

Becoming Like the One We Follow

Biblical Text: Philippians 2:5 – *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

Introduction

Today we’re beginning a study that goes right to the heart of our faith: the Character of Christ. Before we talk about what it means to live like Jesus, we need to slow down and look closely at *who He is*. Everything He taught, everything He did, and every life He touched flowed out of His character.

You’ll notice three traits in particular:

Christ’s humility, which challenges our pride

His compassion, which softens our hearts

His obedience, which strengthens our walk with God

Let’s begin this journey together.

I. HUMILITY – SURRENDERING PRIDE, CONTROL, OR SELF-RELIANCE

Humility is the starting point of Christlike character because it is the posture Jesus Himself chose. Though He was equal with God, He laid aside privilege and embraced servanthood. Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. It is choosing God’s will over your own, and choosing others over personal comfort or recognition.

When we talk about humility, we’re really talking about surrender—letting go of the things we cling to that keep us from fully trusting God. Three areas often rise to the surface:

A. Surrendering Pride

Pride whispers, *“I can handle this. I know best. I don’t need help.”* But humility answers, *“Lord, I need You.”*

Pride shows up in subtle ways:

- Needing to be right
- Struggling to apologize
- Resisting correction
- Wanting credit or recognition
- Comparing ourselves to others

Humility invites us to lay these down and embrace a heart that is teachable, gentle, and open to God's shaping.

B. Surrendering Control

Many of us hold tightly to our plans, our timing, and our expectations. But Christlike humility says, *"Not my will, but Yours be done."*

Control can look like:

- Anxiety when things don't go our way
- Frustration when people don't meet our expectations
- Difficulty trusting God with outcomes
- Trying to manage everything ourselves

Humility releases the need to orchestrate every detail and rests in God's sovereignty.

C. Surrendering Self-Reliance

Self-reliance says, *"I've got this."* Humility says, *"Without You, I can do nothing."*

Self-reliance often feels responsible and mature, but spiritually it can become a barrier:

- We pray less because we depend on ourselves
- We serve in our own strength and burn out
- We make decisions without seeking God's wisdom
- We carry burdens we were never meant to carry

Humility shifts our dependence back to God, allowing His strength to work through our weakness.

Reflection: What part of your character reveals a disconnect with the humility of Christ?

II. COMPASSION – SEEING, SERVING AND LOVING AS CHRIST DID.

Compassion is one of the clearest windows into the heart of Jesus. Over and over in Scripture, we see that Jesus was not moved by crowds, needs, or crises alone—He was moved by people. He saw individuals others overlooked, and His compassion always led to action.

Compassion is more than a feeling; it is love in motion. It is the willingness to step toward someone else's pain, need, or struggle with the heart of Christ. As we explore this trait, we ask a simple but searching question: Who is God calling me to see, serve, or love more intentionally?

A. Compassion Begins With Seeing People Clearly

Jesus didn't just look at people; He *saw* them. *"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them..."* (Matthew 9:36)

He saw:

- Their weariness
- Their confusion
- Their spiritual hunger
- Their need for guidance

Ask yourself: Who in my life have I been overlooking because I've been too busy, distracted, or focused on myself?

B. Compassion Moves Us Toward People, Not Away From Them

Jesus consistently moved *toward* the hurting. The Word says, “*And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him...*” (Mark 1:41) This was a leper...a man society avoided. Yet Jesus stepped close, touched him, and restored him.

Compassion calls us to move toward:

- The lonely
- The discouraged
- The marginalized
- The misunderstood
- The ones others avoid

Is God nudging you to approach, encourage or support someone...even if it feels uncomfortable? How will you answer Him?

C. Compassion Serves With a Willing Heart

Jesus didn't just feel compassion...He acted on it.

“I have compassion on the multitude... I will not send them away hungry.” (Matthew 15:32) He fed the hungry. He healed the sick. He comforted the grieving. He taught the lost. Compassion expresses itself through service—meeting needs with love, patience, and generosity. God calls us to serve in practical, meaningful ways.

D. Compassion Loves Beyond Boundaries

Jesus showed compassion to people outside His culture, comfort zone, and social expectations.

“He must needs go through Samaria.” (John 4:4) Jews avoided Samaritans, yet Jesus intentionally went to meet a broken woman at a well. His compassion crossed cultural, racial, and social lines.

