

1 Corinthians 11:1 Commentary

1 Corinthians 11

1 Corinthians 12

1 CORINTHIANS - PROBLEMS OF A LOCAL CHURCH
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

FROM CHART: Note 2 major divisions:

- **FIRST DIVISION** - Chapters 1-6 = Problems of Congregation - Divisions & Depravities
- **SECOND DIVISION** - Chapters 7-16 = Personal Problems, Worship Problems

1 Corinthians 11:1 **Be** imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: **mimetai**, mou ginesthe kathos kago. Christou

Amplified: Pattern yourselves after me [follow my example], as I imitate and follow Christ (the Messiah). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Complete Jewish: **try** to imitate me, even as I myself **try** to imitate the Messiah

Ed: I do not like this translation as it seems to suggest we need to exert self-effort, which is only half true, for the only way we can carry out this command is by renouncing self-effort and relying wholly on the Holy Spirit's enablement! Not "Let go and let God" but "Let God and let's go!"

ESV: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

KJV: Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

NET Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

NIV: Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

NLT: And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

Phillips: Copy me, my brothers, as I copy Christ himself. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Become imitators of me, even as I also am an imitator of Christ (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: Followers of me become ye, as I also am of Christ.

- **Be:** 1Co 4:16 10:33 Php 3:17 1Th 1:6 2Th 3:9 Heb 6:12
- **just as I am of Christ:** Ro 15:2,3 Eph 5:1-2 Php 2:4-5
- **Go to Verse by Verse Commentary on 1 Corinthians 11**

Related Passages:

1 Co 4:16+; Therefore I exhort you, **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of me.

Phil 3:17+ Brethren, **join** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Mime

A [mime](#) is one who acts out a story without using words. That is a good reminder to us as Christ followers (Christ imitators) to let [our actions speak louder than our words](#). Of course we are to speak words, especially Gospel words, but our life should back up the authenticity of our Gospel message. The lost are watching this great redemptive drama (Christ our life) in everyday situations and looking to see if our life is one of integrity. When it is, they are much more likely to listen to the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His death in their place that they might have eternal life. May the Spirit enable us to imitate Christ in all our spheres of influence so that we have an opportunity to speak the Gospel for the glory and honor of our King. Amen.

Actions are more revealing of one's true character
since it is easy to say things or make promises,
but it takes (Spirit enabled) effort to do things and follow through.

The Christ Life

In this verse Paul calls all believers to imitate his life, just as He imitated the life of Christ. To take it a step further, Paul is calling us to live the "Christ life," even as he did in Galatians 2:20-note. To live the Christ life is not a matter of "trying" but of "dying." In other words it is daily surrendering to the Spirit of Jesus and allowing Him to enable us to live like Christ lived. It is to allow the Spirit of Christ to live through me, daily giving me the desire and the power (Phil 2:13NLT-note) to live as Jesus lived while on earth as a Man (1 John 2:6-note). Jesus said that He came to give life and give it abundantly. The Christ life is the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10b). It is a life of faith and obedience. It is a life which gives great glory to the Father (Mt 5:16), for others see us living in a manner that is not natural but supernatural. For example, they see us forgiving when the normal human reaction would be unforgiving and even to avenge a wrong (cp Ro 12:19-note). And the only way to live in this manner is to daily be filled with Spirit (Eph 5:18-note) and walk by the Spirit of Christ (Gal 5:16-note). Father in Heaven, by Your Spirit grant each us the desire and the power to live the "Christ life" for His glory. Amen

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 A MISPLACED PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 11:1 is a verse that should never have been severed from 1 Corinthians 10 when [Stephen Langton](#) added the Bible chapter divisions in 1205!

Krell adds that Stephen Langton was "a professor in Paris (he later became Archbishop of Canterbury), who put these into a Vulgate edition of the Bible. It was Robert Stephanus, a Parisian book printer, who took over the verse divisions already indicated in the Hebrew Bible and assigned numbers to them within the chapter divisions already assigned by Stephan Langton. While riding on horseback from Paris to Lyons he affixed his own verse divisions to the NT and numbered them within Langton's chapter divisions. Prior to that time when folks looked at Old and New Testament manuscripts, there were no divisions, just one continuous long epistle from beginning to end." ([1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1 Community Jeopardy](#))

Jon Courson - If chapters 10 and 11 were divided most logically, this verse would be at the end of chapter 10. After ending his discussion of Christian liberty, Paul simply says, "If you want to know what to do—just follow me." Paul's is a statement I pray we can make increasingly our own when our kids are confused, our neighbors are questioning, or newer Christians are wondering about what they should do.

Context of Christian Liberty - (Note this section probably begins back in 1Cor 8:1ff+ - e.g., see William Baker's comment below) 1Cor 10:23 All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

1 Cor 10:24+ Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market, without asking questions for conscience' sake;

26 FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS.

27 If one of the unbelievers invites you, and you wish to go, eat anything that is set before you, without asking questions for conscience' sake.

28 But if anyone should say to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake;

29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?

30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.

11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Keith Krell - Paul closes the section in the last two verses with an unsettling invitation. We could ask ourselves, **Could I issue the same invitation Paul does?**" He says that his own life is a pattern of freedom in Jesus Christ, and he invites other people to imitate him. In 1 Cor 10:33-11:1, Paul writes: "st as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."³⁶ Paul doesn't mean that he was a man-pleaser (cf. Gal 1:10). His concern was that his life would be attractive so that they would be drawn to Jesus in him. "Saved" in this context probably includes Christians and means saved in the wide sense of delivered from anything that keeps someone from advancing spiritually (cf. Rom 15:1-3).³⁷ Paul is not content simply to live his life as an example for the Corinthians to emulate; he actually instructs them to (lit.) become "imitators" of him. (cf. 1Cor 4:16). For Paul, as an apostle of Christ, it wasn't just a matter of preaching and teaching. It was a matter of living out the truth that he taught. And in many of those cities Paul went to, he would be the first and only Christian they would see. So watching him live his life was very important for them to understand the reality of the gospel. Paul is asking every one of us through this entire passage, "Do you want to know what it means to live a consistent Christian life? Do you want to properly balance freedom and restraint? Do you want to be in the world and not of the world? Do you want to have a positive spiritual influence in your community, but not allow that community to mold you so you compromise what's true and what's right? Do you want to live a balanced life, not being driven by the extremes of legalism or it's opposite, selfish license? If you do, then watch me, follow me, live with me. I may not be perfect, but I try to imitate the selfless life that Christ lived. I want to glorify God in what I say and what I do and in the attitudes of my heart. To the extent that I succeed, then the good news is that you can, too." ([1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1 Community Jeopardy](#))

**A good leader knows the way,
shows the way, and goes the way.**

IMITATIO CHRISTI

Charles Spurgeon once said that "A Christian should be a striking likeness of Jesus Christ...We should be pictures of Christ....Oh! My brethren, there is nothing that can so advantage you, nothing can so prosper you, so assist you, so make you walk towards heaven rapidly, so keep your head upwards towards the sky, and your eyes radiant with glory, like the **imitation** of Jesus Christ.

To follow in the steps of those
Whose eyes are on the Lord
Will help to keep us strong and true,
And faithful to His Word. —D. De Haan

Imitate those who imitate Christ.

