

Be Imitators of God
Ephesians Part 19

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” - Ephesians 5:1-2

I got in to my car the other day and thought back to the time I first started driving. I was so excited at the prospect. It would be so much quicker than walking or riding my bike everywhere. But when I got behind that steering wheel, things did not go as easily as I thought they would. I kept either under-steering or over-steering. I put the brake on too hard. And parallel parking? Forget it! Then I started driving a stick shift. Wow, getting the gears synchronized with the clutch took a lot of practice. But today I think little about it. I get in my car and put on my seat belt and off I go, talking to my kids or texting someone (did I say that??). Point is, it seems that the car and I are one. I don't need to think about all the coordination that goes into driving. It has become second nature.

How about our relationship with the Lord? Do we know him well enough to respond the way he does? Can we imitate the way he would address an issue? Is there another nature in us that propels us to act like Christ without much thought?

This week they pulled Punxsutawney Phil out of hibernation at the good old Gobblers' Knob celebration. Phil was in his warm hole and enjoying a nice long sleep, waiting for spring. Poor guy had a rude awakening. Out he comes to the very cold dawn to face a crowd of thousands. Unfortunately, he saw his shadow and the prognosticator of all prognosticators gave the crowd a bit of bad news: six more weeks of winter! Sometimes life can be a cold slap in the face. Truly, life has its challenges. But the biggest challenge you and I have as those who follow Christ is the command to be imitators of God.

I came to the stunning realization that life was not going to change for me. So, although I cannot change the world and all the curveballs it throws in my direction, I can change myself. What a revelation! I have prayed, “Lord, change this situation or this person!” Have you done that too? I must admit that sometimes I want life to change but I want to remain the same. I don't think I can call Jesus Lord and continue with that perspective.

He wants us to change. He wants us to begin to operate in his nature. He loves it when we automatically chose his way of thinking and respond the way he would. Of course, that takes conditioning and practice. But I love it when I find myself not upset at the things life sends me. I like it when someone behaves in an offensive way and it doesn't bother me and I find it easy to forgive. And you know what? So does the Lord. He loves it too. He calls that kind of life a fragrant offering. I don't wear much cologne. But I do like being in a place that smells good. It usually puts a pleasant smile on my face. Ok, let's put a pleasant smile on the face of God. Let's become proficient in duplicating his behavior. Let's become the exact representation of Christ on earth, imitators of God.