

# Who Do You Look Like?

"You are the spitting image of your dad. For a moment I thought he must have been resurrected!" These were the words that greeted me as I entered the church where my dad had worshipped most of his life. Being told I looked exactly like my dad did not excite me one little bit. I imagined I looked very different to my dad. I still do.

Today, we are challenged to imitate God! That's a big call. At a youth camp where most were studying at university, I was asked to speak about "singleness and friendships in a sex-crazed world." Under the headings "My Girl," "My Man," I listed characteristics to look for in an ideal prospective spouse that are given in the Bible. One uni student exclaimed, "There's no way I want to be that sort of person!"

Growing up, I dreamed and fantasized about emulating my "All Black" heroes. As that dream faded, it was replaced with wanting to be a world champion sheep shearer like Godfrey Bowen, who taught me to shear. At Bible College, three lecturers really impressed me and I longed to be an eclectic mix of all three. Enter God. As great as these figures were in my life, God says, "I want you to look like me."

Be like God! You can't be serious. Who wants to be like God? Won't I be considered some sort of geek if I start looking like God? Who thinks that's cool? And what does that look like anyway? Set against a backdrop of six negative, concrete examples, the punch line is: "imitate God" [Ephesians 4:25-5:2]. They concern relationships. Each one has a corresponding positive. The negatives destroy relationships; the positives build genuine friendships and unity.

**Firstly**, "stop repeating 'the lie' and start telling each other the truth." God does not lie.

**Secondly**, "don't let your anger be mixed with sin. Don't go to bed [nursing your] anger and don't give the devil a foothold." God uses anger to produce a 'righteous' result but when we are angry we usually act in sinful ways. Cain's anger turned to hatred and resulted in Abel's murder.

**Thirdly**, "don't steal, be honest, work hard, so you have something to share with others."

**Fourthly**, "do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." The way Jesus spoke epitomises this.

**Fifthly**, "stop having an embittered and resentful spirit which refuses to be reconciled. Get rid of your passionate rage and sullen hostility. Don't scream at or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ."

**Sixthly**, "do as God does. After all, you are his dear children."

Imagine what a difference this would make if you and I embraced this. Let's start imitating God.