

WELCOME TO THE PLANET

Part 4: You Were Created to be Like Christ

Intro & Review

When we started this four weeks ago we said basically that we want to ask this question “What on Earth am I here for?” It’s an important question. Am I just taking up space on this planet? Am I excess baggage. Is there, or could there be purpose and meaning for my life?

If you believe that there is a God who created this whole thing then that’s a good question. If for some reason you don’t believe there’s a God who created all this, you think we just came together by random accident billions of years ago, planets collided, and we come from celestial ooze. Really the question about life’s purpose is meaningless.

But, if God created everything, in His creation He must have had a purpose for His creation there’s a purpose behind why He created it. If there is a purpose behind why He created it there must be a purpose behind you and me as His creation. And if there’s a purpose behind you and me as His creation then I have two choices. Either I can live my life and ignore what His purpose is for me. Or I can live my life and pursue God’s purposes for me. That seems fair, doesn’t it? So that first week we just set up this overview.

Week two we said one reason we were created is to worship and honor God. Not just signing on Sunday morning but with our whole life. Every action we do and every thought we have should be honoring to God and His will.

Last week we said we were created and formed for a family. The idea here is we’re saying that every one of us in here have been hard wired to be in relationships, with part of our cells and our DNA and who we are we want to be in relationships. That’s why we don’t like to be alone. That’s why we feel uncomfortable when we’re by ourselves. We want to be with other people because God created us to be a part of a family. We talked about how the church is part of a family. The church is a family in biblical terms.

You’re created to be like Christ.

I’ll be honest with you. Of the ones we talked about you’re created to worship God – that makes sense. You’re created to be a part of a family – we’re connected relationally to be a part of a church family – that makes sense. But this one, you were created to be like Christ. It just seems a little odd, doesn’t it? That you were created to be like Christ?

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”

You and I are created in the image of God. This is what sets us apart from all the other creation.

Romans 8:29

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

What it DOESN'T mean to become like Christ

It doesn't mean that you become a GOD

Let me be absolutely clear on this. You will never become God or a god. God doesn't want you to be a god. God wants you to be godly, that is becoming like Christ, it doesn't mean you become a god.

It doesn't mean that you become a MINDLESS CLONE

Some people have said, "If I become a Christian I have to dress this way, I have to act this way, I have to think this way, I have to do this, I'm just going to be a mindless clone of everybody else."

This whole idea of becoming like Christ doesn't mean that you lose your personality. God created you to be unique. He doesn't want to destroy it. On this planet that we live on there are six billion people and no two people are exactly alike. If that doesn't just announce God's creativity and His desire that He wants us to be unique!

Becoming like Christ is about transforming your character, who you are. It's not about transforming your personality. You're not going to lose your personality. God gave you your uniqueness.

It doesn't mean that your life becomes EASIER

Becoming like Christ doesn't mean that your life becomes easier. Some of you have heard this and this is not true. It's a lie. Some people say, "When you become a Christian that's when you're going to get good grades and your acne is going to clear up and you'll never have fights with your parents any more. That's not true. That's not what the Bible promises. Becoming like Christ doesn't mean you're going to have perfect health or a comfortable lifestyle or constant happiness or that your dreams are going to be fulfilled or you're going to have instant relief from problems.

I'll tell you what it does mean... Your life will be richer, it'll be more rewarding. You'll be able to live life to its fullest.

A lot of people expect heaven on earth and that's not a promise. If you become like Christ it doesn't mean your life gets easier. It means it gets better.

A lot of people fail to realize that you and I exist for God's purposes, not the other way around. Sometimes God's purposes for us are worked out best in the midst of turmoil or crisis or problems or troubles.

It means taking on His values, attitudes, and character

It means taking on His values and His attitudes and His character.

Philippians 2:5

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus

That's what it means to become like Christ. His values, attitude and character.

God reproducing His character in you. That's what it means to become like Christ. That's one of the reasons that we were created.

How do I become like Christ?

It's really a combination. Becoming like Christ is a combination. It's a combination of God's part, your part and others. God has a part, you have a part and others have a part in becoming like Christ.

I play a part...in becoming like Christ...I can...

I can commit myself to GOD'S WAY

That's the part I play in becoming like Christ. I commit myself to God's way. That's the first step.