Be imitators - The verb **be** is **present imperative** calling for this to be our lifestyle. Every command in the NT (**880 present imperatives and 762 aorist imperatives**) is a call for us to renounce self-reliance and to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit. Or stated another, we cannot obey any of the >1500 commands in the NT unless we are filled with and enabled by the Holy Spirit. To attempt to fulfill Paul's command to **be imitators** (or any command) in our own strength will only result in futility and frustration for our fallen flesh will eventually fail us. As **John MacArthur** says "If we do not obey this command (he is referring to Eph 5:18 - be filled with the Spirit), we cannot obey any other—simply because we cannot do any of God's will apart from God's Spirit. Outside of the command for unbelievers to trust in Christ for salvation, there is no more practical and necessary command in Scripture than the one for believers to be filled with the Spirit."

**There's no better sermon
than a good example.**

Be (Become) ([1096](#)) (**ginomai**) means to cause to be ("gen"-erate), to become, to come into existence, to be formed. The verb **ginomai** is in the **present imperative** which means that the only way to continually obey is by renouncing self-reliance and relying on the Spirit's energizing us, giving us the **DESIRE** and the **POWER** (Php 2:13NLT-note). Our responsibility is to **work out** what the Spirit works in (Php 2:12-note). If you try to live like Christ without relying on the same means He relied on to conduct Himself (the Holy Spirit - see Lk 4:1, 14, Acts 10:38, etc), you will become frustrated and fail. The only one who could enable us to live like Jesus lived is the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7)!

Here is an example from a sermon by Bishop Beveridge on the "means" by which we can imitate Christ - "(1) Watch always over thy heart (1Pe 5:8; Pr 4:23). (2) Live as under the eye of God. (3) Consider thou art a Christian." ([Following Christians and Following Christ](#)) Notice that there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that Jesus "emptied" Himself when He left heaven to become a Man (Php 2:6-7). He relied on the Spirit's anointing and empowerment, not His own divine power (Lk 4:14, etc). Is this mysterious? To be sure. But it is also Biblical. And to tell someone to follow the example of Jesus (1Pe 2:21) and fail to tell them

how this is possible (the indwelling, continually "energizing" Spirit - Php 2:13NLT), is to place them under the law and set them up for a spiritual exercise in futility!

Imitators (3402)(**mimetes**) means one who follows. **Mimetes** basically means to copy or imitate someone's behavior and has many related words in English - "*mime*" (one who acts out an imitation of another person or animal), "pantomime" (a theater production which originally was without words), "mimeograph" (a machine which makes many copies from one stencil).

Webster says that to imitate means to follow as a pattern, model, or example; to be or appear like. The 1828 Websters even says in the definition of imitate that...

We should seek the best models to imitate, and in morals and piety, it is our duty to imitate the example of our Savior. ([Reference](#))

Writing to the saints at Corinth Paul said...

I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me. (1Cor 4:16)

Be (present imperative) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1Cor 11:1)

Similarly Paul commanded the predominantly Gentile believers in Ephesus to...

Be (present imperative) imitators of God, as beloved children (Ephesians 5:1-note)

The writer of Hebrews exhorted his predominantly Jewish audience...

that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Heb 6:12-[note](#))

In ancient Greek **mimetes** referred to imitation. Aristotle used the word to describe how people imitated animals, postulating that at the beginning of civilization men learned from animals, e.g., weaving and spinning from spiders, and house-building from swallows!

W. Bauder - Very early on (in Democritus of the pre-Socratics) the words were used to express ethical demands made on men. One should take as one's model the boldness of a hero, or one should imitate the good example of one's teacher or parents... The Rabbis were the first to speak of imitation of God in the sense of developing the image of God in men. In the Pseudepigrapha in addition to the exhortation to imitate men of outstanding character (Test. Ben. 3:1; 4:1) one can also find the thought of the imitation of God (i.e. keeping his commands, Test. Ash. 4:3) and of particular characteristics of God (Aristeas 188, 210, 280 f.). ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Teachers based their whole educational procedure on imitation, as students imitated the behavior of teachers. Slowly the idea developed that people should imitate the gods, and Plato emphasized this.

Joyfully following Jesus the Lord
And trusting His lead every day
Makes us examples that others can see
To follow when trials come their way.
—Sper

Others should imitate us
only as far as we imitate Christ.

The basic meaning of **mimetes** is seen in a mime. An English woman went to France to study under the famous mime artist, Marcel Marceau. All day he taught his students how to make the movements of mime, and each evening they went to see him perform. Their performances were marked indelibly by the style of the master. This is an excellent picture of a Christian who imitates the Lord by exposure to Him.

A person who mimes acts a part with mimic gesture and action, usually without words. Let your actions speak louder than your words and then you will have a platform to proclaim the word of truth, the gospel. As believers in their message the Thessalonians began to pattern their lives after the example set by the missionaries. This fact rejoiced the heart of Paul as it was open evidence of the reality of the Thessalonian believers' conversion and therefore of their divine election. The Thessalonians had become third generation mimics of Christ. Christ is the first; Paul is the second; and the Thessalonians are the third. The Thessalonian believers imitated the Lord and Paul (Silvanus, Timothy) in that they responded to the gospel in spite of affliction. Note that Paul did not write what reportedly was said by one pastor "Do as I say; not as I do." Unfortunately this saying has characterized numerous preachers, many of whom have reputations as great teachers of God's Word. However, when their lives are measured by the Bible's qualifications for communication and character, such ministers come up woefully short. Make sure you mime the right model!

As an African chief once said: A good example is the tallest kind of preaching.

Be like Jesus, this my song,
In the home and in the throng;
Be like Jesus, all day long!
I would be like Jesus.
—Rowe

Nothing is more attractive
than being like Jesus.

Jonathan Edwards was so concerned about the example which he set which others might imitate, that he framed the resolve to "never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life." Find a man like this and become an imitator of him!

Here is a secular quote that has more truth in it than we would like to believe (think of "spiritual children") "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. They must, they have no other models. (James Baldwin)

Our children watch and imitate
The things we say and do;
So if we imitate the Lord,
They'll imitate Him too.
—Sper

Children may close their ears to advice,
but their eyes are always open to example.

As shown in the uses of *mimetes* below Scripture always uses this word in a positive sense.

Richards writes that *mimetes* "is a call to reproduce in our own way of life (Ed: NOT by self effort but Spirit power, daily learning to yield our rights to Him, allowing Him to control us as we abide in the Vine Christ Jesus) those godly qualities that result from salvation and that we see in others. The idea is intimately linked with the thought that teachers and leaders ought to be clear, living examples of the practical implications of commitment to Jesus. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

Mimetes is found 6 times in the NAS (always translated **imitators** (KJV has "**followers**")

(1Cor 4:16+) I (Paul) exhort you (Corinthians) therefore, **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** of me.

(1 Cor 11:1) **Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** of me (Corinthians are urged to imitate the self-sacrificing example of Paul and Christ), just as I also am of Christ.

