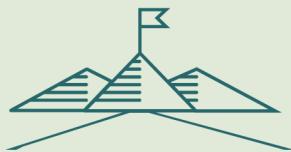


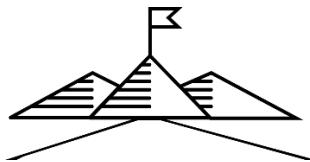


ROLE MODELS: WHO IS YOUR HERO AND WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING



THE CHRISTIAN
LINGUA TEAM

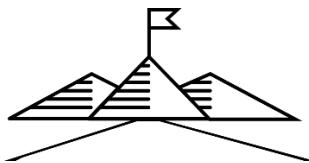
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
PART I: THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE MODELS	5
PART II: JESUS—THE ULTIMATE HERO.....	12
PART III: FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A DISTRACTING WORLD	20
PART IV: BECOMING A ROLE MODEL FOR OTHERS	28
FINAL THOUGHTS	35



INTRODUCTION

Everyone admires someone, be it an athlete, a musician, an actor, or a family member. People admire others for various reasons, including their skills, accomplishments, and aura. But have you taken time to reflect on the question: What makes me admire this person?

The people we look up to influence us more than we can imagine. Their principles, decisions, and even actions can determine the way we think, talk, or even behave. This is the reason we must be extremely careful in choosing our heroes. Society preaches that fame, power, and success are the ultimate goals to achieve, and as Christians, we need to follow a different type of paradigm.

The only perfect role model is Jesus. While it is okay to have mentors and role models, we have to ask ourselves something – are the people I look up to bringing me closer to God or farther away from Him? Let's look into that collectively and find out what it means to follow the right heroes and how they impact our faith.

1

THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE MODELS

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:1

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

Role Modeling in Life and Faith

Role models play an essential role in shaping who we are and who we become. A role model is someone we look up to and seek to emulate, often because of their values, character, and actions. Biblically, role modeling is deeply rooted in the idea of leading by example. The role model definition in Christian terms is someone who lives according to God's teachings, inspiring others to follow suit. For Christians, the ultimate role model is Christ Himself, whose life exemplified love, humility, and obedience to God.

When we speak of role modeling, we refer to the act of exemplifying virtues and behaviors that others can look up to and imitate. Just as Paul guided others by imitating Christ, we are called to be role models to others, leading them with our actions and words. What is a role model in the Christian context? It's someone who not only lives in alignment with biblical teachings but also actively encourages others to do the same.

How Heroes Shape Our Character and Decisions

It's up to us to accept or reject this idea, but the reality is that our heroes directly influence how we live. Our parents, guides, teachers, and so on impact our values and beliefs in more ways than one.

Remember when you were a kid? You had a favorite teacher or an older sibling or even a friend, and I'm guessing you tiptoed your way through

ROLE MODELS

following them. You admired how they dressed and talked or what they did in their free time. Well, the reason behind this is simple. The people we admire impact our lifestyle choices.

Believe it or not, this behavior doesn't stop when you grow older. The society we respect for whatever reason still impacts what we believe in and how we act. Sometimes, this happens without us even realizing it. This is the reason why we should always be critically asking ourselves questions designed to get to know whom we admire and the true difference they create for society.

The Power of Example

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul wrote, *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”* He knew that it was not about pointing others to himself, but leading them towards Jesus. Paul was fully devoted to God, which showed in the way he lived, and he inspires us to do the same.

This verse reminds us that if we are to admire others, we must be selective about who we choose. Role models of integrity inspire us to follow God's path. However, if we idolize wealth, power, or fame, we risk losing sight of what truly matters.

Teachers as role models hold a special place in our lives, guiding us not only academically but morally and spiritually. A teacher's behavior, values, and character can deeply influence their students, shaping the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and followers of Christ. Teachers, through their words and actions, have the power to inspire and lead by example, demonstrating the very essence of role modeling.

Every role model leaves an imprint, but the question is: What kind of imprint do we want to leave on the lives of others?

Role Models Influence Our Choices

Look back at the choices you made. The way you solved a problem, whether it was big or small, the way you interacted with a person, or the milestones you set for yourself — all these actions were most probably based on how people around you have affected you.

FIELD GUIDE

If you have a close friend or family member that you have a lot of respect for and they tend to be nice, patient, and generous, you will try your best to execute the same traits. On the other hand, if the person you hold in high regard tends to be selfish or dishonest, then you will begin to adopt those attitudes.

That is the reason for Proverbs 13:20, which states, “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.” Take a moment to think about and reflect on whom you spend time with because they can directly destroy your character.

