

DISCIPLESHIP DEMANDS IMITATING THE TEACHER (#4)

By Bob Young

Introduction

Many learn best by imitation. The first stage of learning is often imitation. Children imitate parents. Students imitate teachers. People imitate their heroes. Students learn and are able to teach what the teacher teaches. Imitation begins as students speak the words of the teacher—sometimes almost word for word.

Disciples become like their Teacher. Choosing Jesus as our teacher, listening to him, learning his will and his ways inevitably leads us to following Jesus, yielding, obeying, becoming imitators. An important factor in the process for disciples of Jesus is that we become like Jesus by changing our nature (not through masks, the basic meaning of the word “hypocrisy”).

Disciples—followers—imitators, what a challenge! Do I look like Jesus? Am I an authentic disciple? (Key text: Luke 6:40, it is enough that the disciple become like the teacher.)

Key text: John 13, I have left you an example that you should do as I have done.

Our imitation of Jesus begins with the decision we make concerning the message of Jesus, the good news of Jesus. The gospel message is sometimes summarized as in 1 Cor. 15:3-4 -- the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Paul uses the same model in Romans 6 when he describes the way the Romans are able to make a clean break with sin and to follow Jesus, fully yielded. We introduced that concept in the previous lesson.

In Romans 6, Paul says that baptism is a reenactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The first time that a disciple imitates Jesus is in deciding to obey the gospel and thus submit to the Teacher.

How can I imitate Christ? Are you an imitator of Jesus?

Listen to some descriptions of Jesus: Jesus came teaching and preaching, Jesus came praying for the lost, Jesus came seeking and saving the lost.

What are the primary concerns of my life? What is my life about?

Romans 6: A detailed study will be helpful to establish what it means to imitate Jesus, to become a disciple.

Discipleship begins in imitation of the Teacher.

We die, we are buried, we are raised.

We learn more and more about the ways of the Teacher. We say what the Teacher said, we become like the Teacher. We have the same goals and purposes as the Teacher.

Biblically, discipleship is yielding, submitting, obeying.

Now we add a fourth concept: discipleship means that I am committed to being an imitator of my Teacher.