

Chapter



Part 1

(v1-20)

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

(v1)

In one verse

Paul summarizes not only
the purpose of the next 20 verses
but also summarizes one of the
main goals of the Christian Life.

One of the main goals of the
Christian life is to become more
and more like God in how we
think, feel and **act**.

And Paul **reminds** us of the
motive or the **reason** for desiring
to become more like God...
because we are now his children.

*Live a life filled with love,
following the example of
Christ. He loved us and offered
himself as a sacrifice for us, a
pleasing aroma to God. (v2)*

Paul **expounds** and says that the main way that we are to become more and more like God in how we **think, feel and act** is to follow the **example** of Christ.

*For God in all his fullness was
pleased to live in Christ...
(Colossians 1:19)*

*For in Christ all the fullness of
God lives in bodily form,
(Colossians 2:9)*

Because the fullness of God
himself was in Christ and on
display through Christ...

We can be confident that
following Christ's example will
result in becoming more like God.

Paul however highlights two **particular** aspects of all that Christ did, that become the **pinnacle** of what it means to follow Christ's example and what it means to imitate God.

*Live a life filled with love,
following the example of
Christ. He loved us and offered
himself as a sacrifice for us, a
pleasing aroma to God. (v2)*

Paul says that
at the heart of following
the example of Christ and
at the height of imitating God...

There is a willingness to love others even unto the point of being capable of dying for them.

In the coming verses, Paul will go on to say that imitating God and following Christ's example also means no sexual immorality, no greed, no obscene joking... etc.

And you have to ask yourself;
What does loving people, even to
the point of being willing to die
for them, have to do with sexual
immorality, or greed, or theft?

Let's try to answer this question,
because in the answer we find a
major 'secret' to finding success
in living the Christian life.

Remember Paul said this in
Romans 13:8-10

*Owe nothing to anyone,
except for your obligation to
love one another. If you love
your neighbor, you will fulfill
the requirements of God's
law. (v8)*

The commandments “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and any other commandments, are summed up in this one decree: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (v9)

Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.
(v10)

The argument goes like this...

*All sin has adverse effects
on 'our neighbors' ...
(friends, coworkers, family,
spouse, children etc.)*

*When we commit adultery,
we are harming the other
person with whom we
committed it...*

*We also harm our spouse
with whom we committed
adultery against...*

*We also harm our children,
our extended family etc...*

*When we steal from someone,
or when we get angry with
someone etc. We are acting
with great neglect towards
others and we cause great
harm to them in many ways...*

At the core of all sin is a great neglect towards God and others... and the result of all sin is great harm to God and others...

*The real problem is not that
we are too adulterous,
or too covetous etc.*

*The real solution **is not** that
we need to try harder
to be less adulterous or
less covetous etc.*

*The real problem in all sinning,
is that we have a great **neglect**
for our neighbor.*

*The real problem in all sinning,
is that we have a great neglect
for our neighbor to the point
that we are willing to lure their
spouse from them or take their
property from them etc.*

*The real solution to all sinning,
is to really, truly **love** our
neighbor as we love ourselves.*

*If we truly loved our neighbor,
the way Christ loved,
and we were willing to die for
their eternal well-being...
we would have no struggle with
committing adultery against them or
stealing property from them.*

The battle over our ability to imitate God and follow the example of Christ is being fought over our willingness to love our neighbor as our self and our willingness to love God with all our heart, soul, mind & strength.

However most Christians are fighting the battle on the level of individual sins...and they are not seeing their neighbor any differently or valuing them any more than before.

Paul continues...

*Let there be no sexual
immorality, impurity, or greed
among you. Such sins have
no place among God's
people. (v3)*

Paul says that sexual immorality
or other impurities, as well as
greed have no place in the life of
the children of God.

This means that the believer must be **vigilant** against all influences of sexual immorality including what they look at, what they watch and who they surround themselves with.

This means that the believer must also be vigilant against all influences of greed. Which, in America is very difficult to do.

Paul continues...

*Obscene stories, foolish talk,
and coarse jokes—these are
not for you. Instead, let there
be thankfulness to God. (v4)*

Paul says that improper speech,
such as dirty joking, foul
language and abrasive tones are
not for the children of God.

Again, this means that the believer must be **vigilant** against all influences of foul speech.

This means carefully **monitoring**
all speech that goes into our
ears/minds and all speech that
comes out of our mouth.

Paul continues...

You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. (v5)

Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. (v6-7)

We do not have time to get into the implications of Paul's comments here and some of the erroneous theological conclusions of perfectionism or a lack of eternal security...

*We simply want to say that it is clear that these sins are profoundly **important** to God, and according to him they have no place in the life of the believer.*

*Suffice it to say, we will struggle greatly in 'imitating God' and 'following the example of Christ' if our life is full of **sexual immorality**, **impurity**, **greed** and **foul speech**.*

Furthermore, these actions are **indicators** that not only are we not walking worthily of our calling...

But we are also living like the Gentiles do.

These four sins; **sexual immorality**, **impurity**, **greed** and **foul speech** are hallmark examples of worldly living and worldly thinking...these sins are the most common and prevalent in the world.

*These four sins can literally
become the **thermometer**
of our walk with God.*

*If we are failing in these
four areas, we are more
than likely not walking
closely to the Lord.*

Paul continues...

For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. (v8-9)

Paul picks up where he left off in
the second half of Chapter 4.

Paul says that the believer should not follow in the **lifestyle** of the unbelieving Gentiles because our minds are not full of darkness, rather they are full of **light**!

Paul infers that the believer would be foolish to **embrace** the lifestyle of the unbeliever because our minds have been **enlightened** and we have seen the truth.

It should be clear that the believer who has come to a knowledge of the truth, and whose mind has been freed from the web of lies, should no longer live as one who is **ensnared** by **evil** desires.

Paul says that the believer has heard the truth, **revealed** through Christ, and their minds have been enlightened about the **reality** of God, sin and salvation.

This **revelation** of the truth in the mind of the believer should lead them to specific, holy action.

And the appropriate **response**
is to live in the light of the truth...
and no longer in the shadows of
the lies.

The main idea is that as believers,
our minds have been opened.
We have seen the truth and we have
understood the **reality** of sin &
death, Christ & eternity...

Our behavior then, in any and all spheres should **reflect** that reality in all that we do.

In no way should we be content to have our behavior reflect the lost and dying world who are still living in the darkness of lies.

Paul concludes...

Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. (v10-11)

*It is shameful even to talk about
the things that ungodly people
do in secret. But their evil
intentions will be exposed when
the light shines on them...*

(v12-13)

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.

(v15-17)

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. (v18-19)

*And give thanks for everything
to God the Father in the name
of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

(v20)

*There is so much more we
could say about these
closing verses. But we will left
them speak for themselves.*