(Eph 5:1+) Therefore **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** of God, as beloved children and **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Eph 5:2+)

Comment: Just as God forgave us so we should forgive others Eph 4:32+)

(1 Thes 1:6+) You also became **imitators** of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

(1Th 2:14+) For you, brethren, became **imitators** of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea (the problems of the believers at Thessalonica among their fellow Gentiles were similar to those of the believers in Judea who were persecuted by Jews), for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

(Hebrews 6:11-12+) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you will not be sluggish, but **imitators** of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Be diligent just as OT saints like Abraham were, knowing that what has been promised will be fulfilled

By the way, this verse provides ample reason for saints today to read biographies of saints of yesteryear.

Imitators is perfectly illustrated by this section of Scripture for the Thessalonians followed the apostles' example especially by gladly enduring persecution (with joy) for the Gospel's sake and also (1Th 1:8) by sounding forth the gospel with others.

Hiebert commenting on the use of **mimetes** in 1Thes 1:8 adds that

Paul's description of the converts as *mimitae* (from which we get our English word mimic) does not imply that their conversion was artificial or insincere. It does not have the belittling connotation of our English derivative. It was no superficial or slavish copying of merely external resemblances. As De Boer well remarks, '*It was an imitation in the deep and basic sense of the word; it was a bringing to expression in their own lives of what they had seen and detected outside of themselves. It was a capturing of something they had witnessed around them and making it a part of themselves.*' Clearly their conversion went beyond mere verbal profession. They actively began to express in their own lives the characteristics of this new life as they observed it in the lives of the missionaries. It was an imitation perfectly consistent with the development of their own selfhood within this new life. Such imitation demands moral effort (cp Ezek 36:27 where the first half speaks of the provision of divine power and the second half the necessity of personal responsibility). ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians](#))

In 1Thes 1:8 Paul writes that the Thessalonians became imitators of us and of the Lord. So there he is holding up the lives of Silas and Timothy (1Th 1:1) as additional lives that worthy of following! Hiebert explains that "The order (us followed by the Lord) may at first strike us as startling, but it is the logical order. It is the natural order in the experience of converts on a new mission field. Even before the message of a missionary is fully understood or personally accepted, the hearers will observe the outworking of that message in the life of the missionary. And when the Spirit leads them to a personal acceptance of the message, the new converts naturally look to the missionary to learn how to live the Christian life. To reflect their message in their own lives is part of the work of missionaries." ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians](#))

Pulpit Commentary - Christ not only died as a Sacrifice, but lived as an Example. He is the great Example Whom we must imitate, the Pattern of the new creation, the Original of which all believers are copies. Especially we must imitate Him in His patient endurance of suffering. The cross is ever the Christian's motto."

Related Quotes:

- **Christian Nestell Bovee** - "We unconsciously imitate what pleases us and approximate to the characters we most admire."
- In his preface to the writings of Shakespeare, **Samuel Johnson** wrote that "Example is always more efficacious than precept."
- **Merrill Tenney** "The best advertisement for your church is not a large notice board, but rather the example that is set when the town drunk becomes a Christian and lives a godly life."
- **F B Meyer** "Children mostly resemble their father. There is often an unmistakable family likeness, which compels the most casual observer to exclaim, "The very image of his father." Oh that in each of us there might be that which would make men think of God! (Our Daily Homily)

Jesus, my Savior, let me be
More perfectly conformed to Thee;
Implant each grace, each sin dethrone,
And form my temper like Thine own.

THE COMMAND QUALIFIED

Just as I am of Christ - "Am" is added to make translation smooth. Just as is a **term of comparison** which should always prompt the question "What is the writer comparing?" Clearly Paul is saying become like me in the ways that I am like Christ.

Be aware that someone's watching
As you go along your way;
Your example is remembered
More than anything you say.
—Hess

**There's no better sermon
than a good example.**

Keep in mind that most of the New Testament was not written yet and so Paul's life was the Bible that most of the new believer's read (of course they had access to his letters but those were written over many years - [Click to see a list of approximate dates in which the Bible books written](#) - notice that 1Corinthians is one of the earlier books making Paul's example of paramount importance). And so twice in his first letter to the church at Corinth (a church in great need of a reliable role model) Paul commands the saints to walk as he himself walked explaining that he sought to imitate Christ's walk.

Paul is not boasting in himself but ultimately in Christ Who he follows.

As a believer it is fine to follow a man, but just make sure he is a man who follows Christ!

How was Paul like Christ? It seems that one of the clearest descriptions is found in his famous declaration

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.." (Galatians 2:20-note)

We also see him willing to give up his rights in his letter to the fleshly (selfish) saints at Corinth...

1 Cor 8:13+ Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.

1 Cor 9:19-23+ For though I am free from all men, I **have made myself a slave to all**, so that I may win more. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. 23 **I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.**

1 Cor 10:33+ just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.

John MacArthur has a devotional entitled **The Model of Witnessing** (1Cor 11:1) - Christ is the perfect model to imitate in witnessing to others. First, He was available. Although there were times when He left the crowds, Jesus was regularly among the people, even when He was busy.

Second, He wasn't partial. Often Jesus was with common people, lepers, prostitutes, and tax collectors—those belonging to the lower classes socially and morally. But He also helped a Roman centurion, a man of dignity and stature (Matt. 8:5-13), and ministered to wealthy Jairus, whose daughter needed a miracle (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43). Jesus reflected the mind of God, who is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Third, He was sensitive to the pain of others. In Mark 5, a lady with a hemorrhage for twelve years reached out and touched Christ's garment. Jesus asked, "Who touched My garments?" (Mk 5:30) out of concern for her.

Last, He secured a public confession from those who believed in Him, such as the blind man (John 9:1-41), and the Samaritan leper (Luke 17:11-19).

Follow Christ's example as you witness to others. (Truth for today : a daily touch of God's grace)

One theologian said, "All people are created in the **imago dei**—the image of God. All believers are called to the **imitatio Christi**—the imitation of Christ." While that sounds very spiritual, the truth is that many professing believers are far from "imitatio Christi" and more like "imitatio kosmos," (so to speak) imitators of the world. Followers (disciples) of Christ should follow Christ by imitating Him. Of course the only way to imitate Christ is to live by the same power source He lived by during His life. And what was His source of supernatural power? It was the Holy Spirit, Who symbolically anointed Him at His baptism thereby inaugurating His ministry (Mt 3:16-17), and then filling and leading Him into a time of trial and testing (Mt 4:1-2, Luke 4:1-2) and finally empowering Him for His revolutionary three and one half year ministry (Lk 4:14). You say, "But He was God, so surely He functioned as a Man in His divine power." Paul explains that He relinquished His divine prerogatives in His incarnation. In so doing He provided for us the perfect example of how a man should live before God. The first Adam failed and sinned, falling out of the Father's will. The Second Adam remained sinless and continually lived in perfect submission to His Father's will. In Acts 10:38 Peter gives us a summary or overview

of Jesus' earthly ministry explaining "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power (HIS SUPERNATURAL POWER), and how He went about (HIS SUPERNATURAL PRACTICE) doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him (HIS SUPERNATURAL PROVISION)." He gave us this example that we might follow in His steps, trusting not in our natural ability or fleshly power, but wholly leaning on the Spirit's provision and power to enable us to walk as more than conquerors in Christ, in the "Imitatio Christi."

