Living as Jesus Christ Lived

Most of us have been taught to look with admiration at everything the Lord Jesus did and at the kind of person He was. We have been deceived into thinking that we will never be able to have His righteousness, His longsuffering, His meekness…

We are taught that the Lord Jesus lived to a divine standard that is out of reach for human beings, and that because of this we earthlings are allowed our human weaknesses. We are deceived into believing that salvation lies only in the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice on the cross, and that at the resurrection His righteousness will be credited to us.

If we want to find out how the Lord Jesus lived, all that is pointed out to us are the things beyond the reach of ordinary people. We are shown that He walked on water, fed five thousand people with only five loaves and two fishes, raised people from the dead, rebuked the wind, commanded the sea to be still… We could say He did things no ordinary person can do.

Through his servants, Satan deceives us into thinking that no one can live as the Lord Jesus lived and that this calling is not for us. Yet the word of Scripture tells us categorically that we must live as the Lord Jesus lived. It is a command each one of us must fulfil. (He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

Seeking the Things Above

The Lord does not call us to multiply loaves, or to walk on water, or to raise the dead, or to do other miraculous things. It is not in these things that we have been called to be like Him, but to live as He lived.

We must live in the things He lived in, the things within the power of any person, things in which every one of us can and must live as the Lord Jesus lived, both the newly born again and the mature in faith.

These are things people attach no importance to, but which the Lord Jesus lived out in His relationship with the heavenly Father. All of us, from the least to the greatest, must practise these things too, because they are absolutely necessary if we are to come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Self-denial, humility, godliness, righteousness… the things He lived in express the beauty of His character. For these things people despised Him and took no notice of Him. (Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. John 3:19)

We are called to be filled with admiration for the kind of person He is, to be drawn by the beauty of the Lord Jesus' heart. But we must also work to have our heart transformed after His heart: to deny ourselves, to be humble and godly, to make ourselves servants as He made Himself a servant, to be longsuffering when we are mocked, to be full of kindness towards those who

persecute us, to be full of meekness…

If we find our delight in these things and put them into practice, through them we will grow step by step until we reach the perfection of our character.

In His relationship with the heavenly Father, "the true Jesus" denied Himself, was humble, became an obedient servant unto death; the fear of the Lord was His delight, He was godly, and He loved the heavenly Father with all His heart.

There are multitudes of people who appreciate Him because He fed them, because He healed them, but they are not interested in knowing how He lived in His relationship with His Father, nor in living as He lived. Because Satan has deceived us into believing it is impossible to live as He lived, most of us pay no attention to these aspects of the Lord's life.

Yet it is easy to see that the things He lived in are the very things we too are asked to live in. If we live as He lived, we will grow until we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Self-Denial

The dictionary defines it as: giving up one's personal interests or ideas.

In His relationship with the heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus emptied Himself. (Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. Philippians 2:6-8)

Self-denial means giving up your own interests, giving up your own opinions, your own will, giving up having the last word.

Even though He was the Son of God, the Lord Jesus had no opinions of His own, He did not do what He wanted, but submitted His will entirely to God.

We find the definition of self-denial in the life the Lord Jesus lived in His relationship with the heavenly Father. If we do not have this picture of the self-denial the Lord Jesus practised, we will not know what self-denial truly means. (Verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19)

The Lord Jesus chose the twelve disciples after a night of prayer with the Father. But not one of them was chosen by Him; they were chosen by the heavenly Father. (Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12)

He did not act according to His own thoughts, but remained obedient and did everything the heavenly Father told Him to do. When He washed the disciples' feet, when He was the servant of all, when He fed the multitudes, He was in complete obedience to what the heavenly Father told Him to do.

He performed many healings, but not one healing on His own initiative; all were done just as the Father told Him. (I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. John 5:30)

This is the recipe for self-denial. If we admire Him for the way He lived, we will make it our own and practise it exactly as He practised it.

The Lord Jesus shows us how He lived on earth; He shows us this trait of His heart, which is perfect in its beauty. He draws us with this beautiful trait so that we will long with all our heart to have it too.

We have been called to live as He lived, to deny ourselves as He denied Himself. This is the true life to which we have been called, because the new life cannot begin without self-denial.

Self-denial is the first requirement of the Lord Jesus that anyone who wants to begin the new life must fulfil. (If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23)

It is easy to see that self-denial is part of the plan of salvation, and that without it there is no new birth. This is how He lived: He denied Himself, He, our Bridegroom, and He asks us to do the same.

Examine yourself! Have you denied yourself, have you given up human values? Have you fully accepted the teachings of Christ? Have all things become new? (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17)

The devil has come to deceive people with certain parts of Holy Scripture in order to show us that it is impossible to live as the Lord Jesus lived. But it is possible, and it is required for salvation! (And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, **is not worthy of me.** Matthew 10:38)

This is how the Lord Jesus lived, and this is how we too must live. Just by looking around us we can easily see that self-denial is one of the most despised and disregarded things. Let us ask ourselves: Do we value self-denial, and do we long to live in it as the Lord Jesus lived?

