

IMITATORS OF CHRIST

By Keith Greer

"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." {1 Corinthians 11:1} The word imitate is defined as "to use or follow as a model; copy the actions, appearance, mannerisms, or speech of." How can we "imitate" Christ?

Manifest the mindset of a servant. "But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." {Philippians 2: 7} Jesus came to serve - not to be served. Look closely at our Lord's life. He always put the needs of others above His own. "And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." {Matthew 8:20}. He did this because He came to serve others.

Have a forgiving spirit. "And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And they divided His garments and cast lots." {Luke 23:33,34} Christ requested forgiveness for the very ones who took His life on the cross. God's word instructs me to have this same forgiving spirit. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." {Matthew 6:14,15}.

Be obedient in all things. "Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." {Hebrews 5:7,8} Yes, Christ died because He loved sinful men, but also to be obedient to His Father's will. He was obedient in all things. God's children should always strive to adopt this trait in their lives. Through this righteous conduct, we show Christ to the lost dying sinner.

God's children have been left a wonderful "blueprint" to pattern their personal conduct after so others can see "Christ in us." Jesus has not asked us to be perfect but we are to strive for perfection by "imitating" the character traits of our Savior. ***