

Ephesians 5:1-5 – A Life of Love

Calvin, Hendriksen, Robertson, Handfuls, TSK, GreekLexicon, Poole, Rienecker, PNT, Family, Geneva, Gill, Henry, Vincent, JFB, INT
Beloved in the Lord: The Apostle Paul described for us in Ephesians the **wealth of the church** (Ephesians 1-3), the **walk of the church** (Ephesians 4:1-6:9), and the **warfare of the church** (Ephesians 6:9-6:24).

We are picking up in **2nd part of his instruction -the walk of the church.** This is where the details, the “nuts and bolts” section begins. (The 1st part of the walk of the church deals with general principles on how we are enabled to walk properly.)

You can see many innovations in medicine, construction, technology, science, and aeronautics today. These innovations are usually beneficial. But there is one type of innovation that is not beneficial. In fact, this type of innovation is deadly. **I am speaking of the innovation in morality.** One example before us today is **innovation in “love.”** Love used to mean sacrifice for God and your neighbor. Now **love means selfishness** – the love of self – love directed to oneself. **Love is now described as something you make! Love is now something you say.** But this innovation did not just appear today; it was alive in the 1st century. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, to warn them to remain imitators of true love – not innovators of true love.

Our headings are:

Exhortation to True Love

Example of True Love

Example of False Love

Our goals are: That you **learn what true love is,** that you **imitate true love,** and that you **equip your children to imitate you.**

Exhortation to True Love

1 Therefore be **imitators of God** as dear children. 2a And walk in love,

1. Children are expected to imitate their parents...and often do...

They will repeat words you say, and show gesticulations (even embarrassing ones), attitudes, and even dress like their mother!

Similarly, as children of God, **you, adults, are commanded to mimic your Father in heaven.**

2. How then are you to imitate God, your heavenly Father?

You are to imitate God in his love. And you are to **show love to your fellow Christians and even your enemies.**

There is no question you are equipped to do this. You have been made rich (wealth of the church)! “You were **chosen by the Father,** **redeemed by the Son,** and **sealed by the Spirit.** You were **incorporated into the body of Christ.** God then gave **gifts for you: elders, teachers, counselors!** You therefore have help to imitate God.

3. You are to imitate God’s love, not by having a fuzzy feelings, but by doing acts of righteousness for and in front of your brothers and your enemies.

Righteousness is the work of love. The one who loves does what is right. Consider some examples:

If you love your wife you will act justly toward her. You will listen. You will help. You will support.

If you love you God, you will work more for his church. You will talk to him. More, you will copy his love.

If you love your children, the more you will take time to raise them to honor God.

If you love your country, you will fight to make sure it turns to God and follows him.

So when you hear the term **“Walk in love,” it means to walk in faithful obedience: in thought, word, and actions to all of God’s law.** It means to live righteously. It means to show **acts of mercy, goodness, and beneficence.** Law and love cannot be separated!

4. Further, you must remember that you are not simply God’s children, but you are God’s dear children.

The **closer the relationship with someone, the more is expected.** You are dear children who are loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love. **The love you experienced from God is the spring and source of your adoption,** of your choosing, of your calling, and of your quickening (awakening) by his grace. God makes you, dear children, his jewels, his peculiar treasure, and the apple of his eye. You intimately know God.

Zechariah 9:16 The LORD their God will save them in that day, As the flock of His people. For they shall be like the jewels of a crown, Lifted like a banner over His land—

Psalm 135:4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His special treasure.

5. Lessons:

a. Reflect on God’s love. The more you reflect on God’s love for you, the more you will love him. The more you love him, the more you will love his children and do righteous acts to and in front of them. **Don’t look at how good God’s children are,** or you won’t love as you should! Remember, God loved his bride when she was not loving! She was a harlot!

b. Love your children in such a sacrificial way they will imitate your love.

c. Love is not empty promises. Love is not simply saying: “I love you.” Love is not sentimental songs. Love is work. God loves you so *he does...he does* what is good for you. Let’s consider examples of love—what it is and what it is not.

Example of True Love

2 as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

1. God loves you in Jesus Christ and shows it – shows it by action.

God gave his Son as an offering of the field (offering) and as an offering of the fold (sacrifice). These offerings were wonderful, inconceivable, and unparalleled.

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ was a sweet smelling aroma...with which he pleased God on your behalf...like God accepted the sacrifices.

Leviticus 1:13 'but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring it all and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

Christ gave away his time, his service, his strength, his good name, his fame, all the comforts of life, life itself, and his whole human nature, soul and body for you. This is true love. So embrace your brothers as Christ has embraced you!

