



Week 4

Christ as our Example

READ

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1 Peter 2:21



When we think of what it means to be a loving person, we don't likely have 'being a good example' in our top ten list of traits. However, anyone who has been a parent knows that being an example for your child as to how they should live truly is a loving act. When we care deeply about someone, we want what is best for him or her. We want that person to grow in skill or character. If we have something we are good at or passionate about we want to share that with the people we love. We also want to model to them the right way to live. Children are messy and so parents model how to clean things up. Children can be irresponsible or impulsive and so a parent will model self-control and discipline. It is out of love for their children that parents do this because they know that modeling good character and life skills will help their children to grow up to live better, more full lives, and maximize their opportunities.

God is the ultimate parent, but even more than that, he is our creator. God made us and knows exactly how we are supposed to live. He created us perfectly and he placed us in the perfect environment in which to flourish. God created us in his image so that we could bear his glory in all creation. That is what we were made for. In fact one of the most well known documents for teaching new believers summarizes this point by stating: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." We were created to serve God, to find our joy and fulfillment in God, and ultimately to bring glory to God. But instead, we rebelled. We wanted the glory; we thought we knew a better source of joy and fulfillment. And since that time all of us have been making a complete mess of our own lives and the world around us. We simply have failed to live as true humans.

God in his great love was not content to leave us there and so he came down. He became a human being named Jesus. And Jesus lived the life we were created to. He lived in perfect submission to God the Father. He trusted the Father for every decision. When he was tempted to look to other things like power or wealth to satisfy him, he rejected the temptation. Jesus did not live for his own glory but lived to bring the Father glory. In fact right before he went to the cross, Jesus prayed,

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you"

jn. 17:1

Jesus was in essence asking that in his death, his glorification, that he might bring God the Father glory! This is the example Jesus set out for us. He told his disciples that if they wanted to be like him they would need to



“...deny themselves and take up [their] cross daily and follow [him]”

Luke 9:23b

We cannot hope to live the type of life Jesus did on our own. His example would be impossible for us to follow except that because of his death, Jesus sent his Spirit to dwell in us and so now he is at work in us, lovingly teaching us how to live as he did, dying to ourselves to bring glory to our heavenly Father. God loved us too much not to set for us an example of who we are to be in Jesus.

Questions to Ponder:

(If you are doing this as family or with others share your answers)

1. What are some essential things you try to model as an example for other people? (Don't just think as a parent, think as a friend, co-worker, teacher, sibling, spouse, whatever realm makes the most sense for you)
2. Read John 12:20-33, and as you do, take time to write down or discuss, everything you notice about how Jesus is defining his purpose and actions. When you are done take some time to thank Jesus that he lived as the perfect human and ask the Spirit to empower you to live a life that will bring glory to God.

Kids Corner:

Has anyone ever told you that you need to be a good example? Why do you think that is? It's because for many things there is a right way of doing things and a wrong way. The right way will make things better or not harm others but the wrong way can often make things worse or cause hurt to other people. The Bible tells us that God made people to be little pictures of what he is like to the whole world. When we do that well, it helps the whole world see how awesome and powerful and beautiful God is.

One of the most important ways we are supposed to do that is by finding all our happiness in knowing God and loving him. But we decided we thought we knew a better way to live. Even though God made us, he designed us, he wrote the instruction book on how to be the best possible humans, we tried to do it our own way. Instead of loving God and finding our happiness in knowing him, we started to look at other things to make us happy. But they didn't, they couldn't and then we blamed other people and started to hurt them. Just think. Have you ever really wanted something that you think will make you happy, maybe a toy at Christmas? What happens if you get it?

