

The image features a central graphic within a rounded rectangular frame. At the top is a tree with a brown trunk and branches, bearing several red apples. The trunk of the tree is a church steeple. Below the steeple is a row of houses: a central blue house with a white door, flanked by seven smaller orange houses. Below this row is a thick black horizontal line. Underneath the line, the tree's roots are depicted in brown, spreading out across the bottom. The background consists of light-colored rays emanating from behind the tree. The text 'Welcome to the Family' is written in a blue, serif font across the middle of the image, with the tree's trunk passing through the word 'to'.

Welcome to the Family

Ephesians

Ephesians 5:1 - 7 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Ephesians 4:31-32 *”Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

Ephesians 5:1, 2 *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

Ephesians 5:1, 2 *Therefore be **imitators** of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

God loves imitators. He created a
world full of them!

OWL BUTTERFLY



SLEEPER CICHLID (Lake Malawi, Africa)



Fork Tailed Drongo



Apple Store



Microsoft Store



Lessons in imitation



What should we be imitating?

“The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in loving kindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works.” Psalm 145:8-9

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” 1 John 3:16

1. Major in Mimicry

We become more like that which we mimic.

How can we become more Christ-like?

1. Spend time with Him in prayer and bible study.

David: "I have hid Your word in my heart that I may not sin against thee."

2. By loving others well.

"Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:31

3. By forgiving others.

The first to apologize is the bravest.
The first to forgive is the strongest.
And the first to forget is the happiest!

1. Major in Mimicry

We become more like that which we mimic.

How can we become more Christ-like?

4. Defy the cultural onslaught of the world. *“In the world, not of it....”*

2. Lavish Love

Vs 2. “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

“We love, because He first loved us.” John 4:19



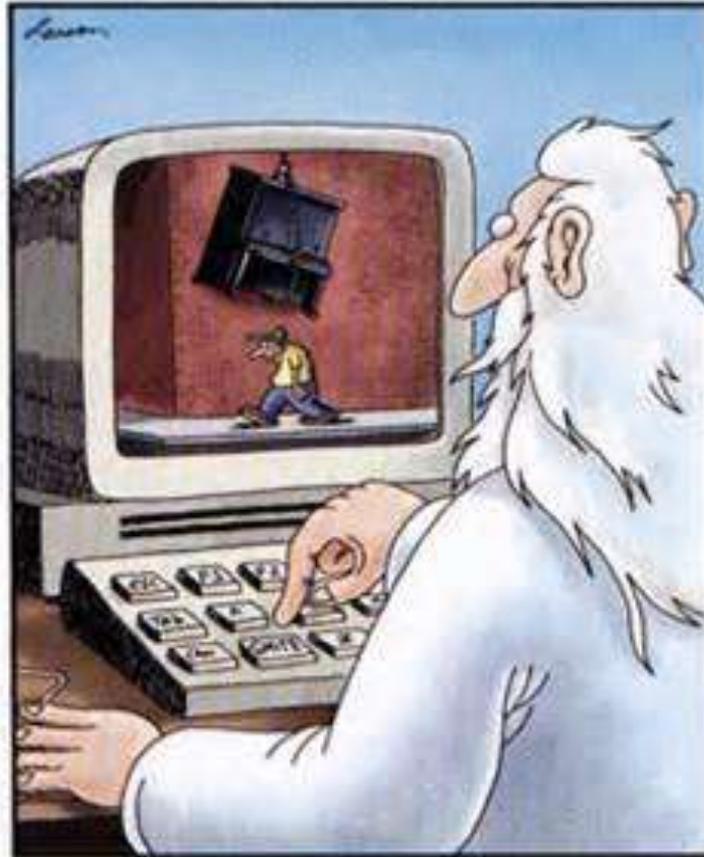
Our love for others correlates directly
to our passion



“While we were still sinners Christ died for us.”

C.S. Lewis *“The only thing Christianity cannot be is moderately important.”*

The world needs to see us leading with love and passion and grace because most the world sees God as this:



God at His computer

God and His smite button

...truth in love.....

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”

Ephesians 4:15

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” John 17:17

“Love the sinner, but hate the sin.”

Vs 3 -5 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

3. Crave (Godly) Character

Lucid leadership = Clear minded

What is your attitude towards pursuing the characteristics of God?

*“We choose what attitudes we have right now. And it's a continuing choice.”
John Maxwell*

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” Philippians 4:6-7

“As for you, always be sober-minded....”
2 Timothy 4:5

History shows that when the church accommodates culture, it weakens it.

“...but instead let there be thanksgiving...”

Ephesians 5:4b

*“Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is **the** great God, the great King above all gods.” Psalm 95:2-3*

“You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense.”

Rick Warren

“mad freshies in the pow pow”

