"Imitate Me"
By Trey Sullins

Imitation is a fact of life. From a young age, people begin imitating the behaviors of those around them. Imitation is one of those things that can greatly benefit or harm us depending on who is being imitated. How would you feel if you were being imitated? Would you be ashamed that someone was following your example, or would you be happy because you knew they would be doing right? Such a consideration was made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1, but Paul lived such a life that he had no hesitation about being imitated. "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." We must learn to imitate the great example of Paul in order to also imitate Christ.

Paul was honest with his convictions. "A Hebrew of the Hebrews" is what Paul considered himself at one point in his life (Philippians 3:5). He was the best of the best as far as Jews go: "circumcised the eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin…a Pharisee" (Philippians 3:5). If there was anyone who could have pride in Judaism it was Paul, but when Paul was confronted with the truth of God's word what did he do? He changed! He completely left behind those old ways of his life, counted them for loss, and corrected to the new path of Christ (Philippians 3:8). Correcting ourselves often times can be very hard to do. However, when we imitate a man like Paul, we will always correct ourselves and change to the truth.

Paul had a great faith. The Bible shows us a living faith is when we pair our faith with godly works (James 2:14-26). His faith was so strong that in Romans 8:38-39 he wrote, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Truly he lived this statement as well as we can see from his numerous missionary journeys and persecutions in the book of Acts (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). When we imitate a faith like that, then nothing will get in the way of us serving God. Its that kind of faith which will keep us be motivated and at peace as we walk the Christian walk (Romans 5:1-2).

Imitating Paul means that we will imitate Jesus Christ! Notice the last words of our main text: "Imitate me, **just as I also imitate Christ**." It is important to recognize why Paul was so confident in people imitating him. It was not because he was so great, smart, or religious. It was only because he himself was imitating Christ. A godly and just life is not one that is guided by our own choices and desires, but rather one that is directed by the commands of God. We have to ask ourselves, is that the life we live? If someone were to imitate us would that person be following after the Son of God as well? Hopefully, that is the case, but if not, we must correct this in our lives. Making this change as quickly as possible is important too because most of us do have someone who is imitating our life, whether we know it or not.

Who do you imitate? Is it the movies stars, scholars, experts, or Jesus Christ? When we look into the Bible, we find that the choice is quite clear; there is only one whom we should be imitating: Jesus Christ. Thankfully, by the grace and mercy of God not only do we have a perfect word (James 1:25) to follow, but we also have powerful examples of others, like Paul, to follow. Let us all be the best Christians we can be every single day!