"IMITATE YOUR FATHER!"

Ephesians 5:1-7
6-14-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***Imitate your Heavenly Father!**

I. "BELOVED CHILDREN" WILL MIMIC GOD'S EXAMPLE (v. 1-4)

The Pattern to Follow:

A. Gracious FORGIVENESS (4:32)

B. Sacrificial LOVE (v. 2)

C. Moral PURITY (v. 3)

D. Wholesome SPEECH (v. 4)

II. "CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE" WILL BE JUDGED BY GOD (v. 5-6)

The Pattern to Avoid:

A. Moral IMPURITY (v. 5)

B. Worthless SPEECH (v. 6)

CONCLUSION:
V. 7 - Don't be like the world, but like your Heavenly Father.

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ILLUS: Children often like to mimic or copy what they see their parents do (Ex: how children play as if they are talking on the phone, talk, gesture, and act just like their mom or dad).

How children respond
How they handle problems
Their mannerisms are largely learned behavior.

The phrase "*Like father, like son*" is more than a cliche.

It is true that children (to one degree or another) take after their parents.

V. 1

"Followers" - **lit. imitators; mimics**

Our Heavenly Father's dealings with us (His children) ought to set the pattern for how we ought to act, respond, behave.

***"As dear children"* -** in the same way as dearly beloved children mimic their father who loves them, so we as children of God should mimic Him.

***Imitate your Heavenly Father!**

I. "BELOVED CHILDREN" WILL MIMIC GOD'S EXAMPLE (v. 1-4)

The Pattern to Follow:

A. Gracious FORGIVENESS (4:32)

V. 1

***"Therefore"* -** for this reason. Refers back to verse 32.

Our pattern of forgiveness is our Heavenly Father.

How has God forgiven you?

1) Unconditionally - "While we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8)

2) Totally & completely - "forgiven" (Aorist tense points to completed action)

3) Vicariously - "For Christ's sake". Because Jesus paid the price. He took the full brunt of our sin.

In like manner, often the one who forgives will have to take the brunt of the sin of the one whom they forgive.

God's forgiveness is only possible because of Jesus' payment. Therefore, forgiveness is only "in Christ."

4) Graciously - the word "forgiven" means to shower with grace. It describes the positive aspect of forgiveness. This type of forgiveness not merely withholds the punishment due the person, but it positively, graciously gives of itself for the well-being of the recipient.

5) Personally - "You" Because God has forgiven you and has given you what you do not deserve, you should do the same for "one another."

B. Sacrificial LOVE (v. 2)

"Walk" -Our conduct or manner of living.

The phrase ***"in love"*** shows that love ought to characterize our lifestyle

"Walk in love" - note the frequent references to our "walk" -

4:1 - *"walk worthy"*
4:17 - *"walk not as other Gentiles"*
5:8 - *"walk as children of light"*
5:15 - *"walk circumspectly"*

"As Christ" **-** Just as; in the same way as. Again, pointing to a pattern we are to copy or imitate.

Christ's love was sacrificial. (true love sacrifices - cp. Eph. 5:25-26).

His loving sacrifice was:

1. Voluntary - *"gave Himself"* (no one forced Him to do it)

2. Substitutionary - *"for"* = on behalf of; in the place of (His motive was purely selfless)

3. Satisfactory - *"sweet-smelling savour (fragrance)"*. Christ's sacrifice satisfied the just demands of His holiness.

"He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Is. 53:11)

In like manner as Christ's sacrifice, any sacrifice we make ought to be:
--of our own volition
--for the sake of others
--acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1)

Since being born again, we have become *"partakers of the divine nature"* (II Pet. 1:4), and since *"God is love"* it is logical that God's children will walk in love (Wiersbe, p. 122).

