

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

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CHAPTER TWENTY -

AS GOD'S CHILD WE SHOULD FOLLOW GOD IN THE SAME FASHION AS OUR CHILDREN FOLLOW US

Ephesians 5, verses 1 and 2

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

How well do I remember when my sons (who are young men now) were little boys . . . my little children. They would go everywhere I went if they were allowed to do so; they followed in my steps.

I am sure you have heard the story of the drunkard who was on his way to the saloon to get a drink early one morning after a beautiful snow had fallen the night before. As he walked through the snow, his feet made imprints there. He had a little boy about four years old . . . the apple of his eye, the joy of his life. He loved that little boy more than he loved his own life. He had not gone far when he heard someone crunching in the snow behind him. When he turned to look, it was his little son. The boy was stretching his little legs as far as he possibly could, taking long steps. The father said, "Son, what on earth are you doing?" The boy replied, "Daddy, I am stepping in your tracks!" The story goes that instead of going to the saloon, the father picked up the little boy in his arms, pulled him close, wrapped his coat around the shivering little body and returned home, never to enter a saloon again. Why? Because his little boy was walking in his footsteps.

As children of GOD, we should walk in His steps. Let me point out something here that needs to be noted: We have two extremes today . . . we have the liberals, and the legalizers. We have those who shout "Grace," but put their members under Law. We are not to walk in the footsteps of JESUS because we are afraid not to. We are not to give up bad habits because the church doctrine or dogma declares that we are not to go certain places or do certain things. If you give up a filthy habit because that is the rule in your church, then GOD gets no glory and you will gain no eternal profit by giving up the habit; but if you give up the lust of the flesh and the habits of the world because you love JESUS, if you stay out of the spiritual saloons (things that would cause you not to be a sober, temperate Christian) because you love JESUS, then you will be blessed, the body will be blessed, and Heaven will gain because of your sacrificial living in love.

Born again children of GOD are:

1. Children of love - because our spiritual Father is love. We are begotten of GOD; therefore we are children of love. **"God is love"** (I John 4:8).
2. Children of light. Our Heavenly Father is light. We are begotten of GOD; therefore we are the children of light. **"God is light"** (John 1:4-5; I Thessalonians 5:4-7).
3. Children of wisdom. Our GOD and our CHRIST are wisdom. We are begotten of GOD and we abide in CHRIST; therefore we are the children of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; I Corinthians 1:29-31).

In the Sermon on the Mount, JESUS said to His disciples; **"I say unto you, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; THAT YE MAY BE THE CHILDREN OF YOUR Father WHICH IS IN HEAVEN: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"** (Matthew 5:44-45).

If GOD treated mankind like some Christians treat each other . . . and like some Christians treat their sinner neighbors and friends . . . this earth would be a place of untold agony. JESUS loved His enemies . . . He did not compromise with them, He did not love their sin, but He loved them. The essence of Christianity is love, and if we do not love our fellowman whom we see, how can we love GOD whom we cannot see? We love Him . . . because He first loved us, and if we are born again . . . spiritually-minded as we ought to be . . . we will display love in our daily living.

True love is two-fold, as set forth here:

1. True love denies self. JESUS the very SON of GOD was rich but for our sakes became poor, He took a body - and in that body He suffered, bled and died. He denied Himself . . . **"Not my will, but thine be done."** He said, **"I came... not to do mine own will, but the will of Him (the Father) that sent me."** He never performed any miracle for selfish reasons. The love of JESUS is self-denying. He gave His life, His all. He gave up all for us; we should be willing to give up all for Him.
2. JESUS sacrificed all, and gave Himself an offering to GOD **"FOR A SWEETSMELLING SAVOUR** . . . The sacrifice JESUS made gratified (or pleased) GOD. Three times in an audible voice GOD said, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"** . . . **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him"** . . . **"Father, glorify thy name... I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."** As I said earlier in the message, if we do not sacrifice because we love JESUS then our sacrificial living, abstaining, and doing does not glorify GOD and is of no eternal value.

Verses 3-7: **"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."**

The filthy lusts of the flesh named in these verses are not to be mentioned among the saints of GOD. Of course, fornication and sensual sins come from selfishness, self-seeking and self-gratification on the part of the individual. Such a life is certainly the exact opposite of a life of love, righteousness and holiness. Our deliverance from these sensual sins of the flesh will come through walking in love, even as CHRIST also loved us. Victory will come when we deny ourselves and take up the Cross to follow JESUS daily (Luke 9:23). When we purpose in our heart to please GOD and the Heavenly Father, when we purpose in our heart to be what He wants us to be, we will not follow the selfish desires of the flesh.

We are saved by grace - grace alone; but the man who deliberately uses grace as an excuse to follow the lust of the flesh is disillusioned and has been deceived with vain words delivered by a vain preacher. It is true that we are not saved by abstaining from fornication, adultery and filthiness (we can abstain from these things and still be lost); but the grace of GOD teaches us to deny these things (Titus 2:11-15).

In Romans 8:4 the Spirit teaches us that the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

As I have tried to point out, the Spirit leads us into paths of right living - to the glory of GOD, not that we might boast, brag, or display our holiness. We live holy through the leadership of the HOLY SPIRIT, to the glory of a holy GOD. The person who declares himself to be in grace and yet follows the lust of the flesh, never displaying works of righteousness, should read again these words: "**But wilt thou know, O VAIN MAN, that faith without works is dead?**" (James 2:20)

To young Timothy, Paul said: "**Nevertheless, THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity**" (II Timothy 2:19). If we do not depart from unrighteousness, then by our daily living we testify that we are not the children of love, but that we are still the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3). We are the children of disobedience if we have not obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine mentioned in Romans 6 . . . the form of doctrine that causes us to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto GOD.

Verse 7 is clear and needs no comment "**Be not ye therefore partakers with them.**" We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; we are rather to reprove them. We are to walk in the light, not as children of night.

~ end of chapter 20 ~

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