

I would like to take a few minutes tonight and extend the excellent analogy that Paul Click used the other night, where the son did not do his Father's will. Let us consider a man who has three sons; and as they are growing up he teaches them a trade. Let us just assume it is carpentry, and the father spends time with each one working to make them a good carpenter. When they are grown, he gives each one of them a project to complete, explaining to each one what is wanted. The first son, as in Paul's story, does things as his father wanted only when he agrees with him that it should be done that way. The second son doesn't agree with the way that his father wants it done, but out of respect for and perhaps fear of his father he goes ahead and does his father's will anyway. And then the third son does exactly what his father willed because he had learned the trade and believed that every thing that had been specified was indeed the best. Consider, now, which son was most pleasing to his father?

There are three basic types here that we all are like at one time or another. The first son was different from his father and would not submit to his will. The second son was also different but for what ever reasons he did obey his father. But the third son had become like his father in spirit, and obedience came very naturally. It seems to me that while God loves us when we respect him enough to do what he wants instead of what we want, it is his whole purpose with us to make us like him. This is why he replaced a law of ten commandments with a law of love. He would like to see us make it on our own, not having to tell us every single move that we must make. He wants us to change from within and become like him. He sent his own son to show us the way; so many times in the gospel of John Christ claims to be the way to the Father, the representative of the Father. If we want to see the Father, we must look to him. He is like his Father in all spiritual things.

This, then is our example. When Paul says in Ephesians 5:1 to be imitators or followers of God, I don't believe that this means just in external actions. Verse 24 of Ephesians 4 says, 'put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' What else could it mean for Christ to 'abide in us,' or for us to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5), or to have God's laws written on our hearts and minds (Heb 10:16)? Let us strive, then to be like God in our hearts, and move towards the perfection of our spirit.