Simply put, we follow certain people because we want to capture their characteristics. So, we must ask, are those people whom we admire making us wise, or are they pushing us away from wisdom?

As we engage in role modeling for others, we must ensure that we’re influencing them positively. Role modeling is a responsibility, and we should reflect on the qualities of a role model that we want to portray to those around us.

How Cultural Influence Alters Reality

Every one of us has control of who and what to follow. In this case, social media, movies, music, and television have labeled certain individuals as role idols, and some of them turn out to contradict God’s truth.

The world places great importance on self-promotion, riches, influence, and wealth. We are taught that to be successful, one must be ahead and respected by others. However, this is not what Jesus taught us.

In Matthew 20:26, He said, “*Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.*” That’s not the message we usually hear, is it? Instead of chasing status, Jesus calls us to serve.

Instead of seeking approval, He calls us to live humbly. It is easier to let social media define one’s idol. People are more likely to base their personas in order to feel accepted instead of living with an internal purpose. This belief underlines my statement of idolizing individuals showing a Godly belief as opposed to a materialistic approach in the first place.

ROLE MODELS

A role model characteristics go beyond just being admired; it's about embodying values that truly align with Christ-like humility and service to others. Instead of idolizing fame, wealth, and influence, we should focus on the role modeling that encourages us to live out Christian values.

Impact of Role Models Who Center Their Lives Around Christ

Ideal role models are those who demonstrate Christ's love, wisdom, and humility. Role model examples include:

- Your mentor helps you develop your faith.
- A friend who always speaks wisely and kindly.
- A pastor or teacher who leads with great humility and wisdom.

These people, through their example, help us be more Christlike by being faithful, patient, and loving. They help us focus on the things that count—not money, fame, and power, but everything that honors Almighty God.

By role modeling a life of obedience to God, these role models encourage us to also get closer to God. They motivate us to grow spiritually, serve others, and even trust God during difficult times.

That doesn't mean they're perfect. No human role model will ever be. But when their hearts are set on Christ, their influence draws us closer to God instead of pulling us away.

The Danger of the Wrong Role Models

Although some negative influences stand out, like someone who lies and denies the existence of God, there are also those who are more subtle. For instance, a dishonest or gossiping friend can be a terrible role model.

A reminder from the Bible states, "*Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'*" 1 Corinthians 15:33. This means that negative influences, even among friends, can lead us away from goodness.

Those we admire can have profound effects on us, and the people we look up to set our habits, priorities, and attitudes. Simply put, bad role models lead to bad character. This leads to questions like: Do my heroes inspire a more worldly version of me? Are they helping me grow in faith or aiding me in compromising?

FIELD GUIDE

Many people intend to follow God but tend to drift away from Him just because of poor role modeling without them realizing the repercussions. The reality of it all is that we are who we strive to be.

We need to control whom we admire. If our role models constantly chase materialistic items, fame, or anything that caters to self-desire, we're bound to drift from what we value most. But if we follow people who love God, serve others, and live with integrity, those values will take root in us as well.

Identifying Worldly vs. Godly Influences

Almost everything we do is influenced by the world. Social media, TV shows, music, and even people we interact with tend to influence us. This, in turn, encourages self-interest, which leads to materialism and instant gratification.

The world views success as having the most money, fame, and power. It celebrates individuals who cannot think beyond their selfish desires and God. This promotes the idea of self-centeredness, a prideful attitude, and happiness that is linked with possessions and popularity.

1 John 2:15-16 warns us, *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.”*

This does not mean we cannot appreciate a talented person or someone who has worked hard to earn our admiration. But it means that we need to be careful with who influences us. If the people we look up to value faith less than fame, integrity less than money, and holiness less than pleasure, then we could be following the wrong people.

Godly Influences: Whom We Should Follow

A godly influence is someone whose life points back to Christ. They may not be rich or famous, but their actions, words, and choices reflect faith, wisdom, and humility. They are people who live with integrity, who serve others, and who put God first in everything they do.

ROLE MODELS

Proverbs 13:20 says, “*Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.*” When we surround ourselves with people who love God, we learn from them. We see what it looks like to live with patience, kindness, and faithfulness.

Godly influences aren’t perfect. They make mistakes like everyone else. But the difference is that their hearts are set on following Christ. When they fail, they look for a way to be forgiven, and when they succeed, they glorify God. Their lives are not about beating personal goals but are greater than that; they live to serve in God’s kingdom.

These types of role models will assist us in maturing in our faith as well as help us become what God wants us to be.

