still struggling
 - 1). But if you can sin without pain – no misery – no conviction – you still need to be saved
 - a). That new nature you've been given and the Holy Spirit in you will not allow that!
Eze 36:27 (ESV) And I will put my Spirit within you, *and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*
 - 2). You may be struggling with a sin – the fact that you are struggling and are miserable is good sign

3. Covetous person is an idolater and has no inheritance in the kingdom

- A. We think the idolater is one who bows before some statue and worships the deity it represents
 - 1). An idolater is somebody who places things above God in their heart
 - a). The adoration, affection God deserves is given to a person, a possession, a position
Arthur Wallis: An idol may be defined as any person or thing that has usurped in the heart the place of pre-eminence that belongs to the Lord.
- B. Christianity is radical – Your creator deserves and demands to be first in your heart
 - 1). He will not accept you replacing him with some other god

Transition: Paul finishes with warning us

3. Let no one deceive you with empty words

- A. Empty words about what? God's judgment against these sins
 - 1). It's what the devil did to Eve in the garden – “Eve, you won't die if you eat from the tree”
 - 2). He whispers to us – “God's not really going to keep anybody out of heaven for these things”
 - a). Those words contradict God – they are empty because it is a lie
 - 1a). God is a God who cannot lie therefore these words are accurate
- B. Paul tells us the truth – inspired by God – Words that warn because he loves us
“for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”
 - 1). That's truth – anything that contradicts it is empty – listen and you end up deceived
 - 2). If your life is characterized by habitual practice of these things – you must wake up

4. Paul finishes: Therefore do not become partners with them...

- A. Watch the company you keep – the friends you have
The people you allow into your heart through TV – Movies - Music
 - 1). People who tell you constantly that these things are normal
 - 2). People whose words are ungodly – empty - influencing you with empty lies
- B. Watch what you pour into your hearts – it will take root – be careful
1 Co 15:33 (ESV) (Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”)

Transition: I want to return quickly to the thought of besetting sin

A. For those of you fighting but not enjoying as much victory as you want

Two Thoughts on Dealing with Besetting Sin

1. Keep fighting

The awful, never-ending process of combating temptation is God's means of maturing us and conforming us to the image of Christ. To throw our hands up in defeat is to abandon the process and to miss out on life's most important lessons. To grow is to be tempted. We can't have one without the other.

In the mountains of northern Georgia there is a white water river called the Chattooga. People travel from all over the Southeast to paddle down this river. The last two sections are especially treacherous, and many people have drowned as their canoes broke up on the rocks and they were sucked helplessly under by the powerful current.

I want you to imagine a skilled paddler in his kayak making his way through the rocks and hydraulics of the Chattooga River. As he maneuvers himself along, something is taking place that onlookers may not be aware of. The potentially destructive force of the river is actually helping the paddler develop his balance, coordination, strength, and concentration.

But imagine that as the paddler approaches the next set of rapids, he thinks to himself, *I'm tired of paddling. This is getting old. My arms hurt. My legs hurt. I'm tired of concentrating.* With that he tosses his paddle into the water and lets the river take control. You can guess what will happen. But here's the point. ***The force that at one point was aiding in the development of his skill and strength has the potential to destroy him once he refuses to struggle against it.***

So it is with the power of sin. As long as we take a stand against temptation, even if we fall momentarily, God will use the struggle to make us into the men and women He wants us to be. But once we throw in the paddle, once we give up and allow the forces of sin to dictate our behavior, it will be only a matter of time until we are swept away and our lives destroyed.

2. Be smart

A. That sin you've fallen in repeatedly – look for the patterns - foreshocks

1). What are you doing before you fall – those things that weaken you – cut them off

CONCLUSION

1. A sobering passage – walk in love and walk in the light

A. It comes along with a solemn warning

1). Those whose lives are characterized by the sins listed in this section will not inherit...

2). Therefore fight against these things – in the power of the Spirit