At first it might seem to make you happy but overtime you get bored and maybe even forget about it. Or suppose a friend or your brother or sister comes and takes your toy from you. What do you do? You might hit him or yell at her or sit on the ground screaming. None of those actions are ways of being a true human. So how do we know how to be a true human? God knew that we could never figure it out on our own. It is completely impossible and so he became a human named Jesus! Jesus lived perfectly by God's instructions. He always found his happiness in God. And his entire life was all about making sure everyone around him knew how awesome, powerful, and beautiful God is. Jesus did this even when it meant he would die. He knew that when he died it would give people the best picture of God, because it would show them how much God loved them.

Jesus was the best example for us to look at but even when we see what he did, it still seems impossible to be a true human. That is why Jesus was not only a good example but he also sent God the Holy Spirit to live inside of us and help guide us and teach us how to live. He did this because he loves us so much. Let's take a few minutes to thank Jesus for being our perfect example, and also for sending his Spirit so that we can learn to live like him.



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DISCUSS | REFLECT



Take a few minutes to read through the following passages of Scripture and then discuss/answer the questions below.

Read:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

John 15:12-15 (NIV)

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 2:20b-25 (NIV)

Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:3b-8 (NIV)



Going Deeper:

1. What are some common themes you notice in what Jesus is modeling, which run through the passages above?
2. If you had a choice between a life of success, influence, and wealth and one of suffering and hardship, which do you think would give greater glory to God? Why?
3. What aspect of Jesus' life scares you the most when you think about the call to follow his example? What does it look like for you to rely on the Spirit to do what Jesus did?

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PRAY





When he was asked how to pray, Jesus took time to teach his disciples to pray what has now been called “The Lord’s Prayer.” It is a beautiful example of how Jesus modeled giving God glory. It begins with praying for God’s holiness and will to be done, and then moves to a posture of dependency for our own needs. Take some time to read through the prayer below, based on Matthew 6:9-13. As you do, pay close attention to the things that it prioritizes and how much space is given to our own needs and desires and how much space is given to God’s desires and his glory.

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen.*

- (New English Version - adopted by the Church of England in 1977)

1. Ask the Spirit to continue to help you identify areas in your life to grow in humility so that you can bring more glory to God.
2. Take sometime to write a summary of your daily routine and then spend time asking Jesus to show you where you can submit to him in each of these moments to bring glory to God. Be open to hearing if he wants you to add or eliminate something.
3. As we read yesterday in John 15, Jesus set an example of serving others. Take time to ask the Spirit to show you one person for whom you need to lay aside your pride or position to serve today so that they might get a picture of his humble love for them.

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CELEBRATE | GO





This morning you are invited to simply take some space to worship Jesus for the example he set before us, and for giving us the Spirit to do likewise. As a family or as an individual look up “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me – CityAlight” on YouTube and use the following words below to sing along.

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

By Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, and Michael Farren

[Verse 1]

What gift of grace
is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more
for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness,
and freedom
My steadfast love,
my deep and boundless peace

To this I hold,
my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to his
Oh how strange and divine,
I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

[Verse 2]

The night is dark
but I am not forsaken
For by my side,
the Savior he will stay
I labor on in
weakness and rejoicing
For in my need,
his power is displayed

To this I hold,
my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley he will lead
Oh the night has been won,
and I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

[Verse 3]

No fate I dread,
I know I am forgiven
The future sure,
the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled
and suffered for my pardon
And he was raised
to overthrow the grave

To this I hold,
my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released,
I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

[Verse 4]

With every breath
I long to follow Jesus
For he has said
that he will bring me home
And day by day
I know he will renew me
Until I stand
with joy before the throne

To this I hold,
my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to him
When the race is complete,
still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

Application:

As we have seen, Jesus humbled himself and came to serve so that God the Father might receive glory. This week, think of 3-5 people who represent different spheres of your life. For example think of someone who is part of your family or household, your school or workplace, your friendship group, your missionfield). And for each person think of one way you can humbly serve him or her as Jesus has served you. Don't forget the instruction that Apostle Peter gave to the churches in Asia Minor when he wrote, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Pet 3:15b).