

More Than a Change of Address - The Four Marks of Christlikeness

Warm-Up Question: What is God's purpose for our lives?

Anchoring Statement: Jesus didn't just die to change your destination; He died to transform your character.

God's purpose for His people is to become like Jesus.

Redemption vs Resemblance

Notice the common prefix: "re."

- **Redemption** means God **brings us back**.
- **Resemblance** means God **makes us like Him again**.

HOW DOES GOD ACCOMPLISH THAT?

Let's look at these three directions of God's purpose.

THE THREE DIRECTIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

Rom 8:29 NIV For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2Co 3:18 ESV 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.

1Jn 3:2-3 NIV Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

BUT WHAT EXACTLY DOES CHRISTLIKENESS LOOK LIKE?

1. CHRISTLIKENESS STOOPS – IT WEARS A TOWEL

Joh 13:3-5 NIV84 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; (4) so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. (5) After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Php 2:5-7 NIV84 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

God measures greatness with a towel, not a title.

The truest measure of maturity is not position, but posture.

2. CHRISTLIKENESS STEPS IN – IT ENTERS PEOPLE'S STORIES

Christlikeness moves toward people, not away from them.

Jesus didn't minister from the sidelines. He stepped onto the field.

People do not experience the love of Christ as a theory. They experience it through proximity.

3. CHRISTLIKENESS SACRIFICES – IT PAYS A PRICE

Heb 12:2 NIV Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I love how the Passion Translation puts it:

Heb 12:2 TPT We look away from the natural realm and we fasten our gaze onto Jesus who birthed faith within us and who leads us forward into faith's perfection. His example is this: Because his heart was focused on the joy of knowing that you would be his, he endured the agony of the cross and conquered its humiliation, and now sits exalted at the right hand of the throne of God!

The depth of our love is often revealed by the price we're willing to pay.

4. CHRISTLIKENESS ENDURES – IT TRUSTS THROUGH THE FIRE

Joh 16:33 NIV84 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

God often uses pressure not to crush us, but to carve us.

CONCLUSION

So what does Christlikeness look like?

1. Christlikeness **stoops**. It wears a towel.
 2. Christlikeness **steps in**. It enters people's stories.
 3. Christlikeness **sacrifices**. It pays a price.
 4. Christlikeness **endures**. It trusts through the fire.
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Final Reflection

- If the people who know me best were asked what Jesus is like, what parts of His character would they recognize in my life?

- As I look at these four characteristics—humility, proximity, sacrifice, and endurance – which one is God most deeply developing in me right now?
 - Where is God inviting me not merely to admire Jesus, learn about Jesus, or sing about Jesus—but to become more like Jesus?
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Life Group Reflection Questions

Christlikeness Stoops – It Wears a Towel

- Where in my life is God inviting me to exchange a title for a towel?
- How do I typically respond when my service goes unnoticed or unappreciated?
- What would humility look like in one of my current relationships?

Christlikeness Steps In – It Enters People's Stories

- Whose story has God placed near me that I may be overlooking?
- Where am I tempted to keep a safe distance when Jesus would move closer?
- What might it look like this week to step into someone else's pain, struggle, or need?

Christlikeness Sacrifices – It Pays a Price

- What is my love costing me these days?
- Am I loving others primarily when it is convenient, or am I willing to be inconvenienced for their good?
- What sacrifice might God be inviting me to make for the sake of another person?

Christlikeness Endures – It Trusts Through the Fire

- What difficult circumstance am I facing that God may be using to shape me?
- What has suffering taught me about God, myself, and others?
- What part of my character might God be refining in this season?