We see this pattern repeatedly in the New Testament God's call for believers to "be imitators" ultimately of Jesus, the perfect example of the perfect Man...

1 Cor 4:16 (commentary) **Therefore** (based on what he has just said - see Taylor's discussion) I exhort you , **be** imitators of me.

Mark Taylor has an insightful note on 1Cor 4:16 and the verses in the preceding context - There is a significant connection between Paul's description of suffering and the teaching of Jesus at this point, which paves the way for the exhortation of imitation in 4:16-17. Paul's catalog of tribulations puts Christian values in stark contrast to worldly values. The world's opinion of the apostles may be summed up in two phrases, translated by the NIV as "scum of the earth" and "refuse of the world," terms used metaphorically for anything contemptible. Apostles were regarded by the world as the most detestable of all people, but, as such, the apostles incarnated the scandal of the cross.....

The focus of 1Cor 4:14-17, which is closely linked to 1Cor 4:6-13, is **apostolic imitation**. To this point in the argument Paul has established that his ministry among them embodied the wisdom of God (1Cor 2:1-5, 13-16; 3:10), that **he and other apostles are living examples of Christ crucified** (Ed cf Gal 2:20) (1Cor 4:9-13).....

In light of all that Paul has argued to this point in the letter and in light of his role as the founder of the church in Corinth, their father in the Gospel, he has established his right to say (literally), "**Become** imitators of me." He has not written to shame but to admonish (1Cor 4:14). **But how are they to imitate Paul?** 1Cor 4:17 explains that it **has to do with his way of life in Christ**. The most immediate example (Ed: **The context**) is 1Cor 4:9-13, which includes not only the reality of suffering for the Gospel but also the proper response to those who inflict it (4:12-13) (Ed: Compare Peter's exhortation regarding suffering for doing right in 1Pe 2:20-21 and the proper response to unjust suffering in 1Pe 2:22-23). **To imitate Paul would be to walk in the way of humility and suffering and godliness for the cause of Christ.** Imitation is not the same as saying, "I belong to Paul!" Rather, Paul wants them to incarnate the cross (Ed: Which recalls Paul's famous declaration in Galatians 2:20. And so Paul is calling the readers to imitate the crucified life in their daily experience. All believers have been crucified with Christ positionally but it is quite another thing to live it out in our daily lives as Jesus advocated in Mk 8:34-35, Lk 9:23), to live out their Christian identity in a real and meaningful way, to become true disciples of Christ. This teaching, Paul claims, is universal to all the churches and not specific only to the church at Corinth (see also 1Cor 7:17; 11:16; 14:33-36). There was a consistency of apostolic teaching and expectation of imitation in all the churches (Ed: Nor was Paul the only apostle who exhorted the saints to be imitators of Christ - e.g. Peter in 1Pe 2:21 and John in 1Jn 2:6). Paul's sending Timothy was not a special case in the sense that unusual demands would be made of the Corinthians. The Corinthians are part of a greater whole (cf. 1 Cor 1:1-2).....Paul himself plans to visit Corinth in person (1Cor 4:18-21), but until he comes he wants Timothy's actual presence in Corinth to remind them of his pattern of life in Christ. **The implication that "presence" is a necessary component of "imitation" is hard to miss.** (1 Corinthians - New American Commentary)

Comment: Paul's exhortation is clearly synonymous with a call to discipleship, for a disciple was to follow his teacher and ultimately to imitate him. (See 2Ti 3:10) As an aside, as Taylor alludes to above, it is difficult to imitate someone without being in their presence.

Php 3:17+ Brethren, **join** (more literally "**become** followers" - **present imperative** = an "opportunity" to jettison self-reliance and rely on the Spirit) in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

John 13:15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

Ephesians 5:1-2+Therefore **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and **walk** in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

1 John 2:6+ the one who says he abides in Him **ought** (not maybe but is obligated) himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

How many of us could say - "*My life is the book from which I want you to learn?*" or "*My life agrees with my teaching?*"

If we would desire to be men who make disciples able to make disciples, then we need to be able to confidently declare to them "Be imitators of me, just as I am of Jesus."

This is also a good pattern for any spiritual activity we do (or any praise we receive for so doing) -- to point away from ourselves and to Christ!

As a corollary, it is not wrong to follow the example of a man, as long as that man is following Christ!

Leon Morris - He calls on his converts to imitate him, but in the very act of saying this he points them away from himself. The reason they should imitate him is that he imitates Christ. His example points them to the Saviour. (1 Corinthians, 1985, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

W E Vine on 1Cor 11:1 - this verse obviously belongs to the end of chapter ten. The principle Paul has just stated as to his own actions he exhorts his readers to follow, and he does so, not in the spirit of self-advertisement, but because Christ is the controlling example for all, the principle being that of the sacrifice of our own rights and likes with a view to the interests and profit of others. See Romans 15:1–3. (Collected writings of W. E. Vine)

Mark Taylor on 1Cor 11:1 - All things boil down to the imitation of Paul who imitates Christ, and Paul imitates Christ by not seeking the things of himself but what is for the benefit of others that they might be saved (1Cor 10:33-11:1; cf. 1Cor 10:24). Ultimately the paradigm of "Christ crucified" (1Cor 1:23; 2:2) is the guiding principle for Christian decision-making and behavior. (Ibid)

John MacArthur - Paul closes this section, which in thought extends into chapter 11, with a practical suggestion for following the principles of Christian liberty. Because the apostle lived in such a way as to please all men in all things, not seeking [his] own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved, he could safely tell the Corinthians to follow his example. He had lived and ministered in Corinth for eighteen months, and the believers there knew him well. "You remember how I lived when I was with you," he is saying. "Live like that yourselves." Paul's goal was to bring people to salvation. He was willing to set aside anything for that (cf. 1Cor 9:19–23).

The reason Paul was so confident and successful in his Christian living in general, and in the responsible use of his Christian liberty in particular, was that he was an imitator of Christ, the supreme example of One who set aside His rights for the sake of others, the One who "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant" and "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death" (Phil. 2:7–8). Paul called the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitated the God-glorifying condescension of Christ (cf. 4:16; Phil. 3:17). (1 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary).

John Butler - The copying of Paul. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). In view of the problem in Corinth of being man followers, it is important to understand that the word "followers" here means imitators. Paul wanted the believers to imitate him even as he imitated Christ. Earlier Paul requested the same thing (1 Corinthians 4:16). Paul was not soliciting a group of followers. He only wanted the believers to conduct themselves as he conducted himself in imitating Christ. Not many men can say this. Most men are like the religious leaders of Christ's day of whom Christ said to do as these leaders say, but do not behave as they do (Matthew 23:3). (Analytical Bible Expositor: I & II Corinthians)

Expositor's Greek - Paul's personal example played a large part in his argument (9); it is fitting he should refer to it in summing up.

