

The Teachings Of Jesus: Lesson 7

# Living Like Christ

**Memory Text: John 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.” It was new in the sense that it had a new standard – “as I have loved you.”

**Key Thought:** The watermark (a faint design made in some paper during manufacture, which is visible when held against the light and typically identifies the maker) of true Christianity is being molded by the tenderness, sympathy, consideration, and compassion revealed in Jesus life.

**Illustration/Setting The Stage:** Carol Woodle – looks like Oprah – became impersonator when an old lady, thinking she was holding Oprah’s hand, sobbed and said it was the only thing she ever wanted.

To look like a celebrity impersonators analyze makeup, costumes, and characteristics until they are able to imitate them. They pour over films, read biographies, and practice their songs until they perfect their impersonation.

There are 20,000 professional impersonators in the U.S. The reason there are so many is because celebrities are so highly regarded in today’s society. Dr. James Houran, a New York-based psychologist who studies celebrity worship, said: “Human beings are hardwired to worship something, and in the absence of ... organized religion, we turn to trying to copy and learn from people that are successful.”

If an impersonator is unable to discern his or her actual identity from that of the personality, that would be cause for alarm. Although it’s few, some impersonators don’t know who they are anymore. They have lost their identity.

**Christian's are called to be imitators of Christ's character.** We won't ever lose our identity following Jesus. Our identity crystallizes and our personality improves:

**1 Corinthians 11:1:** "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

**Ephesians 5:1:** "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children."

**Philippians 2:5:** "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

**1 Peter 2:21:** "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps."

**1 John 2:6:** "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

**Matthew 11:29:** "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls

**Luke 6:36:** "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

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

## **Sunday – How Jesus Lived**

Matthew 20:28; Acts 10:38

Jesus lived an unselfish life of loving service. His priorities centered on others, not Himself. His hands were every ready to relieve every case of suffering. He cared for those who were considered of low value to society – children, women, foreigners, lepers, tax collectors, etc.

**How did Jesus view people?** With compassion (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32 – saw the multitude and had compassion) – He was moved with compassion (bowels yearn for, feel sympathy, to pity) – "sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others." – Think about two blind men near Jericho, a pleading leper, and widow who just lost her son.

**How did Jesus live?** He came to serve not be served (\***Matt. 20:28**; Acts 10:38).  
 “From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others.”  
 (Desire of Ages, p. 70) “Jesus lived to relieve every case of suffering that he saw. He  
 had little money to give, but He often denied Himself of food in order to relieve  
 those who appeared more needy than He. To those who were in need He would give  
 a cup of cold water, and would quietly place His own meal in their hands.” (Ibid. p.  
 87)

The sun exists to give light and warm the earth. It helps the body produce vitamin D, kills bad bacteria, cures depression, decreases blood pressure, etc. Trees exist to provide shade, a home, and oxygen. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, "a mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year." A single mature tree can absorb carbon dioxide at a rate of 48 lbs./year and release enough oxygen back into the atmosphere to support 2 human beings. If the sun and trees exist to serve then we can too.

### **Monday – Love your Neighbor**

Luke 10:30-37; Matthew 7:12

To live like Jesus is to show the same love He demonstrated. He illustrated this kind of love through the **parable of the Good Samaritan**. The lawyer summarized our duty to God and man – love God and neighbor as yourself (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18 – “shema” - confession of faith) – but he realized he didn’t love his fellow man as he should so tried to justify himself by asking, “Who is my neighbor?”

Neighbor means “near one”, and our neighbors are all those who stand in need of help – physically or spiritually, irrespective of color, creed, etc. This was the lesson of the parable – Samaritan taking care of a Jew – impartial kindness.

He gave the man a hand up not a hand out - It is just as wrong for a person, through the bad choices they make that put them in a needy position, to expect help from

others and be a burden to others as it is to neglect to help (counsel, clothe, feed, etc.) the same person in need.

“Treat others as you would want to be treated” not, “do not do to others what you yourself dislike,” nor “treat others as they treat us,” for after all it’s easy to be kind to those who are kind to us and nasty to those who are nasty to us. Our love toward our neighbor is independent of the way our neighbor treats us.

We only love God as much as the person we like the least (\***1 John 4:20**; 1 John 2:4; 1 John 4:12). Our default setting makes it easy to dismiss a person who irritates us, loathe a person who mistreats us. Our hearts need to be changed.

## **Tuesday – Loving Service**

Matthew 25:31-46

Most people wish to serve God - but in an advisory capacity only. We want to tell God what He ought to be doing to the neglect of what we ought to be doing. We are His hands and feet.

**What is the basic message of the parable of the sheep and goats?** The way we treat others is the way we would treat Christ – We are not responsible for fixing all of the ill around us, but we are responsible for doing what we can what we can (“I made a difference to that one”). And it’s not about great achievements either, but the spirit in which the work is done (see Matt. 7:22, 23).

This is not salvation by doing good things for those in need (the surprise of the saved ones shows they didn’t demonstrate love to gain merit), but salvation through a faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

## **Wednesday – Love Your Enemies**

Luke 6:27, 28, 32-35

Ameneh Bahrami, an Iranian, lost her sight and suffered burns to her face, scalp and body in an attack carried out by a man who was mad because she refused to marry him. Where she comes from it's the legal right for victims to ask for a strict enforcement of Islamic law, under which an attempt is made to reach a settlement with victims or their families. If no agreement is reached then "qisas," or eye-for-an-eye retribution, is enforced.

So, blinded and disfigured by the acid thrown into her face Ameneh found herself standing above her attacker in a hospital operating room as a doctor was about to put several drops of acid in one of his eyes in a court-ordered payback.

The man waited on his knees and wept as the inevitable was about to happen. But the doctor realized that Ameneh wasn't comfortable and asked whether he should proceed. It wasn't long before Ameneh pleaded with the doctor to spare him stating she had forgiven him. During this gripping scene broadcast on Iran's state television, Ameneh Bahrami demonstrated what it meant to forgive her debtor.

**In what practical ways is love toward our enemies manifested?** Luke 6:27, 28 – An enemy can show us enmity in three ways: hostile attitudes (“hate you”), abusive words (“curse you”), and abusive actions (“spitefully use you and persecute you”). Jesus asks us to respond with three manifestations of love (**\*Luke 6:32-35**): treating them with respect and dignity (“do good”), speak well of them (“bless” them), and intercede for them (“pray” for them”). The Christian's answer to antagonism and hatred is to “overcome evil with good.” (Rom.12:21) We are not to put ourselves in a dangerous position...

**Why are we to love our enemies?** Luke 6:32-35 – First, we need to live above the low standard of the world; even criminals help each other. If we don't love in a

superior way what would be the value of Christianity? Second, God will reward us even though we don't love for the reward. Third, this type of love is evidence of our close communion with our heavenly Father.

### **Thursday – How To Live Like Jesus**

John 15:4-12

**How can we ever hope to live like Christ?** First, all His biddings are His enablings. In every command is a promise. Second, He will work in us if we allow him to (Phil. 2:13). Third, we must abide [stay] in Him (**\*John 15:5**). We can only love our neighbor as Christ gives us this love. And we can only love like Him if we abide in Him.

“This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.” (Thoughts From The Mount Of Blessings, p. 76)

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent [give permission for something to happen], He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service.” (Desire Of Ages, p. 668)

**Appeal:** Living like Christ signifies loving like Christ because Christ is love. Let us live and love like Christ today.