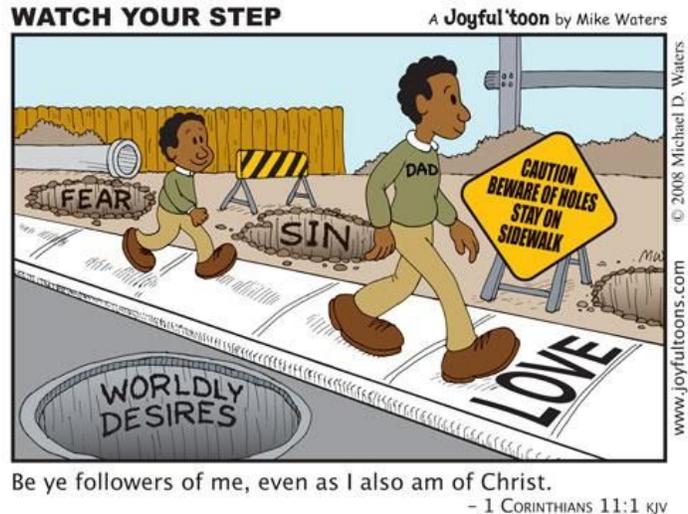


# **5 Ways to Imitate Christ**

By Fr. Edward Lee Looney

In St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, he exhorts his readers to be imitators of God. I venture to say that St. Paul exhorts us to imitate Christ, who is God. After all, Paul had the encounter with the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus, which changed his life forever. How do we begin to imitate Christ? What does that look like? We can derive elements of imitation from the accounts of the evangelists to see how Christ lived His life. I'd like to propose five ways for us to imitate Christ in our daily lives.



## **PRAY**

If you want to imitate Christ, you must become a person of prayer. No less than twelve times in the Gospels, Jesus went up a mountain or withdrew to a deserted place to pray. It was in these moments that he prayed to His Father in heaven, to His Abba. In the Gospel of St. John, we find Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, in which He prays that all might be one. Jesus recognized the value of prayer, both personal and intercessory. Prayer is an essential component of being an imitator of Christ.

## **FEED OTHERS**

Jesus fed other people. Most concretely we see this in the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes, when Jesus feeds the crowd of over 5,000 people. In John 6, Jesus tells the crowd that He is the Bread of Life, that they must eat His Body and drink His Blood, and if they do, they will have life forever. In the Eucharist we celebrate, Jesus feeds us with Body and Blood. After Mass we go out into our world and have the opportunity to feed other people by our works of mercy. This is how Jesus says we will be judged in Matthew 25. Jesus fed others, and if we want to imitate Him, so must we.

## **INVITE OTHERS**

Jesus constantly invited people in His ministry. He invited the Twelve to follow Him, to leave their ordinary lives as fishermen or as a tax collector. Jesus invited people to come to Him, those who were sick or burdened, and He promised them rest. In our own lives we have the opportunity to invite others to know Jesus. Invite people you dine with to join you in a prayer before meals. Invite someone to go to Sunday Mass or join you

for a parish program or event. Be a person who invites others to know the Lord, and when you do, you will be imitating Christ.

## **DIE FOR OTHERS**

Don't take this imitation literally. But Jesus did die for us, and so we should die for other people. This type of dying means giving of yourself to others. Die to your inner wants and desires, in order to allow Christ to live more fully in you. Jesus died for us, so He wants us to die to ourselves, in order to serve others, that they might have life!

## **TEACH OTHERS**

The people who followed Jesus hungered for His teaching. Jesus taught throughout His ministry in varied ways, especially through parables. He taught people about the Father and about who He (Jesus) truly was. He explained to them the significance of the Israelite people eating manna in the desert. In our lives, the most concrete way we can teach other people is by signing up to be a catechist. But that takes a special calling. If that's not how God wants you to teach, then teach by your words and actions to all you meet each day.

## **CONCLUSION**

These five ways of imitating Christ are not exhaustive. There are so many others contained within the Gospels. I simply propose these five as a starting point. After reading all of them, you might want to do all of them. I caution you not to! In the spiritual life we often become overburdened by the tasks we want to take on. When we strive to do four or five lofty ideas, and begin to fail at one, and then a second, it is easy to become discouraged. Consider working on one aspect of imitating Christ, then when it is incorporated into your life, add another.

What would happen if our whole world sought to imitate Christ in word and action? It would be a different place! There would no longer be hate or violence, but God's peace would reign in the world. This work begins with you and me; it begins right now, as we strive to imitate Christ in all that we do!

<http://www.ignitumtoday.com/2015/09/02/5-ways-to-imitate-christ/>