

# The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON CIV : PRACTICAL INJUNCTIONS ABOUT THE OLD AND NEW LIFE (4:25-5:2)

## **Ephesians 5:1, 2 —**

*Be ye folowers of god as dere children and walke in love even as Christ loved vs and gave him silfe for vs an offerynge and a sacrifice of a swete saver to god. (Tyndale's New Testament, 1534)*

*Bee yee therefore followers of God, as deare children, And walke in loue, euen as Christ hath loued vs, and hath giuen himselfe for vs, to be an offering and a sacrifice of a sweete smelling sauour to God. (Geneva Bible, 1599)*

*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. (King James Version, 1769)*

*Become, then, followers of God, as children beloved, and walk in love, as also the Christ did love us, and did give himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell, (Young's Literal Translation, 1898)*

*Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell. (Revised Version, 1885)*

*Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell. (American Standard Version, 1901)*

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Revised Standard Version, 1952)*

*Be becoming therefore imitators of God, as children beloved, and be ordering your behavior within the sphere of love, even as Christ also loved you and gave himself up in our behalf and in our stead as an offering and a sacrifice to God for an aroma of a sweet smell. (Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation, 1961)*

*Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (New King James Version, 1982)*

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (New American Standard Version, 1995)*

*Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (New International Version, 2011)*

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (English Standard Version, 2016)*

γίνεσθε οὖν μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητά καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας (Stephanus Greek NT, 1550)

Γίνεσθε οὖν μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητὰ καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας. (NA28 Greek New Testament)

## **Imitate God in Love and Forgiveness**

**negatively ...**

**positively ...**

**motivational clause**

**[positive exhortation]**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

**[positive exhortation  
with motivational  
clause]**

<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, ...

... as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

***“The continuous display of love for one another is the epitome of what it means to be a Christian. Abundant and self-sacrificial love is in the very nature of God himself. Paul thus calls believers to emulate their God and display the likeness of their Father, which Christ himself has already shown us how to do.” [Arnold, 309] “The readers’ forgiving of one another, just as God in Christ forgave them, entails their becoming imitators of God. They are to make God’s activity the pattern for their lives. Their depiction as God’s dearly loved children makes clear the basis on which the demand for imitation is made. Believers have been adopted into God’s family (cf. 1:5) and should exhibit the family resemblance. It would be***

*incongruous to be God's dearly loved child and not to want to become like one's loving Father. In fact, the new child-Father relationship not only requires but also enables imitation to take place, as the children live their lives out of the love they have already experienced from their Father.*" [Lincoln, 310] One of the major differences between Christianity and other world religions is that not only is there a moral code (all religions have some moral code) but only Christianity gives us the power to live that moral code! The Lord not only gives a standard of life but gives us His Holy Spirit which enables us to live the standard He demands. No person can live the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit.

**THE MOTIVE FOR OBEYING IS UNIQUELY CHRISTIAN** — "Paul has depicted in the strongest possible terms the contrast between the readers' previous way of life in the society of his day and their present existence in Christ. The standards presented in this passage are very different from the lifestyle of the surrounding world. This is not to say that some moralists would have disagreed with the apostle's assessment and given contrary advice. Some would have concurred with him at a number of points. Virtue and vice lists, and negative and positive injunctions of a kind similar to Paul's can be found in the Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish literature of the day. *But it is 'the framework of motivations supplied by his gospel' that makes his 'ethical teaching coherent and distinctly Christian'. Particularly significant is the motivation not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom they were sealed until the day of redemption (v. 30). God has stamped the readers with his own character and guaranteed to protect them until the final day. How ungrateful they would be if they now behaved in a manner which grieved the very Spirit by whom God had marked them as his own. Further, they are to forgive others just as God in Christ forgave them (v. 32), and they are to be imitators of God by walking in love. The model and ground for such a life of love is Christ's love so signally demonstrated in the cross. Ultimately, then, to imitate God is to imitate Christ, and costly, sacrificial love is to characterize believers in their relationships with one another.*" [O'Brien, 355f]

**V. 1 — Therefore be, Be becoming therefore** — γίνεσθε οὖν [ginesthe oun] — **STRONGLY CONNECTED TO PREVIOUS VERSE** — Both 'therefore' and the same command 'be, be becoming' from v. 32 make clear that this exhortation is building upon and drawing out the consequences of the previous one: 'Become and continue to be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you ... therefore become and continue to be imitators of God ...'. "*'Therefore' (oun) closely links this admonition to the immediately preceding statement that 'God ... forgave you in Christ,' but also to the whole of 4:32, which speaks of God's kindness and tenderheartedness. Because God forgives, his children should also be forgiving, and thereby imitate their Father.*" [Arnold, 309; see also Lincoln, 310; O'Brien, 352; Hoehner, 643f; Eadie, 362]

**ON-GOING AND CONTINUING** — The present imperative verb 'be, be becoming,' the same verb that introduced 4:32, indicates that the action should be an ongoing and developing quality in the lives of believers. *Believers are to develop continuously into imitators of God.* [Arnold, 309; Hoehner, 644] "*Growing in love is a continuing need for every believer, since love fulfills all of God's law (Rom. 13:8-10). As we grow in love we also see the need to be even more loving. And since biblically defined love is so contrary to the flesh, we are always in need of reminders and encouragement to love.*" [MacArthur, 194]