Roy Ciampa - Christ's example of putting the needs of others before his own freedom or rights, and especially of doing whatever is necessary to secure their salvation (see again the preceding verse), was clearly the motivating force behind Paul's own approach to ministry as he has described it to the Corinthians and promoted it as a model for them to follow. (Pillar New Testament Commentary)

Pulpit Commentary on 1Cor 11:1—Followers of me; rather, imitators of me; follow herein my example, as I follow Christ's. What Christ's example was, in that he too "pleased not himself," he sets forth in Rom. 15:1–3; and the general principle of self-abnegation for the sake of others in Phil. 2:4–8. This verse ought to be included in ch. 10. It sums up the whole argument, and explains the long digression of ch. 9. As I also am of Christ. This limits the reference to his own example. I only ask you to imitate me in points in which I imitate Christ.

Richard Pratt on 1Cor 11:1 - Paul's commitment to seeking the salvation of the lost led him to subjugate his personal preferences and freedoms to the good of others. As a result of the consistency with which Paul fulfilled this service, he felt capable of encouraging the Corinthians to follow his example as he followed the example of Christ. Christ gave up his freedom and honor, humbling himself to the point of death on a cross, in order to save others (Phil. 2:5–8). Paul encouraged the Corinthians to

remember Christ's great sacrifice as the perfect model of love and concern for others (see Eph. 4:32–5:1). (I & II Corinthians, Holman New Testament Commentary)

Bruce Barton on 1Cor 11:1 - This verse belongs at the conclusion of chapter 10, not at the beginning of chapter 11, where it has been traditionally placed. Paul had just told the Corinthians that his goal was to seek the good of others, not himself. In this regard, Paul called upon them to imitate him. Elsewhere Paul had encouraged the believers to imitate him. In 1Cor 4:15–16, he had stated, "For even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you. So I ask you to follow my example and do as I do" (NLT, see commentary on 1Cor 4:14–16; see also Eph 5:1; 1Th 1:6; 1Th 2:14). As in chapter 4, Paul's words were not prideful. He had just spent three chapters explaining how the Corinthian believers needed to deal with the issue of eating meat that had been offered to idols. His conclusion of the matter balanced freedom in Christ with responsibility to love the "weaker" believers. All Christians should be so focused on bringing others to Christ that nothing stands in the way of that goal. Paul followed his own advice (see 1Cor 8:13; 10:33) and encouraged the believers to follow his example. The reason they could do so? Because he followed Christ's example—just as I also imitate Christ. The New Testament places strong emphasis on imitating leaders. (1 & 2 Corinthians, Life Application Bible Commentary)

Barton on **IMITATION** - Why did Paul say, "Imitate me" (1Cor 11:1)? Paul wasn't being arrogant—he did not think of himself as sinless. He had already introduced them to the Messiah; now he wanted them to follow his example. The Corinthian believers did not know much about the life and ministry of Christ. Paul could not tell them to imitate Jesus because the Gospels had not yet been written, so they knew little of what Jesus was like. The best way to point these new Christians to Christ was to point them to a Christian whom they trusted (see also Galatians 4:12; Philippians 3:17; 1Th 1:6; 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9). Paul had lived in Corinth almost two years and had built a relationship of trust with many of these new believers. Even today, God's Spirit still uses the faithful lives of Christians alongside the Scriptures to help people understand and follow Christ. Watch how faithful Christians live and, in the light of Scripture, pattern your conduct after theirs. (Ibid)

ESV Study Bible - God has designed the Christian life so that much of one's progress comes through imitating other Christians, imperfect though they be (cf. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3). (Crossway)

Charles Ellicott notes that "Any shade of offence that such words (Imitate me) could, by any chance, have given is at once removed by the clause which follows. 'even is I also am of Christ;' the comparative *kai* serving to bring out the fact that he himself was an imitator, as he advised them to be,—an imitator of the highest of all examples.

William Baker on 1Cor 11:1 - Paul offers his final bit of advice to help the Corinthians guide their own decisions in the future. They can gauge their lives by how Paul has conducted himself. This they could understand, not only by having observed him when he lived among them for 18 months but by hearing his teaching both while he was there and in this letter. Paul was not so egotistical, however, to think that even though he was a chosen apostle of Christ, that somehow his life was not without flaws. Thus, he accents that his life is but an imitation of the one in whom Christians invest their hope. Paul is not so much thinking of modeling Jesus' life and ministry. Rather, drawing on what he said in 1Cor 4:8–13, he sees his own suffering and endurance of physical hardship for the sake of others as parallel to Christ's torturous and humiliating death on a Roman cross for the sake of the world (Garland 2003:503; Thiselton 2000:796). **This kind of self-sacrifice is precisely what Paul had been presenting as the behavioral paradigm for the Corinthians since he took up the issue of meat offered to idols in 1Cor 8:1.** (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Volume 15: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians)

Robert Hughes compares 1Cor 4:16 and 1Cor 11:1 writing that in the former passage "the call was to imitation of Paul as the proper view of leadership. Here the call was to imitation of Paul's glorification of God and furtherance of the gospel by self-limitation of freedom in order to become a servant of all." (First Corinthians, Everyman's Bible Commentary)

Paul Benware on "THE MATTER OF DOUBTFUL THINGS (1Cor 8:1–11:1) - A "doubtful thing" is something (often having to do with an activity or one's adornment) about which the Bible has no specific commands and concerning which sincere Christians differ. At Corinth, one such doubtful thing had to do with eating meat that previously had been sacrificed to idols. Although Paul does not take sides on the issue, he does give some principles to apply to such situations. (See Romans 14 as well.) First, Paul says, believers are to make decisions on the basis of knowledge. There ought to be a biblical basis for the choice made. Second, they are to act on the basis of love. They should be willing to suppress their liberties for the sake of weaker Christians. Paul modeled this truth in his own life, giving up his own personal rights in order to benefit other believers. (Survey of the New Testament Revised)

Verbrugge notes that Paul "is not content simply to live his life as an example for the Corinthians to emulate; he actually instructs them to (lit.) become "imitators" (*mimētēs*, GK 3629) of him. He used this same word and concept in 4:16 (see comments there). Here, however, Paul goes on to stress that he himself is an imitator—of Christ and of his lifestyle. That must always be the overriding goal in our lives—not to use some other human being as our model but to use the perfect, sinless Christ. It is not too much to say that Paul is here instructing the Corinthians to imitate him only insofar as he imitates Christ. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary,

A T Robertson - The division of the chapters is unfortunate. This verse clearly belongs to what precedes. He has just stated his own principle of action, and he begs them to follow it, because it is Christ's. There is no connection with what follows. 'Become imitators of me.' Excepting Heb. 6:12, *mimetes* is in NT. peculiar to Paul (1Cor 4:16; Eph 5:1; 1Th 1:6, 2:14): not found in LXX. Everywhere it is joined with *ginesthai* (Lemma = *ginomai*) which indicates moral effort; 'Strive to behave as I do.' Everywhere the more definite '**imitator**' (RV.) is to be preferred to '**follower**' (AV.): 'Be ye followers of me' is doubly defective. **Just as of Christ** - This addition dispels the idea that it is in any spirit of arrogance that he asks them to imitate him; once more he is only asking them to do what he does himself, to follow the example of one whom they recognized as their teacher. It is as an **example of self-sacrifice** that he takes Christ as his model; the whole context shows this. And it is commonly this aspect of Christ's life that is regarded, when He is put before us in N.T. as an example: Ro 15:2, 3; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:4, 5. "The details of His life are not generally imitable, our calling and circumstances being so different from His. Indeed, the question, 'What would Jesus do?' [WWJD] may be actually misleading" (Goudge). The wiser question is, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?')A critical and exegetical commentary on the First epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, International Critical Commentary)

Norman Geisler comments on the way 1Cor 11:1 is misinterpreted asking **Does Paul's statement "Imitate me" justify authoritarianism, as some cultic groups claim?**

MISINTERPRETATION: Paul sometimes calls on his followers to imitate him (see also 1 Cor. 4:16). Some authoritarian cults, such as the Boston Church of Christ, use this to justify their authoritarianism. Is this a legitimate inference from these verses?

