God's Goal for You: CHRISTLIKENESS

(Selected Scriptures)
11/15/03

By what do we measure our lives?

*** God's blueprint for our lives is Christlikeness!**
To Christians who were struggling with Judaizers and their cultic Legalism the Apostle Paul said: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again **until Christ be formed in you**" - Galatians 4:19

I. What is Christlikeness?

A. Christlikeness is modeling (copying) the transferable attitudes and actions of Jesus Christ
Galatians 1:16 To reveal his Son in me

B. Christlikeness is being molded by God into His Son's Image
*Ro 8:29 - For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

C. Christlikeness is possible for every single believer
*Col 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present **every man perfect in Christ Jesus**:*

D. Christlikeness is the evidence of Full Maturity
*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**:*

II. How can I be more Christlike?

A. Christlikeness is a work of God only possible for those who are in Christ
Galatians 2:20 - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Cp.I Cor.15:10)
1 Cor. 1:30 - But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

B. Christlikeness happens when we Follow Close to Jesus Christ
*1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that **ye should follow his steps***

C. Christlikeness grows through the Changing Process of God's Spirit
*Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*
*2 Cor. 3:18 - But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as **by the Spirit of the Lord**.*

D. Christlikeness happens through the Renewing of our Minds by the Instrument of God's Word
*Ephesians 4:23 And be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**;*
*Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is **renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him" Romans 12:2 "…be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"*

E. Christlikeness is produced in large part through the ministry of a local church (Eph.4:11-13)
*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**:*

F. Christlikeness can grow with age in the Lord
*2 Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the **inward man is renewed day by day**.*

G. Christlikeness grows through Trials & Tribulations (James 1:2-4)
***James 1:4** – "But let patience have her perfect work, **that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing**."*

H. One day in Heaven, we shall be perfectly like Him (1 John 3:2)
1 John 3:2 - Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

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Intro. Show Picture of one of the Kids

We look at our children and say "who does he/she look like?"

Who should God's children resemble?

By what do we measure our lives?

How do you know you have arrived at God's Standard?

Who is God's Standard by which we compare ourselves?
(It is certainly not each other - 2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise)

*** God's blueprint for our lives is Christlikeness!**

To Christians who were struggling with Judaizers and their cultic Legalism the Apostle Paul said: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again **until Christ be formed in you**" - Galatians 4:19
Paul had travailed to see them come to Christ, now he labored again to see the formation of Christlike character in them.
Note: the passive voice of the verb "formed" reveals that it is God who does the forming. We do not shape ourselves into Christlikeness. He does it as we yield to Him.

In our discipleship, who do we want our disciples to look like, act like, talk like, think like etc. Answer: Jesus Christ

In our Parenting, who do we want our children to look like, act like, talk like, think like etc. Answer: Jesus Christ

I. What is Christlikeness?

A. Christlikeness is modeling (copying) the transferable attitudes and actions of Jesus Christ

> **Galatians 1:16**
> **To reveal his Son in me**, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
1Co 11:1 ¶ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.
Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
1Jo 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.
1Jo 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

It is God's will that each one of His children reflect Christ in this world. That is, we are to shine as light and radiate the transferable attributes of Christ (that is His love, mercy, grace, holiness, etc.)

> A miner who had come back from the Klondike had made a unique gold watch-chain, composed of splendid nuggets taken from a mine in the newly discovered gold-fields in Alaska. A newspaper reporter, writing of it, said that wherever this miner went this striking chain of nuggets made him a walking advertisement for the Klondike, and aroused a desire in other men to go there. The sincere disciple of Jesus Christ who seizes every opportunity to do Christlike deeds is forming a chain of nuggets far more precious. Wherever he goes the imagination of men is aroused, and their desires awakened to know the Christ who makes such deeds possible. This is what Christ meant when he said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

To be a "Christian" means a "Christ-like-one"
Acts 11:26 "…And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

III. Alexander the Great and the man named Alexander

> Once a soldier was reported to Alexander the Great as having shown great cowardice on a particular occasion. When the soldier appeared before Alexander the Great, he asked him his name. On hearing that it was Alexander, he upbraided him with the dishonor that he had brought on such a name and entreated him either "Either change your ways or change your name"

B. Christlikeness is being molded by God into His Son's Image

Ro 8:29 ¶ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

"Predestined" = to determine in advance. To mark out with a boundary beforehand.

