

# The Bulletin

## Meeks Street Church of Christ

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**December 24, 2023**

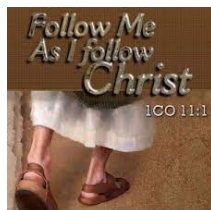
### **“Imitating Paul” #2**

By Brian Meade

It is the words of the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, *“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”* (ESV). This simple and easy to follow statement by Paul helps us to see clearly the way to follow Christ by watching him.

It is often that people need to see a good example of someone who is following Jesus in the proper way.

As we continue our study of the life of Paul, let us consider more of his character, as he imitates Christ.



### **3. Paul Was Uncompromising In His Beliefs.**

We live today in a world that believes that everyone has their price. The world truly believes that if you offer someone enough to compromise their convictions, they will give in to the reward and compromise for gain.

One sad example of compromise from the Old Testament is the story of Balaam in Numbers 22-23. Balaam was lured by the power of honor and riches to go with the men sent to him by Balak. Balak wanted Balaam to curse the people of Israel whom God blessed. Although he knew better than to actually do this, he evidently was more than tempted to do what was forbidden.

Peter uses him as an example of compromise, as he warns us about some who have done the same, *“They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet.”* (2 Peter 2:15-16).

But in contrast, faithful men like Paul show us what it is like to stand firm in the face of pressure or enticements to give up Bible convictions of truth for something less than God’s word. Paul is an example of standing for truth without concessions to error that would please men, but not God.

We read the words of Paul in Galatians 2:3-5, *“Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”*

When men wanted to make circumcision a part of the Gospel way of salvation, Paul did not allow that at all! He did not strike a deal with them, make any concessions, or give ground with those who would pervert the Gospel message of Christ. Paul knew that to do so would only pervert God’s word (Galatians 1:6-9).

In order to imitate Paul, who was imitating Christ, we need to take a strong stand and remain firm on what the Bible teaches. As we should be aware, we live in a world where compromise by weak-kneed religious leaders is everywhere! We can easily see how unity in diversity is a system based on compromise. It joins people together of all brands and kinds of religion together, not in true Bible unity, but in a false blending of compromise. This unity celebrates diversity in beliefs— not bringing people together on the single truth of God’s word.

#### **4. Paul Was Unselfish In His Behavior.**

When we look at the life of Paul the apostle, we see an unselfish person personified in his behavior. We read in 1 Corinthians 10:33, *“just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”*

The very next verse is our theme for this article, *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 11:1). It continues the thought of thinking of others and their profit like Jesus did. This connection can be easily missed, if we do not study this carefully. This is one of the unfortunate chapter breaks that makes it seem to be a new thought, but is connected to the behavior of our Lord.

Paul learned from Jesus to be self-sacrificing for the good of others. Jesus said in Mark 10:45, *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

And in John 15:13, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”*

Paul taught others to be unselfish in their ways in Ephesians 4:28, *“Let him who stole steal no longer; but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”*

Paul is teaching the thief, who comes to God by the gospel, to no longer seek to take stuff away from others. Not only that, but to work so they can give to others who are in need. That is unselfishness class 101!

#### **5. Paul Had Great Love For The Brethren.**

Paul told Timothy, *“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”* (2 Timothy 1:13).

We know that love is more than just the warm, sentimental type of feelings one can have, and goes much deeper than that. Paul is the very one who was teaching the Corinthians to correct their problems relating to spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14. He showed them emphatically, that a lack of love can make our spiritual service fruitless (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Paul forever teaches us all the qualities of love needed to overcome any problems in the church. Paul said, *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.”* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

The answer to most problems in the world today is a lack of love for our fellowman. We expect the ungodly to be this way, but may it never be said of Jesus’ followers— that they lack love.

If we are to imitate Paul as he imitated Christ— Let us show great love for all, and especially of our fellow brethren in Christ! (John 13:34-35).

