



COACH'S COUNSEL

It is much easier to do something than to trust in God; we see the activity and mistake panic for inspiration. That is why we see so few fellow workers with God, yet so many people working for God. We would much rather work for God than believe in Him.¹⁵

Oswald Chambers



5. Team up to imitate the Master

Imitation is a very effective way to learn. (Imitate: to follow in action or manner, to copy, to reproduce closely).¹⁶ For example, if you wanted to learn to high jump, would you rather attend a half-day lecture on the subject or spend fifteen minutes watching an accomplished high jumper clear the bar then try it yourself?

Imitation is effective in business too. People who want to learn to sell often go on sales calls with experienced sales people. They may take courses on selling, but there's no substitute for watching a pro do it. The idea is to follow a proficient person around (side-by-side), observe her in action, then do what she does.

Imitation is so fundamental and so effective that it's a primary way small children learn; they imitate their parents. Perhaps that's why Paul says:

Be imitators of God as beloved children. Ephesians 5:1

Jesus even modeled imitation for us. In His earthly life, He imitated the Father.

[F]or whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. John 5:19





NOTES

Paul personalized the principle.

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

Paul was not being arrogant or mysterious, but practical. He appreciated the value of good teaching and he spent time teaching. He also knew the power of imitation and he made every effort to model what he believed and taught. The Bible tells us that Jesus imitated the Father, Paul imitated Jesus, and believers (like Timothy) imitated Paul. Imitation is simply watching and learning from believers who have gone before us, then doing what they do. Are you learning to apply biblical truths to your life by watching how more mature believers do it?

In Hebrews 6:20, we learn that Jesus ran ahead of us—He was “a forerunner for us.” In other words, He modeled the character traits he wants us to imitate. Therefore, watch Him, study Him, become like Him. The Bible says Jesus provides...

an example for you to follow in His steps. 1 Peter 2:21

[L]et us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus... Hebrews 12:1-2

By the way, who are you watching? Who do you imitate? Do you copy clothing or hair styles, attention-getting behavior, or character qualities? Are you imitating those who reinforce Christlike behavior in you?

Fix your eyes on the Master. He said, “Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it” (Matthew 11:29, TM). As you do, your desires and purposes will come into harmony with His. The practice of imitation becomes most effective when exercised in a close relationship. Are you close enough to the Master to imitate Him? Are you close enough to describe His character traits?

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God is working in us to reach His highest goals until His purpose and our purpose become one.¹⁷

Oswald Chambers





In Matthew, Jesus talks about being so close to Him as to be yoked to Him. It's a picture of being hooked up, bound together, side-by-side, like a team of horses. Or we might say, "teamed up" with Him. Then He explains the benefits:

I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

Matthew 11:29-30, TM

How about that? Does the idea of living freely and lightly appeal to you?

How does the concept of imitating Jesus, becoming like Him, strengthen (add a cable to) your sense of purpose as you go about your work or study?

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We should be so one with God that we don't need to ask continually for guidance.¹⁸

Oswald Chambers