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: The New Testament often exhorts believers to submit to their leaders (1Cor. 16:16; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5). It also says wives are to submit to their husbands, children to their parents (Col. 3:18-20), and citizens to their governments (Titus 3:1). But this should not be twisted into ecclesiastical authoritarianism.

This submission is qualified. Children are to obey their parents only "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1), not in literally anything their elders may command. The same is true of citizens submitting to their respective governments. There are many instances of justified disobedience to government, such as when the Pharaoh commanded the midwives to kill every male baby that was born (Exod. 1:15–21) or when the three Hebrew children were commanded to bow before an idol (Dan. 3). We should submit to a proper authority only when it takes its place under God but not when it takes the place of God.

There is an important difference between legitimate submission and illegitimate authoritarianism. Proper submission to a church leader is voluntary, not compulsory. It involves a free choice to join or leave that organization without intimidation or reprisal. It is done out of love and respect (cf. Heb. 13:7), not out of fear. While the Bible speaks of voluntary submission from the bottom up, it nowhere enjoins compulsory obedience from the top down. That is, it never says that leaders should command (or demand) obedience; only that followers should freely give it. Church leaders themselves are reminded not to "lord it over the flock" but rather to be "examples" to it (1 Peter 5:2–3). They are to lead by their life, not their lips; by their character, not their commands. (When cultists ask: a popular handbook on cultic misinterpretations)

Robert Morgan has an illustration entitled "**It Stirs Me Up Much**"...

Jim Elliot, who gave his life while trying to reach the Auca Indians, was largely shaped through the reading of Christian biography.

I see the value of Christian biography tonight, he wrote in his journal, 'as I have been reading Brainerd's Diary much today. It stirs me up much to pray and wonder at my nonchalance while I have not power from God. I have considered Heb 13:7 ([note](#)) just now, regarding the remembrance of certain ones who spake the word of God, 'consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith'.

I recall now the challenge of [Goforth's Life](#) and [By My Spirit](#), read in the summer of 1947, the encouragement of [Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret](#), and The Growth of a Soul. There are incidents which instruct me now from the reading of J. G. Paton's biography, read last winter. And now this fresh Spirit-quickened history of Brainerd. O Lord, let me be granted grace to 'imitate their faith.'

It has since been through the reading of Elliot's journals that scores of young people have given their lives to the service of the Gospel. (Morgan, R. J. Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes: Thomas Nelson Publishers) (I highly recommend reading Hudson Taylor's "Spiritual Secret" which can be downloaded free [Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret](#))

Henry Blackaby's devotional on 1Cor 11:1 - Role Models

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

Who are your role models? Are you aware of the effect that others have on you? We are all influenced by other people, sometimes for good and sometimes for bad. Those who claim to be their own person, boasting that no one influences them, are living in denial. The question is not, Will someone influence me? but, Who is going to influence me?

Paul understood that the ultimate role model is Christ. As he strove to be like Christ, he urged others to follow his example. Paul was not boasting; he understood fully that the only things in his life worth emulating were the things that were like Jesus. He was taking on the responsibility of mentor, and he took it seriously. He was motivated by love for those Christians less mature in their faith than he was. His desire was not that they be like him, but like Christ.

We often choose our role models unwisely. We idolize sports heroes or other celebrities, knowing very little about their character. Then we are crushed to discover that our heroes are not all that we thought. It is important to be smart about role models we choose. Take stock of who exerts the most influence in your life right now. Is it someone whose example you'd be better off not following? Consider ending an unhealthy relationship and seeking out those who, by their example, will show you how to be more like Jesus. (The Experience)

PAUL AN EXAMPLE CHRIST OUR HIGHEST EXAMPLE

As **Johann Bengel** says Christ is our highest example because He "did not please Himself, Ro 15:3, but gave Himself at all costs for our salvation, Eph 5:2." (Gnomon)

Christ's selfless example is preeminently presenting in Philippians - (Phil 2:4) do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Phil 2:5) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

ILLUSTRATION OF IMITATION - When in the Mexican War, the troops were wavering, a general rose in his stirrups, and dashed into the enemy's lines, shouting, "Men, follow!" They, seeing his courage and disposition, dashed on after him, and gained the victory. What men want to rally them for God is an example to lead them. All your commands to others to advance amount to nothing so long as you stay behind. To affect them aright, you need to start for heaven yourself, looking back only to give the stirring cry of "Men, follow!" (Talmage quoted by D L Moody in "Thoughts for the Quiet Hour")

Related Resource:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

PONDER THE PASTOR'S EXAMPLE

Given the fact that many Christians observe their pastors as those they might seek to imitate, it is worth surveying what it is they are imitating. And as you read the list remember that you are looking in the mirror? Would you want others to imitate you (even in those times when you know no one is watching or listening)?

Here is research that we distilled from **Barna, Focus on the Family, and Fuller Seminary**, all of which backed up our findings, and additional information from reviewing others' research:

Fifteen hundred pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout, or contention in their churches.

Fifty percent of pastors' marriages will end in divorce.

Eighty percent of pastors feel unqualified and discouraged in their role as pastor.

Fifty percent of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living.

Eighty percent of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years.

Seventy percent of pastors constantly fight depression.

Almost forty percent polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry.

Seventy percent said the only time they spend studying the Word is when they are preparing their sermons **(This is Key)**.

From our recent research we did to retest our data, 1050 pastors were surveyed from two pastor's conferences held in Orange County and Pasadena, Ca-416 in 2005, and 634 in 2006 (I conducted a similar study for the Fuller Institute in the late 80s with a much greater sampling).

Of the one thousand fifty (1,050 or 100%) pastors we surveyed, every one of them had a close associate or seminary buddy who had left the ministry because of burnout, conflict in their church, or from a moral failure.

Nine hundred forty-eight (948 or 90%) of pastors stated they are frequently fatigued, and worn out on a weekly and even daily basis (did not say burned out).

Nine hundred thirty-five, (935 or 89%) of the pastors we surveyed also considered leaving the ministry at one time. Five hundred ninety, (590 or 57%) said they would leave if they had a better place to go-including secular work.

Eighty- one percent (81%) of the pastors said there was no regular discipleship program or effective effort of mentoring their people or teaching them to deepen their Christian formation at their church (remember these are the Reformed and Evangelical-not the mainline pastors!). **(This is Key)**

Eight hundred eight (808 or 77%) of the pastors we surveyed felt they did not have a good marriage!

Seven hundred ninety (790 or 75%) of the pastors we surveyed felt they were unqualified and/or poorly trained by their seminaries to lead and manage the church or to counsel others. This left them disheartened in their ability to pastor.