How to Tell the Difference

Sometimes, deciding whether someone is considered a worldly or godly influence can be difficult. If someone promotes excessive greed, dishonesty, or selfishness, then we clearly know that their example is not helpful.

But sometimes it's tricky. A person might seem to be a wonderful role model—they may be nice, generous, or even hardworking. But if these people do not possess God's priorities, then they can also cause us to go astray.

Ask yourself the following questions while considering the people around you who may be influencing you:

- Does this person help me to deepen my walk with God?
- Do their actions and words show Christian principles?
- Are they more focused on gaining control or power and status for themselves instead of humility, integrity, and love?
- Following their lead, will I end up becoming more Christlike or more worldly?

The things or even a person we admire change our behavior and thinking in a certain way. Therefore, we need to analyze the people we admire and see if they lead us toward wisdom, truth, and righteousness.

FIELD GUIDE

Shifting Our Focus to Christ

At the end of the day, no human role model will be perfect. Even the best leaders and mentors make mistakes. That's why Jesus should be our ultimate example.

Hebrews 12:2 says, *“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”*

Jesus taught us to live a life of love and service while putting God first. He did not chase money or fame; He served and forgave His enemies, all while remaining strong during His suffering. Once we start focusing on Christ, our approach to the world shifts completely. Rather than seeking success, we search for a deeper purpose in life. We go on to understand that which is truly great, and we find out that pursuing wealth and high status is meaningless. True greatness is being devoted to God.

In order to select positive influences, following Jesus and His ways must come first.

Discussion: Who Do You Admire Most, and Why?

1. Who is someone that inspires you, and what attributes do you cherish?
2. Do they have heavenly influences, or are they simply worldly?
3. How did the people you chose to follow affect your decisions and behavior?
4. What actions can you take to have a more godly influence on the people around you?

The people that we follow and admire have the power to shape our lives positively or negatively. It is truly up to us. This is why we must always be aware of whom we let influence us.

This week, reflect on the people who motivate you and their impact on your life. Is there a chance they could be leading you far from Christ? If yes, take a break and go seek godly role models.

After all, a person does not need to be famous for their whole life to be a hero. The one whom we should all follow and admire is Jesus because he sacrificed his life for us.

2

JESUS—THE ULTIMATE HERO

Key Scripture: Hebrews 12:2

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."

Why Jesus Is the Perfect Role Model

Everyone has role models who they strive to be like and look up to. Some admire athletes for being disciplined, actors for being talented, or famous role models for achieving great things. But despite that impact, they all have imperfections. They struggle, make mistakes, and fail just like us; they are only human, after all.

That is why, as believers, we are encouraged to turn our attention to Jesus. Unlike anyone else, Jesus is the perfect example of how we should live. He lived his life without sinning, being selfish, or walking away from God's intentions for him. He did not live for fame, the spotlight of the world, power, or wealth; rather, he lived for love, truth, and obedience to the Father.

If we want to know what true greatness looks like, we don't need to look any further. Jesus is the greatest hero of all. His life teaches us how to honor God, and his sacrifice teaches us how to live our lives.

Jesus Led with Humility

In the world's eyes, heroes are often powerful, wealthy, and admired by many. But Jesus showed us something completely different. He did not seek power, and instead humbled Himself and served others.

Philippians 2:5-7 says, *"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not*

FIELD GUIDE

consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.”

While Jesus could have demanded to be worshiped and treated with respect, He chose to remain humble. He spent time with the outcasts of society, healed the sick, and even washed His disciples' feet. He never demanded recognition or sought status—He simply loved and served.

That's the kind of hero worth following. A leader who puts others before Himself.

Jesus Walked in Love and Compassion

Jesus was loved by many, and one of the key reasons for this was His profound love for humanity. His compassion didn't end with those who were easiest to care for. He extended His love to the outcasts, sinners, and even those who turned against Him.

Consider how He treated people whom others rejected. He was open and understanding, even when it came to the tax collectors. He didn't shy away from eating with sinners, and He went out of His way to speak to the Samaritan woman at the well. This interaction wasn't just a one-time act; it became a role model example of how to engage with people society rejected. Jesus role modeled compassion in a way that broke down cultural barriers.

Take Mary Magdalene, for instance—a woman often judged by society. Jesus' encounter with her transformed her life, showing us that a female role model can be someone who moves from being misunderstood and dismissed to becoming a key follower of Christ. In the same way, Jesus empowered women, showing that they too could serve, lead, and exemplify God's love. He didn't see her as less worthy or incapable but as someone to be valued and loved, just like any man.