Humility

The dictionary defines **humility** as: a lowly, submissive, respectful attitude.

In His relationship with the heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus was lowly in heart. This is another trait of the Lord Jesus' character, of shining beauty, with which He draws us to Himself. It expresses the beauty of the Lord Jesus' character, and we must fall in love with it so that we long to be humble exactly as He was. (Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29)

We are called to live as He lived, to live humbly as the Lord Jesus lived, a life that is despised and disregarded by most Christians today. The Lord Jesus is our model of humility. In His relationship with the heavenly Father, He was so lowly in heart that His judgment was taken away. (In his humiliation his judgment was taken away. Acts 8:33)

We too are called to this humility, in which our judgment is taken away. If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that it is a difficult calling and one despised by most. (And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. Philippians 2:8)

His attitude of lowliness and absolute submission is shown by the fact that He judged only as He heard from the Father, not seeking to do His own will but only the will of God. That is how the Lord Jesus lived. (I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. John 5:30)

He humbled Himself so much that He became obedient unto death. (Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. 1 Peter 2:23)

Let us ask ourselves: Do we love this Jesus who behaves so humbly towards His Father? Do we love this Jesus who submitted to the Father in all things? Would we want to be the wife of such a Man, who has no opinions of His own but does only what His Father tells Him? Do we love this trait of character with all our heart, so much that we long to be like Him, to live as He lived? (Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. 1 Peter 5:6)

Examine yourself! Do you live humbly in your relationship with God? Are you lowly and submissive in all things, as the Lord Jesus lived?

Godliness

The dictionary defines a godly person as one who strictly observes…; showing respectful and admiring conduct towards someone.

Another trait of the Lord Jesus' character that is perfect in its beauty **is godliness.** The word of Scripture tells us that the Lord Jesus was heard by the heavenly Father because of His godly fear. (Hebrews 5:7)

The Lord Jesus admired and loved the heavenly Father with all His heart and strictly kept all His word; this is true godliness. We too are called to this: to have the godliness the Lord Jesus had, not merely a form of godliness. (The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19)

We must understand that only if we come to live in complete obedience to the laws of the Kingdom, which are flawless and perfect, as the Lord Jesus lived, can our character be brought to perfection.

The Lord Jesus came to earth to teach us godliness, which is admiration and strict obedience. (If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to **the doctrine which is according to godliness**; he is proud, knowing nothing. 1 Timothy 6:3-4)

We must learn to be godly as the Lord Jesus was, so that in the end we will be found obedient in all things, just as the Lord Jesus obeyed the Father.

We can see an example of obedience in Abraham when he was asked to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. He did not grumble, he did not bargain; he simply did exactly as he was commanded. (The angel said: Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God. Genesis 22:12)

Everyone will have to undergo the test of godliness, to be examined and found either fit or unworthy of the Kingdom of God. Citizenship in the Kingdom of God obliges each one to godliness; it obliges us to admire Him and to keep His commandments strictly. (For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, **having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.** 1 Timothy 4:8)

Only the one who comes to this godliness, this complete, unshakeable obedience, the obedience that marked the Lord Jesus and stands at the opposite pole from Adam's disobedience, will be found worthy to dwell for ever in the heavenly Land.

We cannot spend our whole life in a mere form of godliness and still believe that in the end, by appealing to mercy, we will be received into God's paradise. (For men shall be lovers of their own selves… Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Timothy 3:2-5)

Examine yourself! Do you admire the godliness the Lord Jesus had so much that you long to be godly like Him?

He Took the Form of a Servant

The dictionary defines a slave, or bondservant, as: a person deprived of all rights, wholly owned by a master…; a person who blindly and servilely carries out the will of another.

The Lord Jesus is the Son of God, but when He came down to earth, out of His great love for the heavenly Father, **He offered Himself as a servant** to God.
This is how the Lord Jesus lived His whole life on this earth, and He calls us to have in us this mind that was in Him. (Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. Philippians 2:5,7)

This was the Lord Jesus. Let us think of a bondservant, a slave who belongs to his master. He has no right to decide what to do in his master's household. He comes before his master as a slave who does only what the master says.

He is the Son of God, and we value Him for that; but to value someone who offers himself as a slave and who calls us to do the same humbling thing — not many accept that.

The Lord Jesus did nothing of Himself, absolutely nothing. This mind was in the Lord Jesus, and He asks us to have it too.

Even though He was in the form of God, even though He was the Son of God, He did not think equality with God something to be grasped. He emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death.

The Lord Jesus admired and loved the heavenly Father so much that He kept God's word as a servant does. We too have been called to this: to keep Christ's word as a servant before his master.