Seven hundred fifty-six (756 or 72%) of the pastors we surveyed stated that they only studied the Bible when they were preparing for sermons or lessons. This left only 38% who read the Bible for devotions and personal study.

Eight hundred two (802 or 71%) of pastors stated they were burned out, and they battle depression beyond fatigue on a weekly and even a daily basis.

Three hundred ninety-nine (399 or 38%) of pastors said they were divorced or currently in a divorce process.

Three hundred fifteen (315 or 30%) said they had either been in an ongoing affair or a one-time sexual encounter with a parishioner.

Two hundred seventy (270 or 26%) of pastors said they regularly had personal devotions and felt they were adequately fed spirituality. **(This is Key)**.

Two hundred forty-one (241 or 23%) of the pastors we surveyed said they felt happy and content on a regular basis with who they are in Christ, in their church, and in their home!

Of the pastors surveyed, they stated that a mean (average) of only 25% of their church's membership attended a Bible Study or small group at least twice a month. The range was 11% to a max of 40%, a median (the center figure of the table) of 18% and a mode (most frequent number) of 20%. This means over 75% of the people who are at a "good" evangelical church do not go to a Bible Study or small group (that is not just a book or curriculum study, but where the Bible is opened and read, as well as studied), **(This is Key)**. (I suspect these numbers are actually lower in most evangelical and Reformed churches because the pastors that come to conferences tend to be more interested in the teaching and care of their flock than those who usually do not attend.)
([Statistics on Pastors from "Into Thy Word"](#))

DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO

1 Corinthians 11:1

NOTE: All of the devotionals below are from [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

As we sat at the table one day last week, my oldest son began protesting about his little sister “always” copying him. When she imitates his laugh or eats her French fries before her burger like he does, it annoys him. My wife and I tried to get him to realize that he has an opportunity to influence her by setting a good example.

Unlike my son, Paul invited others to copy his example (1 Cor. 11:1). In this verse, he concluded his discussion from chapter 10 about the Corinthians loving others enough to limit their freedom. He said that when they were invited to a nonbeliever’s home for dinner, they were free to eat what was set before them (1Cor 10:27). But if their freedom to eat the meat offered to idols caused another believer to question whether or not what they were doing was right, they were to limit their freedom for the good of the “weaker” believer (1Cor 10:28).

Paul encouraged the people to follow his example in this matter, in the same way he followed Christ’s example. Paul did not seek his own good, but the good of others by imitating Jesus’ example of love, unity, acceptance, and sacrifice.

In the same way, we are to follow Jesus’ example so closely that we can say with confidence to our brothers and sisters, “Copy me as I copy Christ.”

Show me the way, Lord, let my light shine
As an example of good to mankind.
Help them to see the patterns of Thee,
Shining in beauty, lived out in me.
—Neuer

Live a life worth imitating by imitating Christ.

Life Shadowing

Read: Acts 20:17-21,31-38

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

When our daughter Julie was a high school senior, she had the opportunity to “job shadow” for 2 weeks. She went “on the job” to find out firsthand about two professions that had captured her interest. For the first week, she sat in on the classes of a math teacher at another school. For the second week, she shadowed a college basketball coach.

The idea of shadowing is a vital one, because it emphasizes the importance of example. A person who is being shadowed knows he or she is setting an example for the student.

We are all participants in a process that might be called “life shadowing.” If we are parents, our children shadow us all the time, learning how to act as adults. At work, we have fellow employees who notice our reactions to all kinds of situations. In our community, our neighbors observe us and see how Christians live, even when we don’t realize they are watching.

Is our life worthy of shadowing? Does our example lead others in the right direction? Paul said that his life was worth shadowing because he followed Jesus—the ultimate example (1 Cor. 11:1).

If you want to become a worthy example for others, shadow the Savior! By Dave Branon

You're teaching a lesson each day that you live;
Your actions are blazing a trail
That others will follow for good or for ill;
You'll help them or cause them to fail.
—Bosch

To cast a good shadow, walk in God's light.

You Are A Role Model - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

Charles Barkley, superstar basketball player for the Phoenix Suns, said in a television ad, “I am not a role model.” But, like it or not, he is. Everybody is a role model for somebody else.

As we grow up, we have many role models, people who inspire us—parents, teachers, athletes, political leaders, characters in novels and in the pages of history.

The Bible also gives us many role models. The apostle Paul, for one, is a challenging example of discipleship. In fact, he held himself up as a pattern for all Christians to follow. "Imitate me," he urged, "just as I also imitate Christ" (1Cor. 11:1). He knew, of course, that he could serve as a godly example only if he faithfully followed his Lord.

Paul commended the Thessalonians because they followed him and the Lord (1 Th. 1:6). They became examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, and they were well-known for their faith in God (1Cor. 11:7-8).

As we copy Paul, who himself was copying the Savior, we in turn become models who are being copied. What is the quality of our spiritual influence? Negative or positive? Remember, it can't be neutral. No one can rightly say, "I'm not a role model." By Vernon C. Grounds

We cannot live our lives alone,
For other lives we touch
Are either strengthened by our own
Or weakened just as much.
—Anon.

The best role models model Christ.

A Lasting Legacy - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

My middle-aged friend, who was a medical doctor, knew that he was suffering from a disease that would gradually cripple him and eventually kill him. What an emotional struggle he experienced in coming to accept his condition! He had expected to be helping sick children for many years. He had also hoped that he would provide a comfortable life for his family and the best possible education for his children. But how could he do that now? What could he leave as an inheritance to his children?

In my visits with him, my despairing friend would often raise that issue. But he gradually came to believe that the all-important legacy we can leave our families is not a comfortable home and a large income. The greatest legacy is a spiritual one that no amount of money can buy. It's an example of unwavering trust in God's love and wisdom. It's also an example of steadfast endurance, courage, patience, and hope for eternity when all hope in this world is gone. I told him that if he left that legacy for his family, they would bless his memory until they too departed for glory.

Are we laying up a lasting spiritual legacy of priceless value for those we love? —By Vernon C. Grounds

Faithful parents never carve their name
On marbled columns built for earthly fame;
They build instead a legacy that springs
Out of a life lived for the King of kings.
—Gustafson

A life lived for Christ is the best inheritance we can leave our children.

Walking Our Faith - Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? —James 2:22

Often we Christians are urged not just to "talk the talk" but to "walk the talk." The same advice may be expressed in these words: Don't let your behavior contradict your professed belief. At other times we are admonished to be sure that life and lip agree. If our conduct doesn't harmonize with our confession of faith, however, that discrepancy nullifies the testimony of the gospel which we proclaim.

As far as we can know, Mahatma Gandhi never became a Christian, but he made a statement that we who follow Jesus would do well to ponder. When asked to put his message into one short sentence, he replied, "My life is my message."

Certainly we should explain the gospel message as clearly as possible. Yet the clearest explanation isn't going to win hearts for our Lord unless His love is embodied in our lives. To quote the apostle Paul in 1Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." And holding himself up as a pattern, he wrote in Philippians 4:9, "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

Pray, then, that like Paul we may live out our saving faith before the watching world. - Vernon C. Grounds

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—

All His wonderful passion and purity!
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.
—Orsborn

The world is watching us—do they see Jesus?