#### **6. Paul Lived A Contented Life.**

We read of Paul’s estimation of his contentment in Philippians 4:11-12, *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”*

One might ask how Paul could learn to be this way, and that’s where he says in the next verse, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* (Philippians 4:12). Paul relied on the help from the Lord Jesus to be content in difficult times. One might say it would be easy to be content when we have all we need and more, but the times of abounding offers its own set of challenges (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

When we look at the life of Jesus, we see the perfect example of contentment with little. Jesus was born to parents who did not have much of this world’s goods. It is evidenced by the manner of Jesus’ birth in a lowly manger (Luke 2:7). And when it came time for the sacrifice the Law required forty days after Jesus’ birth, they gave the sacrifice of the poor (Luke 2:21-24; Leviticus 12:2 & 8). Jesus lived in the lowly town of Nazareth, as a carpenter’s son (John 1:46; Matthew 13:55). Jesus was content with what He had.

In world that is anything but content with its material goods, and life in general— Christians must imitate Paul and Jesus in our manner of life. And if we are blessed with much, let us still be content (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

**News and Notes:**

Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Fred Johnson, Mary Ann Holley, Robert Howard, Billy Grisham, and Mackenzie Hughes had Strep last week.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Adam Harris  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "When Right Things Are Wrong"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Author:** 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon  
**Starting Page & Question:** Herschel Patton  
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**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Paul Johnson  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Tim Harris Jr.  
**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 3:1-4  
**Song Leader:** Paul Busby  
**Lord's Supper:** Paul Busby  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "What Is Your Life All About?"  
**Closing Prayer:** Doug George

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**December 27, 2023**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Brian Meade  
**Workbook:** Preparing To Teach Our Neighbors  
**Author:** Max Tice  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #81, Fill In The Blanks #3  
**Invitation:** Doug George  
**Song Leader:** Tim Harris Sr.  
**Closing Prayer:** Adam Harris



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**And Our Facebook Page.**

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# ***“When Right Things Are Wrong”***

Lesson Text: **1 Corinthians 8:13.**

## **I. When Our Liberties Become A Stumbling-Block.**

- 1 Corinthians 8:7-13.
- Romans 14:13-17.
- Matthew 18:5-7.

## **II. When Lawful Things Are Not Expedient.**

- 1 Corinthians 10:33.
- 1 Corinthians 6:12-13.

## **III. When Lawful Things Are Bound Religiously.**

- Mark 7:1-8.
- 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.
- 1 Corinthians 9:5.
- 1 Timothy 4:1-4; Hebrews 13:4.

## **IV. When Lawful Things Are Perverted.**

- 2 Timothy 2:15.
- 2 Peter 3:15-16.

## **V. When Civil Law Goes Against Divine Law.**

- 1 Peter 2:13-15.
- Acts 5:22-29.

## **VI. When One’s Motive Is Not Right.**

- Matthew 6:1-6.
- Philippians 1:12-18.
- Titus 1:11.

# **“What Is Your Life All About?”**

Lesson Text: **Colossians 4:1-4.**

Questions to consider: **(1)** What is it about this life that really gives us the most joy, happiness, & contentment? **(2)** What is it that we spend most of our time and energy in doing above all else? **(3)** What would the people who see us every day say was most important to us?

## **I. What Are We Living For?**

- Selfishly Making Money **1 Timothy 6:6-10.**
- Gathering Material Things **1 John 2:15-17; Luke 12:15; 22-31.**
- My Job Or Career **2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8.**
- My Family **Matthew 10:37.**
- Fame Or Self-Recognition **Luke 10:19-20.**
- Higher Learning **1 Corinthians 1:21-25; 1 Corinthians 8:1.**
- Sports And Recreation **1 Timothy 4:8.**
- Entertainment **Acts 17:21.**
- Pleasures Of Life/Sin **2 Timothy 3:1-3.**
- For Self Only **Luke 9:23-24; Romans 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 10:33.**

## **II. Paul's Estimate of Life.**

- **Philippians 1:21.**
- *“For to me to live is \_\_\_\_\_ and to die is \_\_\_\_\_.”*
- **Philippians 3:7-8.**
- **Galatians 2:19-20.**

## **III. Solomon's Estimate of Life.**

- **Ecclesiastes 12:13.**
- Can I Truthfully Say This Is What My Life Is About?

## **IV. The Christian Life.**

- We Put God as our first priority **Colossians 3:1-4**
- We Live By The Word Of God **Deuteronomy 32:46-47; Matthew 4:4.**
- We live to worship God **John 4:23-24; Acts 2:46.**
- We live to serve God continually **1 Corinthians 15:58; Heb. 6:10-12.**
  - The Christian Life Is The Only Life That Is Really Meaningful.