

☞ WWJD series

Review "Running the Race"

Run the race marked out; fix your eyes on Jesus; follow him.

The WWJD movement started in 1989 when the youth group at Calvary Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, studied Charles Sheldon's 1896 novel, In His Steps. In the novel, parishioners preface every thought and action with "What would Jesus do?" and begin to see the difference it makes. Calvary's youth took Sheldon's model to heart and made up colorful woven bracelets to wear as a tangible reminder of that powerful question. Soon people throughout their community were wearing the bracelets, and it mushroomed from there. By the late '90s, the letters WWJD could be found on a multitude of books, T-shirts, and other Christian merchandise. To date, an estimated 14 million bracelets have been sold.

This series will focus on Christlikeness.

--Francis Frangipane... Christ Himself is the eternal blueprint for our lives. Only in studying Him, in measuring ourselves by Him, do we grow securely upon the foundation of God. Beloved, we were created to become like Christ. This has been the Father's purpose from the beginning of time and it remains His unchanging goal at the end of the age. The pursuit of Christlikeness aligns us with the Father's highest priority for our lives.

☞ The Character of Christlikeness

Philippians 2:1-11

This text is a great starting point; a summary

1. The Believer's Relationship – Unity with Christ and other believers
2. The Believer's Responsibility – Character like Christ's
3. The Believer's Reward – The exaltation of Christ

Focus today on the believer's responsibility to have the attitude and character of Christ. This is summed up in verse 5... "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus"

Attitude is a choice.

Attitudes are capable of making the same experience either pleasant or painful.

Attitudes determine our actions, for good or bad.

Talk about "attitude" as it relates to flying.

It's not what happens to me that matters most; it's how I react to what happens to me.

What was Christ's attitude or character?

1. 📌 **Selfless (v.6)**

Jesus was already God (his nature); He was already equal to God
He was willing to release that status to fulfill his purpose

Like many homemakers – willing to forego a skilled career in order to stay home and raise the kids. Also, like a man who will take any job he can get in order to support his family.

Vs. Holding on to pride

Our attitude should be like Christ – Selfless; not grasping...

📌 **We don't always need to defend our rights, or our status, or prove how great we are. We just need to follow Christ.**

The man who has the right to boast doesn't have to.

You can't glorify self and Christ at the same time.

Don't brag--it isn't the whistle that pulls the train.

If there's one thing we should let others find out for themselves, it's how great we are.

2. 📌 **Humble (v.7)**

The closer we get to God, the more modest we shall become. (It's all about comparing ourselves to Christ instead of others).

Humility is acceptance of the place appointed by God, whether it be in the front or rear.

Made himself nothing – this was a personal choice
= To make empty; KJV = no reputation

Emptying of self – releasing of personal status

☞ John 3:30

He must become greater; I must become less.

If you want to test most people, give them power. Jesus had ultimate power, but chose to make himself nothing.

☞ **Nature of a servant;** literally "slave;" Contrast with nature of God.

He chose no independence; no self-interests, but was totally submitted; a servant.

John 13:14-17

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Cal Thomas found himself called a "Christian leader" by a leading Christian magazine and he wondered what that meant. More speaking engagements? Perhaps an appearance on a Christian talk show?

Thomas wonders if we have reversed things. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. "In a church I once attended, there was a man of tremendous faith. His wife is an alcoholic. His daughter has psychological problems. He was often poor in health. Yet, week after week, he never complained. He always smiled and asked me how I was doing. He faithfully brought to church a young blind man who had no transportation. He always sat with the blind man, helping him sing the hymns by saying the words into his ear. That man was a 'Christian leader' if ever there was one."

☞ **This world values status and fame; God values servanthood and faithfulness.**

Human likeness; similar to us

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

-- C. S. Lewis... The Second Person in God, the Son, became human Himself: was born into the world as an actual man -- a real man of a particular height, with hair of a particular color, speaking a particular language, weighing so many pounds. The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a

man but (before that) a baby, and before that a fetus inside a woman's body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.

Christ's attitude was humble – by his own choice!

3. 🚩 Obedient (v.8)

Appearance as a man; similar to us. (*If it looks like a duck...*)

Humbled himself (again)

🚩 Became obedient = **attentively listening; submissive** (*military orders?*)

John 5:19

I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

--Oswald Chambers... *Weighing the pros and cons for and against a statement of Jesus Christ's means that for the time being I refuse to obey him.*

The cost of obedience is nothing compared with the cost of disobedience.

A few centuries before Christ a man named Alexander conquered almost all of the known world using military strength, cleverness and a bit of diplomacy. The story is told that Alexander and a small company of soldiers approached a strongly fortified walled city. Alexander, standing outside the walls, raised his voice and demanded to see the king. When the king arrived, Alexander insisted that the king surrender the city and its inhabitants to Alexander and his little band of fighting men.

The king laughed, "Why should I surrender to you? You can't do us any harm!" But Alexander offered to give the king a demonstration. He ordered his men to line up single file and start marching. He marched them straight toward a sheer cliff

The townspeople gathered on the wall and watched in shocked silence as, one by one, Alexander's soldiers marched without hesitation right off the cliff to their deaths! After ten soldiers died, Alexander ordered the rest of the men to return to his side. The townspeople and the king immediately surrendered to Alexander the Great. They realized that if a few men were actually willing to commit suicide at the command of this dynamic leader, then nothing could stop his eventual victory.

Are you willing to be as obedient to the ruler of the universe, Jesus Christ, as those soldiers were to Alexander? Are you as dedicated and committed? Think how much power Christ could have in our area with just a portion of such commitment.

🚩 Death = figuratively, "**self-denial**"

Luke 9:23-24

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer... When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

It is not by accident that the symbol of Christianity is the cross rather than a bed of ease.

You deny Christ when you fail to deny yourself.

Conclusion

☞ Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...

- 1. Selfless**
- 2. Humble**
- 3. Obedient**

When a company takes over another company, there is often a sign placed outside the premises announcing, "Under New Management."

No sign so accurately summarizes what takes place in Christian conversion. When Christ takes over a life, that life is literally "under new management." How hard it is to learn this lesson, and to acknowledge the new authority in our lives!

How hard it is for those who have obeyed the flesh, to obey the Lord Jesus Christ! But that is required in being a Christian.

--Charles Swindoll... To be like Christ. That is our goal, plain and simple. It sounds like a peaceful, relaxing, easy objective. But stop and think. He learned obedience by the things he suffered. So must we. It is neither easy, nor quick, nor natural. It is impossible in the flesh, slow in coming, and supernatural in scope. Only Christ can accomplish it within us.

☞ Let's ask for his Character to be formed in us.