

# To Be a Follower of Christ

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*Of the Seventy*

To be a follower of Christ is to strive to conform our actions, conduct, and lives to those of the Savior.

In my personal study of the scriptures, I have been impressed by the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who later became known as Paul, as described in the Bible.

Paul was an active man in the persecution of the Church and the Christians. But because of the power of heaven and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, he was changed completely, and he became one of the great servants of God. His model of life was the Savior Jesus Christ.

In one of Paul's teachings to the Corinthians, he invited them to be his followers as he himself was a follower of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 11:1). This is a sincere and valid invitation from Paul's time until today: to be a follower of Christ.

I began to reflect on what it means to become a follower of Christ. And more important, I began to ask, "In what way should I imitate Him?"

To be a follower of Christ is to strive to conform our actions, conduct, and lives to those of the Savior. It is to acquire virtues. It is to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

I have studied some aspects of the Savior's life, and I have retained, as part of my message today, four of His qualities that I try to imitate and that I share with you.

The first quality of the Savior is humility. Jesus Christ was very humble from the premortal life. At the Council in Heaven, He recognized and allowed the will of God to prevail in the plan of salvation for mankind. He said, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2).

We know that Jesus Christ taught humility and humbled Himself to glorify His Father.

Let us live in humility because it brings peace (see Doctrine and Covenants 19:23). Humility precedes glory, and it brings God's favor upon us: "Yea, all of you be

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“Individuals who walk humbly with God remember what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have done for them.”

“We act honorably with God by walking humbly with Him” (“Do Justly, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 111, 109).

The second quality of the Savior is courage. When I think of Jesus Christ at the age of 12, sitting in the temple of God among the doctors of the law and teaching them divine things, I note that He already had, very early in His life, a good sense of courage, a particular courage. While most would expect to see the young boy being taught by the doctors of the law, He was teaching them as “they were hearing him, and asking him questions” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 2:46 [in Luke 2:46, footnote c]).

We served a full-time mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Mbuji-Mayi Mission from 2016 to 2019. The way to travel in the mission from one zone to another was by road. A phenomenon had arisen in that area with bandits armed with bladed weapons breaking onto the road and disturbing the movement of travelers.

Five missionaries traveling from one zone to another as part of the transfer were victims of these disturbances. Having been victims of this phenomenon ourselves sometimes before, we began to fear for the lives and safety of all of us, even hesitating to travel on these roads to visit the missionaries and hold zone conferences. We did not know how long it was going to last. I drew up a report, which I sent to the Area Presidency, and I expressed my feelings of fear about continuing to travel when the road was the only way to reach our missionaries.

In his reply, Elder Kevin Hamilton, who was our President of the Africa Southeast Area, wrote to me: “My counsel is to do the best you can. Be wise and be prayerful. Do not knowingly put yourselves or your missionaries in harm’s way, but at the same time go forward in faith. ‘For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind’ (2 Timothy 1:7).”

This exhortation greatly strengthened us and allowed us to continue to travel and serve with courage until the end of our mission, because we heard direction from our Father in Heaven through that scripture.

In modern scripture, we read the inspired words of the Prophet Joseph Smith reflecting the Lord’s encouragement to us: “Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!” (Doctrine and Covenants 128:22).

Let us have the courage to do what is right even when it is unpopular—the courage

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The third quality of the Savior is forgiveness. During His mortal ministry, the Savior prevented a woman who had been taken in adultery from being stoned. He charged her to “go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). This moved her toward repentance and eventual forgiveness, for as the scriptures record, “the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name” (Joseph Smith Translation, John 8:11 [in John 8:11, footnote *c*]).

During a Christmas devotional in December 2018, our dear President Russell M. Nelson spoke about four gifts we have received from the Savior. He said that one gift the Savior offers is the ability to *forgive*:

“Through His infinite Atonement, you can forgive those who have hurt you and who may never accept responsibility for their cruelty to you.

“It is usually easy to forgive one who sincerely and humbly seeks your forgiveness. But the Savior will grant you the ability to forgive anyone who has mistreated you in any way” (“Four Gifts That Jesus Christ Offers to You” [First Presidency Christmas devotional, Dec. 2, 2018], [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

Let us sincerely forgive each other to obtain the forgiveness of the Father. Forgiveness sets us free and makes us worthy to partake of the sacrament every Sunday. Forgiveness is required for us to be truly disciples of Jesus Christ.

The fourth quality of the Savior is sacrifice. It is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Savior gave the supreme sacrifice of His life for us so that we would be redeemed. Feeling the pain of sacrifice, He asked His Father to keep the cup away, but He went to the end of the eternal sacrifice. This is the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

President M. Russell Ballard taught this: “Sacrifice is [the] demonstration of pure love. The degree of our love for the Lord, for the gospel, and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them” (“The Blessings of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 76).

We can sacrifice our time to perform ministering, to serve others, to do good, to do family history work, and to magnify our Church calling.

We can give of our financial means by paying tithing, fast offerings, and other donations to build the kingdom of God on earth. We need sacrifice to keep the covenants we have made with the Savior.

My prayer is that by following Jesus Christ and drawing upon the blessings of His Atonement, we become more and more humble, we are more courageous, we forgive more and more, and we sacrifice more for His kingdom.

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