

IMITATORS OF GOD

Ephesians 5:1-7

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. The goal of the Christian life is to become imitators of God, to become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ every day.
- b. The only way we can be “imitators of God” is by continually yielding ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit.
- c. In these verses, Paul says we are to imitate God in love and in holiness.

II. WE ARE TO IMITATE GOD IN LOVE-

- a. *Ephesians 5:1-2 (NKJV) “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”*
- b. Paul says we are to imitate God in love. He says we are to do this by walking in love and by growing in our ability to love others as God has loved us.
- c. The word “walk” in verse two refers to our daily life, to our lifestyle. Our daily walk, our daily life is to be characterized by Christian love.
- d. Are you growing in your ability to love people the way God loves people?
- e. The Bible says God loves everyone. Are you growing in your ability to love everyone no matter who they are?
- f. God loved us and forgave us when we didn’t deserve it. Are you growing in your ability to love and forgive those who don’t deserve your love?
- g. God loves His people. Are you growing in your love for your fellow believers?
- h. Let’s take the 1 Corinthians 13 test. *1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) “Love is patient and kind. **Are you?** Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. **Are you?** Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. **Do you?** Love does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. **Do you?** Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.” **Is that how you love?***
- i. The only way we can imitate God’s love is to admit that we cannot do it on our own and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to love others as God has loved us.

j. God was serious when He gave this command. Are you serious about keeping it?

III. WE ARE TO IMITATE GOD IN HOLINESS-

- a. *Ephesians 5:3-5 (NKJV)* “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”
- b. Paul says we are to imitate God in holiness. Fornication or sexual sin was as rampant in Paul’s day as it is in ours.
- c. The word that is translated fornication is *porneia*. It was a word used in ancient times to refer to any kind of sexual sin; adultery, pre-marital sex, bestiality, homosexuality, pedophilia, any kind of unchastity, prostitution, and harlotry.
- d. If you combine the Greek word *graph* which means “to write” with the word *porneia* you have “pornography” which means to write about or to depict sex sin.
- e. Paul says there is no place for any kind of sexual sin in the life of the believer. He says this should not be named once among the saints, not one time.
- f. The word translated “uncleanness” refers to something that is vile, rotten, and decaying. In verse 3 this word refers to sexual sin as vile, rotten, and evil.
- g. Many today try to minimize or even beautify the evil of sexual sin. But the Bible says sexual sin of any kind is always evil, rotten and filthy.
- h. What does covetousness have to do with sexual sin? *Exodus 20:17 (NKJV)* “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your **neighbor’s wife**, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”
- i. Believers are not to covet the mates of others, especially the mates of other believers. Paul says that is “not be once named among you.” Not one time.
- j. Paul says not only are believers to have a clean life we are to have a clean mouth. Paul says believers are not to be involved in filthy language, foolish talking, or coarse jesting. *Ephesians 5:4 (NKJV)* “neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”
- k. “Filthiness” is the general word for obscenity. It describes words that are disgraceful. “Foolish talking” is literally “stupid speech.” It speaks of filthy gutter talk. “Coarse jesting” refers to dirty talk and innuendo that is more clever and sophisticated.

- l. Believers are not to use or listen to such evil and vile language. Paul says the language of believers is to be clean, holy, beneficial and thankful.
- m. In verse 5 the Bible makes it clear that the person whose life is constantly characterized by sexual sin and filthy talk, the person who lives and talks like this on a daily basis is not saved. *Ephesians 5:5 (NKJV)* “*For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*”
- n. Paul says that no habitual fornicator and filthy talker is saved. True believers can fall into the sin of fornication and they can use language they should use sometime but that is not going to be the continuing and on-going pattern of a true believer’s life.
- o. Because when a person is truly saved there is going to be a change. From the moment a person is saved, God is going to begin to clean up their life and clean up their mouth. *Titus 2:11-12 (NKJV)* “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*”
- p. *Ephesians 5:6-7 (NKJV)* “*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 be partakers with them.*”
- q. Paul says we are not to let anyone tell us that a person who lives like this is saved and going to Heaven. They are not.
- r. Sexual sins and filthy language are not characteristics of the children of God. They are the characteristics of children of disobedience who are going to hell unless they repent and are saved.
- s. Paul says believers are not to be a part of this kind of evil.

IV. CONCLUSION-

- a. We are to imitate God in love and holiness. Are you?
- b. Lord, help us to love as you love and to be holy in all we say and do.