

*In search of...*



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# Imitate Jesus Christ

The apostle Paul called upon mankind to imitate himself (I Corinthians 4:16, Philippians 3:17), others who served God (Hebrews 6:12, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9), and the Churches of God (I Thessalonians 2:14). However, hear his ultimate call: "Imitate Jesus Christ!" (I Corinthians 11:1).

Paul addressed the Thessalonians in I Thessalonians 1:6, noting they imitated Jesus Christ. Though persecution came to them, they joyfully embraced the

inspired Word of God. Three verses earlier, Paul praised them for three behaviors: their work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope. By these, the Thessalonians demonstrated unity with Christ.

To students of scripture, the words imparted to James by the Holy Spirit, "Even so, faith, if it has no works, is dead, by itself", do not bring surprise. To those who believe Christ accepts them even with their

lack of service, a sad ignorance exists.

Galatians 2:16 –  
“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

A man can do nothing by his own design to justify himself in the sight of God. The law demonstrated this fact. Man's justification comes from Christ's faith. Christ lived the Law of Moses without bringing its curse upon Him (Deuteronomy 27:26). What He did (John 5:30) and the blessings He brought upon all mankind (Genesis 22:18) came only through obedience to God. Jesus trusted God the Father and His works demonstrated His Faith. Man's faithful obedience earns nothing, but as in all ages, men who walk by faith shall live (Hebrews 10:38). They live through the faith of Jesus the Messiah. They live faithfully when they imitate Jesus Christ.

When Jesus declared in Matthew 16:24 that man must “deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”, no one believed they would live a life of

ease. Jesus labored while upon the earth. Jesus found persecution around every corner. He let his disciples know they should expect the same (John 15:18-20). Still, Jesus declared the labor done in obedience to God was easy and light (Matthew 11:28-30).

John 17:22-26 – “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Jesus demonstrated the labor of love. God loves Jesus. God loves the world. Jesus desired we experience the same love so we might be one with the Father. Jesus states very clearly in John 14:15, our

labor demonstrates our love toward Him. When we engage His labor of love, we imitate Jesus Christ.

Jesus exemplifies the steadfastness of hope which the Thessalonians employed. Through Jesus work of faith and His labor of love, He knew He would die being rejected by those He came to save and do so through great suffering (Matthew 8:31). Yet, He had hope. On the day of Pentecost, Peter spoke of Jesus' hope prophesied by King David over a thousand years before.

Acts 2:25-28 – “For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.”

Clearly, Jesus hope rested in the Father that He would not remain in the grave. He completely believed in the joy of being again with the Father and experiencing the glory of Heaven again (John

17:5). Those washed in the blood of Christ hold to the hope of resurrection as Christ himself experienced resurrection (I Corinthians 15). On the final day of the earth's existence, those who imitate Jesus Christ will rise to meet him in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17).

The apostle Paul, following the steps of Jesus, provides a pattern for everlasting life (I Timothy 1:15-16). He commends the Thessalonians for walking in the pattern. Within the pages of scripture, “the faith which was once for all delivered” (Jude 3) exists that all men might strive to obtain it. Passages such as Ephesians 5 and others provide a very clear picture of what it means to engage in a work of faith, a labor of love, and the steadfastness of hope. In their simplest form, they declare “Imitate Jesus Christ”. Pick up the Bible today and learn to walk the footsteps of God.

Travis Main

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**WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST**



92 Rose Cottage Ln.  
Wellsburg, WV 26070  
304-737-1422

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# Bible Kings

A V I Y E W E M H E R O D Y B W J Q H G  
 V Y S C Q F R G R O B T R T S F P E S U  
 J I U W A E H W S Z B X O X S E D E N F  
 G M W S S U Y B E A F K B V X D X Y J S  
 N O U N C B R Q U M A O R F E A D E C Z  
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 R E N E B U C H A D N E Z Z A R T M S G  
 G A E B A H G R H O C Q B B Y I O C O Z  
 L O J A S G T Y A H G H Q R F P R I L Q  
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 N T L W N O E G E I G J Z C Q N A A O C  
 Z R U M Y O Z D R S H Q R M E G L O N N  
 S M A W P X S F U Z K Q N I U F C U H E  
 K J H D A R I U S E V J Z D I H N P I V  
 B P P N M E L C H I Z E D E K I J L R M  
 P S R D K W U J R C Q C J O C N D G A C  
 F V A X U O L G U Y G N R V P X V I M W  
 R X X S I N F M K P Z H W R W O V E J W  
 D T I C Y U A H S Z X Q Y X E S E R Y R  
 A X N Q W A J E S U S B J R H B N F F Y

- In Canaan, Og was the king of B\_\_\_\_\_ (Deut. 3)
- Daniel served under N\_\_\_\_\_ in Babylon (Dan. 1)
- Salem's king M\_\_\_\_\_ came to meet Abram (Gen. 14)
- King A\_\_\_\_\_ chose Esther for his queen (Est. 2)
- Above the head of J\_\_\_\_\_ it said, "The King of the Jews" (John 19)
- D\_\_\_\_\_ was the king of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 6)
- God blessed S\_\_\_\_\_ with wisdom and more (1 Kings 3)
- Paul made his defense before king A\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 26)
- H\_\_\_\_\_ the tetrarch had John the Baptist put to death (Matt. 14)
- The king of Moab, E\_\_\_\_\_, was a very fat man (Judges 3)
- Help building the temple came from H\_\_\_\_\_ of Tyre (1 Kings 5)