**imitators of God, followers of God** — μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ [mimētai tou theou] — **IMITATE = EMULATE, FOLLOW AFTER** — The verb 'mimētai' simply means 'to emulate, to follow after.' It was used in classical times to mean 'an imitator, a copier' as an actor who 'impersonates' or in the bad sense, an 'imposter.' A word from the same root can mean a counterfeit; a good counterfeit is as close to the original as possible. [Hoehner] The word and its cognates are rare in the LXX and where they appear they relate to the making of objects to resemble other objects or one person copying the conduct of another, but never are people called to imitate God. It was widely used in the Greek world philosophy, art and the Mystery religions. It is simply some kind of model set up for imitation: sons imitate their fathers, subjects imitate their rulers, pupils imitate their teacher, the good are also to be imitated. [Best, Arnold] *Imitation is not divorced from the recognition of authority: the imitation of believers of God, the imitation of the disciples of Christ, the imitation of converts to the Apostle Paul.* [F. F. Bruce] It is the term from which we get our word 'mimic', someone who copies specific characteristics of another person. [MacArthur]

**'IMITATE GOD' ONLY USED ONE TIME IN THE BIBLE ...** — Only here in Ephesians is there the admonition to be 'imitators of God.' "A frequent feature in ancient paraenesis was the provision of models for imitation. [Paul] chooses the highest model possible and in so doing supplies the only passage in the NT where the explicit language of imitation of God is employed." [Lincoln, 310; see also Best, 466; Arnold, 309; O'Brien, 353]

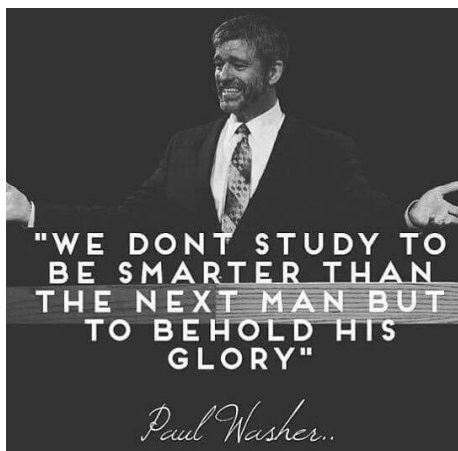
**... BUT THERE ARE MANY SIMILAR STATEMENTS** — Although 5:1 is the only place in the Scriptures where we are called upon to 'imitate God', the same idea has been expressed in a variety of different ways.

*'For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.... You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.'* (Lev 11:44,45; cp. 1 Pet 1:15,16: 'but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."')

*'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.'* (Lev 19:2)

*'Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.'* (Lev 20:7)

*'And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.'* (Lev 20:26)



that day, saying, "Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God." ... Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.' (Josh 14:8,9,14)

'If you [all of Israel] fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God.' (1 Sam 12:14)

'Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.' (1 Kings 11:6)

'and yet you [Jeroboam] have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes' (1 Kings 14:8)

'But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.... Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.' (Matt 5:44,45, 48)

'But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.' (Luke 6:35)

'Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.' (Luke 6:36)

'even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.' (Col 3:13b)

'Therefore I urge you, imitate me.' (1 Cor 4:16)

'Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.' (1 Cor 10:31-11:1)

'For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you.... not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.' (2 Thess 3:7,9)

'Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.' (Phil 3:17)

'Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.' (Gal 4:12)

'And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit' (1 Thess 1:6)

'For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus.' (1 Thess 2:14)

'And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' (Heb 6:11,12)

'For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps' (1 Pet 2:21) [Best, 467; Lincoln, 310f; O'Brien, 352f; Bruce, 367f; Hoehner, 644; Eadie, 362; Muddiman, 230f]

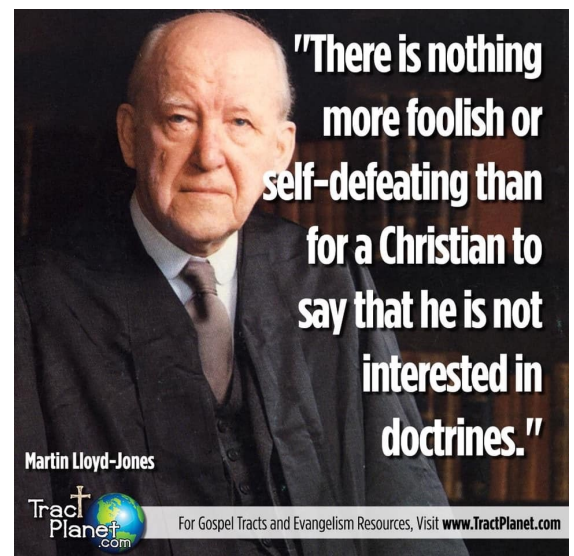
**TO IMITATE GOD REQUIRES KNOWING WORD OF GOD —**  
**"To know what God is like we must study His Word, His revelation of**

'You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.' (Deut 13:4)

'But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.' (Num 14:24)

'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord.' (Num 32:11,12)

'Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I [Joshua] wholly followed the Lord my God. So Moses swore on



*Himself, His great Self-disclosure. Yet the more we learn of God's character the more we learn how far above us He is and how impossible in ourselves it is to fulfill the command to be like Him, to be absolutely perfect, just as He is. That is why we need 'to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man' in order to 'be filled up to all the fullness of God' (Eph. 3:16, 19). The only way we can become imitators of God is for the Lord Jesus Christ to live His perfect life through us. We are totally dependent on His Spirit to become like Him. If we are to obey Paul's admonition to the Corinthians, 'let all that you do be done in love' (1 Cor 16:14), we must submit to the controlling influence of the Spirit."*

[MacArthur, 194]

