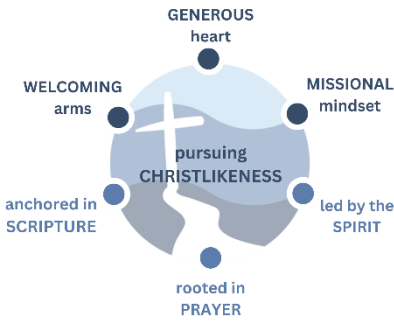


Living our Values... Growing our Culture

Week 5: Pursuing Christlikeness



Opening question:

- The question Darryl posed on Sunday: 'What would a more Christlike version of yourself look like?'

Read – Philippians 2:1-11

Questions (choose some from):

- 1) Go through the passage together and identify the characteristics of Jesus highlighted in these verses. Write them down on a big piece of paper and put it in front of the group.
- 2) What else would you want to add about the characteristics of Jesus from your knowledge of the gospels. Add these words to your piece of paper.
- 3) Paul starts this passage by talking about being 'united with Christ' (v1) and that this leads us to being 'likeminded' (v2). What do you think 'being united with Christ' means? And how might this help you become more like Jesus in your own lives?
- 4) This passage particularly talks about Jesus' humility and his willingness to become 'downwardly mobile.' How does this compare to the way the world invites us to be? How do you feel about this personally? How does this passage speak to you specifically?
- 5) How do we actually 'become more like Christ'? How much is our part and how much is God's part? Is it just about 'trying harder to do better'? (see 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3: 1-10)

Key verse:

'In your relationships with each other, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:5)

Respond & Encounter:

Identify the 'one thing'

Take a few moments of silence, perhaps with the piece of paper from 1) above in the middle of your group. In the silence, invite everyone to ask the Holy Spirit to identify just one area of their life where they want to become more Christlike (one characteristic of Jesus or fruit of the Spirit he wants to grow in you (e.g. to be more patient, forgiving, to speak words of encouragement more, to bless those who have hurt you).

Invite everyone to offer that one thing to God and pray that the Holy Spirit would empower them to live differently this week and be more Christlike in that one area.

You might like to pray with each other about those things, or just take time to sit with God whilst you play quiet music (e.g. spirit of the living God) in the background.

Live it out this week: Be open to the Spirit

Identify one of the following to try out this week:

1) Growing the fruit. Select one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) to focus on developing in the coming week or fortnight. Each morning pray that God would give you more of that fruit and consciously, with God's help try and live that out in your life each day.

2) Make a conscious effort this week to 'do what Jesus would do' in each situation.

- Each morning, pray that God would enable you to live as Jesus would if he were you today.
- When you face every difficult situation this week pray, 'God show me what Jesus would do in this situation and help me to do it' and then seek to be obedient to that and see what God does.

3) 'Habit swap.'

Take half an hour to sit with God and reflect on some of your 'weekly habits.'

- Write down a list of any habits which you sense may draw you away from God/being Christlike, or simply don't build you up.
- Write down a list of habits which do draw you closer to God and do build you up.
- Prayerfully identify one habit from the first list that you could make a conscious effort to 'let go of' this week and one from the second list which you could consciously take up in its place.
- Ask God to help you in this 'habit swap' this week and seek to live that out each day.
- At the end of the week reflect on whether this 'habit swap' has made any difference or not.

4) Reviewing your day (The *Examen*). This is a simple daily pattern of prayer (developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola) which helps individuals prayerfully reflect on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence, discern his direction, and grow in Christ-likeness.

You can find a simple version here <https://www.jesuits.org/spirituality/the-ignatian-examen/>. Commit to trying this each day this week, asking God to transform you through it.