



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

Unification – Union with Christ

Lesson 24 – We are Like Christ

September 17, 2017

I. **Lesson Starter:**

We will be continuing in our third and final section of this series, titled “Unification, our Union with Christ”. Last week, we completed looking at “We are in Christ”. Today we will look at “**We are Like Christ**” and next week we will finish the entire series with “We are With Christ”.

II. **Explanation and Scriptural Basis**

Another aspect of our union with Christ is **our imitation of him**. Our union with Christ implies that we should imitate him. We should reflect what his life was like, so that we too can bring honor to Jesus and God in everything we do. In our Christian Life, we should strive to imitate Christ in all our actions. By contrast, disobedience to Christ holds him up in contempt:

- **Hebrews 6:5-6 - *Who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age⁶ and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.***

1 Corinthians 11:1-2

¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. ² I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.

1 John 2:3-6

³ We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴ Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Philippians 1:19-20

¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

III. **Striving to Imitate Christ**

1. Imitation Evident in Suffering

Christians are called to take suffering patiently:

- 1 Peter 2:21 – “Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps”
- Phil 3:10 – “Share in Christ’s sufferings, becoming like him in his death”
- Romans 8:17 – “We suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him”

It is ultimately through suffering that God makes us more Christ-like and we are able to “mature in Christ”. Our obedience, trust and patience are fully “developed” through adversity. Isn’t crazy how we seem to learn so little most of the time when things go well? Why is that our human nature takes over with pride so many times, yet God needs to bring us back home with suffering at times.

This should bring us great comfort that we are only experiencing what Christ has already endured on our behalf. Whether through our prayers, feelings or experiences; Christ has been there and understands!

- Revelations 3:21 – “He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne”.

2. Not Just Mimicking of Actions

Our imitation of Christ should be thought of as merely a mimicking of Christ actions. The far deeper purpose of our imitation to “become more and more like him”.

- When we act like Christ, we become like Christ

Ephesians 4:13-15

¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ

As we grow in maturity in Christ, we “being changed into his likeness”.

1 John 3:2

² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

At this point when Christ returns, we will be fully glorified!!

3. Perfectly Like Christ, but not Christ

As we pursue our Christian life, we never lose our identity or uniqueness, our individual personhood. While we attempt to grow “like Christ” by changing our wants, desires, attitudes, actions and decisions; yet we never become Christ.

Matthew 10:39

³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it

The more “like Christ” we become, the more truly ourselves we become. We always will remain separate and distinct individuals, each growing in our diversity of gifts and talents to be used for God.

IV. Group Questions

1. When we examine 1 Peter 2:21, Phil 3:10 and Romans 8:17 above; discuss the following:
 - a. What was Christ’s suffering for?
 - b. Why should or do we suffer?
 - c. What kind of suffering is this actually referring too? All suffering of any type or specific types?
 - d. What should we think and how should we treat suffering?
2. Why is it that we “seem to learn better” through our suffering as opposed to when things go just fine? What is ultimately required from us to learn through our suffering as opposed to becoming bitter?
3. Discuss specific examples of Christians “mimicking Christs action” as opposed to “absorbing and taking on his character”?
4. How does your obedience affect your maturity growth in Christ?
5. Take a minute in the circle and think through specific times of extreme adversity in your life. What was Christ trying to teach you or develop in you?