Ephesians 5:1-2

These two verses conclude and summarize the previous verses 4:25-32, but also:

1. Describe what it means for us to imitate the love of God
2. Lay the foundation for Paul’s applicable description of what it means to “walk in love” that is described in the rest of the book.

These verses capture the contrast between the Pagan life destination (self, with a continual lust for more) and the Believer’s life destination (sacrifice for others which is pleasing to God.)

Ephesians 5:1 – “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

1. “Therefore” (oun) begins the summary of the previous chapter and ends the previous discussion. It means, “so, in a word” or “therefore, in summary” or “what I’ve been saying is”.
2. “be”
3. “child” or “children” is tekna which means those born from a father.
4. Only place in OT and NT we are told to imitate God explicitly
   a. Be holy because he is holy (Lev. 19:2) is common
   b. Jesus said love enemies an be known as “sons of the Most High”
   c. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:35-36)
5. The Jews of Jesus day knew that to be holy, just and wise was to be like God. Philo (Jew) even used Plato (Greek) to build this case. Since there was no greater good that God, Phil used Moses as an example of one who imitated God.

Ephesians 5:2 – “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

1. “love” –
2. “walk” –
3. “Christ loved” –
4. “gave up himself” – “gave over” combined with “himself” is a clear sign that Jesus initiated the handing of himself over to death.
   a. He became the victim willingly
   b. He gave himself to serve others
   c. He did not accept sin or tolerate rebellion towards God, but he did intervene in the best way he could to help resolve the conflict.
   d. His work was effective before God; His work did not guarantee those he served would respond or appreciate his work
5. “offering” – prosphora from the verb “to bring” is from the Hebrew minhah which can be a meal or cereal offering, but is also an animal offering
6. “sacrifice” – thysia is a word that means the victim of the offering was slain to become a peace-offering
7. “an aroma of a sweet smell” – eis osmen euodias appears in the Pentateuch over 40x in reference to sacrifices that were accepted by God.
   a. This means the Lord’s sacrifice of himself was pleasing to God the Father, and therefore accepted by him as fulfilling the work of reconciliation between God and man.

8. The demonstration of a “love” like God’s in our lives will be:
   a. Offering
   b. Sacrifice
   c. Acceptable as a sweet smell to God
   d. Paul describes his life this way in Philippians 4:18
   e. Using Christ on the cross as a standard and an example Paul gives us a model to follow and the grounds to evaluate our love.
      i. Note: it was not tolerant of sin, rebellion, deception, lies, false reality, abuse, etc.
      ii. Instead,
         1. it was self-sacrificial in an attempt to restore those in rebellion.
         2. It was an offering that was pleasing to God in its own work, not necessarily in the fruit of that work. (for example, not everyone is saved and not everyone will respond fairly, justly, humbly to our love.)