Matthew 9:9

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

We have an opportunity. Our part is we can commit to God's way. You commit to God's way even when you don't fully understand it. That's what faith is. Faith is committing to God's way when you don't fully understand it. I'll be honest with you, sometimes God's way is difficult. Sometimes it's not always clear.

It may not fully make sense what it means to follow God's way but that's what faith is: "God, I'm going to trust you that you're bigger than my little mind. That when you say this is the way I ought to live my life I'm going to trust that." So in playing my part I can commit myself to God's way.

I can change the way I THINK

This is right out of the Bible.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let me give you some examples. How about when you seeing a person or a group being made fun of and you laugh at that. Then at some point you notice that you don't think that's funny any more. You see it as cruel. That's an example of changing the way you think. You go, "I'm not going to think that's funny any more" or "I'm not going to think that's acceptable any more."

How many of you when your hungry you say, "I'm starving." I used to use that phrase all the time. Think about the poorest countries in the world. You know what what biggest problem usually is? Starvation. Kids with yellow hair because of malnutrition. They didn't have enough nutrients to give their hair color. They have bloated stomachs not because they had too much food but because they didn't have enough. Arms about the size of my thumb.

Thinking about that will change the way you think. Because I've never starved a day in my life. I've been hungry.

Do you want to become like Christ? You commit to God's way. You change the way that you think. Then...

I can develop Christ-like CHARACTER

That is the goal of becoming like Christ. You put on the character of Christ.

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Display a new nature – put it on. See if you can intellectually track with me. To put on the nature of Christ what does that mean?

In order to put on the character of Christ I have to a) know God's character b) I have to decide that character can redirect the way I live my life, and c) I put it on.

God plays a part... in me becoming like Christ

I didn't put any subpoints. You don't need any subpoints. That's it. God plays a part. God is the one that helps us become like Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Philippians 2:13

for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

It is totally impossible to follow God's way on your own power. On your own you will never match up. On your own power you can never follow God's way. So God gives us his spirit and the desire to obey Him and then the power to do what pleases Him. But what I want you to see in this verse is that God is working in you.

So we play a part and number two, God plays a part. And then finally...

“Others” play a part in me becoming like Christ

God's Word provides the TRUTH

God's Word provides the truth of how to become like Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I realize you go, that's what I expect to hear when I go to church that I should read the Bible. The Bible is God's voice. It's so that you would be in range of God's voice. If the only time you're hearing God's voice is when you come here and you hear the Bible taught to you, you're out of range of God's voice six other days of the week.

Here's the truth: there are so many voices shouting at you telling you what to do and how to live. You turn on the TV – boom! There's a voice. You go to school – boom! There's a voice. Everywhere you go there's these voices telling us how to live. Most of them don't lead to life. A lot of them are very confusing.

Becoming like Christ, you play a part, God plays a part and “others” play a part. The path is set by the truth from God's word. So God's word provides the truth and...

God's people provide the SUPPORT

This is a repeat of last week, this verse here. You don't do life alone. If you want to become like Christ you've got to rub shoulders with people who are on the same path and walk in the same direction.

Romans 1:12.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine

That just means if I'm going to be like Christ here's what I have to do. I've got to find some other people who want to be like Christ too, that are doing their part. So I do my part, God does his part, the Bible sets the direction, others come alongside and encourage.

And here's the last thing I want you to hear. This doesn't happen immediately. **Becoming like Christ doesn't happen immediately.**

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

It's a lifelong journey of becoming like Christ. You do your part. God does His part. His word sets the course. Other people go along for the ride and help you. That's the third reason the Bible teaches why you and I are here – to become like Christ.

Discussion Questions

- In your own words what does it mean to become like Christ?
- Why is important to know that becoming like Christ *DOESN'T* mean I become a God, a mindless clone, or that my life will be easier.
- Why do you think God would make one of life's purposes to become like Christ?
- In your own words, what does it mean to commit to living God's way?
- Can you think of an example where you or someone else committed to God's way even when it didn't make sense?
- Do you think its possible for your to control the way you think?
- What are somethings you can do to take control of the way you think?
- What do you think it looks like to put on the character of Christ?
- How important do you think part you play in becoming like Christ is compared the role God and others play?
- In your own words, what part does God play in you becoming like Christ?
- How would you explain the role the Bible plays in you becoming like Christ?
- What does it look like for other people to help you become like Christ?