

☞ WWJD Series

So far, we've talked about the Character, the Conduct, and the Conditions of Christlikeness. To be more like Jesus, we need to be selfless, humble, and obedient. We are to be servants who trust God and live for righteousness. And, we must put off the old life and put on the new by remembering who we are in Christ; by running from temptation; and by relying on the Holy Spirit.

☞ The Criteria of Christlikeness

Ephesians 4:32

Criteria = characterizing traits. The Lord is our example. We are trying to be like him. So what was his example of Christlikeness?

1. ☞ Be Kind

Can you ever remember a time when you regretted having said a kind word?

It is easier to catch flies with honey than with vinegar.

☞ Literally = useful; to **furnish what is needed**

Jesus came to furnish what we couldn't furnish for ourselves. When we see a need and help fulfill that need, we are being kind. Kindness is a virtue that we are to add into our lives. We are, by nature, self-focused. But we can add kindness into our lives...

2 Peter 1:5-7

make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

Anybody here remember the sitcom All in the Family? Archie is basically a huge jerk, while Edith is a rather nice person. In one scene Archie is complaining, as Archie commonly did. He says to her, "That's you all right. Edith, the Good. You'll stoop to anything to be good. You never make nobody mad. You think it's easy living with a saint? Even when you cheat you don't cheat to win. You cheat to lose. Edith you ain't human." Edith says, "That's a terrible thing to say, Archie Bunker. I am just as human as you are." Archie retorts, "Oh, yeah? Then prove you're just as human as me. Do something rotten."

For most people, the “doing something rotten” comes very naturally, while kindness is something that must be developed.

Kindness is also a fruit of the Spirit that will develop as we are continually filled with his presence.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

One kind act will teach more love of God than a thousand sermons.

2. 📖 **Be Compassionate**

Sympathetic; tenderhearted

📖 **To suffer with** (com – pati)

“Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. When we look at compassion this way, it becomes clear that something more is involved than a general kindness or tenderheartedness.”

Jesus came and walked among us. He became one of us and experienced what we experience. He suffered for us. And, many times the Scripture says that when Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion for them.

-- Henri Nouwen... Let us not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, and broken.

📖 **Colossians 3:12-13**

as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with compassion**, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

KJV – bowels of mercy

Modern: “my heart went out to them...”

“it touched my heart...”

"...sick to my stomach"

--James S. Hewett... A little girl was sent on an errand by her mother. She took much too long in coming back. Mother, therefore, demanded an explanation when she finally did return. The little girl explained that on her way she had met a little friend who was crying because she had broken her doll. "Oh," said the mother, "then you stopped to help her fix her doll?" "Oh, no," replied the little girl. "I stopped to help her cry."

Men, this can be difficult for us. We tend to be "fixers." But your wife will tell you that many times she doesn't want you to fix anything. She just wants you to be there and show some compassion. And, even those times that we do fix things, it should be driven by compassion, not just by a need to "get it off our plate." All believers are called to be compassionate.

Psalms 82:3-4

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. 4 Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out.

A CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST came along saying: "You only THINK that you are in a pit."

A PHARISEE said: "Only BAD people fall into a pit."

A MATHEMATICIAN calculated HOW he fell into the pit.

A NEWS REPORTER wanted the exclusive story on his pit.

A FUNDAMENTALIST said: "You DESERVE your pit."

BUDDHA said: "Your pit is only a state of mind."

A REALIST said: "That's a PIT."

A SCIENTIST calculated the pressure necessary to get him out of the pit.

A GEOLOGIST told him to appreciate the rock strata in the pit.

AN EVOLUTIONIST said: "You are a rejected mutant destined to be removed from the evolutionary cycle." In other words, he is going to DIE in the pit, so that he cannot produce any "pit-falling offspring."

The COUNTY INSPECTOR asked if he had a permit to dig a pit.

A PROFESSOR gave him a lecture on: "The Elementary Principles of the Pit."

A SELF-PITYING person said: "You haven't seen anything until you've seen MY PIT!!"

A CHARISMATIC said: "Just CONFESS that you're not in a pit."

An OPTIMIST said: "Things COULD be worse."

A PESSIMIST said: "Things WILL get worse!!"

JESUS, seeing the man, took him by the hand and LIFTED HIM OUT of the pit.

3. 🍷 Be Forgiving

To grant as a favor; to pardon; to rescue

Jesus pardons our sins. He forgives us!

--Erwin W. Lutzer... *You must choose to forgive whoever has wronged you. Forgiveness is not an emotion, it is a decision of the will.*

--Mahatma Gandhi... *The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.*

☞ **Matthew 6:12**

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

--C. S. Lewis... *We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it.*

☞ **Mark 11:25**

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, **forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.**

If God were not willing to forgive sin, heaven would be empty. (And if we are unwilling to forgive, our lives and our homes will be empty)

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" **22** Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. **23** "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents (*millions of dollars*) was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. **26** "The servant fell on his knees before him, 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' **27** The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. **28** "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (*a few dollars*). He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. **29** "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' **30** "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. **32** "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33** Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow

servant just as I had on you?' **34** In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. **35** "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Regard as enormous the little wrong you did to others, and as trifling the great wrong done to you.

Conclusion

☞ Luke 6:27-31

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 **Do to others as you would have them do to you.**

☞ Jesus was kind – he furnished what we needed. Let us do likewise.

Jesus was compassionate – he lived among us and suffered for us. Let us show compassion as well.

Jesus was and is forgiving – he pardons even his enemies. Let us be willing to forgive.