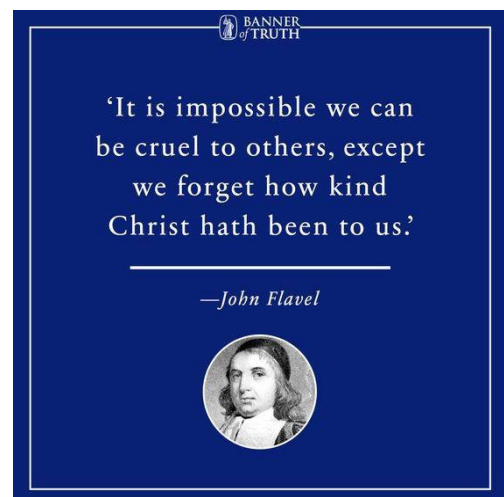
**JEWS HESITATED TO 'IMITATE GOD' —** *"Certain factors operated against the appearance among Jews of the idea of the imitation of God: the initial sin of Adam and Eve as the desire to be like God, the existence of human sin, the second commandment forbidding the making of any likeness to God, the Hellenistic usage of imitation in relation to sculpture. Indeed the thought of the imitation of the invisible God is paradoxical. As a result it was only towards the end of the first century that the idea began to appear in Palestinian Judaism. None of this hindered the acceptance of similarity to God in the age to come (cf 1 Jn 3.2)." [Best, 466f]*

**BUT HELLENISTIC JEWS DID HAVE CONCEPT OF BEING IMITATORS OF GOD —**

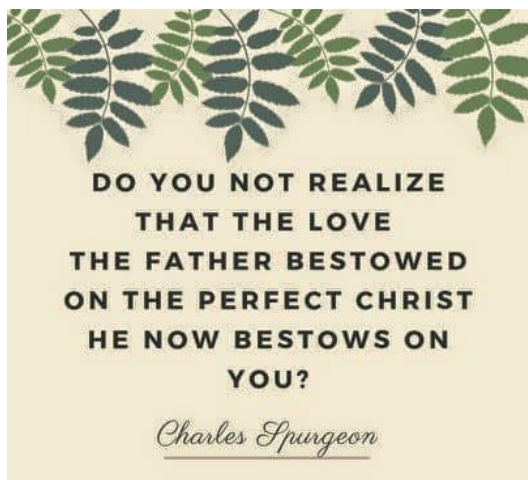
Several of the commentators give quotes from the Jewish philosopher Philo (c. 20 BC - 50 AD) who in turn gets some of his teaching from Plato. "First century Judaism applied the term to following after God and his righteous ways. A person who does good works — abstaining from what God hates and has forbidden by his commandments — is an imitator of God (*T. Ash.* 4.3). The language of imitating God appears a handful of times in Philo. For instance, in commenting on what Moses says in Deut 8:18 ('for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth'), Philo says, 'And in another place also the lawgiver gives this precept, which is most becoming and suitable to a rational nature, that men should imitate God to the best of their power, omitting nothing which can possibly contribute to such a similarity as the case admits of' (*Virtues* 168). What Philo means is that since God has empowered people to make wealth, they should follow his example by helping others.... *This and other passages in Philo (e.g., Alleg. Interp. 1.48; Sacrifices 1.65, 68) demonstrate that a first-century Jew could use the language of imitation to describe the concept of following the ways of God in the OT. The substantial difference, however, comes in the motivation and pattern that God has given under the new covenant. He calls his people to pattern their lives after not only his holiness, but his love. The kind of love the Father shows in providing his Son as an offering for sin is unexcelled.*" [Arnold, 310] "Barth states that though not in the OT, the concept of imitating God is found in Hellenistic Jewish writers, particularly Philo. From Plato's *Theaetetus* (25 §176a-b) Philo concludes that we ought to flee from earth to heaven and this flight means to become like God as far as possible and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise,' similar to the present context where Paul enjoins them to walk in holiness (4:17-32), walk in love (5:2), and abstain from evil (5:3-6). More specifically Philo illustrates from Moses that a person should imitate God as much as possible. He states that the strength that God gave should be used to imitate God by graciously giving in the same way. He also states that a person resembles God by showing kindness (or being gracious). Thus what greater good can there be than to imitate God. These last two references are fitting for they speak of being gracious to one another as a reflection of God's grace, which parallels this context (4:32). Hence, the concept of imitating God was known in Hellenistic Judaism in the first century, the setting of Paul's own time and training. Paul now goes on to state how we are to imitate God." [Hoehner, 644f; see also Lincoln, 311; Best, 466; O'Brien, 353; Bruce, 368]

**IN CONTEXT: WE IMITATE GOD BY LOVING SHOWN IN**

**FORGIVENESS —** *"The principal idea expressed in the exhortation to 'be imitators of God' in this context is the manifestation of love to fellow believers. One of the most tangible ways of displaying this love is by showing genuine forgiveness each and every time someone offends. There are a variety of additional ways that people can imitate God, but the display of love, especially in self-sacrificial ways, is the lofty example that Paul holds up in this passage."* [Arnold, 309] *"The idea of 4.32b, forgive as God forgives, is now widened here into imitation of God and in v. 2 to 'love'.... [W]hat features of God's activities are believers to imitate? The context, 4.32 and 5.2 suggests the readiness to forgive and love, love being a generalisation of forgiveness."* [Best, 465, 467; see also Lincoln, 311f] *"The greatest evidence of love is undeserved forgiveness. The supreme act of God's love was to give 'His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life' (John 3:16). God's love brought man's forgiveness. God loved the world with such a*



