

Imitating Christ In Attitude

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In Philippians 2:5, the apostle Paul instructs the Christians in Philippi to “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” The New International Version translates this command a bit more clearly: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” If a person were in a particularly grumpy mood, perhaps complaining about an aspect of their job that grates on their nerves, a coworker might say, “You need an attitude adjustment.” This common phrase simply means that if the situation were viewed from a different, more objective viewpoint, maybe things wouldn’t seem so bad. That’s what Paul instructs Christians to do: adjust your attitude to imitate that of Christ. We must strive to look at our lives and the situations we find ourselves in through the eyes of Christ; we need to adopt His attitude and outlook.

There are many scriptures to which one could turn to examine the attitude of Jesus in various situations. For example, in John 11, Mary and Martha send word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus is very sick. Christ makes known to His disciples that He will raise Lazarus from the dead (“wake him up”) so that they will believe in Him, and He will be glorified as the Son of God (John 11:4,11,14). But even though Jesus knows He has power over death, when He sees Lazarus’ sisters and friends lamenting and weeping over his death, Jesus weeps, too. Jesus wept because he was moved with compassion—He felt their pain and their

sorrow. Likewise, Christians are instructed to be compassionate toward one another. In Romans 12:15, the holy apostle writes, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” Even if the sorrows and stresses that afflict our brethren don’t seem that important to us, we need to adjust our attitudes and always be ready to encourage one another and bear each other’s burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Perhaps most importantly, we need to imitate Jesus’ attitude toward serving God. In John 8:29, Jesus told the Jews that He would only do those things that please the Father. This attitude of humble obedience led Jesus to pray to the Father before He was betrayed, “not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). Even though Jesus had the power to refuse the will of His Father, pleasing Him was His number one priority, even though it led Him to the cross. God gives all people the free will to make their own choices about serving Him—we can either accept the entirety of His will, or we can reject it completely; there is no middle ground. There may be some aspects of living for Christ that just don’t thrill you. There may be aspects of worship or serving others that you’d rather just leave alone or change to fit your own desires. But if that’s the case, God expects you to improve your attitude. God commands His children to imitate the attitude of Christ, and this includes bending your own will to humbly submit to Him in all things.