Even in the midst of enduring mockery and suffering on the cross, Jesus continued to pray for His enemies, saying, *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34).

Jesus shows us the full extent of love—a love that goes beyond boundaries, beyond deserving or not. He challenges us to love others the same way, even those who may seem hard to love. We are called to role

ROLE MODELS

model Jesus' love in our lives, reflecting role modeling in a way that leads others closer to Christ.

By choosing to role model His compassion, we set an example for others, not just by what we say, but by the love we give to all people, regardless of their past or shortcomings. Our role model definition of love comes from the greatest example—Jesus Christ. This isn't a task of simple kindness but a life-altering choice to be a role model of Christ's unconditional love in the world.

Jesus Spoke Truth With Courage

Aside from being loving and caring, He also spoke the truth and did so with great courage. He was ready to face religious leaders head-on, correct wrongdoings, and get to the essence of the matter.

Jesus was sure of himself when he stated, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,”* John 14:6. But unlike many others, Jesus did not put a spin on his doctrines for the approval of people. He presented the truth with love and confidence, nothing more or less.

Jesus's followers should exhibit the courage to fight for the truth regardless of hostility and opposition. It means embracing the path of difficulty while ignoring the approval of many. A genuine hero critiques the apparent ideologies out there and declares the hardest/inconvenient truth.

Jesus Showed Unshakable Faith

Jesus didn't just talk about faith—He lived it. Everything He did was rooted in complete trust in the Father.

He set aside time for prayer prior to selecting His disciples. He prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane before dealing with the cross by saying, *“Yet not my will, but yours be done”* (Luke 22:42). During the time in the wilderness when he was tempted, He also held true to God's Word.

Even at the most difficult times, he always held true to His trust in God. He fully mandated them whether it came at a cost or not.

FIELD GUIDE

How much more should we pray and have faith if Jesus, the Son of God, depended on it so much? He teaches us that real strength is not what we possess but being totally and completely dependent on God.

Jesus Sacrificed Everything for Us

The greatest act of heroism is sacrifice. And no one made a greater sacrifice than Jesus.

He didn't just heal, teach, or inspire—he sacrificed himself completely for our lives. He paid our sin debts so that our lives would be free. He went through pain so that we can have salvation.

John 15:13 says, "*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*"

That is what Jesus did, not only for His close friends but for everyone – including you, me, and the entire world.

This is why He is the ultimate hero. Not because He performed miracles or gathered crowds, but because He gave up everything to save us. No other hero, no other role model, can compare to that kind of love.

Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

Every person we admire will have their weaknesses. No human can ever serve as a perfect hero. But with Jesus? He is the only role model who will never fail us.

That's why Hebrews 12:2 says to "*fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer, and the perfecter of faith.*" Not only is He the one and the only true leader we are allowed to follow, but also the one person who is more than worthy of being followed.

So, let us strive to imitate Jesus. Let us follow his example of humility, love, faith, sacrifice, and truth. Let us love the way he loved and live the way he lived.

Because in the end, He is the only hero who can truly change our lives for the better.

ROLE MODELS

Learning from Christ's Humility, Love, and Obedience

Following Jesus means putting effort into becoming like Him, not just believing in Him. Everything about Him, such as the way He lived, how he treated people, and how He obeyed God, are proof of the harsh reality of faith we must come to truly accept.

Realistically, it is still difficult to try to live your life like Jesus. Selfishness is what guides the masses, and the primary focus is on what's in it for them, while success and fame should always be the end goal. In contrast, Jesus lived in obedience to God and loved people. If we want to be His followers, we must look up to Him.

What actions should we take to achieve this? How do we replicate His ways and implement them in our lives? Every journey begins with learning, and for this particular one, we focus on three characteristics which are love, humility, and obedience.

Christ's Humility: True Greatness Comes from Serving

Nowadays, no one practices humility. Everybody seeks compliments, being put on a pedestal, and appreciation. There are lots of people on social media trying to show off how significant they are. But Jesus taught us to live life differently.

Philippians 2:5-7 says, "*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God.*" Jesus had every reason to be treated as a royal Emperor, but instead, He chose to humble himself to serve others. He washed the feet of His disciples. He spent time with the poor and outcasts. He never used His power to elevate Himself—only to help others.

That's real humility. It's not about undervaluing yourself; it's about valuing others. It's about serving rather than being served, using what skills and opportunities you possess to their fullest potential.

Pride has to be cast aside if we want to embrace service as part of following Jesus. True service takes place out of the public eye and without reward. Because God's Kingdom is built on humble service, true greatness stems from there.