*great love that He offered forgiveness to sinful, rebellious, wretched, vile mankind, by sending His own Son to give His life on the cross that they might not suffer death. He offered the world the free gift of eternal fellowship with Him. Because forgiveness is the supreme evidence of God's love, it will also be the most convincing proof of our love. Love will always lead us to forgive others just as love led God in Christ to forgive us (Eph. 4:32). Nothing more clearly discloses a hard, loveless heart than lack of forgiveness. Lack of forgiveness betrays lack of love (see 4:31).* The presence of forgiveness always proves the presence of love, because only love has the motive and power to forgive. The extent of our love is the extent of our ability to forgive. Whatever another believer may do against us, no matter how terrible or destructive or unjustified, Christ has paid the penalty for that sin. No matter how others may hurt, slander, persecute, or in any way harm us, Christ's sacrifice was sufficient to pay their penalty. When a Christian expresses, or even harbors, vengeance toward a brother, he not only sins by allowing selfish hatred to control him but he sins by profaning Christ's sacrifice — by seeking to mete out punishment for a sin whose penalty has already been paid by his Lord. Because Christ has paid the penalty for every sin, we have no right to hold any sin against any person, even a nonbeliever. Peter thought that forgiving someone 'up to seven times' was generous. But Jesus said, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven' (Matt. 18:22). In Christ all our 'sins are forgiven for His name's sake' (1 John 2:12); He has 'forgiven us *all* our transgressions' (Col. 2:13, emphasis added). 'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace' (Eph. 1:7). Just as the depth of God's love is shown by how much He has forgiven, the depth of our love is shown by how much we forgive. 'Above all,' Peter says, 'keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins' (1 Pet. 4:8). The Greek word behind 'fervent' refers to a muscle stretched to the limit. Our love is to stretch to the limit in order to cover 'a multitude of sins.' The greater our love the greater the multitude of sins it will cover in forgiveness. The depth of our love is also shown by how much we know we have been forgiven. When Jesus was eating dinner with Simon the Pharisee, a prostitute came into the house and anointed Jesus' feet with her tears and with expensive perfume. Simon was incensed at what she did and was disappointed in Jesus for allowing such a woman to touch Him. Jesus responded by telling a parable: 'A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more? Simon answered and said, I suppose the one whom he forgave more. And He said to him, You have judged correctly?' After comparing the ways that Simon and the woman had treated Him, Jesus said, 'For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little' (Luke 7:36-47). Because Simon had no real sense of the enormity of the sin in his own life, and therefore sensed no need for forgiveness, he was unforgiving of others — especially those whom he considered moral and social outcasts. Unforgiveness is the measure of self-righteousness just as forgiveness is the measure of love. Our ability to love, and therefore to forgive, depends on our sense of how much God has forgiven us. Unforgiveness is also a measure of unbelief, because the person who feels no need for forgiveness feels no need for God.... The person who sees the greatness of his own forgiveness by God's love will himself in love *be* forgiving. He forgives in love because his heavenly Father has forgiven in love and he desires to be an imitator of His Father." [MacArthur, 195f]



**as beloved children, as children beloved** — ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητά [hōs tekna agapēta] — **'LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON'** — *"The nature of the relationship that believers now enjoy with God through the new covenant also provides a significant motivation for imitating God. Christians are now in a relationship with the Father as his 'beloved children'. This is not a status that they work hard at earning and finally attain when God deems them good enough to be accepted as sons and daughters. Believers are adopted as God's children (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5) when they put their faith in Jesus Christ and are now God's own inheritance (Eph 1:18). As a consequence of this new and marvelous relationship, 'God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit' (Rom 5:5), thereby giving his people the capacity to love far beyond what they might think they are capable of showing (Eph 3:20 - 21)." [Arnold, 310] "The adjective [agapetos] in classical times, with reference to children, meant 'beloved' or 'contented' but particularly referred to an only child to whom the parents had devoted all their love. In other words, because the child had received so much love, the child had the security of being loved and thus was contented.... Here Paul exhorts believers to become imitators of*

*God, that is, as beloved children. As stated above, [agapetos] was often used in reference to an only child and such a picture might be applied to Christ as the only son of the Father. Here, in the present context it cannot be pressed quite to that extent, but believers must realize God's ability to extend his love to each of his children as if he or she were the only child. They should be content because of the knowledge and security of his love. He uses the term [tekna] which connotes a closer relationship to the parent than the word [huios] (cf. 2:3). It denotes dependency on the parent. Therefore, believers are to be imitators of God as ones who are his beloved children because of his love which has been experienced in Christ. The result will be harmony and growth to the body of Christ." [Hoehner, 645f] "The whole of the Christian life is the reproduction of godliness as seen in the person of Christ. God's purpose in salvation is to redeem men from sin and to conform them 'to the image of His Son' (Rom. 8:29). To be conformed to Christ is to become perfect, just as God is perfect (Matt. 5:48). 'As obedient children,' Peter tells us, 'do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy' (1 Pet. 1:14-16; cf. Lev. 11:44). The great hope of believers is, 'We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just*

as He is' (1 John 3:2). Imitating His love is possible because 'the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us' (Rom.5:5). When Alexander the Great discovered a coward in his army who also was named Alexander, he told the soldier, 'Renounce your cowardice or renounce your name.' Those who carry God's name are to be imitators of His character. By His grace it is possible to reflect Him even in our present limitations.... It is natural for children to be like their parents. They have their parents' nature and they instinctively imitate their parents' actions and behavior. Through Jesus Christ God has given us the right to become His children (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26). As Paul declared at the beginning of this letter, God 'predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will' (Eph. 1:5). Because our heavenly Father is holy, we are to be holy. Because He is kind, we are to be kind. Because He is forgiving, we are to be forgiving. Because God in Christ humbled Himself, we are to humble ourselves. Because God is love, as His beloved children we are to walk in love. This ability is not natural, however, but supernatural — requiring a new nature and the continuous power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us by obedience to God's Word." [MacArthur, 194f; see also Best, 467; O'Brien, 352; Eadie, 362]

**v. 2 — And walk in love, (ESV) — and be ordering your behavior within the sphere of love, (Wuest) — καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ [kai peripateite en agapē] — “These two statements parallel each other, for to be an imitator of God is to walk in love.” [Hoehner, 646] “The ultimate demonstration of love is Jesus’ act of laying down his life for his people to procure their forgiveness of sins and bring them into a relationship with God. His willing sacrifice serves as the hallmark example defining what it truly means to love.” [Arnold, 311] This command to love is reminiscent of Christ’s command to His disciples in His farewell discourse: ‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.... This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.... These things I command you, that you love one another.’ (John 13:34; 15:12,17)**

