

## Followers of Jesus Christ's Example Described

### John 13:15

*For I have given you an example,  
that you should do as I have done to you.*

Imagine what one would be if he has *Satan the devil* for his example. There are indeed such people, for Jesus Christ tells them "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning [and] he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). Imitators of Satan willfully disobey God and His law, lie and act malevolently toward men, and refuse to repent of their sins and believe the gospel and trust in Jesus Christ. This is what we all are by nature.

Imagine what one would be if he has *Pharisees* for his example. He would be what Jesus Christ called a "whitewashed tomb" (Matthew 23:27f). He would hide his inward evil with outward religion, making showy displays of his charity, prayers, fasting, and sectarian duties (Matthew 6:1f, 5, 7, 16, et.al.). He would be self-righteous and holier-than-thou in his own eyes, but despicable in God's eyes, and a hypocrite in the eyes of all who know what he is.

Imagine what one would be if he has *Jesus Christ* for his example. Christ is twice expressly said to be the "example" for God's people (John 13:15 & 1 Peter 2:20-23). But other times we are exhorted to do "just as" He did, or according to His example.

We here in this message will observe some ways in which Jesus Christ is the example for His people, and what they will be if they follow His example.

**1. *Condescending to serve others.*** It should not escape our attention that we have at least three examples of Christ in this regard.

~ Paul the apostle taught in *Philippians 2:3-9*: "3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him ...."

~ Christ taught in *Matthew 20:25-28*: "25 ... 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"

~ Christ exemplified condescension in *John 13:12-15*: "12 So when He had washed their feet [vv.4f], taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.'"

Let us learn these lessons from these instances:

~ Since Christ our Example condescended to sinners – putting their spiritual needs above His own heavenly position, and eating with them and being their friend (Luke 7:34), and bringing salvation to them – let us follow His example. Let us not be like Pharisees who would say to sinners, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!" (Isaiah 65:5).

~ Since Christ our Example condescended to be the servant of the lowest, so should we. Let us not be like heathen rulers (both civil and religious) who desire to be lords over others and be served by them.

~ Since Christ is the perfect example of "he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11 / 18:14), let us follow His example. Since Pharisees are a foremost example of "whoever exalts himself will be humbled" (ibid), let us not follow their example.

**2. *Loving one another*** (John 13:34 & 15:12-14): Jesus Christ said to His disciples, "13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ... 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 15:14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (See the commentary on this in Ephesians 4:31-5:2.)

Christ loved God's children enough to lay down His life for them. They should follow His example by loving one another in the same manner. Nothing distinguishes saints from the world more than their love for one another (see 1 John 3:11-18).

**3. Forgive one another** (Colossians 3:12-13): "12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

O that we who are Christ's disciples might learn to forgive others as Christ forgives us – even when their offenses against us are very grave and oft-repeated, as ours are to Him!

**4. Receiving one another** (Romans 15:7): "Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."

Christ received us sinners (see Luke 15:11-24). Let us received sinners receive all other sinners received by Him. Let us not reject anyone received by Christ.

**5. Pleasing one another instead of ourselves** (Romans 15:1-3): "1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself ...."

Self-centeredness and egotism have no place among saints! Christ our example is proof.

**6. Walking exemplarily in all things** (1 John 2:6): "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

We are not called to walk as Christ did in His *miraculous* walk, as when He walked on the water. Rather, we are called to walk as He did in His *ordinary* walk. For example, we are to walk in devotion to God, in love to God, in communion with God, in singleness of purpose, in righteousness and holiness, in fellowship with God's people, in doing good to others, and so forth. The whole of Christ's life should serve as our constant example. We should walk in such a way that people call us "Christians"!

**7. Exercising proper obedience and abiding** (John 15:10): "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

We are to keep Christ's commandments – particularly His "new commandment" (John 13:34) – as Christ kept His Father's commandments – particularly those of the law, which Christ kept fully. And we are to abide in Christ's love as Christ abode in His Father's love, which He did whole-heartedly and constantly.

**8. Giving abundantly to needy saints** (2 Corinthians 8:7-9): "7 But as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us – see that you abound in this grace also. ... 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

No one ever outgave Christ. If you think you can, try.

**9. Loving wives sacrificially** (Ephesians 5:25-29): "25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."

If every husband loved his wife as Christ loved His wife, how happy every wife should be!

**10. Suffering patiently for doing good** (1 Peter 2:20-23): "20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth' [Isaiah 53:9]; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."

If we faithfully Christ our example, imitating all the good that He did and abstaining from every form of evil like He did, this sinful world will hate and persecute us just as they did to Him.

Now you know the answers to the question "What would Jesus do?"

Now the question is "Will you do as Jesus did and would do?" Is Jesus Christ your example? Are you following His example?