FIELD GUIDE

Christ's Love: A Love That Has No Limits

Jesus didn't just preach love; He role modeled it. Every word He spoke, every miracle He performed, and every sacrifice He made stemmed from a heart rooted in love. His love wasn't limited to a specific group or a set of people; it was inclusive and transformative.

But Christ's love went beyond the expected. He loved sinners, the broken, the outcasts, and even those considered His enemies. Consider how He treated people whom others rejected. He healed lepers when no one else would touch them. He forgave the woman caught in adultery when the crowd wanted to stone her. He welcomed tax collectors and sinners, people others deemed unworthy, when everyone else avoided them.

In this way, Jesus didn't just talk about love; He role modeled it. His love wasn't conditional on worthiness, nor did it seek validation from others. He role modeled unconditional love, demonstrating that it wasn't about those deserving it, but about sharing it freely with those in need.

Think about the women He interacted with. His love extended to women who were often marginalized in society. Jesus broke cultural norms, welcoming women as followers, leaders, and role models in their own right. Women like Mary Magdalene, who was once oppressed and judged, became central figures in His ministry, not as passive bystanders but as role models of faith and courage. Through His actions, Jesus showed the world that women too were to be valued and empowered to follow God's call.

Even on the cross, when He was being mocked and tortured, Jesus didn't abandon His mission of love. He still prayed, saying, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*" (Luke 23:34). This is the ultimate example of role modeling: not just loving when it's easy, but loving in the most difficult of circumstances.

This is the kind of love Jesus had. A love that doesn't keep score, doesn't hold grudges, and doesn't turn away from those who need it most. If we are to follow Jesus, we too must embody this kind of love—not just for our family and friends but for everyone. Even for those who frustrate us, those who hurt us, and those who don't deserve it.

ROLE MODELS

Because the truth is, none of us deserved Jesus' love, but He gave it freely anyway. And now, He calls us to do the same. Just as Jesus modeled love for us, we are called to role model that love for others, even those we find difficult to love.

In this way, role modeling Christ's love becomes a calling for all, demonstrating the transformative power of love in action. Women, like men, are called to role model this Christlike love in their daily lives, shaping not just their own hearts but influencing others to do the same.

Christ's Obedience: Following God No Matter the Cost

One of the most powerful things about Jesus was His absolute obedience to God. He never did anything for His gain—everything He did was to fulfill the Father's will. Even when obedience meant suffering, He remained faithful.

In Matthew 26:39, the night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, *“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

He knew the pain that was coming. He knew the suffering He would endure. But He chose God's plan over His own comfort.

That's what true obedience looks like. It's trusting God even when it's hard. It's following Him even when we don't understand everything. It's saying, “God, I trust You more than I trust myself.”

Sometimes, obedience means stepping out of our comfort zone. Sometimes, it means making sacrifices. But when we obey God, we can trust that His plan is always greater than anything we could choose for ourselves.

Discussion: How Can Following Jesus Change Your Life?

1. How do you think your life would change if you practiced true humility like Jesus did?
2. How would your life transform for the better if you embraced the love of Jesus?
3. What do you think is one thing God wants you to trust Him with more?

FIELD GUIDE

4. What steps can you take to follow Jesus' example of humility, loving others as yourself, and obedience?

Being a follower of Jesus is more than believing in Him. It is about imitating Him: practicing humility instead of pride, loving instead of selfishness, and obedience instead of self-comfort.

Society expects a lot from us. We are required to achieve great results, love ourselves first, and value relationships only with people who value us back. It is understood that these are much lower than what Jesus expects from us.

When the expectation is to love Jesus, we must walk in His footsteps, transforming everything to Him.

3

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A DISTRACTING WORLD

Key Scripture: Romans 12:2

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

We Must Stay Focused on Christ When the World Pulls Us Away

Our life is full of distractions, and with every turn we take, something is always trying to gain our attention. From social media to entertainment, success, relationships, and so on, the world is full of opportunities. We are constantly stuck in the middle, trying to find something valuable, things to admire, and what goals to attempt. But if we're careless, we can end up pursuing the wrong things without realizing it.

Romans 12:2 tells us “Do not be conformed to this world.” We need to keep an eye out on who and what we allow to influence us. Is God's trust shaping us, or are we letting the world decide our fate?

The challenge is not just avoiding sins but being able to recognize the signs when our focus is being shifted away from Christ. When our hearts start wanting worldly success other than spiritual growth, entertainment over prayers, and influencers' claims other than God's word, we might be drifting away from Him.

