

How to be Followers of Christ

Intro:

1. **ILL: "Samples Needed"**.
2. To become interested in spiritual things, people need to see genuine samples of the product.
3. You can be a genuine sample when you conscientiously follow the Lord Jesus.
4. **Matt 16:24 - If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**
5. This passage shows you some attitudes you can develop to genuinely follow the Lord.

Philippians 2:12-18

6. You need to be followers of the Lord . . .

I. In the Way You Obey God - v12-13

A. Obedience is an evidence of your salvation.

1. God is the majestic Creator - the true Master of the Universe!
2. He created you & everything you possess.
3. As the Lord Jesus, He redeemed you when He went to the cross. You are His twice!
4. God is the one who is worthy to be obeyed.
5. Lord Jesus showed us an example by obeying the Father's will in everything.

B. God has always honored obedience.

1. **I Sam 15:22 - Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.**
2. **Matt 7:21** tells us that entrance into heaven is based on obedience.
3. Noah was saved because he obeyed & built the ark (**Gen 6**).
4. **Ex 20:12** (1 of the 10 Commandments) promises a long life to those who are obedient.
5. **Jam 1:25** states that all their deeds will be blessed for those who obey.

C. **v13** - God will work in you to accomplish His purposes.

1. **Rom 8:28 - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**
2. God promises to provide guidance & the power of His Holy Spirit to live according to that direction.

II. In the Way You Shine as His Lights - v14-16

A. **v14** - How do you misrepresent the Lord? You complain & argue!

1. Complaining & arguing lead to dissention & eventually to church fights.
2. There is no worse witness to a neighborhood or community than for a church to fight.
3. The community thinks of the church as a social club that can't get along with one another.

B. **v16** - How do you accurately represent the Lord? You hold out the word of life!

1. The best way to hold out the word of life is to have that word demonstrated in your life.
2. **Matt 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**
3. As the moon reflect the light of the sun - you reflect the light of the Lord when your life demonstrates what's in the Bible!
4. **v15** - How can people tell if you are living the life?
 - a. **Blameless** (ἄμεμπτοι) = not able to be blamed for doing wrong.
 - b. **Pure** (ἀκέραιοι) = Lit., unmixed - not containing anything that would corrupt, so "harmless", (NAS) "innocent".
 - c. **Without fault** (ἄμωμοι) = lit., without blemish. The only acceptable sacrifice in the Old Testament was an animal without blemish! (**Rom 12:1-2**)

III. In the Way You View Physical Death - v17-18

A. v17a - Death is like a Drink Offering.

1. A drink offering was when a worshipper poured 3 pints of strong wine on the ground.
2. **The Jewish Meaning:** the wine was a symbol of vigor & refreshment. Pouring it out was a sign of putting God before enjoyment.
3. The possible **Christian Meaning:**
 - a. Red wine was used in the Passover feast as a symbol of blood.
 - b. Lord Jesus used this meaning at the Lord's Supper as His blood being poured out for you.
Matt 26:27-28 - Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."
4. Paul was probably implying here that he would suffer a violent, bloody death.

B. v17b-18 - But Paul saw death in the Lord as better than living in this life.

1. **Phil 1:23 - I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far . . .**
2. Death to him was a reward for a faithful life.

C. Your death can be a beautiful testimony to an unbelieving world - if your Christian life was genuine!

1. **ILL: Quo Vadis** (The way the Christians faced the lions singing).
2. **ILL: "End of the Spear" & "Through Gates of Splendor"** (The Aucas eventually gave their lives to the Lord!)

Following Lord Jesus often means taking up the cross of obedience, proclamation of the word & a sacrificial life! The Christian life is to be a life of surrender to the will of God. But God has promised to give you the direction & the strength to do it. You want your Lord to say to you, "Well done My good & faithful servant"! (**Matt 25:21-23**)

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