

Ephesians 5:1-7

Verse 1:

--**Therefore** takes us back to all that Paul has been saying about putting off the old man and putting on the new man.

--The Greek word for **imitators** (*mimetes*) is used seven times in the NT and always translated *imitate* or *follower*.

1 Corinthians 11:1: Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:6: And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

--We should be natural **imitators of God** and not the unsaved world. This is literally what we were created for—**4:24**. In fact, as individuals created in His image, we each imitate a particular facet, color, or shade of His glorious Person. *Christ's life in us is unique*

--We do so in the spirit of **dear children**—not groupies. It is natural to have your children imitate you but awkward to have a stranger doing so. *We all remember catching our kids saying or doing something we do.*

--**As dear children** also assumes the new life God has given us through His Holy Spirit. This command to imitate comes with the power and nature to do so.

--What are we to imitate God as? As two things that are declared to be what God is:

1) As Love (**2**).

1 John 4:8: He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

2) As Light (**8**).

1 John 1:5: 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.

Verse 2:

--**And walk in love, as Christ also loved us. . .** Since the word *love* means different things to different people, I would like to point out three things about Biblical love.

--First, Biblical love is a command. It is not the same as the world's idea of emotional love we just so happen to "fall into" or comes "at first sight" or works like "magic" or any other type of strange feeling that is beyond our control. The world is always chasing the fleeting and fickle thing it calls love.

--You will notice that Biblical love is commanded, which means we are responsible for it, which tells us that it is in our power. *We cannot impose this false idea of love on God and His Word!*

1 John 3:23: And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

--Biblical love is not emotionless. Biblical love is a part of our whole being—body, mind, and spirit. Our will is part of our love. Our thoughts are part of our love. Our obedience is part of our love. Our emotion is part of our love. Biblical love is determined by willing more than feeling.

--That is why God will hold us responsible for our love to Him and our love to others.

In fact, don't we do the same with parents, or spouses, or friends? We hold them responsible for their lack of love. We don't give them a pass as if they couldn't help "falling out of love" with us!

--So to **walk in love** is to set my will in a certain direction. I must lean toward love!

--Second, Biblical love should never be a discouragement. Sadly, when we think of walking in love, our minds often go immediately to the one or two people in our lives that are hardest to love (you probably already did this!)—those we hold responsible for not loving us as they should. *That is a Satanic attack of discouragement.*

--The command is to **walk in love**. So whoever you are walking around day by day—saint or sinner, friend or foe, easy or hard—those people should be loved by us. Who am I around in life? *I must love actual people I know and interact with—you don't love Taylor Swift!*

--Love shouldn't be a burden. In fact, most of it is a blessing to us and others. And yes, there are a few hard ones for each of us in life and we need them to grow in love.

--We want the Lord to find us walking in love when He comes!

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13: And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

--Third, Biblical love is a clear witness for Christ. **And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us. . .** there is a testimony to our love. It is to be noticeably different than the world's idea of love.

John 13:34-35: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

--Jesus gives the unsaved world the right to judge our profession based off of our life of love expressed to one another. The unsaved don't care about our creeds, belief statements, or appeals to the Greek original. They will know we are Jesus' disciples, and the Father's dear children, if we love the family of God. *Can the unsaved world tell you genuinely love the family of God?*

--Paul now expands on the love of Christ we are to walk in. He says: **as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us. . .** Christ's love is a giving love. Christ did not come and demand love. Christ did not come to be served. Christ came to give.

--We are not called to give ourselves to what Christ did. That is impossible. No human man or woman could give themselves because they are a creation, a servant, and therefore not their own to give. And as sinners, we all would have been unacceptable sacrifices. But Jesus was free, free to hold Himself back in perfection and glory, but He didn't, He freely gave Himself.

--So we are called to imitate this spirit—with His Spirit in us—and **love, as Christ** with a giving type of love. *We do so as we are able. One must possess a measure of His love before we are able to give love. The more needy I am, the less loving I am. The more loving I am, the more independent I am.*

--Christ's giving was as **an offering and a sacrifice to God**. . . what is the difference between the two words? **An offering** could be bloodless but **a sacrifice** required the shedding of blood.

--Offering:

--Offering gives us the idea of surrender of control. It speaks of a gift. It is used for monetary offerings (**Acts 24:17**) and Paul even uses it for saved Gentiles as the church (**Rom. 15:16**). The gift has been surrendered for the use of another.

*Hallesby (Religious or Christian): *"In many parts of our country it is said of a person who has become converted: he has surrendered to God. It is an excellent expression. But let us note what it means. To surrender oneself in war, for instance, means to lay down all one's weapons and raise one's hands aloft in order to show that one neither has nor intends to use any weapons anymore. Then one delivers himself over to the mercy of the other unconditionally."**

--We too must learn to offer ourselves to God the same way that Christ did.

Hebrews 9:14: Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God...

--Sacrifice:

--Sacrifice gives us the idea of cost and life. It speaks quite literally of a victim. The OT sacrificial system use was always that of blood spilled. That is why we have the contrast of a **living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2)** and **spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5)** in the NT. The victim or sacrifice has given the full price—it's highest and best—to express love.