Scattered Fruit - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

The story is told of a Christian who was home on furlough from serving in the armed forces. He was rushing to catch his train when he ran into a fruit stand on the station platform, knocking most of the piled-up apples to the ground.

The young boy who operated the stand tried to pick up his scattered fruit but was having difficulty. The apologetic serviceman put down his luggage and started collecting the apples. He polished each one with his handkerchief and put it back on the counter. So impressed was the boy that he asked gratefully, "Soldier, are you Jesus?" With a smile the soldier replied, "No, but I'm trying to be like Him."

Sometimes, as we hurry about our own responsibilities, we become too busy to care about other people. But we must remember that Jesus urges us to show kindness and concern for our fellow travelers. He set the example for us in John 13 by being a servant. We need to take the time to be helpful also.

Would anyone ask of us, "Are you Jesus?" And could we honestly respond, "No, I'm not Jesus, but I'm trying to be like Him"? Christlike kindness can open the door for a heart-touching testimony. - Vernon C. Grounds

Be like Jesus, this my song,
In the home and in the throng;
Be like Jesus, all day long!
I would be like Jesus.
—Rowe

**Nothing is more attractive
than being like Jesus.**

Choosing A Good Leader - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

I was having coffee at McDonald's when I noticed a man walk in who was holding a white cane. He had his hand on a young boy's shoulder and appeared to have complete trust in his ability to guide him.

Jesus spoke about leaders who couldn't be trusted. He called the religious leaders of His day "hypocrites" and "blind leaders of the blind" (Mt. 15:7-14). The scribes and Pharisees were teaching man-made traditions, not God's commands (Mt 15:3-9).

Today many voices are crying out from radio, TV, and the pulpit: "Follow me! I have the truth." It's a cacophony of confusion that often leads people astray. The apostle John anticipated such a time when he wrote, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 Jn 4:1).

How do we "test the spirits"? By asking these questions: Does the teacher's life reflect the life of Christ? Does the teacher proclaim salvation by grace through faith—not by works? Reliable teachers and leaders will always point us to Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14:6), and not to themselves. Otherwise, they are merely blind leaders of the blind.

Let's choose with great care the leaders we follow. - By Dennis J. De Haan

For Further Study

Read 1John 2:4; 3:18-19; 4:2-3.

How can we be sure of knowing truth from error?

How does God help us? (1Jn 4:4).

**A good leader knows the way,
shows the way, and goes the way.**

Color Courage - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

A radio ad for watches suggests that listeners buy a watch with a bright color band and then wear it with clothes of other colors. When people notice your watch because of its contrasting color, the ad says, “They’ll see that you have ‘color courage.’ And they’ll want to be like you.” Something in us enjoys having others follow our example.

If you do a quick reading of 1 Corinthians 4, you might think the apostle Paul sounds a bit boastful when he says to follow his example of self-sacrifice (v.16). But a closer look at Paul’s words shows why he wrote so confidently. He could ask people to imitate him because he imitated Christ (1Cor 11:1), the greatest Servant of all.

The persecution he endured and the position he held in the church (1Cor 4:10-17) all happened because Paul followed Jesus. When he mentioned that even if the Corinthians had 10,000 teachers he would still be their father in the faith (1Cor 4:15), he was acknowledging that Jesus is the only reason people could trust his teaching.

If we want people to imitate us, we must first imitate our Lord. If we have any reason for people to follow our example—if we have any courage to point others to the Savior—it is because of Him, not us.

Joyfully following Jesus the Lord
And trusting His lead every day
Makes us examples that others can see
To follow when trials come their way.
—Sper

**Others should imitate us
only as far as we imitate Christ.**

Just Watch - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1 -The young boy looked up at his grandfather and wondered aloud, “Grandpa, how do you live for Jesus?” The respected grandfather stooped down and quietly told the boy, “Just watch.”

As the years went by, the grand-father was an example to the boy of how to follow Jesus. He stayed rock-steady in living for Him. Yet the grandson often lived in a way that was not pleasing to God.

One day the young man visited his grandfather for what both knew would be the last time. As the older man lay dying, his grandson leaned over the bed and heard his grandpa whisper, “Did you watch?”

That was the turning point in the boy’s life. He understood that when his grandpa had said, “Just watch,” he meant, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). He vowed that from then on he would live as his grandfather did—striving to please Jesus. He had watched, and now he knew how to live.

Is somebody watching you? Are there younger Christians who need to see that it is possible to live for Jesus every day and in every way? Challenge them—and yourself. Challenge them to “just watch.” Then show them the way.

Be aware that someone's watching
As you go along your way;
Your example is remembered
More than anything you say.
—Hess

There's no better sermon than a good example.

Imitate Me - Andrew Marton recalls the first time he met his future brother-in-law Peter Jennings, who was a top foreign news correspondent in 1977. He said he was so nervous that he acted like “a jittery fan in the presence of a journalistic hero whose personal wattage could light up Manhattan.”

Andrew looked up to Peter and tried to emulate him. He became a journalist too and approached his assignments the way Peter did —“he dove in and worked harder than everybody else.” Andrew tried to walk like Peter, to dress like him, and to have the same “aura.”

We all tend to follow the patterns of others. The Corinthians did too. But they shifted their focus away from Christ and onto individual leaders. Rather than emulating the Christlike qualities of these leaders, they let their allegiances lead to various divisions and

contentions in the church (1 Cor. 1:10-13). The apostle Paul recognized their error, so he sent Timothy to remind them of his teachings and the importance of walking in obedience to the Lord (1Cor 4:16-17).

We are to imitate Christ (1Peter 1:15-16). It can also be helpful to have mentors who imitate Him. Those who walk in step with Christ provide a model for us to emulate. But our ultimate example is Jesus Himself.

To follow in the steps of those
Whose eyes are on the Lord
Will help to keep us strong and true,
And faithful to His Word.
—D. De Haan

Imitate those who imitate Christ.

Apprenticeship Program - I urge you, imitate me. —1 Corinthians 4:16 - Life certainly was a lot simpler years ago. If a man was a carpenter, his son was likely to be the same. That's because the shop was at home and the boy worked with his father. The son watched carefully as Dad cut the wood, planed and smoothed it, then fastened it together to build a table or a bench. It was apprenticeship by example.

Most young people don't learn their trades like that anymore. Vocations are far too complex and the training way too demanding. One aspect of life, however, is the same as it was years ago. Children not only learned how to do things from Dad and Mom, they also learned about life. They saw their parents' values and ethics in action every day in their homes.

Christian moms and dads still have "little apprentices" watching how they put their beliefs into practice. It goes on at mealtime, in the car, in the store, in conversation with or about neighbors—all the time. What a wonderful opportunity to teach our children how to live for Christ! And young people not only need it, they want it.

Paul told his children in the faith to imitate him—to follow his example (1 Cor. 4:16). Are we living for Christ in such a way that we want our children to imitate us?

Our children watch and imitate
The things we say and do;
So if we imitate the Lord,
They'll imitate Him too.
—Sper

**Children may close their ears to advice,
but their eyes are always open to example.**