2. God gives proof of Christ's unfailing love and, consequently, an example of your duty to love that way.

Matthew 20:28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

A good Christian would exemplify a life of service, service to your wife, husband, or children.

1John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

A good Christian would be willing to die for others...literally die...following Christ's example...

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..."

1John 3:16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

3. Lessons:

a. Live your life in a self-sacrificing way. This is how you walk in love so your physical and spiritual children can be blessed by you and follow you...and follow Christ at the same

time.

b. Can your neighbor say that your good works to him are a sweet smelling savor?

They should be able to say so.

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

15 For **we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.**

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.

c. If you don't love, your worship will be hindered.

Matthew 5:24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Example of what True love is not

3 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.**

1. Love is not fornication and uncleanness.

It is true in those days (as today) many did not consider fornication sin, but fornication is a stench in God's nostrils.

And note the link between fornication and covetousness. Fornication is grounded in covetousness. Covetousness or greediness is the insatiable desire to satisfy the body or the pocket. The covetous doesn't care he might be robbing the other person or that person's future spouse! It is "unbecoming" for a saint to live for sensual feelings or to be covetous.

Fornication is so bad it should be out of the vocabulary of Christians. Such things must neither be done nor talked about as existing in the congregation of the saints.

Unfortunately, Christians often moderate or redefine terms so they do not appear to be so sinful. You might hear words like: "Sowing wild oats." I even once heard a so-called Christian homosexual say: "We love each other." But that isn't love. It is hate (of God's law). Most Canadians are now born out of wedlock now. They hate those children. Fornication is sin. It is not love. Those children are being deprived of what is good for them!

2. Love is not filthiness-obscenity.

This likely refers to **lewd paintings or carvings which were common in Ephesus.** Isn't our culture enveloped by pornography?

Look how many politicians have been caught up of late in pornography, even child pornography!

3. Love is not foolish talking...or disgraceful talking.

This likely refers **to lewd talk...and talk about indiscretions -boasting.** Their goal is to titillate...tempt...tease.

4. Love is not coarse jesting (joking).

Not all joking is forbidden, but all coarse jokes that aim to hurt or insult are sinful. Elijah was famous for mocking and laughing at the prophets of Baal-1Kings 18:27. Christ promised that those who are weeping will laugh...Luke 6:21 Solomon said that there was a proper time for laughing...Ecclesiastes 3:4

None of these 4 things Paul mentions evinces love. They are perversions of love. They are rooted in selfishness. **True love is selfless.** Selflessness is what you must show.

5. Instead of these false ideas of love, Christians show love by giving thanks, especially for God's gracious gifts of salvation and sanctification.

Giving thanks (lit. speaking good things) to God is set in opposition to fornication, lewdness, and cruel jokes. It shows you understand true love – the love of God.

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.

6. Wicked people who do not know what true loves is will not have eternal life.

Fornicators and coveters are actually idolaters. The covetous man thinks his life consists of pleasure and goods...so he makes them **idols.**

7. God doesn't only demand righteousness; he wants you to set an example especially to young people and new Christians.

Consider the calls of 2 different letters in the New Testament.

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

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, **but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

8. Lessons:

a. Watch your life, especially you young people. Your bodies are to be used to love God not to be joined with wickedness. To commit fornication is reduce yourself to a loaf of bread. And the person with whom you commit adultery is treating you as a load of bread. They don't love you. To commit fornication is to rob someone else's future spouse.

b. Watch your language. Let your language support and encourage love! Don't demean or minimize it. Don't encourage adultery or other things that pervert love.

c. Avoid the company (they are not worth keeping) of anyone who lures you from love to lust!

Conclusion:

Jesus calls you in this passage to **imitate the love of God and let others younger in age and younger in the faith imitate you.** God makes it clear **what love is: It is self-sacrifice for the good of others and the glory of God, like Jesus did.** God also makes it clear what **love is not: It is not temporary feelings of pleasure or self-indulgence.**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Ask God to show you more and more how much he loved you. You badly need true love. True love is not in your nature. You don't like to live in this self-sacrificing way. You naturally want to live for things that give temporal pleasure. Your tendency is to be guided by temporary feelings and excitement. I once heard a man say when he chewed into a Black Angus steak: "This is love." That was joy, or maybe lust. Ask God to imprint Christ's life of selfless obedience and that cruel bloody cross on your soul forever!

2. Ask God to help you follow his love more and more.

3. Ask God to help you so that your life will reflect to others the love Jesus has for you.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, **you don't know what true love is and you can't truly love** until you have experienced Christ's true and infinite love. Do you want to experience that true love today...the love that sent Jesus into this world to live (obey) and die for you? If you do, why don't you ask God for that true love today?