It is one of the most despised things; it is the lowest position there is, to offer yourself as someone's slave and no longer do whatever you please. It is something people overlook, something they despise. Yet this is what we are called to. (But now being made free from sin, and become [having offered yourselves as] servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Romans 6:22)

Once you have offered yourselves as servants to God... God does not enter into a relationship with us as partners. He does not merely want us to bring Him our sacrifices (gifts) and so buy ourselves a place in His eternal Kingdom. No, He wants us to love Him so much that we willingly offer ourselves as His servants. (Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened. Psalm 40:6) **Servants of Christ** — this is what we have been called to: to live as He lived. (He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6) This is how the Lord's disciples lived, and this is how we too must live, as servants of Christ. (Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:1; Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:1)

Only if we find in Him the embodiment of perfect beauty, the pearl of great price, only then will we love Him with all our heart and all our mind; only then is the desire awakened in us to be like Him, to deny ourselves, **the desire to offer ourselves as servants** and to learn from Him alone.

Only love with all my heart and all my mind moves me to offer myself as a servant willingly, compelled by no one. Only this obedience of a servant to his master can result in the image of the Lord being built in us step by step, down to every detail.

Only when His statutes are my delight will I deny myself and willingly offer myself as His servant. (I will delight myself in thy statutes. Psalm 119:16; Thy law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8)

Only when His words are a delight to us do we build, obeying every detail the Holy Spirit brings to us, and only then will we truly be transformed. The Spirit changes us from beauty to beauty into the image of the Lord only if we obey Him completely, down to the smallest details. (Behold,

I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness. Psalm 119:40)

You cannot become a servant of Christ until the old man dies, until you are determined to obey in all things. (It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. 2 Timothy 2:11)

Our model, whom we must imitate in every respect, is the Lord Jesus. He admired and loved the Father so much that He willingly became a servant, obedient in everything. He willingly made Himself a servant because the Father's statutes and commandments were His delight. (Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. Philippians 2:5,7)

Only those who are drawn by His traits and willingly offer themselves as servants have their fruit unto holiness and, in the end, everlasting life. (Become servants to God… ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Romans 6:22)

It is essential to understand that all the Lord's commandments by which we must live are a faithful image of His character, of the kind of person He is; they show us how He lived, they show us His ways. All of His commandments, absolutely all of them, actually represent Him.

That is why we cannot neglect a single commandment, because the Lord's traits are found in His commandments. In every one of His teachings a trait of the Lord lies hidden. Just as all the features of the one about to be born are hidden in the human embryo, so the traits of the Lord Jesus are hidden in the seed of God. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11)

So if I long with all my heart to have the traits of His character, His commandments will be a delight to me, and I will love them. Like a servant, I will joyfully obey all His commandments, and I will become like Him. (I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Psalm 119:127; I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments. Psalm 119:131)

Examine yourself! Have you offered yourself to live as a servant, obedient to the Lord Jesus in all things, just as He was in His relationship with the heavenly Father? Are the Lord's commandments a delight to you?

Righteousness

The dictionary defines righteousness as: being without sin, pure, immaculate, spotless, clean.

One of the most beautiful traits of the Lord Jesus' character **is righteousness.** He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. (He… is righteous. 1 John 3:7) Holy Scripture calls Him the King of righteousness.

If we are drawn to this trait of the Lord Jesus' character, which is perfect in its beauty, and love it with all our heart, we will hunger and thirst after His righteousness and long to live righteously as He lived. (Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6; But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33)

Those who are born again and are in the Kingdom of God love righteousness and hate iniquity. So we have at hand a simple test by which we can easily check whether we are born again. (If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 1 John 2:29) One of the most important things in the Kingdom of God is righteousness, or holiness. (For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17; Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever. Psalm 93:5)

Citizens of the Kingdom of God do not cheat, do not give or take gifts that are really bribes, do not covet or take what belongs to someone else. If they are at school, they do not cheat in exams; they have no stolen or pirated software on their computers; they do not take or use things from work that do not belong to them. For example, they do not use the company car or any of the company's property for personal purposes. (Neither shalt thou covet… any thing that is thy neighbour's. Deuteronomy 5:21)

The word of Scripture warns us that whoever does not live in righteousness is not born of God. (In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:10) If until now we have not submitted to the authorities ordained by God,

if we do not love the Lord Jesus' command to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, if we do not delight in it, if we are greedy and do not want to pay our taxes, if we work cash-in-hand off the books, if we slip bribes to doctors at the hospital and in other places, if the world's television and internet are our daily food… then we are not drawn to this trait of the Lord Jesus' character and we do not long to live as He lived. (Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. Matthew 22:21)

Examine yourself: Do you hunger and thirst to be righteous in all things? Do you want to live in the righteousness in which the Lord Jesus lived?

In conclusion, we can easily see that He has called us to live in the very things He lived in, and that we can live as He lived. If we live like this, the Holy Spirit will change us from beauty to beauty into the image of the Lord until we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Only if we live as He lived can the traits of His character be imprinted on us: His righteousness, longsuffering, goodness, love, mercy…

This article is taken from the booklet Transformed into the Image of Christ, available free online in .pdf format.

Go to the next article: The Church and the School of Christ

Source: *Living as Jesus Christ Lived* — Unmodified Word
unmodifiedword.com/articles/living-as-jesus-christ-lived