

What does it mean to be Christlike?

What characteristics of Christ are we supposed to develop?

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Christians say that their goal is to become like **Christ**. Just what exactly does that mean? What characteristics of **Christ** are we supposed to develop?

Our conversion from *sinner* to *child of God* includes a change of *mindset*. One of the first steps in becoming **Christlike** is to adopt the *mindset of Christ*.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in **Christ Jesus**:
(Philippians 2:5)

When we choose to surrender *our lives and our will* to **God**, we take a first step on the path towards a **Christlike** mind. We are using our will to choose **God** over the world, just as **Christ** did when **He** went to the cross for our sakes. Many of the characteristics of **Christ**, like *kindness, goodness, patience* and *obedience*, will be obtained by first using our will to make a decision to change.

Once we make a choice to become more **Christlike**, the **Holy Spirit** takes us further.

But we all, with open face
beholding as in a glass
the glory of the **Lord**,
are changed into the same image
from glory to glory,
even as by the **Spirit of the Lord**.
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

We give *our willingness* and the **Holy Spirit** begins the *transformation of our spirit* to a **Christlike** spirit. **His** work in us is what makes the transformation possible.

Our total commitment to **Christ** is what makes it possible for the **Holy Spirit** to transform us into **Christlike** beings. Look at the example of Matthew:

And as **Jesus** passed forth from thence,
He saw a man, named Matthew,
sitting at the receipt of custom: and
He saith unto him, *Follow Me.*
And he arose, and followed Him.
(Matthew 9:9)

While the other disciples had trades they could return to if they needed, Matthew was a tax collector and when he left his booth to follow **Christ**, he left behind his ability to earn a living. That took *total commitment and faith* and that is the kind of commitment we must make to be transformed.

Choosing discipleship to **Christ** was Matthew's way of expressing his total commitment. The point of discipleship is to become like the teacher.

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master,
and the servant as his lord.
(Matthew 10:25a)

While Matthew was able to follow the human **Christ**, we also choose to be disciples and we follow the teachings of **Christ**. In these teachings we learn what our **Teacher** was like and as **His Spirit** is revealed to our spirit, we become more like **Him**.

Matthew's commitment shows us that he made a significant sacrifice to follow **Christ**. We may be called on for such a sacrifice some day, too.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it;
but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and
the gospel's, the same shall save it.
(Mark 8:35)

This is where the rubber meets the road and our true commitment to **Christ** is revealed. In the U.S., we have not had to make many sacrifices for our faith but in many other countries, **Christians** have been tried terribly for their dedication to **Christ**. It bears thinking about how much we are willing to sacrifice for **Christ**. The answer will reveal a great deal about our commitment and how far we have come in the journey to become **Christlike**.

What characteristics reveal **Christ** in us? *Humility* will probably be on the top of the list.

And whosoever will be chief among you,
let him be your servant:
(Matthew 20:27)

God came to us on earth not as a richly robed king but as a penniless teacher, a servant. He suffered shame and degradation for our sakes. *Are we willing to suffer the same for His sake?*

If we are, it will show in our love for others. Jesus suffered for us because He loved us. He asks us to love each other in return.

This is My commandment,
That ye love one another,
as I have loved you.
(John 15:12)

The progress of our transformation can probably be gauged by our love for others. And, not just the people that are easy to love, but our love for those who have hurt us, too.

Loving those who have hurt us requires *forgiveness*. Christ came to us to make forgiveness for our sins possible. We didn't earn or deserve forgiveness; He gave it to us anyway. He had every right to not forgive us but He forgave us anyway. He is our example of how we are to forgive.

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,
if any man have a quarrel against any:
even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
(Colossians 3:13)

Even if we have every right to not forgive, we must do it anyway to become Christlike.

Christlike behavior includes *spreading the gospel*. Jesus came to save us but He also came to *teach* us.

And He saith unto them, *Follow Me*, and
I will make you fishers of men.
(Matthew 4:19)

He passed on the responsibility of teaching to us. Telling the Good

News that **Jesus** brought us carries on **His** work and makes us more like **Him**.

As we teach we also learn and grow till we no longer find the old dead spirit in us but see **Christ** in us.

Who shall change our vile body,
that it may be fashioned like unto
His glorious body,
(Philippians 3:21a)

The change will be *gradual* and we will slide backwards *sometimes*. It will not be complete on earth, either, but we should strive to become as much like our beloved **Savior** as we can while we are in this world. Only in heaven will the work be completed in us:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and
it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but
we know that, when he shall appear,
we shall be like him;
for we shall see him as he is.
(1 John 3:2)

We cannot make ourselves **Christlike**, we must rely on the **Holy Spirit** to do that work. Our job is to be willing to change and to walk in the changes the **Spirit** makes in us. We must be committed to change completely. When we are, the *love of Christ* will shine from us and we will become forgiving and humble teachers of the *Gospel*. Remember

... that He which hath begun a good work in you
will perform it until the day of **Jesus Christ**:
(Philippians 1:6)

(All Scripture is KJV)