

Week 15: "Fragrance of Christ"

Day One: "Be Imitators of God"

Read: Ephesians 5:1-2

Reflect: When are you most like God?

Dig: The word "therefore" ties this call to imitate God to the previous sentence. So based on Ephesians 4:32, what are we doing when we are most like God?

"Mimetes" (imitator) is the term from which we get the word mimic, someone who copies character traits or actions of another. Besides being forgiving, what other characteristic are we to imitate? (See Ephesians 5:2).

Upon what relationship is this mimicking based?

What does Ephesians 1:5 say about our relationship to God?

Apply: Since God expects you to act like his child today and to mimic him, how can you act lovingly?

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Day Two: "Love As Christ Loved Us"

Read: Ephesians 5:1-2

Reflect: In your life, how costly has committed love been?

Dig: What does 1John 3:16 have to teach us about true love?

Philippians 2:5-11 also teaches us to love as Christ did. What word or phrase captures the heart of this passage?

The phrase "live a life of love" (beginning of verse 2 of Ephesians 5) keeps things down to earth and practiced. What practical and costly (giving up) ways has the author already called us to love in Ephesians 4, the previous chapter? (Name at least two):

Apply: What do you need to give up in order to fulfill the call to truly love as Christ loved and gave up his life?

What inconvenient (to you) thing is God asking you to do for the good of others?

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Day Three: "Offering and Sacrifice"

Read: Ephesians 5:1-2

Reflect: Who has sacrificed the most for you? What have they sacrificed?

Dig: According to Hebrews 10:19-22, what did Christ's sacrifice do for us?

According to Hebrews 9:14 how does Christ's sacrifice help us and our feelings of guilt?

What act of service (sacrifice) that is to become a pattern for us did Christ make before his death?
(See John 13:12-16)

Apply: Since we are supposed to love as Christ did, what piece of dirty work (like washing feet) could you do today to give of yourself for others?

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Day Four: "Fragrant Offering"

Read: Ephesians 5:1-2

Reflect: Whose life do you admire because it is attractive as a lifestyle?

Who would you name as a holy person?

Dig: Look up Leviticus 1:9 & 13. Which offering is aromatic and pleasing to God?

A burnt offering fully consumed by fire symbolized complete surrender. If that is so about a burnt offering, why would Christ's death be called a pleasing or fragrant sacrifice?

According to 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, who besides Christ is a fragrant smell?

How does Philippians 4:18 help you understand what qualifies an offering as "fragrant"?

Apply: What could you do today in serving others that could be called a fragrant offering to God?

Week Fifteen: "Fragrance of Christ"

Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 5:1-2 "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."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

-- **reading:** you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

-- **meditation:** you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.

-- **prayer:** you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.