

**Imitators of Christ**  
How Closely Do We Walk With Him?  
Adapted – Ted Gatza

**Introduction**

1. **“Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness.**  
**“- Oscar Wilde**
  - A. While it may sound good to the casual ear, it is a statement of mockery.
  - B. Flattery is defined as “false praise, and compliments”
2. **In the secular work place, many resorted to imitation by flattery to rise in the ranks to a greater position.**
  - A. Those who were imitated often laughed at those who imitated them.
    - i. They recognized the vain effort to rise in the ranks without genuine ability.
  - B. Some often encouraged it to exercise their ability to control the actions of others.
3. **Imitation can be a good thing – without the flattery.**
4. **Imitation is defined as: *To follow or endeavor to follow as a model or example; to reproduce closely; to assume the appearance of.***
  - A. The imitation of a son of his father.
    - i. Like the phrase “*Like father, like son.*”
  - B. For that reason we as parents and grand-parents must make sure we are living lives to be imitated.
  - C. An employee might try to imitate another employee on the job.
    - i. Not with flattery, but recognizing the worth and value of the one being imitated.
5. **Numerous times in the NT we are admonished to imitate (or follow) the examples of Jesus, Paul, and other leaders of faith.**
  - A. 1 Cor. 4:16<sup>NKJV</sup> – *Therefore I urge you, imitate me.*
  - B. Eph. 5:1<sup>NKJV</sup> – *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.*
  - C. Phil. 3:17<sup>NKJV</sup> – *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.*
  - D. 1 Thess. 1:6<sup>NKJV</sup> – *And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit*
  - E. Heb. 6:12<sup>NKJV</sup> – *that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*
6. **In this lesson we will discuss being imitators of Christ.**
  - A. Peter said: *“For even to this were you called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps:”* – 1 Pet. 2:21<sup>NKJV</sup>
  - B. Paul said: *“Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”* – 1 Cor. 11:1 <sup>NKJV</sup>

## **7. Christianity is built upon the imitation of Christ.**

A. For a Christian, this name means everything because it is a description of what you are and who you follow.

B. We go by the name Christian because we follow Christ.

## **8. Let's look at eight ways we should be imitating Christ:**

### **Discussion**

#### **1. Imitators of His Holiness**

A. Jesus is holy and undefiled

i. (Heb. 7:26) – For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

ii. “No guile or deceit found in his mouth”

1. (I Pet. 2:22) – “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;

B. We are partakers of his holiness

i. (Heb. 12:10) – For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

ii. We are made holy by his blood!

C. We are instructed to be holy (I Pet. 1:15-16) – “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

D. We are to be a “holy priesthood”

i. (I Pet. 2:5) – you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

ii. and “a holy nation”

1. (1 Pet. 2:9) – But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

E. We are to live lives of “holy conduct and godliness” - “...what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conduct and godliness”

i. (2 Pet. 3:11) – Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

F. We are partakers of the divine nature - “...partakers of the divine nature”

i. (2 Pet. 1:4) – by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

G. Are we imitating His holiness? Are we partakers of the divine nature?

## **2. Imitators of His prayer life**

- A. In frequency (on a regular basis) - “as was His custom”
  - i. (Luke 22:39-40) – Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”
- B. In fervency (pray earnestly) - “he prayed more earnestly”
  - i. (Luke 22:44) – And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- C. In privacy (not to be seen of men)
  - i. “In secret” (Matt. 6:5-7) – “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.
  - ii. “Alone” (Matt. 14:23) – And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.
- D. In style and content (example of Lord’s prayer)
  - i. (Matt. 6:9-13) – Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name...”
- E. Are we praying frequent enough? Do we pray earnestly? Are we trying to be seen of men?

## **3. Imitators of His relationship with the Father**

- A. He was one with the Father
  - i. (Jn. 10:22-38) –
    - 1. 25 – Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.
    - 2. 30 – I and My Father are one.”
- B. He did the Father’s will
  - i. (Matt. 26:39) – He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”
- C. Draw near to Him
  - i. (James 4:8) – Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- D. Examine your life,
  - i. Are you doing the Father’s will?