FIELD GUIDE

If you want to stay focused on Christ in a materialistic world, you need to start recognizing what is pulling you away and learn to guard your heart from worldly things.

False Idols Can Be Dangerous

When we think of “idols,” we think of statues and ancient gods. But idols still exist today—just in different forms.

An idol is anything in place of God in our hearts. This can take the form of a job, a marriage, money, popularity, or even a sense of personal well-being. When an individual bases his/her identity, goals, or well-being on anything outside of Christ, it becomes idolatry.

Exodus 20:3 says, *“You shall have no other gods before me.”* This is clearly more than just a command about people worshiping idols; it is crucial in ensuring that nothing and no one takes the place of God in our lives.

Every idol or idolized character fails to provide satisfaction. Money can be lost. Success can fade. Relationships can disappoint. But God is unchanging. When we put Him first, we build our lives on something that will never fail.

So how do we know if something has become an idol? A good question to ask is, *“Would my joy and faith still be there if this were taken away?”* If not, then it is time to surrender whatever has taken the place of Christ and refocus on Him.

Worldly Influences That Distract Us

We receive constant messages from the world about what we should want and how we need to live. It sets the definition of success and associates happiness with wealth, fame, and chasing one’s own gratifying interests. But these things are never truly satisfying.

1 John 2:15 warns us, *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.”*

You can still enjoy life, but it does mean that we must be mindful of what we prioritize the most.

Some of the greatest distractions are:

ROLE MODELS

- **Social media and entertainment** - These in themselves are not bad. But when they begin to dictate our lives and influence our thoughts more than the Word, they become problematic.
- **The Pursuit of Success and Validation** - Most people who work hard get results, and this is not wrong, but when our value is associated with what we accomplish instead of with Christ, we can oftentimes forget what is most important.
- **Cultural pressures** – The world promotes values that often go against God's truth. Without His instruction, it is possible to start believing ideas that are in contradiction with His Word.

It's easy to fall into the trap of simply going along with what the masses are doing. However, as a believer in Christ, you are expected to live differently, meaning prioritizing the right decision over the popular one and the everlasting over the temporary.

How to Follow Jesus' Path

Following Jesus in a distracting world requires intentional effort. We can't just drift through life and expect to stay close to Him. We need to focus on choices that strengthen our faith and what really matters.

Here are a few ways to follow Jesus's path:

Refresh Your Thinking with God's Word

Romans 12:2 tells us to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” Spending time in the scriptures is the most valuable thing one can spend their time on. Our hearts are shaped by our thoughts. And if we depend on the world's ideas rather than God's truth, we will only learn the ways of the world.

Focus On The Impact Of Everything You Consume

Philippians 4:8 says we should focus on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. This statement emphasizes the point that not everything we consume or listen to is good for us. Recommendation: Choose media that supports your beliefs rather than challenge them.

Make Time Available For Prayer

FIELD GUIDE

Set aside some time for daily prayer. This is a solid way to stay proactive in ensuring that one stays connected to God. Prayer is not only about asking for things but also using it as an opportunity to let God shape your heart and decisions. Making time on a regular basis to speak to God will aid in ensuring the world's distractions do not sway us.

Spend Time With Like-Minded Believers

Surrounding yourself with believers has proven beneficial in making someone stronger in their faith. Doing so allows someone to concentrate more on their relationship with Christ. The people we associate ourselves with are who we become, as Proverbs 27:17 says. *“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”*

Redirect Your Focus On Heavenly Things

Making God a priority allows him to put everything into perspective for you. You will find yourself chasing these earthly things, which may seem appealing but always leave one feeling unfulfilled. As Matthew 6:33 says, *“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”* True fulfillment comes from pursuing God, not the world.

Practical Ways to Keep Christ at the Center

Keeping Christ at the center of our lives is easier said than done. Everyone has responsibilities and distractions that make it exceptionally easy to forget about God for a long time.

As stated earlier, keeping Christ at the center of our lives requires conscious effort on our part. There are always small, daily decisions we can make to help us stay connected to God even when life gets too busy to handle. But the question, how do we ensure we have an active, healthy relationship with God that's not overworked or thought about purely on a Sunday?

The answer is simpler than you think. Focus on practical steps during your day-to-day life that will help you turn your attention towards God.

ROLE MODELS

Start the Day with God

The first thing we do when we wake up speaks volumes. Imagine looking at your phone first thing in the morning. Scrolling through social media and then checking emails already sends your mind racing. Instead, what if we spent a moment focusing on God? Switching our focus from everything else to God helps bring everything into perspective.

