

What's Involved in Actually Imitating God?

Intro:

1. **Imitate** (μιμῆομαι) = to use as a model (for personal conduct). **ILL: John Philip Sousa & the crank organ.**
2. New Testament passages where this word is used.
 - a. **I Cor 4:16** where Paul urges us to imitate him.
 - b. **I Cor 11:1** - where we are to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ.
 - c. **I Thess 1:6** - where we are to imitate the apostles & the Lord.
 - d. **I Thess 2:14** - where our church is to imitate God's churches in Judea.
 - e. **Heb 6:12** - where, rather than be lazy, we are to imitate the faith & patience of those who will inherit God's promises.
3. The implications of imitating God.
 - a. Denying yourself, taking up a cross & following the Lord (**Matt 16:24 & Lk 9:23**).
 - b. Unless you do, you can't be a disciple (**Lk 14:27**) or be worthy of the Lord (**Matt 10:38**).
4. It's natural to imitate your dad if you respect him. **ILL: The anti-cigarette commercial of the boy copying his dad.**
5. So - what are we to imitate & how?

Ephesians 5:1-14

I. Stay Away from Imitating the World - the Sons of Disobedience

- A. **v3** - What are some of the attitudes of the world?
1. **Sexual immorality** (πορνεία) = improper sexual intercourse. Where we get our word "fornication".
 - a. Adultery is fornication among married people.
 - b. **The attitude:** "I want pleasure no matter who it hurts"!
 2. **Impurity** (ἀκαθαρσία) = Uncleaness.
 - a. This is a catch all word for corruption of your body & loose morals in general.
 - b. The word used for unclean animals. As these animals were not accepted for sacrifice, so unclean thoughts, talk & conduct have no place in God's presence.
 - c. **The attitude:** I don't care about the condition of my physical body or mind even if they were created in God's image to be used as His temple"!
 3. **Greed** (πλεονεξία) = covetousness, the desire to always have more.
 - a. **The attitude:** "I'll be satisfied only when I get to the top!" So, what's the top?
 - b. To be a billionaire? The lowliest beggar who has the Lord could be "on top". **ILL: The Rich Man & Lazarus (Lk 16:20-25).**
- B. **v4** - How are these attitudes developed?
1. Through **obscenity** (αἰσχροτήτης) = filthy talk. This is what you allow yourself to be exposed to.
 2. Through **foolish talking** (μωρολογία) = lit. "moron speech". This is what you allow yourself to say.

3. Through **coarse joking** (εὐτραπελία) = lit. “well turned”, witty, jesting. Mainly getting people to laugh about immorality. **ILL: The comedy sitcoms on TV.**
- C. **v5** - What does God think about you exhibiting these attitudes & behaviors?
1. You become an **idolater** - one who chooses to worship idols rather than God.
 2. You **cannot inherit the kingdom.**
- D. How can you stay away from these attitudes & behaviors?
1. **v3** - **There must not be even a hint!**
 - a. KJV - **It ought to not even once be named among you.**
 - b. Don't even talk like that!
 2. **v6** - Don't be deceived **with empty words** that those in the world talk with.
 3. **v7** - Don't **be partners with them.** Don't imitate that behavior!

II. Focus on Imitating the Lord - the Son of God

- A. **v2** - You can imitate the Lord by demonstrating His love.
1. He loved you enough to live a sinless life (**Heb 4:15**)!
 2. He loved you enough to volunteer to go to the cross for you.
 3. When you follow His example of expressing love to others, you become like Him!
- B. **v8** - You can imitate the Lord by demonstrating His light.
1. **v9** - The light produces good fruit.
 - a. Being a Christian isn't just knowing good - it's doing it!
 - b. **Jam 2:15-17** - **Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**
 2. **v10** - The light proves what is acceptable to the Lord.
 - a. When a commercial buyer buys clothing material he holds it up to the light to see the flaws.
 - b. You need to continually hold your life up to Jesus to see the flaws! **Rom 12:2** - **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.**
 3. **v11-14** - The light exposes what is evil.
 - a. **Jn 3:19-21** - **This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.**
 - b. When a pure lifestyle is turned on in the presence of corrupt ones, it tends to influence the corrupt ones to become purer!
 - c. **ILL: When a match was lit in New Cave.** (A small dim light in complete darkness)
 - d. To get evil out of a person, you fill him with the Holy Spirit! **ILL: D. L. Moody:** “How do you get the air out of the bottle? Pour water in it!”

So verse 14 says, “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”