*Mackintosh (Occasional Papers): *"True, it will ever be difficult to flesh and blood to live for Christ and the Church, but then it is well worth encountering all the difficulty. The Lord has special joy and complacency in those who sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Church. It was what He did Himself, and all who are filled with His Spirit will follow His example."**

--Christ, of course, is the ultimate ideal of all surrender and sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:5-7: Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'"

--Again, it is important to point out that we do not imitate Christ as a substitutionary offering or sin atoning sacrifice. Paul is using Christ's life and death on the cross as an example for saved sons and daughters to follow—this is not a description of the Gospel for the unsaved.

--(Some teachers and commentators fear moralizing the cross as *only* a religious example. They fear the Gospel will be set aside. I understand the fear as that has happened. That being said, the Scriptures clearly speak of Christ's life and death on the cross in relation to salvation but *also* as our example in matters of sanctification in passages such as this one and **Phil. 2:1-11**. We must not fear to exhort how the Scriptures use the cross to exhort.)

--Paul is encouraging all believers to walk in the spirit of self-giving and self-sacrificing love Christ expressed to His Heavenly Father.

****John 10:17-18: Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received from My Father.****

****John 14:31: But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.****

--So we too, walk in love, to express our personal love to God the Father who has given us this commandment and loved us first.

--Every deed done in this spirit, exemplified by Christ, is pleasing to God. ***For a sweet-smelling aroma.***

****Philippians 4:18: Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.****

--In this spirit of Christ-like love God sees His own free love flowing through us to others—saints and sinners.

Verse 3:

--Where love is being spoken of sex is soon to follow. These sexual acts are not the fruit of walking in the love of Christ. The contrast here is obvious. We should be given to the love of God as Christ was **(5:2)** and not given to lewdness as the Gentles **(4:19)**.

--***Fornication*** is the Greek word that encapsulates all sexual acts outside of the marriage covenant: Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bestiality, Incest, Adultery, etc. as would be understood to come from **Leviticus 18**.

--***All uncleanness*** is impure sexuality in all forms: thought, desire, motive, word, deed, etc.

--***Covetousness*** is added here because sinful lusts are an evidence of selfish coveting—***you shall not covet your neighbors wife!*** *Porn addiction just turns to the desire for something else/new to please you. It is not sexual fulfillment of God's design.*

--Paul says ***let it not even be named among you, as is fitting to saints***. He is not saying that these sexual issues cannot be discussed—Paul is obviously doing so and has done so in his other epistles—but that they should not be connected with sons and daughters of God that name the name of Christ. They don't fit God's character and they should not fit ours.

Verse 4:

--Paul adds to the list the more verbal forms of sexual impurity which are also not conducive to the main end of our lives—to please and glorify God.

--The Greek word for *filthiness* is used only there in the NT and carried the idea of something shameful or an obscenity.

--*Foolish talking* and *course jesting* we understand. These are the regular conversations of the lost, who worship sex and are saturated with filthy versions of it. *A few years ago social media clips of bestiality were running through public schools in our area.*

--What should characterize the general speech of Christians instead? *But rather giving of thanks*. Thankfulness should be the tone of our lives and our humor.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.

1 Thessalonians 5:18: In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Verses 5-7:

--**(5) For this you know.** . . Paul says that they are well aware of the following fact. It was not up for discussion.

--Those who worship sex as an idol—the reigning idol of America—have no *inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God*.

--I believe Paul explains the kingdom as that of *Christ and God* because of the example he just gave in **1-2** of how Christ freely and willingly gave Himself to the Father for the Father's pleasure. That type of pure, giving love is the very opposite of the selfish lust displayed in our current world. How could one who walks in the shameful filth of sinful, worldly sexuality be an inheritor of Christ's kingdom?

--**(6)** Paul knows that Satan will attack this sobering truth! This is what he did from the very beginning! He spoke: *You shall not die* in direct conflict with God's: *You shall surely die*.

--These words are *empty words* because those who live in sexual sin will not escape God's wrath. There are numerous other Scriptures that say this: **1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8.**

--There are many voices out there—influenced by Satan the father of lies—that claim there is no such danger of hell in fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness. God isn't like that. His love is different. They cry *Peace! Peace!* where there is no peace.

--The *wrath of God* that comes on unrepentant sinners is not an emotional outburst. It is the calm, measured, and unflinching response of a holy God to unholy sin. It is therefore sure. God will bring every act of sin into judgment. Either Christ took our hell on the cross or we will be forced to accept our hell in the lake of fire for all eternity. Man says to God—*Thy will be done*. Or God says to man—*Thy will be done*. *If you are in sexual sin—heed God's warning, repent, and flee from the wrath to come!*

--(7) **Therefore** is to sum all this up. It is improper for those who are to imitate God and walk in love to live in sexual sin. We are not to join in the disobedience of the lost or envy sinners!

Proverbs 23:17: Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day.