Don't worry if you are thinking this means you have to pray for hours at a time before getting out of bed. Even a split second for God has the potential to change your day for the better. Simply thanking Him for the new day or reading a short Bible passage can help begin the day the right way.

Giving God your first thought of the day motivates us to take life day by day rather than focusing solely on a checklist.

Stay in God's Word

The Word of God tells us the essence of who we are and why we do what we do. When a person stops thinking about the truths of their life, purposefully, they begin to drift away from the essence of Christ. The methods of social media, news, and even entertainment are constantly replayed in the world, and if we do not take caution, we could lose ourselves to these voices and forget about the voice of God.

Role modeling is crucial here, as we should be looking up to godly role models who prioritize God's Word. Male role models, like Jesus, show us how to live in alignment with Scripture, and they inspire us to keep focused on the Word of God instead of the fleeting trends of the world.

In Matthew 4:4, the Lord said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God," and He is correct. Just as our bodies need food, our souls also need to be spiritually nourished.

Indulging in the reading of the Bible should not be done as if the person is trying to complete a box on a list, but rather to make it their goal to hear God. His heart, wisdom, and guidance for our life pour into our hearts only through His Word. Remaining in His Word, no matter how minor the verse may seem, directs our attention to essential portions of life that indeed matter.

FIELD GUIDE

Make Prayer a Conversation, Not a Routine

There are set times of the day when people pray, myself included, before meals, at church, or when seeking help from God. Despite seeming casual, these set times can give rise to a false sense of security that prayer is being performed. A person can become routine-oriented along the journey and forget the sweet essence of a relationship with God.

Picture only speaking to your best friend for five minutes once a week. That wouldn't feel like much of a friendship, right? With God, the same concept applies. He desires us to spend the entire day conversing with Him instead of just during scheduled moments.

Choose Godly Influences

It's much easier to walk away from God when the people we spend most of our time with do not value the same things as we do. If we do not pay attention to our inner self, it becomes effortless to drift away from God.

We shouldn't completely jibe interactions with non-believers, but seeking people who help us grow in our faith becomes even more important.

This might look like:

- Joining a small group or Bible study class.
- Looking for someone to help you out spiritually for mentorship.
- Hanging out with friends who motivate you to grow more in your walk with Christ.
- People who care about Jesus strengthen our faith and keep us on track.

Weakness: Being too attentive

Distractions go from neutral to negative and begin as small phenomena that start infringing upon our lives until they sideline or marginalize Jesus.

Consider whatever it is that passes the time: social media on a phone, work/school or personal goals, or specific forms of entertainment. None of these are sinful, but they do not help draw us closer to God.

ROLE MODELS

According to Hebrews 12:1, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

This requires us to identify the things that pull us away from Christ and shift our intentions from doing, changing what we find necessary. In order to remain close to Jesus, we may have to willingly accept dropping a few distractions.

Live with Purpose

Being intentional is one of the best ways to stay focused on Christ, and viewing our day-to-day as contributing to God's grand scheme of things certainly helps.

Work isn't simply a means to earn an income, it is an opportunity to serve God through what we do.

Relationships aren't limited to simply associating with each other, but rather, they present opportunities for us to show God's love.

Problems and challenges are not obstacles or setbacks but opportunities to strengthen our faith.

As it is stated in the Bible, Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

When we take this approach to our day-to-day lives, Christ does not remain a small compartment of our lives but the very foundation of everything we do.

Discussion: What gets in the way of being with Christ?

1. Which activities or events in your life pull your attention away from spending time with Jesus?
2. How can you make an effort to ensure Christ is a priority in your everyday activities?
3. What type of behaviors, people, or even things do you need to cut back on or eliminate to remain spiritually healthy?
4. What is one small step you can take this week to help you feel closer to Christ?

FIELD GUIDE

Keeping Christ at the center and focusing all while having to make daily decisions is not about perfection- it's about choices and how to prioritize Him moment by moment and in everything you do.

Make sure to spend some time this week asking yourself what things are trying to gain your attention. Then, narrow it down to just one step you can take to focus your attention on what truly matters. Remember, the closer we are to Christ, the more we are free to be who He envisioned us to be.

4

BECOMING A ROLE MODEL FOR OTHERS

Key Scripture: Matthew 5:16

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Guiding Others Toward Jesus Through Our Day-to-Day Actions

Without even realizing it, each of us influences someone in some way. Our behavior, speech, and actions are the easiest ways to provide someone with direction, whether it be toward Jesus or away from Him.

