

Imitators of God
Ephesians 4:32 – 5:1-2
Sunday a.m. 4/23/2017

Charles Caleb Colton said, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” Colton was an extensive writer and pastor in England. He left the pastorate in 1828 after serving two churches in 12 years.

Apparently, he did not take Ephesians 5:2 to heart. Many believe he left the church and England due to a great gambling debt. He eventually moved to Paris where he acquired a great fortune by gambling, but lost all of it.

- ❖ How do we imitate God?
 - ✚ We cannot create a universe
 - ✚ We cannot make man or woman
 - ✚ We cannot be omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent

✚ **Here are three ways to imitate God**

■ **Imitate God’s Forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32)**

Colossians 3:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

- **The result of not forgiving is bitterness**

James 3:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don’t brag and deny the truth.

- **Satan wants us distracted with thoughts of unforgiveness**

Proverbs 14:10a (NKJV)

The heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy.

R. T. Kendall

“Graciousness is shown by what you don’t say, even if what you could say would be true.”

Neil Anderson

- ✚ I feel angry when I think of that person
- ✚ I wouldn’t mind if something bad happened to that person
- ✚ I say something negative about them when their name is mentioned
- ✚ I cannot thank God for them or pray for them

■ **Imitate God’s Love (Ephesians 5:2a)**

John 13:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- **God's love is sacrificial**

John 15:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

- **God's love is beyond the worlds expectations**

Matthew 5:43-48 (NKJV)

- **We are to love because God loved us**

1 John 4:11(NKJV)

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

■ **Imitate God’s Sacrifice (Ephesians 5:2b)**

- **Sacrifice is God's expectation**

Luke 9:23 (NKJV)

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

- **Sacrifice is God's expectation**

Philippians 2:8 (NKJV)

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- **Paul lived a life of sacrifice**

Philippians 2:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Philippians 3:7 (NKJV)

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Philippians 3:17 (HCSB)

Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.

Warren Wiersbe

Paul was saying, "Caesar is not going to kill me. I am going to give my life as a sacrifice to Jesus Christ. I have been a living sacrifice, serving Him since the day I was saved. Now I will complete that sacrifice by laying down my life for Him."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)

- **Paul's secret to life was to die daily**

1 Corinthians 15:31

"I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."

❖ What would you consider as sacrifice in your life?

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