Predestination in this verse refers not to salvation but sanctification.

Our being "conformed to the image of His Son" has ultimate reference to our future bodily resurrection.

I Cor. 15:49 - "And as we have borne the image of the earth, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

"We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope (Rom. 8:24) in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (I Jn. 3:2, 3).
Our lives are to be formed into Christ-likeness.

This is God's plan for our lives here and now, not merely in the future.

When we were saved, we became God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Being a "Christian" means a "Christ-like-one" or a "follower of Christ" (Acts 11:26, 26:28; I Pet. 4:16).

**You will be like whom you follow.

God does not want His children to be conformed (put into the mold of) to this world (Rom. 12:1, 2), but to His Son.

You were not saved to be conformed to the image of some movie star, rock musician, sports figure, millionaire, or other celebrity!

"First born" - a title of honor, authority, and pre-eminence, not a reference to origin (Col. 1:15; cp. Ps. 89:27).

Jesus is called the "first born of the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." (Col. 1:18).

Ultimate perfection is found in Jesus Christ! (Hutz, BJU - Romans, p. 52).

To stoop to conform your life to anyone else is to choose far less than the best!

C. Christlikeness is possible for every single believer

Col 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present **every man perfect in Christ Jesus**:

"Whom we preach" - the message Paul proclaimed (announced) was singular: "Christ!" (I Cor. 2:2)
"Warning" = "noutheteo" - to put into the mind; to confront one's thinking and to correct one's thoughts.
"Teaching" = indoctrinating

To teach in "all wisdom" is to teach about Christ, because it is in Christ that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" reside (Col. 2:3).

Paul's purpose (his motive, his goal) = "That we might present (as an offering to God) every man perfect (complete; mature) in Christ"
Paul's whole life and ministry was wrapped up in this goal: mature believers.

D. Christlikeness is the evidence of Full Maturity

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**:

God's goal is that we would be "a perfect man" = a complete, mature man (in contrast to the reference to "children" - v. 14)

God's goal is that we would receive all that Christ has to offer us - for life and godliness.

God wants us to have the whole measurer of Christ's fullness. His will is that we come to a full maturity. This fullness does not come from us, but from Christ.

If we only grow half way, we have not fulfilled God's will for our lives. His will is total maturity.

No parent would be pleased if their children only grew up to the second grade education or up to 10 years emotionally, or up to 12 years physically.

ILLUS: the sadness of mental and physical retardation is not as sad as spiritual retardation - when we fail to grow up (Heb. 5:11-14).

The reason we assemble each time we gather is to grow into Christ-likeness. This happens when God's word is faithfully proclaimed. Although many a faithful pastor/Sunday School teacher/ AWANA worker/ Jr. Church Worker etc. sometimes wonders at the effectiveness of his ministry. God no doubt has used many who questioned their effectiveness.

> Coming to the close of many years of faithful ministry, an aged pastor tied his sermon notes in a bundle and wrote on it: "Where has the influence of all the sermons I have preached gone?" One who had been under his ministry for years and who had grown in Christlikeness and in the knowledge of God's Word, gave the following heartfelt appraisal of his sermons: "Where are last year's sunrays? They have gone into fruits and grains and vegetables to feed mankind. Where are last year's raindrops? Forgotten, of course, but they did their gracious and refreshing work. Your sermons, preached over the years, have gone into my life and into the lives of others, to make me and them better, nobler, and more Christlike. They have deepened our love for God's Word, given us a vision of and love for unsaved ones, and have challenged us to go on in the Christian life!"

My friend, don't get discouraged! The world would be vastly different, if it were not for the changes wrought by your labor for Christ. (Ill. Jimmy Stewart's film: "It's a Wonderful Life")

Never forget however, that it is your reflection of Christ that will make the biggest impact.

As the moon reflects the sun, so the believer is to reflect the Son and thus be "the light of the world…."