- ii. Are you drawing near to Him?
- iii. Are you seeking to be one with God?

#### **4. Imitators of His love, compassion, and forgiveness**

- A. Jesus loved Lazarus and wept over his death.
  - i. (Jn. 11:35) – **Jesus wept.**
- B. Jesus showed compassion to the diseased and healed them – (Matt. 4:23-24; 9:1-8; 20:34; Mark 1:41)
  - i. (Mark 1:40-41) – **Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.” Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”**
- C. Jesus showed compassion to the sad.
  - i. (Luke 7:13) – **When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”**
- D. Jesus showed compassion to the multitudes. He was constantly surrounded by crowds but he showed compassion. (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32)
  - i. (Matt. 9:36) – **But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.**
- E. In forgiveness (Mark 11:25; Matt. 5:23-24)
  - i. (Mark 11:25) – **“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.**
- F. Especially in the midst of all the world’s problems and political atmosphere, are we showing love and compassion toward others? forgiveness?

#### **5. Imitators of His willingness to teach**

- A. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 4:25-5:1) - He taught the crowds
- B. It was His custom
  - i. (Mark 10:1) – **Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.**
- C. Taught Mary and Martha
  - i. (Luke 10:38-39) – **Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.**
- D. In the great commission
  - i. (Matt. 28:19) – **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**
- E. Are we teaching others?

- i. (2 Tim. 2:2) – And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
  - 1. Are we teaching our children?
  - 2. Teaching the younger men and women?

## 6. Imitators of His priorities

- A. Doing the Father's will (John 5:30; Gal. 1:4)
  - i. John 5:30) – I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.
- B. Importance of listening to the word.
  - i. (Luke 10:40-42) – And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”
    - 1. Mary chose “the good part”
- C. Seeking first the kingdom
  - i. (Matt. 6:33) – But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- D. Teaching the children (Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Deut. 6:7)
  - i. (Matt. 6:33) – But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”
- E. Do we have our priorities straight? Are we always so busy that we forget about what should come first?

## 7. Imitators of His righteous indignation

- A. He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers
  - i. (Mark 11:15-17) – So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ ”
- B. Against hypocrites (Matt. 22:18; 23:13-29)
  - i. Matt. 22:18) – But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?
- C. Against false teaching (Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7; 2 Tim. 4:3; 2 John 1:9)
  - i. (Mark 7:7) – ‘And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’
- D. Toward sin (Mark 8:38; Matt. 23:33-36)
  - i. (Mark 8:38) – For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He

comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

- E. Are we angry about sin? Those who toss aside God’s word? When we see other Christians living like the world?

## **8. Imitators of His sacrificial death**

- A. We are to be dead to sin and alive unto God

- i. (Rom. 6:5-11) – For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- B. Crucify the flesh

- i. (Gal. 5:24) – And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

- C. Christ should be living in us

- i. (Gal. 2:19-20) – For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- D. We should be a living sacrifice

- i. (Rom. 12:1-2) – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- E. Is our old man crucified? our body of sin destroyed? Are we a living sacrifice?

## **Conclusion:**

1. So what are you imitating? What example are you imitating (self, the world or Christ)? What do people see when they look at your life? If they were to imitate you, would they imitate Christ?
2. In order to be an imitator of Christ, you must first obey him and become a Christian.

- A. Hear the Gospel

- i. Rom 1:16. - For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek
- B. Believe the Gospel
  - i. John. 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- C. Repent of your Sins
  - i. 2 Cor. 7:10 - For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, 'a repentance' which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
- D. Confess Christ before man
  - i. Rom 10:10 - for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
- E. Be Baptized for the remission of your sins
  - i. 1 Pet. 3:21 - which also after a true likeness doth now save you, 'even' baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- F. Salvation will be given
  - i. Mk. 16:16 - He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.
- G. To continue therein
  - i. 1 Tim. 4:16. - Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee.
- 2. Then to the best of your ability, imitate Christ in your life!