

Imitate Christ — **Philippians 2:1-11**

In my adolescence, I had mentors who gave me a good foundation in the gospel. As a result of that training and mentorship in my teens, I assumed leadership responsibilities for working with other young people early in my life.

An experience I keep close to my heart happened when I was 18. I led a youth camp for five days. A group of about 50 young adults camped in the mountains in tents. The leadership team was about 10–12 young people, most in their senior year of high school and some in the first year of college.

At the end of each day, we evaluated what went well and what did not go so well. We prayed together. On the first night, a member of the leadership team came to us crying. She told us that the woman we hired to help us in the kitchen lived by the river. When it rained, her house, made of old zinc sheets and cardboard, got completely wet. Our colleague then said: “We must build a house for her.” “A house?” we all said. “You’re crazy! We’re young students, we do not have jobs, and we depend on our parents. That is not possible.”

Every night, this young woman came to the meeting saying we needed to build a house for our cook. And every day the answer was no, we can’t, and we won’t.

On the last night, she came back with the same idea, but something different happened. We said, “OK, we will build a home for this woman.” But we complicated the situation a little bit by saying, “If she can get a piece of land and shows us the deed in her name, we will build her a house.” The idea behind this qualification was really to get rid of her. We said among ourselves, “There is no way this woman will buy a piece of land.”

Six months later and to our great surprise, the woman appeared at one of our meetings with a piece of paper in her hand. She said to us, “You told me that if I could get the land deed, you would build me a house.” Boom. We felt like we just got a bucket of cold water poured on us.

*And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross! Philippians 2:8 NIV*

That afternoon we had to humble ourselves before the Lord as Christ did for us. After a deathly silence, we honored our word and assumed our responsibility. We said to her, “We don’t know how or with what, but we promised you a house, and we will build you a house.” To make a long story short, it took us a year of fundraising, and our weekends were filled with related activities. That group of young people determined to accept the challenge of imitating Christ. We built the house. We all cried and praised God when we asked God to bless this woman’s new home and gave her the keys.

I must confess, this action took us out of our comfort zone, and that is exactly what was and is needed to imitate Christ. We must leave our comfort zones; humble ourselves; show love and commitment for those in need; ask forgiveness for our actions of avoiding responsibility, humility, and sacrifice; preach the kingdom values; and show Christ’s love through our actions.

A dictionary definition of *imitate* is “to behave in a similar way to someone or something else.”¹ The apostle Paul tells us, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1 NRSV). Perhaps Paul expressed himself that way because the early Christians in Corinth did not know much about the life

and ministry of Jesus Christ, and the Gospels may not have been written. In our case, we know the gospel of Christ and are instructed in the life and ministry of Jesus. We must still decide to follow Jesus' way or ignore it for our comfort and convenience.

Thank God that in the end those young adults made the decision to imitate Christ. In so doing, we changed the life of a woman as Jesus would have us do. By becoming like Christ, we were able to do incredible and unthinkable things.

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1. *Cambridge Free English Dictionary*, s.v. ["imitate."](#)



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