II. How can I be more Christlike?

A. Christlikeness is a work of God only possible for those who are in Christ

You can't be like (resemble) someone you are not related to We have His "Seed" remaining in us (I John 3:9); His Holy Spirit.

Galatians 2:20 - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Cp.I Cor.15:10)

Positionally we are perfect in Christ:
Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

We are complete in Christ:
Colossians 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

In Christ we have everything we need spiritually:
1 Cor. 1:30
But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Positionally, we have the righteousness of Christ. Because Christ is God, the Scriptures say that we have the "righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21)

Practically, it is God's plan that we also live unto righteousness.
1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

It is wrong for us to expect Christ-likeness from a non-believer

> On September 11, 1992, an unusual parking ticket was given on Piru Street in south-central Los Angeles. At 9:46 a.m. an officer wrote up the ticket for an illegally parked Cadillac. There was no question that the car was in violation. The driver did not object to the ticket. In fact, the driver didn't say a word. He couldn't. He was dead! The officer had taken time to observe the parking violation, write a ticket, then stick his hand through the open window (within inches of the body stiffly sitting upright behind the steering wheel) and place the $30 citation on the dashboard. He never noticed the man was dead. Paramedics said the man had been dead ten to twelve hours when the ticket was given. That officer shares a common trait with many Christians. We walk through life citing others with petty violations while remaining oblivious to the fact that they are spiritually dead. We're offended or repulsed by the behavior of some non-Christians and rebuke them for not acting more Christ-like. The fact is, they don't have the power to change. They are "illegally parked" and can't do a thing about it without Christ. Christians can help by personally introducing them to the love and power of Jesus.
>
> * Houston Chronicle, Sept. 13, 1992, p. 10A

B. Christlikeness happens when we Follow Close to Jesus Christ

1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that **ye should follow his steps**

Matthew 11:28-30
Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
[29]Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30]For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

We are encouraged to Follow Jesus:
Mt 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.
Mt 16:24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.
John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

C. Christlikeness grows through the Changing Process of God's Spirit

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth ***the Spirit <u>of his</u> <u>Son</u>*** *into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

2 Cor. 3:18 - But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are ***changed into the same image*** *from glory to glory, even as* ***by the Spirit of the Lord****.*

D. Christlikeness happens through the Renewing of our Minds by the Instrument of God's Word

Ephesians 4:23 And be ***renewed in the spirit of your mind****;*

Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is ***renewed in knowledge*** *after the image of him that created him"*

Romans 12:2 "…be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"

E. Christlikeness is produced in large part through the ministry of a local church (Eph.4:11-13)

The pastor-teacher1)equips
2)so that each can minister
3)with the result of edification

Note the words in the context which speak of growth:
"perfect" (v. 13)
"fullness" (v. 13)
"no more children" (v. 14)
"grow up" (v. 15)
"increase" (v. 16)
"edifying" (v. 16)

*God wants us (the "Body" of Christ - v. 12) to grow up!
Why grow?
1. We need to grow so that we would have unity (v. 13a)
   (Growth promotes balanced harmony in the Body)
2. We need to grow so that we would have maturity (v. 13b)
   (Growth builds and develops the Body)
3. We need to grow so that we would have stability (v. 14)
   (Growth aids the protective defense system of the Body)

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**:

F. Christlikeness can grow with age in the Lord

2 Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

> A scientific observer of wide experience and observation declares that all nectar-gathering insects, such as the common honeybee, manifest a strong preference for the finest flowers. The more perfect in form, color, and fragrance, the more they are attracted to it, as they seem to know by instinct that there they will find the richest supply of honey. It is from the characters and lives of those who are most like Him who is the Altogether Lovely that the souls of others can gather the most sweetness of God's love and grace. To be Christlike, is to be winsome; to grow in grace, to grow in Divine attractiveness.

G. Christlikeness grows through Trials & Tribulations (James 1:2-4)

James 1:4 *– "But let patience have her perfect work,* ***that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing****."*

Example: When the Goldsmith sees his reflection in the refined gold, he then turns off the heat. (ex. Job)

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

H. One day in Heaven, we shall be perfectly like Him (1 John 3:2)

1 John 3:2 - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Philippians 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Those who are GODLY:

Psalms 4:3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;