

Role Model

Have you ever thought about how you became the person you are today? Where did you pick up or develop your behaviors, your mindset, your habits? Who has influenced YOUR life?

While we tell people to “be themselves” and the cool thing is to be original, there are really no “original” people walking around today. There may be some original combinations in a particular person but they weren’t the beginning, or creator.

We were all created in the image of God. Then we entered a sinful, fallen world that is full of corruption. That God image immediately begins to be shaped and molded by those around us. We pick up things from mom/dad, brother/sister, grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, friends, enemies, celebrities, etc.

People are constantly learning, picking up things from others. For the “cool” people, you are not original, you are an imitator. You are a combination of the influences in your life, many of which you may not even recognize as influences.

Imitating is part of who we are, it is part of our nature. You are supposed to be an imitator. Right?

Last week Tony Simon preached about the words of Jesus, “Follow Me”. We are supposed to imitate Christ and let the Holy Spirit conform those combinations of who we are into the image of Jesus.

Have you ever thought about who is following YOU? Everyone is influenced by others, but also everyone influences others.....so when they imitate you, what are they imitating?

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV)

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

Other translations say “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ”

Who in this room feels like they can say this with confidence? “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

How many of you feel unworthy to be followed? Maybe afraid that others won’t see enough of Christ in you?

Here’s the kicker....people are following you, people are imitating things they see you do and hear you say! It’s already happening.

People are already following your example, the question is....Are you following Jesus?

You see this wasn't a one time thing for Paul.....

1 Corinthians 4:16 (AMP)

So I urge you, be imitators of me [just as a child imitates his father].

Philippians 3:17 (NIV)

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

There's no better sermon than a good example.

One of the greatest preachers of all time, Jonathan Edwards was so concerned about the example which he set which others might imitate, that he aimed to "never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

I've heard people preach and teach on how believers should not follow a man but should only follow THE MAN, Jesus Christ. While technically true we must realize the responsibility of men and women on this earth.

Why do people exist? To worship and praise God, to bring Him glory. That is our eternal purpose. It is for today, and it is for all of eternity. That is part of what you do here on the earth but it's what you'll do forever if you are a child of God.

Worshipping God is your eternal purpose. But you have a temporary purpose as well....to be an example of Jesus to others.

What do we tell people who get healed of a serious illness or overcome some tremendous difficulty in life? "God's not done with you yet, there's more for you to do"

More WHAT? You can worship Him in heaven! That's an eternal purpose!

There is more work for you to do. You get to continue to be the light in a dark world. Follow Jesus so the people who follow you will follow Him!

Matthew 5:14-16 (NKJV)

14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

This isn't just for parents today. Everyone is an example to someone. This is why I think leadership development is so important. You are all leaders....the question is what are you leading people to?

I'm not saying follow a man instead of Christ, I'm saying follow a man TO Christ!

You know the old saying "do as I say, not as I do"? I think it stinks. I think people use it as an excuse to live sinful, sloppy lives, but at the same time can have a good aspect to it. If said with true conviction it's the world's version of "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

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!

Ephesians 5:1 (AMP)

Therefore become imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father];

Jesus came and died on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven if we place our hope and trust in Him. He died as a sacrifice, but He lived as an Example. He is the great Example that we must imitate, He the Pattern of the new creation, the Original of which all believers are copies.

What were we commissioned to do? Go, make disciples of all the nations! By teaching them to observe all the things that Jesus commanded. We do this by teaching them what He said but also by modeling these things in our lives.

Who are you following.....and where are they leading you? Who is following you.....and where are you leading them?

When I was a teen, my favorite baseball player was one Marcus Eugene Grace. Mark Grace was the first basemen for the Chicago Cubs. I loved the way he played the game. He was a very good hitter. He actually led all of baseball in both singles and doubles in the 90's.

I would imitate Mark Grace when playing baseball with friends. But there was a problem, he was left handed and I was not. So I learned to bat left handed and was ok, but couldn't throw lefty. I did what I could to be Mark Grace as I pretended I was playing against all the greats like most young baseball fans do.

Mark Grace eventually went on to play for the Arizona Diamondbacks and won a World Series with them. I didn't really follow him closely once he left "my team". And I'm thankful that his influence on me was limited.

Years later I would read news about him getting his 3rd DUI, and then his 4th with jail time. This was at one point my “role model”

Anybody remember the old Charles Barkley Nike commercial about not being a role model?

“I am not a role model.

I’m not paid to be a role model.

I am paid to wreak havoc on the basketball court.

Parents should be role models.

Just because I dunk a basketball.....doesn’t mean I should raise your kids.”

There is some truth to this.....Chuck is right in sense that parents should be role models and raise their kids.

But I have a problem with that very first statement “I am not a role model”. Here’s the definition for a role model - a person looked to by others as an example to be imitated. See you don’t get to choose whether you are a role model or not. All you get to choose is what role you are modeling....

When Paul said “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”, he understood that not only is he a role model but there was a particular role that he was to model.....Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NKJV)

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.

We represent Jesus. We, not the Pope, we...the church....represent Christ on the earth. People should see Jesus in us, they should see the goodness of God and desire relationship with Jesus and reconciliation to the Father through Christ.

Is this what they see in you? Is this what your children see? Your co-workers? Your friends? The people sitting around you this morning?

You are someone’s role model! Are you modeling Jesus?

Hebrews 13:7 (NIV)

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

You can’t accurately model someone that you don’t know. When I was a teen modeling Mark Grace, I’m thankful that I only had limited knowledge of him and was limited in influence. I didn’t model the “bad things” he did.

But for you to accurately model Christ....you must know Him. Not just know who He is. Not just know a few things about Him. But do you know Him....personally.....intimately.....

When Paul said "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" what he meant was imitate my imitation of Jesus. In the same manner that I follow Jesus....follow me.

3 John 1:11 (NIV)

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

He knew he was a sinner saved by grace through faith in Jesus. He knew he was not perfect and fell short at times.....He was not saying "I am perfect like Jesus is perfect, so follow me"

He was saying look at my life, what I do that looks like Jesus.....do those things.

Paul said:

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

I have been crucified with Christ; 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 gave Himself for me.

Acts 20:19 (NIV)

I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents.

So the question is.....what in your life looks like Jesus?

Christians say that they want to see the world changed.....then why don't they change it?

Only God can change people's hearts. I have a love/hate relationship with that truth. I love that it's in God's perfect, holy, just hands. I hate that it's not in mine.....

So it's true that only God can change hearts. It's also true that people are supposed to see Him in you and me. And when they see the goodness of God....it WILL lead them to repentance.

Do you love like Jesus loves?

Do you forgive like Jesus forgives?

Are you humble like Jesus is humble?

Are you obedient like Jesus was obedient?

Do you make the will of God and the work of God the main priority in life like Jesus did?

Are you selfless like Jesus is selfless?

Are you willing to lay down your life for others like Jesus laid down His life for you?
Are you a servant to others and Jesus was a servant?
Are you willing to be an example of the example that Jesus was on the earth?

Church, this is on us. If you want to see the world changed, be the change you want to see in the world.

If you think there should be more godly people in the world, try being one. If you think there should be more godly influence, you be that godly influence.

IT IS WHY YOU ARE STILL HERE!

People are watching.....

Can you say to those who look to you as a role model.....“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”