**BELIEVERS ARE AGAIN COMMANDED HOW TO WALK — Paul here uses the present imperative (a command) to stress this should be and continue to be a regular and characteristic way of relating to one another. Certainly the sacrifice of one’s own interests out of concern for the welfare of others is the quality above all that fosters harmony in our churches.** This is the third time in the second half of this letter (chaps. 4-6) that Paul instructs believers as to how they are to live: we are to walk in unity (4:1-16), in holiness (4:17-32) and in love (5:1-6). [Best, 468; Lincoln, 312; Arnold, 310; Hoehner, 643,646; O'Brien, 353f; MacArthur, 194; Robinson, 158]

**We are to walk worthily of our calling as believers:** ‘I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called’ (Eph 4:1)

**We are to walk in holiness and not as the lost:** ‘This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind’ (Eph 4:17)

**We are to walk in love, our thinking, attitudes and behavior are to be characterized by the grace and forgiveness of Christ:** ‘And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.’ (Eph 5:2)

**Paul will continue to describe how we are to walk as children of light:** ‘For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light’ (Eph 5:8)

**Paul will command us to walk as the wise:** ‘See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.’ (Eph 5:15,16)

Paul elsewhere describes an instance when believers may not have been walking in love: ‘Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.’ (Rom 14:15)

**THE ‘SUMMUM BONUM’ (THE ‘HIGHEST GOOD’) OF CHRIST THAT WE ARE TO IMITATE — “The summum bonum of Christ that we are to imitate is His love. He loved us and gave Himself up for us. Giving of oneself to others is the epitome of agape love. Biblical love is not a pleasant emotion or good feeling about someone, but the giving of oneself for his welfare (cf. 1 John 3:16). Divine love is unconditional love, love that depends entirely on the one who loves and not on the merit, attractiveness, or response of the one loved. Christ did not simply have a deep feeling and emotional concern for mankind. Nor did He sacrifice Himself for us because we were deserving (cf. Rom. 5:8, 10). ‘While we were yet sinners,’ He gave Himself up for us purely out of sovereign, gracious love, taking our sin upon Himself and paying its penalty in our behalf.**

“God’s love, and all love that is like His, loves for the sake of giving, not getting. With conditional love, if the conditions are not met there is no obligation to love. If we do not get, we do not give. But God’s makes no conditions for His love to us and commands that we love others without conditions. There is no way to earn God’s love or to deserve it by reason of human goodness.

“Romantic, emotional love between husband and wife ebbs and flows, and



sometimes disappears altogether. But loss of romantic love is never an appropriate excuse for dissolving a marriage, because the love that God specifically commands husbands to have for their wives is *agape* love (Eph. 5:25; 3:19; cf. Titus 2:4; etc.) — love like His own undeserved love for us, love that is based on willful choice in behalf of the one loved, regardless of emotions, attraction, or deserving. Romantic love enhances and beautifies the relationship between husband and wife, but the binding force of a Christian marriage is God's own kind of love, the love that loves because it is the divine nature to love. It is the love of giving, not of getting; and even when it ceases to get, it continues to give. Where there is the sacrificial love of willful choice, there is also likely to be the love of intimacy, feeling, and friendship (*philia*).

“God loved us while we were still sinners and enemies, and He continues to love us as believers, even though we continue to sin and fall short of His perfection and His glory. He loves us when we forget Him, when we disobey Him, when we deny Him, when we fail to return His love, and when we grieve His Holy Spirit. When Jude said, ‘Keep yourselves in the love of God’ (Jude 21), he was indicating the responsibility to stay in the place where that divine love sheds its blessing.

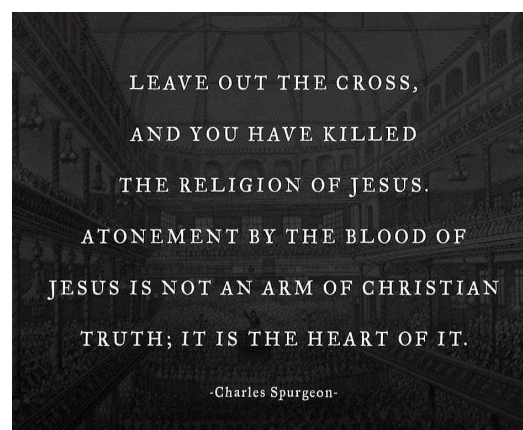
***“Those who are given God’s nature through Jesus Christ are commanded to love as God loves. In Christ, it is now our nature to love just as it is God’s nature to love — because His nature is now our nature. For a Christian not to love is for him to live against his own nature as well as against God’s.***

***“Lovelessness is therefore more than a failure or shortcoming. It is sin, willful disobedience of God’s command and disregard of His example.”*** [MacArthur, 197]

**as Christ loved us (ESV) — even as Christ also loved you (Wuest) —** καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς [kathōs kai ho Christos ēgapēsen hēmas] — **CHRIST IS OUR PATTERN** — *The love of Christ for His people is both the reason and the pattern for living a life characterized by love. The conjunction ‘even as’ should be taken as having both a causal force (‘because Christ has loved us, we should love others’) and a comparative force (‘we should sacrificially love others as Christ has loved us’).* [Arnold, 310] *“Christ’s love for us is stated for the first time in this book. Earlier Paul stated that God the Father loved us (2:4). However, in Rom 8:35 and 37 Paul makes specific statements of Christ’s love — ‘who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.’ In John’s Gospel (13:1, 34; 15:12) the love of Christ is also seen as a model for the disciples. The object of that love is believers.”* [Hoehner, 647] *“The Christian’s walk in love is to extend to every person, believer and unbeliever. If God’s love can reach out even to His enemies, how can we refuse to love our enemies? If He loves His imperfect children with a perfect love, how can we not love fellow believers, whose imperfections we share? And if divine love led Christ to sacrifice Himself for unworthy and ungrateful sinners, how can we not give ourselves to fellow sinful people, unbelievers as well as believers, in His name? Shortly before His betrayal and arrest, Jesus was having supper with His disciples. During the meal the disciples began arguing among themselves as to which was the greatest. Their Lord was facing His ultimate humiliation and affliction, and yet their only concern was for themselves, for their own prestige, rank, and glory. When the Lord most needed their comfort, encouragement, and support, they acted as if He were not with them. All their attention was focused selfishly on themselves (Luke 22:24). It was then that Jesus picked up a basin of water and began washing their feet, a task usually reserved for the lowest of servants. Despite their callous lack of concern for His impending suffering and death, Jesus humbly, forgivingly, unconditionally, and self-sacrificially ministered to them. After He finished washing their feet and returned to the supper table, ‘He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him’ (John 13:12-16). Later He commanded them to love in this same manner (John 13:34-35).”* [MacArthur, 198]

## THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

There are many facets to Christianity, from Bible Versions to worship styles to acts of service. But while there may be many differences between we who are believers, this that follows is the essence of Christianity. ***Jesus Christ suffered the wrath of God in our stead! Without the sacrificial, substitutionary, atoning death (and resurrection) of Jesus Christ on behalf of His people, there is no Christianity!***



**and gave himself up for us, (ESV) — and gave himself up in our behalf and in our stead (Wuest) —** καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν [kai paredōken heauton huper hēmōn] — **SELF-SACRIFICIAL LOVE** — *“The immeasurable fervour of Christ’s love is beyond description. That love which is set before us was noble, ardent, and self-sacrificing; eternal, boundless, and unchanging as its possessor — more to Him than the possession of visible equality with God, for He veiled the splendours of divinity; more to Him than heaven, for He left it; more to Him than the conscious enjoyment of His Father’s countenance, for on the cross He suffered the horrors of a spiritual eclipse, and cried, ‘Why hast Thou forsaken me?’; more to Him, in fine, than His life, for He freely surrendered it. That love was embodied in Christ as He walked on earth, and especially as He bled on the cross; for He loved us.”* [Eadie, 363] *“The apostle’s point is plain.*

*Christ's handing himself over to death for his people was the supreme demonstration of his love for them. Because he is both the ground and model of their love, costly, sacrificial love is to be the distinguishing mark of their lives. To serve others in this way is not only to please God; it is also to imitate both God and Christ.*" [O'Brien, 355]

**NO MAN TOOK CHRIST'S LIFE FROM HIM** — The reflexive pronoun indicates that He took His own initiative in handing Himself over. This echoes Jesus' words when He states that He is the good Shepherd and will lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:11,15,17). Jesus was not forced to die at the hand of human beings but rather laid down his own life. In John 10:18 he specifically says that he lays down his life on his own accord and that he has power to lay it down and power to take it again. Jesus freely obeyed the Father's will. [Hoehner, 647f] *"The general idea is, that Christ's love led to His self-surrender as a sacrifice. He was no passive victim of circumstances, but in active and spontaneous attachment He gave up Himself to death, and for such as we are — His poor, guilty, and ungrateful murderers."* [Eadie, 363f] "'Also' (the conjunction *kai* interpreted as having an adjunctive force) indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ, in addition to the Father, loves his people dearly. Believers not only look to the Father's example of self-giving love, they also look to Christ because of his willing participation in the divine plan. John's gospel emphasizes God's love in giving his Son as an atoning sacrifice (John 3:16; see also 1 John 4:11). *Yet Jesus was not a passive victim in this costly sacrifice (as Isaac was when Abraham prepared to offer him in obedience to God; see Gen 22:1 - 18). Jesus gave himself up for us (Eph 5:2, 25; Gal 1:4; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14). This self-giving decision is summed up well in Jesus' words in the fourth gospel: 'My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command' (John 15:12 -14). Love for one another, patterned on his own self-giving love, is the 'new command' that Jesus gave to his disciples (John 13:34)."* [Arnold, 310f]

**'HAND OVER, GIVE OVER, DELIVER TO'** — The verb *'to hand over, give over'* is aorist, pointing back to the action of the cross. BDAG defines this word as follows:

(1) to convey something in which one has a relatively strong personal interest, *hand over, give (over), deliver, entrust*; as

(a) a thing such as talents, Matt 25:20,22; also in the sense of *'give back, restore, give up'* as in John 19:30 when Christ *'gave up'* His spirit on the cross; used in Acts 15:26 of men who have *'risked their lives'* for the name of Christ (they *'gave over'* their lives for Christ);

(b) *hand over, turn over, give up* a person as *'handing over'* into the custody of the police and courts; used as a military term *'surrender'*; used throughout the NT of Christ being *'handed over'* to sinful men. It is the word used when Judas agreed to thirty pieces of silver if he *'deliver Him'* to the Sanhedrin (Matt 26:15). It is used of the Jews who *'delivered over'* Jesus to Pilate (Acts 3:13). We saw this word in Eph 4:19 of the unsaved Gentiles who had *'given themselves over'* to licentiousness.

(2) to entrust for care or preservation, *give over, commit, commit*; used in this manner in Acts 15:40 to be *'commended'* by someone to the grace of the Lord.

