

SERVING LIKE JESUS

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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Pastor Michael McCall

Romans 8:29 (28-31) *“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...”* Seven basic principles for Christians to become more like Christ Jesus...

Principle #1 - IDENTIFICATION. Know who you are.

This is the starting point. You must know who you are in Christ, otherwise everyone will try to make you someone you are not. Jesus had no doubt as to his identity. 18 times Jesus defines himself by saying **“I am _____”** and then he fills in the blank. Jesus says **“I am the truth...I am the way...I am the life...I am the Son of God...I am sent from the one above...I am the door...I am the bread of life...I am the living water...I am the resurrection.”** Jesus knew exactly who he was. Do you know who God made you to be? We all start off as originals but we often end up as carbon copies of somebody else...because we don't know who we are. Two traps that keep us from knowing our identity...copying and comparing. God says that's not right...because God made you to be you. Nobody is like you in the whole world. You have a unique thumbprint, eye print, voiceprint, footprint; nobody is like you. God never makes copies or clones. God made you, God loves you, and God likes you and God wants to bring out in you who He created you to be..

Listen up: since God likes you and if you like you, then if other people don't like you...that's their problem. You were made by God. You are not an accident. You are made for a purpose. You are deeply loved. You are fallen and flawed - but you are deeply loved...more than you will ever know. And Jesus died for you...that shows how much you are worth. Know that through Christ that you are a redeemed and reborn child of God...a “Christ-one”...a spiritual being alive now and forevermore.

Principle # 2 - MOTIVATION. Know what – and who - you are living for.

Jesus said in John 5:30 **“I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”** Jesus says “I'm not out to win a popularity contest. I'm just want to do what God put me on earth to do.” Friends, this will simplify your life. If you know who you are - “a Christ-one” - and if know who you're trying to please – “God who loves me”, then your life will be simplified and purposeful. We all get pulled in many directions trying to please others. Jesus never let the approval or rejection of others control him. **“No one can serve two masters”** Jesus said (Matthew 6:24), but rather **“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”** (Mt.6:33) Keep God first and the rest will follow. I like the way the Apostle Paul puts it...**“For Christ's love compels us...”** (2 Corinthians 5:14) Life is all about loving God and loving others.

Principle #3 – VOCATION. Know your calling.

Know what God has called you to do. The word “vocation” we use for your job or career. We talk about vocational training for a particular skill or job. The word “vocation” comes from the word “voce” or “voice”. “Vocation” means “calling”...what God has called you to do. When we respond to God's call and receive Jesus. As God's people, we are each given a calling...a purpose on this earth. I am called to be a pastor...other people are called to be other things. No vocation is more important than any other one. Whatever your calling is... that is your ministry. Everybody is called into ministry. Your ministry may be being a coach...or singing...or organizing things. But it's when you take what God shaped you to do and you use it for his glory...that's your ministry.

Principle # 4 - CONCENTRATION. Focus on what matters most.

Focus! Don't get distracted. You can spend your life on lots of good things. It's not a matter of right or wrong, good and evil...it's a matter of better and best.

Jesus is a master of concentration...and he focused his life like laser. Only 3 years of earthly ministry...it's still going strong! Light defused has no power at all...light focused has enormous power. If you want your life to matter, focus it. In Philippians 4:13, Paul says **“...one thing I do...”** He doesn't say “40 things I dabble in.” Luke 9:51, **“As the time approached for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”** Jesus knew what mattered most.

Listen up: The greatest use of your life is to invest it in that which will outlast it. Living for here and now is short-term thinking. Invest your life in that which will outlast your life because you're going to spend more time on the other side of death than on this side. If you want an effective life, selection is the name of the game. Know what matters most.

Principle #5 - MEDITATION. Listen to God.

Don't just talk to God...listen to God. “Why don't I hear from God?” Because you're not quiet. God can put impressions right into your mind. God invented radio waves...sound floating through this room right now...a radio could pull sound out. Same thing with television. God made your brain able to tune Him in with images and insights. If you get an idea and it is a bad idea, it isn't from God. If you get an idea that contradicts what's in the Bible, what God has already said in his truth, it's not from God. And God speaks in many different ways...through the Bible...through a Christian friend...

...and sometimes directly to your mind or heart. Luke 5:16 **“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”** Often! Christians, God speaks to us if we will listen.

Principle #6 – COLLABORATION. Join a small group.

Why? Because Jesus did. We were made in the image of God, which means we're relational. God is love. Father, Son and Holy Spirit in relationship. We were made for relationship. In Genesis 2:18 God said **“It is not good for the man to be alone.”** You don't have to have a spouse, but you need other people in your life. Before Jesus ever started his ministry, he started a small group. Jesus had a connection...a community. Mark 3:14 **“Jesus appointed twelve - designating them apostles - that they might be with him...”** If anybody had the right to do it on his own it was Jesus and Jesus showed us we need to be together. The Bible says the members are the ministers. We take care of each other best in small groups. As Jesus approached death, he said to his small group **“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here with me and keep watch with me.”** (Matthew 26:38) Being there for each other. Jesus needed it. We do too.

Principle #7 - RECREATION. Take time to recharge.

Seven different times in his ministry Jesus retreats. Rest, renewal, and recreation are so important that God put them in His Top 10. Jesus said **“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”** (Mark 2:27-28) We are not robots...we need rest. If you're too busy to take your vacation time you're too busy. If you're too busy to pray, you're too busy. And if you're too busy to relax, you're too busy. You need to stop and smell the roses. You need to enjoy the moment. Unless you take time to relax and schedule it there's always going to be something more urgent. But here is the key: Jesus is the Lord of Rest. The God who creates...recreates. Jesus said **“I came that you might have life.”** (John 10:10)