

Title: Christ-like love for lost souls

Text: *Php 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

Introduction: Who is the most influential spiritual leader that you admire in the scriptures? Is there one leader whom you respect and admire so exceptionally that you would want to emulate him or her and try to be like them in your own personal life? Is there one leader producing the type of fruit in soul winning endeavours that you long to see generated in your own personal life? If so, who is that leader and what did they do?

Is it right to follow someone so closely that you actually start emulating them? The Bible is replete with scriptures that instruct us to be followers of spiritual leaders. Paul said in *Php 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

This scripture says we are to be “...followers and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. The word “followers” is taken from the Greek word *mimetes*, from where we get the English word “imitate.” Other words that are derived from *mimetes* are “mimic” and “mime.” However, the best translation of this word is actually the word “actor”

Therefore, the command to “follow” isn’t referring to a casual type of following; rather, it implies an intentional study of the deeds, words, actions, and thoughts of another person in an attempt to fully understand that person and then to replicate his attributes in one’s own life. This type of following enables a person to think like his subject, walk like his subject, mimic his subject’s movements, make the vocal intonations of his subject, and act like his subject in a masterful way.

That why the apostle Paul says in *Php 4:9* “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do...”

However, this can only be achieved by those seriously committed to studying the action of the subject, because it is the only way they can commit to the act of replication. Such a commitment to act, mimic, or replicate a respected leader is the result of true discipleship.

That’s why *Heb 6:12* say that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

We could actually translate Hebrews 6:12 to mean: "...But skilfully and convincingly act like those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

A good actor studies the character and life of another and then portrays that person on a stage or on film. The actor obtains every bit of information he possibly can about the person in order to better portray him in his acting role. Then the actor begins to practice acting just like that person – trying to talk like him, think like him, and even walk and dress like him. If he actor acts long enough and consistently enough, the character role he is playing can actually become a part of the actor's own identity. That's the power of acting!

The writer of Hebrews understood the power of imitation. That's why he said in essence, "If you want to walk in faith, find someone who successfully walks in faith. Watch what he says, how he behaves, and how he lives – and then act like him! Do what he does, say what he says, and behave like he behaves. Be an imitator of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises!

1Co 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

1Jo 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

So acting and imitating is foundational to the Christian life. It is for this very reason we are instructed in scriptures to be followers, imitators of those who have gone ahead of us.

In 1Cor 11:1 apostle Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

And Apostle John said, "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. John 13:15

The apostles followed the example of Christ in the many areas but particularly in the area of soul winning endeavours. They imitated Jesus and we are to imitate the apostles and the Apostle of our soul Jesus Christ: Eph 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"

The one thing, more than anything else that will make us like our Lord Jesus Christ is not His compassion for those who are suffering, it's not the healing of sick people, and it's not the feeding of hungry people neither is it the ministration to the poor and the downtrodden wherever He went. It's His love for sinners! The bible says in Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." Lu 15:3 So He spoke this parable to

them, saying: 4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 "And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 "And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7 "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

The Shepherd is Jesus Christ. Paul told us: "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus became one of us. Jesus laid down his life for each of us lost sheep. Jesus searched and found each one of us lost sheep. "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. And He's asking us to replicate His love for lost souls.

May The Lord Teach Us What It Cost Him To Make A Sinner Whole And Teach Us The Value Of One Soul.

Prayer Points for today:

- Father in Jesus Mighty name please help me to imitate Jesus' love for souls in my life

- Lord help me to be a good actor on the stage of soul winning endeavours

- Lord help me to be obedient in mimicking Jesus Christ in everything that He did, particularly in soul winning areas

- Lord help me to follow the examples of the apostles who preceded me – acting like them and replicating both their acts and their godly fruit in my life

Now ask the Lord for grace

- Grace to do what Jesus did say, do and act until I have become like Him

- Grace to act like the apostles in their obedience to God's word – I want to be obedient to God's word in soul winning endeavours

- Grace to imitate and replicate both their acts and their godly fruit in my life and ministry

- Grace to commit to Soul Winning endeavours

The Holy Communion:

Pray for forgiveness of sins

I bless the bread and wine and whatever you have. I declare it holy as a symbol of the blood and flesh of Jesus Christ.

I pray that as you partake of this communion; your eyes will be open and you will be empowered to imitate and replicate the love of God for souls and the passion to go after lost souls. I pray that you will not lose your rewards here and in eternity. I pray that God will give you spiritual understanding to know what you ought to do in this Prophetic season of revival in Jesus Mighty Name.

Give Jesus thanks!