God's Advice for All Relationships June 20, 2021

*Ephesians 5:1-2 Speaker: Christian Clement-Schlimm*

Example is the most powerful rhetoric.   
– Thomas Brooks

Intro: The pros and cons of relationship advice

Be imitators of God!

1. Remember the implied limitations

Isaiah 40:28 *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.*

John Gill *“Not in his works of infinite wisdom and almighty power, which is impossible;”*

1. Remember the context

v. 1 *Therefore be imitators of God …*

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

John Gill *“but in acts of righteousness and holiness, and particularly in acts of mercy, goodness, and [charity]”*

* What are some of God’s unique, divine attributes?
* What are things God has done that only God can do?
* What do you envision when you hear “imitate God”?

1. Imitate God by remembering how God loves you!
2. Children follow their parents’ lead

v. 1 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.*

Matthew 5:48 *You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Galatians 3:26 *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

1. God’s children are beloved

Romans 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*

Example: Fathers raising their children

* Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*
* Numbers 14:18 *The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty …*
* What does it mean to be a child of God?
* How should being a child of God impact and shape our relationships with others?

1. Imitate God by loving and sacrificing for others!
2. Loving others means seeking their best

v. 2 *And walk in love …*

1 Corinthians 13:6 *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

1. Sacrificing for others means putting them first

v. 2 *… as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us …*

Matthew 20:28 *even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Example: Husbands loving their wives

* Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*
* How is biblical love different from the love our society often promotes?
* What are some of the ways Jesus loves the church?
* How can we walk in love and sacrifice for others in various relationships?

1. Imitate God as praise of His glory!
2. Imitation of God is worship of God

v. 2 … *a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Matthew 22:37 *… “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”*

1. Jesus’ sacrifice for us was praise for the Father

* John 6:38 *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*
* Colossians 3:23 *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,*

Example: Bondservants obeying their masters

* Ephesians 6:5-6 *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart*
* How does a Christian’s relationship with God influence or transform their relationships with other people?
* How can our relationships become “fragrant offerings” and “sacrifices” to God? How can we honour God through our relationships?
* What are some practical steps we can take to ensure that God is always at the centre of our various relationships?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study 1 Kings 6:11-22

Notes