

Formative Practice Guide: Imitate

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

In writing to the church in Corinth, Paul urges the people to “be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (*1 Corinthians 11:1*). Given that we live 2,000 years later and that we are not divine, imitating Christ takes a good amount of contextualization, wisdom, and practice. Since no human will ever perfectly imitate Christ, we can look to other Christians for inspiration on how to imitate Christ just a little better.

Spiritual Exercises:

Plan time in your upcoming schedule to include the following exercises in your routine.

In the next week, plan a time to talk to someone who expresses great zeal in their pursuit of Christ to remind yourself of the passion that the Lord inspires in his people. New Christians are often great examples of this. And in the next two weeks, talk to a Christian that you believe displays godly wisdom in their lives. Be willing to both ask questions and share encouragement about the maturity that you see in them.

Find a way this week to thank at least one person for the specific way she or he have been a positive example for you to imitate.

You can even imitate an influential Christian of the past without talking to them. Research the biography of a Christian whose life you admire and plan a time to start reading it. For a rich and historical collection, consider the book *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*. For an easy-to-read collection of short stories that will look great as an illustrated piece on a coffee table, *Stories of the Saints: Bold and Inspiring Tales of Adventure, Grace, and Courage* is a great option.

Guided Reflection:

Reflect on these concepts throughout your day. Feel free to also set aside some distraction-free time for more intentional reflection.

Think about the kinds of Christians you want to imitate. What about their lives do you find particularly encouraging? Are you able to follow in their positive example while giving them grace when they have moments of failure?

Regardless of where you are in your own spiritual journey, you can also be a positive influence for someone else to imitate as you **a)** live a life worthy of imitation and **b)** make spaces for others to imitate Christ alongside you. What is something about your walk with Christ you would like for others to see or imitate? Praise God for his sanctifying work in you. What is an area of your life that you wouldn't want to be

imitated? Confess that to God and receive his grace, being reminded that Jesus' grace not only brings forgiveness but transforming power in your life.

Who is in your life that you have invested parts of yourself into? How are you reflecting Jesus to the children in your life (whether in your home, your community, church gathering, etc)?

Connecting the Practices

For ideas how to grow in relationships of Christ-like imitation, see the earlier formative practice guide, "Befriend." Pray for God to show you more opportunities to imitate mature believers and give thanks for the ways God has already provided you examples.