

Keys to Living a *Christ-like* Life

I find it quite interesting- and telling, that after recounting great men and women of *faith* from the past (*i.e.* Old Testament) in Heb.11, when it comes to living faithfully (“*lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and... run with endurance the race set before us*”) the writer points us NOT to their example, but to *Christ*- “*fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith...*” Heb.12:1-2. Simply put: To be a *Christian*, look to *Christ*- He is your example, standard, and goal. So, let’s consider a few keys to living a *Christ-like*, or *Christian*, life:

- Jesus knew **from where He came** and **where He was going**, John 8:14; 13:3. If/when we *know* (realize and admit) that we have “*come forth from God*”- that we are not the result of some *cosmic happy accident* but are instead *divine descendants* (cf. Acts 17:26-28), and that, when this life here is over, our “*spirit(s) will return to God who gave*” them, Eccl.12:7, then we **know who we are!**
- Jesus knew **why He was here**, Luke 19:10. Fulfilling this purpose included a few others: 1) *preaching the kingdom of God*, Luke 4:43; and, 2) *to die on the cross* as the *propitiation for sin*, John 12:27. Therefore, to live *like Christ*, we must understand and likewise fulfill comparable purposes: 1) to be “*crucified with Christ*” so that “*it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I no live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me,*” Gal.2:20; and, 2) to be “*faithful men, who will be able to teach others also,*” 2Tim.2:2. Do you know **your purpose** as a “Christian”? If so, you know **why we’re here!**
- Jesus knew **failure was a possibility, just not an option**, Heb.4:15. If sin was not possible for Jesus- that the *divine* part of His nature (cf. Col.2:9) made it impossible for the *human* part to sin, His example becomes meaningless to/for us. But such is not the case because Heb.4:15 says He can “*sympathize with our weaknesses*” precisely because He was “*tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*” He *could* sin, He just *didn’t*. If He had sinned, His sacrifice on the cross for our sins would have also been meaningless. Now think about us. In our admitted dependence upon divine *grace*, do we become spiritually complacent regarding the commands to “*Become sober-minded as you ought and stop sinning*” (1Cor.15:34a), or to be “*like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’*” (1Pet.1:15-16). Giving in to temptation is certainly a *possibility* for us, but it shouldn’t be considered an *option*. If we know this, then we know **how we are supposed to live!**
- Jesus knew and kept **the most important thing(s) the most important thing(s)**, Matt.22:37-39. Look, I get it. We all struggle to keep what we know are “the most important things” *in our heads* “the most important things” *in our lives*. Jesus succeeded where we often fail. But we can and should (often) *re-evaluate* and *refocus* our priorities to keep “the main things” “the main things” and not let all the “other things” of life take over our lives! “*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you,*” Matt.6:33. If we do this, **we are living the “Christian” or Christ-like life!**

So “*fix your eyes on Jesus*” and *think* like He thought, *know* what He knew (to the degree possible of course), *feel* like He felt, and *do* what He did... and don’t ever take the “Christ” out of “Christian”! (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)