

BEING AN IMITATOR

Introduction

- 1) “**Imitation** is the sincerest form of flattery” (Charles Caleb Colton, 1820)
- 2) As Christians, we are to be “imitators,” but not for the purpose of flattery
- 3) Christians are commanded to be imitators of what they should be (1 Cor. 4:16)
- 4) “Imitator” (Gk. *mimetes*) = a mimic ; “the verb is always used in exhortations, and always in the continuous tense, suggesting a constant habit or practice” (Vine)
 - a) “Mimic” = to imitate or copy in action, speech, etc...to be an imitation of; simulate; resemble closely (Webster)
- 5) As good imitators, we should know everything we can about who and what we should imitate

I) “**Christian**” = **Imitator of Christ**

- A) The name “Christian” itself implies that one follows and imitates Christ (Jn. 1:43; 13:15)
- B) We are to be “imitators” of God as His dear children (Eph. 5:1-2a)
 - 1) Pattern our lives after the one whose name we wear – if not imitate, why wear name?

II) **Imitating Faithful Brethren**

- A) We should imitate those who *constantly* strive to imitate the Lord Jesus (1 Thess. 1:6)
 - 1) They are living, breathing examples of being Christ-like
 - 2) Sadly, such genuine examples are in short supply among God’s people (3 Jn. 9-12)
 - a) Even prominent brethren can become bad examples (Gal. 2:11-13)
 - 3) May God raise up more outstanding spiritual examples among us to imitate (Phil 3:16-17)
 - a) We should be good examples for others to imitate – “What if everyone was just like me?”
- B) Biblical examples we are to imitate
 - 1) Attitude of humility and selflessness (1 Cor. 4:16; see vv. 6, 9)
 - 2) Willingness to suffer persecution (1 Thess. 2:14)
 - 3) Honest and upright business practices (2 Thess. 3:6-10)
 - 4) Seek the profit and good of others before self (1 Cor. 11:1; see 10:23-33)
 - 5) Faith and hope in the word of God throughout life (Heb. 6:11-12; 13:7)

III) **The Key to Knowing What to Imitate**

- A) *Is this person saying and doing what Jesus said or did?*
 - 1) We *have* what Jesus said and what Jesus and his followers did
 - 2) All examples worthy of imitation today are those *based on Christ and His example*
 - 3) No foolishness such as “Do as I say, not as I do” – must be all-around imitators of Jesus!
- B) Remember **WWJD** (What Would Jesus Do?)?
 - 1) Good idea, IF one is familiar with what Jesus actually did and what He says in His word
 - 2) Not good IF one is *assuming* what Jesus would do based on his own personal feelings
 - 3) Based on Biblical idea of imitating Christ/God (Eph. 5:1-2)
 - a) True application comes from knowing how to distinguish between truth and error (v. 3ff)
 - b) Following those who follow Christ will help us learn and apply God’s truth
 - 4) Too many today follow **WWID** (What Would I Do?) - remember Jeremiah 10:23

Conclusion

Let us be “imitators together” of great examples in the Bible and outstanding examples among us today (Phil. 3:17). Learn to distinguish between true examples and false examples. Would you (or God) recommend that someone use *you* as their example/pattern? Why or why not?