

Jesus: A Worthy Pattern

1. Idolizing Heroes

- A. We admire those who do what we wish we could: athletes, artists, etc. We vicariously live through them by *emulation*: clothes, hair styles, mannerisms, etc. We in effect say, “If I could do that, that’s how I would do it.”
- B. But the most important goal is the development of character. While parents have a great influence through genetics, nurture and emotional bonds, we are called to a higher pattern of emulation than even our parents.
 - 1. From a purely human standpoint, Jesus’ life still stands as the single greatest influential life ever lived. Even our modern calendar and its resultant Y2K problem is an outgrowth of His influence.
 - 2. In Jesus we see a man of sterling character, pure motive, controlled power, flawless intellect and unimpeachable ethical standards.
 - 3. In regard to **self**, *confident*; in respect to **others** *considerate*; in relation to **God** *conscientious*. Jesus is the epitome of emotional and mental stability, fully composed and in control of His body and mind. He had clear vision, focused purpose and sure identity.
- C. Beyond the practical effects of His character, a significant body of evidence exists which suggests that He was more than an exemplary human being. He was “God with us” – Immanuel (Mt 1:23).
 - 1. Jesus came to be what God had hoped His human creation would be. Where man failed, Jesus succeeded – Heb 2:5-9.
 - 2. God did more than tell us what to be; in Jesus He *showed* us what He hopes for every man and woman He creates.
 - 3. Through His success, we succeed. We can be restored and elevated to the noble place for which God created us.

2. Jesus: The Pattern of Selflessness

- A. If anyone was ever justified in putting their own interests first, it was Jesus. He had every right of royal privilege, honor and preference; He had every right of self-determination and autonomous will. *However*, Jesus demonstrates complete abdication of self-concern and lives wholly for the will of His heavenly Father. See Jn 4:34; 6:38; 8:26-29.

- B. Two instances: Submitting to John's baptism "to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3:14-15); the paying of taxes (Mt 17:24-27).
- C. Jesus was willing to set aside divine glory and privilege and submit as a servant – Ph 2:5-8. He later asks for the restoration of glory "*which I had with You before the world was*" (Jn 17:5). God grants this request – Ph 2:9ff.

3. Our Selfish Society

- A. Our society is becoming increasingly coarse and selfish. The cultural message has changed from the freedom to pursue individual happiness to what society **owes** to the individual.
- B. The messages hammered in by media: Do what makes **you** happy; you **deserve** the best; you determine what is **right for you**, etc. Christians subtly buy into this by frittering their lives away on their possessions, their time, their desires, their recreation, their comfort zone. *This is a bottomless pit of self-gratification; it is never completely satisfying!*

C. When is the last time you truly sacrificed something for God?

Conclusion: "... you are not your own ... For you were bought at a price ..." (1 Cor 6: 19-20). Jesus sets the example of selflessness, for He **truly** was free to be His own person. But we are redeemed from spiritual slavery and eternal death. We owe our lives to God!