This challenges us to love:

- People who are different from us
- People who have been rejected

- People who feel unworthy
- People society pushes aside

Ask yourself: Who is God calling me to love more intentionally...even if they are different from me?

E. Compassion Reflects the Heart of God

Ultimately, compassion is not something we manufacture. It flows from God's own heart. The Word says, "*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and great in mercy.*" (Psalm 145:8). When we show compassion, we reveal God's character to the world.

Christ-like compassion flows freely. Maybe there is someone right here in this study group who you need to see more clearly, serve more willingly, and love more intentionally.

Remember that compassion is not a moment...it is a lifestyle shaped by the example of Christ.

Question: How does the lack of Christ-like compassion impact those we choose to ignore with indifference, unkindness or callousness?

III. OBEDIENCE – ALIGNING MY WILL WITH GOD'S WILL

Obedience is one of the most defining marks of Christ's character. Jesus didn't obey reluctantly or out of obligation. He obeyed because His heart was fully aligned with the Father. His obedience flowed from love, trust, and surrender.

When we talk about obedience in the Christian life, we're talking about bringing our desires, decisions, and direction under the authority of God. It is choosing God's way even when it conflicts with our own.

The guiding question for this section of our study is: What step of obedience is God prompting me to take right now?

A. Obedience Was Jesus' Daily Priority

Jesus didn't treat obedience as an occasional act...it was His lifestyle. Jesus said, "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*" (John 4:34)

Obedience was His nourishment, His purpose, and His joy. He lived every day with this clear focus: *What does the Father want?*

When we treat obedience as optional, we do not allow God to be at the CENTER of our walk with Him.

B. Obedience Requires Surrender of My Own Will

Even Jesus faced moments where obedience was costly. He said, "*Not My will, but Thine, be done.*" (Luke 22:42) In Gethsemane, Jesus shows us that obedience often requires surrender:

- Surrendering personal desires
- Surrendering comfort
- Surrendering our preferred outcomes
- Surrendering our timing

Obedience is not always easy, but it is *always* right.

Question: Where is my will wrestling with God's will?

C. Obedience Demonstrates Love for God

Jesus taught that obedience is the true expression of love. He said, "*If ye love Me, keep My commandments.*" (John 14:15) Love is not proven by emotion...it is proven by obedience. When we obey, we declare:

- "Lord, I trust You."

- “Lord, I honor You.”
- “Lord, I belong to You.”

Obedience is love in action. Ask yourself: Is my obedience driven by love or by obligation?

D. Obedience Opens the Door to God’s Blessing

Throughout Scripture, obedience is connected to God’s favor and guidance. The Word says, *“A good man steps are ordered by the Lord.”* (Psalm 37:23) Jesus said, *“Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”* (Luke 11:28)

Obedience positions us to:

- Hear God clearly
- Walk in His protection
- Experience His provision
- Grow spiritually
- Live with purpose

Disobedience closes doors; obedience opens them. Ask yourself: What blessing or breakthrough might be on the other side of my obedience?

E. Obedience Is Empowered by the Holy Spirit

We don’t obey in our own strength. Jesus obeyed through perfect unity with the Father, and we obey through the power of the Spirit. Philippians 2:13 says, *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”*

The Spirit gives us:

- The desire to obey
- The strength to obey
- The wisdom to obey
- The courage to obey

Obedience is not about trying harder. It’s about yielding more to the Will of God through the gift of His Holy Spirit. Ask yourself: Where do I need to rely on the Holy Spirit instead of my own strength?

Ask the Lord to show you:

- One area to surrender _____
- One command to obey _____
- One step to take _____

Obedience is not about perfection...it's about direction. Every step of obedience makes us look more like Christ.

CONCLUSION

As we close this study, let's go back to the simple, powerful truth that has guided the entire lesson: the goal of the Christian life is not just to believe in Christ, but to become like Him. Every trait we explored...His humility, His compassion, and His obedience...reveals not only who Jesus is, but who the Holy Spirit is shaping US to be.

Christlike character is formed over time. It grows through daily surrender, intentional choices, and a heart that stays open to God's work. Carry these three questions with you when you leave the class:

- Where do I need to surrender pride and embrace humility?
- Who is God calling me to see, serve, or love with compassion?
- What step of obedience is God asking me to take next?