(3) to pass on to another what one knows, of oral or written tradition, *to hand down, pass on, transmit, relate, teach*. Used of the traditions of the Pharisees (Mk 7:13), of the holy commandments delivered to those who became apostates (2 Pet 2:21), of the believers who were to contend for the faith *'once delivered'* to the saints (Jude 3);

(4) to make it possible for something to happen, *allow, permit*; as the crops are gathered once they are ripe (Mk 4:29). [BDAG]

*In this verse action is ascribed to Christ. Normally it is God who is said to love people and either He or a human agent to hand Christ over to death (Rom 8:32). Whenever Christ is the subject of 'to hand over', the verb is usually passive and the true subject is God or a human; e.g., Christ being delivered up (by God or a person) for our sins (Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 11:23; Mk 9:31; 10:33; 14:41, etc.). But in the following three places Christ is the real subject, the verbs are active and in each case the aorist tense refers to His sacrificial death.* [Best, 469]

**For believers:** *'And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.'* (Eph 5:2)

**For His churches:** *'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her'* (Eph 5:25)

**For Paul:** *'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.'* (Gal 2:20) [Best, 469]

*"The example of Christ is appealed to alongside the example of God: their way of life must be marked by love, as Christ's was. He showed his love by giving himself up to death on their behalf; the practical implication is clear, even if Paul does not spell it out expressly here as John does: 'by this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (1 John 3:16).... Paul can speak of Christ as giving himself up (cf. Gal. 1:4) and of the Father as giving him up (cf. Rom. 8:32); in the whole ordo salutis the Father and the Son act as one."* [Bruce, 368]

**‘FOR US’ = REPRESENTATION AND SUBSTITUTION — Jesus went to the cross as a willing victim, on behalf of those to whom were given unto Him by the Father. The language indicates at least representation, even substitution.**

*‘Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree)’ (Gal 3:13)*

*‘For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.’ (2 Cor 5:21)*

**“This clause defines what it means that ‘Christ loved us’ by explaining it in terms of his self-giving sacrifice.... The prepositional phrase ‘for us’ is frequently used in connection with Christ’s death and has become part of the traditional confession of the early church (see Rom 5:8; 8:32; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1 Thess 5:10; Titus 2:14; 1 John 3:16; see also, 1 Clem. 21:6; 49:6; Ignatius, Eph. 1.2; Trol. 2.1; Rom. 6.1; Phld. 4.1; Smyrn. 1.2; 2.1; Diogn. 9.2; Pol. Phil. 8.1; 9.2).” [Arnold, 311]**

**a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (ESV) — as an offering and a sacrifice to God for an aroma of a sweet smell. (Wuest) — προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας [prosphoran kai thusian tō theō eis osmēn euōdias] — CHRIST, THE SACRIFICIAL OFFERING TO GOD — ‘Offering’ and ‘sacrifice’ are considered by many to be a**

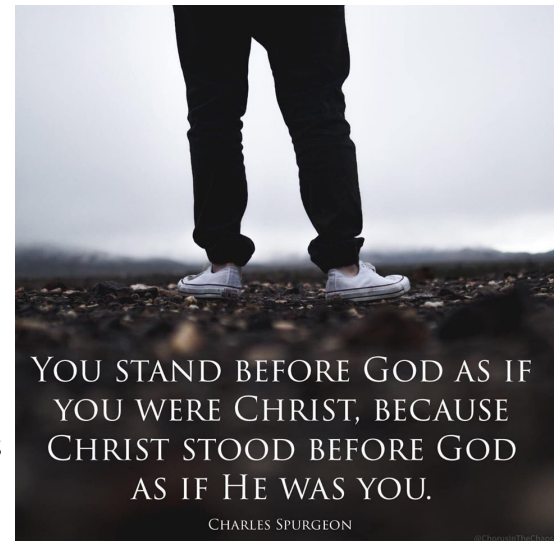
**hendiadys** – hen•dahy•uh•dis – noun, Rhetoric – the expression of a single idea by two words connected with ‘and,’ e.g., *nice and warm*, when one could be used to modify the other, as in *nicely warm*.

*‘hendiadys,’ two words expressing a single idea. Anything presented to God is an offering, but a sacrifice was something slain. “In specifying that Christ gave himself as ‘an offering and sacrifice’ (prosphoran kai thusian), Paul uses the language of the old covenant sacrificial system. The first term is far less common than the latter and refers to ‘that which is brought as a voluntary expression.’ In meaning and usage, it closely approximates its*

*etymology, ‘to bring [something] to [someone]’ (pros + phero). The only other time that Paul uses it is in speaking of his Gentile converts as an ‘offering’ to God (Rom 15:16). The term ‘sacrifice’ (thusia) is the most common term in the LXX to refer to the ritual of animal sacrifice. The cognate verb (thuō) means ‘to slaughter an animal in a ritual manner as a sacrifice to a deity.’ In fact, the word ‘altar’ is built upon this term for sacrifice (thusiasterion). Both nouns appear together in Ps 40:6, where the psalmist says, ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire.’ The author of Hebrews cites this psalm in his discussion of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ (Heb 10:5, 8). It is possible that here the two nouns form a hendiadys — one notion of sacrifice in which we should not see different shades of meaning between the two nouns.” [Arnold, 311] “Every victim ever slain on Pagan altars was a declaration of the necessity for such a sacrifice; all the blood shed on Jewish altars was a prophecy and promise of propitiation by the blood of Christ; and the whole New Testament is the record of the Son of God offering himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This, according to the faith of [Christianity], is the sum of the Gospel — The incarnation and death of the eternal Son of God as a propitiation for sin. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to the sense in which the apostle here declares Christ to be an offering and a sacrifice.” [Hodge, 202f] “Taken together the two words convey that Christ handed himself over as the offering and sacrifice that would fulfill all the offerings and sacrifices in the OT. When one looks at the calendar of feasts (Lev 23) and all of the offerings and sacrifices for which each Israelite was responsible, and all the offerings and sacrifices which the priests had to offer for all the people (both the daily offerings as well as the annual celebrations), it is astounding that the one supreme offering and sacrifice of Christ met all their requirements. The Book of Hebrews (9:26; 10:10-12) carries a parallel idea when it speaks of the ‘one’ offering and sacrifice of Christ.” [Hoehner, 649] “The first substantive (‘offering’) ... may mean a bloodless oblation, though sometimes in a wider signification it denotes an oblation of any kind, and even one of slain victims. (‘Sacrifice’) ... is the slaying of a victim — the shedding of its blood, and the burning of its carcass.... Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice in its completest sense — a holy victim, whose blood was poured out in His presentation to God. In the meantime it may be remarked, that the suffering involved in sacrifice, such unparalleled suffering as Christ endured as our sacrifice, proves the depth and fervour of His affection, and brightens that example of love which the apostle sets before the Ephesian church.” [Eadie, 364f]*

*‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.’ (Psalm 40:6 [Psa 39:7 LXX]); quote by the author of Hebrews: ‘Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.’ (Heb 10:5)*

**GOD WAS WELL-PLEASED WITH THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST — Paul does not just speak of Christ’s death as a ‘offering and sacrifice’ but adds that it was ‘an odor of a sweet smell, a sweet-smelling aroma, a fragrant aroma.’ The root of the word used here for ‘odor’ (osmē) can refer to an ‘odor, smell’ whether it is pleasant or unpleasant. But Paul adds the odor is ‘euōdias’ meaning, ‘fragrance, sweet odor, aroma.’ These two words occur forty-nine times together in the LXX (forty-seven in the canonical books) meaning ‘fragrant aroma’ (e.g., Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; Num 15:3, 5; Ezek 6:13, 19). Hence these two words together refer to sacrifices and derive their background from the OT. Out of the forty-nine times the expression ‘fragrant aroma’ is found in the OT, twenty-six times (twenty-five times in the canonical books) it is the exact same**



phrase as in this present verse. In other words, Paul is capturing the OT sense of a sacrifice that is acceptable to God. [Hoehner, 650f] ***The underlying sense of Paul's words is that the sacrifice of Christ was fully pleasing to God the Father. "The idea behind 'sweet savor' is simply that the sacrifice is well pleasing to God. This does not suggest that God is pleased that sin demands death, and that His Son had to die to save lost sinners. Rather, it indicates that the death of Christ satisfies the holy law of God and therefore is acceptable and pleasing to the Father."*** [Wiersbe, 44] "Paul elaborates still further on this sacrifice by affirming that it was a 'fragrant aroma' (osmen euodias) to God. This phrase appears repeatedly throughout the OT in connection with the pleasant smell of the burnt offerings regularly sacrificed on the altar. Such offerings were a 'pleasing aroma' to the Lord (see, e.g., Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2). The expression could also be used metaphorically as, for example, in Ezek 20:41, where those who will be gathered from exile will be received by God as a 'fragrant incense.' ***Here the expression should be interpreted as indicating the acceptability of Christ's sacrifice to God. He willingly gave himself as an offering for sin and God accepted this offering. Christ's sacrifice was therefore effective for the forgiveness of sins.***" [Arnold, 311f] "The imagery performs a doxological function at the end of the sentence, as through it [Paul] indicates that Christ's sacrifice of love was supremely pleasing and glorifying to God. But the rhetoric still serves the paraenesis, and the readers are reminded that Christ's sacrificial love should find a response in analogous acts of love toward each other. It is significant that Paul, in Phil 4:18, could in fact speak of the Philippians' sacrificial love for him in the same terms that [he] uses for Christ's sacrifice, 'a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.'" [Lincoln, 312] "The one other place in the Pauline writings where this phrase — 'a fragrant odor' — occurs is in Phil. 4:18, where Paul uses it of the gift which his friends in Philippi had sent him: 'a fragrant odor, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.'" [Bruce, 369]

*'Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.'* (Phil 4:18)

***Christ was a propitiatory sacrifice:*** 'whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed' (Rom 3:25)

***Christ was a sin offering:*** 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom 8:3)

***Christ was our Passover Lamb:*** 'Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.' (1 Cor 5:7)

**OT SACRIFICES 'A SWEET AROMA'** — "The first five chapters of Leviticus describe five offerings commanded by God of the Israelites. The first three were the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering. The burnt offering (Lev. 1:1-17) depicted Christ's total devotion to God in giving His very life to obey and please His Father; the meal (grain) offering (Lev. 2:1-16) depicted Christ's perfection, and the peace offering (Lev. 3:1-17; 4:27-31) depicted His making peace between God and man. All of those offerings obviously spoke of what was pleasing to God. Of each, the Scripture says it provided a 'soothing aroma to the Lord' (Lev. 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16).... While Christ was the sin-bearer, God could not look on Him or rejoice in Him or be pleased in Him. But when the Father raised Christ from the dead, the sacrifice that caused Him to become sin became the sacrifice that conquered sin. The sin that put Him to death was itself put to death, and that great act of love was to God as a fragrant aroma. That fragrant aroma spreads its fragrance to everyone on earth who will place himself under the grace of that sacrifice, and it will spread its fragrance throughout heaven for all eternity." [MacArthur, 198f] 'A fragrant aroma' was used in the OT of all the main types of sacrifice in the levitical ritual to indicate it was well pleasing to God:

***the burnt offering:*** 'but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.' (Lev 1:9)

***the meal offering:*** 'He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.... Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar. It is an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.' (Lev 2:2, 9)

***the peace offering:*** 'and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is on the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.' (Lev 3:5)

***the sin offering:*** 'He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the Lord. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.' (Lev 4:31)

"Christ's death is presented here as an example for our lives, but his death is never merely an example. With it comes a theology of atonement grounded in the love of God and Christ. Ideas of substitution, representation, and sacrifice are clearly present. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, smoke from an offering ascended as a pleasant smell to God, which was a way of expressing God's pleasure at the worship being offered. The image is adapted to express God's pleasure in what Christ's death accomplished. Paul used similar language to describe the ministry of Christians (2 Cor. 2:14-16) or the gifts of others to assist him (Phil. 4:18)." [Snodgrass, 253]