C. Moral PURITY (v. 3)

"Be ye holy (set apart) for I am holy" (Lev. 20:7; I Pet. 1:15, 16)

"fornication" - sexual impurity

"All uncleanness" - anything that would defile or stain our heart (spirit) or body

"Coveteousness" - an illicit lust to have that which is not yours; a greed (the 10th commandment)

"Let it not be once named among you" -

"Named" - to have a reputation for any of the above is a disgrace. Our testimony is vital to uphold.

Once" - impurity is never OK. It is always wrong.

"As becometh saints" - As is suitable for holy, sanctified ones. Impurity does not suit a saint. It is unbecoming. It is a mismatch. It is unfitting for an imitator of God, a dear child of God.

Is sin in the life of a believer different from sin in the life of an unsaved person? Yes -- it's worse! (Wiersbe, p. 126) "A Christian is not sinless, but he does sin less - and less - and less." (Wiersbe, p. 126)

D. Wholesome SPEECH (v. 4)

"Filthiness" - Obscenity. Filthy talk or dirty "four letter words"; any form of gutter language.

Our speech should be clean!

"Foolish talking" - the speech of those who are void of wisdom. Foolish speech would be vain talk, empty conversation, silly talk.

Our speech should have meaning!

"Jesting" - coarse joking.

Humor has its place, so long as it is clean. Bar room jokes, innuendos, or dirty stories have no place in the Christian's vocabulary.

Our speech should be serious!

*Cp. 4:29 and 30

"Let no corrupt (rotten, putrid, foul, rank) communication proceed out of your mouth"

"Which are not convenient" - Which are not fitting.

Such speech does not at all suit a child of God.

How does God speak? His speech is truthful, meaningful, clean, and serious. Take after your Father!

"Giving of thanks" - Our speech ought to reflect gratitude for what God has done for us.

II. "CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE" WILL BE JUDGED BY GOD (v. 5-6)

Verses 5 & 6 parallel Verses 3 & 4:

V. 5	**V. 3**
Whoremonger	fornication
unclean	personuncleanness
coveteous man	coveteousness

V. 6	**V. 4**
vain words	filthy, foolish, & coarse words

The Pattern to Avoid:

A. Moral IMPURITY (v. 5)

"No whoremonger (fornicator) . . ." - Anyone who practices such behavior is evidencing by such behavior that God is not their Father.

Paul has a similar statement in I Cor. 6:9-11

"Unless a man be born again (born into God's family) he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).

Those who are born again will not be perfect, but they will not be like the devil's children either!

"Coveteousness" is idolatry. Why?

Because an overwhelming greed for anything is actually an obsession. Anything we are obsessed with is actually an idol.

B. Worthless SPEECH (v. 6)

The "deception" in view is that of believing you can live a lifestyle of verse 5 and still be bound for Heaven.

Many *"vain talkers"* pedalled a cheap grace which taught that you could be saved and then live any way you wanted!

No! When you are saved by the Heavenly Father and become one of His, you will act like one of His!

"These things" - the sins of v. 5 merit the deep-seated anger and judgment of God.

"Children of disobedience" - Children of Satan (Jn. 8:44) characterized by disobedience.

Note: in contrast to the *"dear children"* of God (v. 1)

CONCLUSION:

V. 7 - Don't be like the world, but like your Heavenly Father.

Because we will not share in the world's judgment, we should not share in their debauchery.

We are not to be fellow-partners together with such.

Be a separatist! (II Cor. 6:14-18)

To imitate our Lord, we should ask ourselves in every decision: What would Jesus do?

Christ has left us an *"example, that we should follow in His steps"* (I Pet. 2:21 - *"example"* = a copy, pattern to trace)

Ask yourself:Would Jesus spend His money on this?
Would Jesus spend His time on this?
Would Jesus listen to this music?
Would Jesus have this attitude?
Would Jesus make this decision this way and for this reason?
Would Jesus be involved in this activity?

In order to imitate someone we need to know what they are like. We learn what God is like through reading and hearing His Word.

Knowing God (His attributes) is the key to a Godly walk!

Also, to imitate someone requires ability. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to imitate God's characteristics. See: Eph. 5:18