



Poima

“Relational Christianity Part 1”

Ephesians 5:1-21

The Bible has always been crystal clear in what it teaches about God and what it teaches about people. Since the creation of Adam and Eve, Satan has been on a campaign to pervert the relationships people have with God and with one another. Satan has spun a web of deceit and lies that have utterly perverted our understanding of true love. Our sin nature has kept us in a vicious cycle of sinful and selfish decisions that have resulted in spiritual and emotional emptiness.

Ephesians 5:1-6:9 is the instructional manual for authentic relational Christianity. Paul teaches what it means for a true follower of Jesus to properly relate to God and other people.

In three paragraphs, Paul instructs us on the proper way to imitate the true love of God.

1. *An authentic follower of Jesus learns how to imitate and demonstrate the love of God.*

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:1-2)

When we are born again, the old selfish nature dies, and the new nature created by God in Christ lives. But our sinful habits are baggage that must be discarded – laid aside – so that we live our new life in Christ unhindered. How does this happen? It happens when we fully embrace the true love of God – embrace it cognitively and emotionally. When we do this based solely in the truth of Scripture, our lives are radically changed, and our perspective on life is transformed.

It starts by ***imitating*** the love of God – the Greek word for ***imitate*** is the term from which we get ***mimic***, someone who copies specific characteristics of another person. The whole of the Christian life is the reproduction of godliness as seen in the person of Christ. The purpose of God in salvation is to change sinful people by conforming them to the image of His Son.

Paul gives a **contrast** on **how** we are to imitate and demonstrate the love of God.

2. ***Imitating and demonstrating the love of God requires the ability to fully understand the lifestyle from which we have died. (Ephesians 5:3-7; 11-14; 17a; 18a)***

First, Paul tells us **what not to do**:

3. ***Imitating and demonstrating the love of God requires a full obedience to the lifestyle to which we have been resurrected. (Ephesians 5:8-10; 15-16; 17b; 18b; 19-21)***

Second, Paul tells us **what to do**:

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