

Friday, May 1

Ephesians 5:1 *Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.*

As our favorite tv shows go into re-runs because of the Covid-19 shutdown of studios, Kerrie and I have been exploring Amazon Prime videos and what they offer. One of the options Prime has is to watch tv shows from decades ago – I’m talking tv shows in black and white. A week or so ago we happened upon *The Danny Thomas Show* (titled *Make Room for Daddy* for its first three seasons) with Danny Thomas, Marjorie Lord, Angela Cartwright and Rusty Hamer. It ran for 11 seasons from 1953-1964. And we’re having so much fun watching even though we know some of the interactions wouldn’t be politically correct in today’s culture, and it would also probably be a little too tame.

This isn’t meant to be a promo for Amazon Prime or for *The Danny Thomas Show*. Last night as we watched an episode, Danny Thomas told a humorous story about an immigrant and the difficulty that person had learning the English language. As soon as he started telling the joke, I said to Kerrie, “My dad used to tell that joke all the time.” (And it’s not because both my dad and Thomas are Lebanese.)

During the six decades I had with my dad, his sense of humor always lit up a room. And I learned in my adult years that the stories/jokes/one-liners my dad told were ones he had learned from people like Danny Thomas, the Marx Brothers, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, etc. (For those of you younger than the Boomer age group, Google the names.)

Yes, my dad had a great sense of comedic timing, but what he did was imitate the very best. And he captured people’s attention and built a reputation for being a “great man”, for at least one reason, because he imitated the best.

Read Paul’s statement again in Ephesians 5:1 – *Imitate God, in everything you do.*

There are many things we can’t, or shouldn’t, do in imitating God. We can’t create something out of nothing. We can’t know everything. We can’t control everything. We shouldn’t accept worship. We shouldn’t act as though we’re the King of the world. So, what does Paul mean? The context is critical to understand Paul’s command.

The verse just prior reads (4:32) *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

And the verse after reads (5:2) *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.*

Those verses offer pretty straightforward actions we’re to take. But there’s also this. The Greek word Paul uses for the word *imitate* means “to take on the image of.” If you’re a Christian, you have *Christ in you*. You have the nature of Jesus, and you no longer live, because He lives in you. You are fully indwelt by the presence of God. It’s in your nature to demonstrate/*imitate* His character and personality.

So, as we mature in our faith, we’ll begin to see His nature expressing itself through our personality. We’ll do things and say things, and think thoughts, that will surprise us. We’ll think, “That wasn’t like me.” And, in Christ, that’s a good thing.

My dad borrowed from outside sources, and used their words in his life. When we imitate God, we’re revealing Who is in us and how He’s working in and through us.

At that point . . . we’re imitating the Very Best . . . the Perfect . . . the Absolute.

*God with us. Christ in us. The Holy Spirit upon us.*