

SERMON NOTES EPHESIANS 5:1&2 BE IMITATORS OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

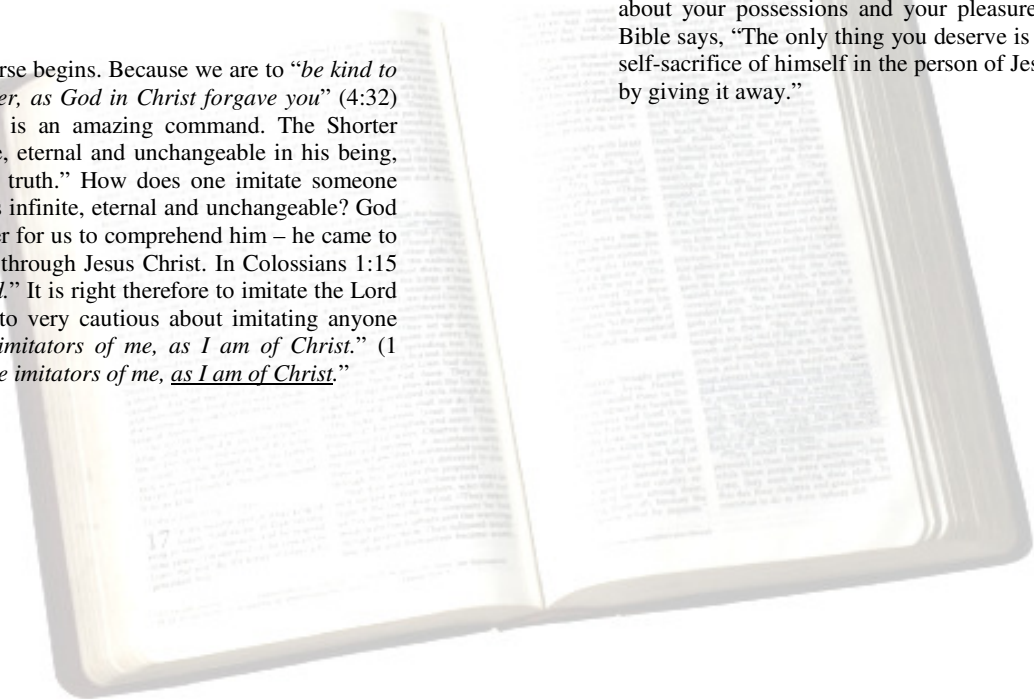
We come this morning to one of the most important verses in the Book of Ephesians, indeed in the whole Bible. Ephesians 5:1 is a verse to be memorised and pondered. It is a verse you could well take as one of your life verses. It is a life-directing statement. It is a liberating principle of Scripture. It could well save you from years of misdirected religious activity, from heresy and destructive behaviour. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes that this command “be imitators of God” is the, “*supreme argument ... the highest level of all in doctrine and in practice ... the ultimate ideal.*” It teaches that we are to bridge the gap between what we are and what we should be by imitating God.

BE IMITATORS OF GOD (verse 1)

First of all notice the *therefore* with which the verse begins. Because we are to “*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you*” (4:32) we are *therefore* to be imitators of God. This is an amazing command. The Shorter Catechism tells us that, “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.” How does one imitate someone who is unseen, because he is a Spirit, and who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable? God did something wonderful that made it much easier for us to comprehend him – he came to this earth as a human being. We can know God through Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1:15 we are told, “*He is the image of the invisible God.*” It is right therefore to imitate the Lord Jesus Christ in order to imitate God. We need to be very cautious about imitating anyone other than God. It is true that Paul said, “*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 11:1) But notice the qualification, “*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*”

LIVE LIVES OF SELF SACRIFICING LOVE (verse 2)

This is not, as you might expect, a second and separate command; rather it fills out and explains what it means to imitate God. To imitate God is to walk in love. Or, in other words, our imitation of God is to be shown in a life of love, which finds its motive and model in the self-giving love of Jesus Christ. This sets us directly at odds with the thinking of our world. The media tells us every day, “You are all-important. Your life is about your possessions and your pleasures. Live for yourself! You deserve it!” The Bible says, “The only thing you deserve is hell. God has delivered you from that by the self-sacrifice of himself in the person of Jesus Christ. So live as he lived. Find your life, by giving it away.”



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