Take a moment to consider the different individuals who have greatly impacted your life. There is a chance that a close friend, teacher, or parents as role models come to mind. They showed you what was correct instead of needing to motivate you to follow a set of rules. They acted in ways that proved their words.

We can be those types of role models, and it is Jesus who calls us to do so. He said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

This verse means that the activities in our daily lives should allow us to express God's love, grace, and truth in a way that brings people closer to Him.

The question now is, how do we go about this? What steps do we take in our lives to ensure that others try to come closer to Jesus?

FIELD GUIDE

Allow Your Light To Shine

Being a positive influence in people's lives doesn't mean you have to be flawless. It simply means you need to be available.

People observe how we deal with challenges, how we interact with others, and what we do in practice. If we say that we are followers of Jesus but do not live any differently from the rest of the world, our actions become meaningless.

To shine your light means:

- To have strong moral principles, even when there's no one around.
- To be selfless instead of choosing to be selfish.
- To remain loyal to your beliefs even when they are currently unfashionable.

While people may not pay attention to you, they will pay attention to your life. Your actions are your testimony.

Living With Integrity

Integrity is being the same person in public and in private. It's choosing to do what is right, not what is simple.

Proverbs 11:3 states, "*The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity*", which means you will be fruitful if you practice honesty but suffer if you're deceitful.

People learn to trust you when you practice honesty, consistency, and fidelity. They realize that you not only talk about your religion but also live it every single day. That type of authenticity can be life-changing when it comes to convincing people about the God we serve.

Attempting to follow Jesus while living a dishonest life, gossiping, and compromising your virtues creates a cloud of confusion around people who witness it. Do they stop believing in us? We do not know, but living a life full of sincerity, humility, and fidelity makes us an epitome of Christ.

Loving Like Jesus

The best role models are those who love others the same way Jesus did and put themselves into other people's shoes.

ROLE MODELS

Jesus loved people who were not easy to love; that's why He cared about the sinners, the outcasts, and even His enemies. His love was not only forgiving and compassionate, but it was also patient.

As said in John 13:34-35, "*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*"

If you want to lead others to Christ, then you have to love them like He does, which means loving everyone unconditionally, even when they don't deserve it.

How to be a role model in this context is simple: love others as Christ loved us. Words don't always express our love, but our actions do. Showing kindness towards others is how they will begin to notice the love of Christ.

Leading Through Humility

Many people think being a leader or a role model means being in control, being the best, or having all the answers. But Jesus showed us something different.

In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul writes, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*"

Jesus led through humility. He didn't ask for attention or respect; He simply served. He served His disciples and even washed their feet. He always made sure people came before Himself, and in the end, gave His life for us.

In order to guide people to Christ, it is important to set an example. This means speaking less and listening more, making yourself secondary, and serving when the opportunity presents, regardless of the time or place. Leadership role models like Jesus show us that true leadership is about service, not self-glorification.

Acting Upon Your Faith

Not everyone will listen to a sermon. Not everyone will read the Bible. But everyone sees the way you live.

Your life could be the only example of Jesus that someone will ever see.

FIELD GUIDE

That doesn't mean you have to be flawless; it just means you need to be real. People appreciate authentic faith, not a show. Such individuals pay close attention when they encounter someone who sincerely loves God, trusts Him, and follows after Him.

1 Peter 3:15 tells, *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”*

When you live a life full of joy, peace, and faith, people will start asking questions about what makes you, you. Those people will give you a chance to talk about Jesus, not only with words but with your life.

Mentoring and Inspiring the Next Generation

Whether we realize it or not, we all have influence. Someone is watching the way we live, how we handle struggles, and how we treat others. For many people—especially the younger generation—our actions speak louder than our words.

The next generation is searching for guidance. They are looking for role models who don't just talk about faith but actually live it out. They need to see what it means to follow Christ in a real and practical way. That's where mentorship comes in.

Inspirational role models are not perfect—they are people who show others what it looks like to live with integrity and devotion to God. Mentoring isn't about having all the answers; it's about walking alongside someone, sharing your experiences, and pointing them to Jesus. It's about being real, showing grace, and offering encouragement. It's about investing in someone else's faith journey.

So how can we mentor and inspire the next generation in a way that truly makes a difference?

Leading by Example

One of the most powerful ways to mentor others is simply by living out your faith. People may not always remember what you say, but they will remember how you live.

ROLE MODELS

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul says, “*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*” That’s what mentorship looks like—it’s not about pointing people to ourselves but pointing them to Jesus through our daily lives.

You don’t have to be a pastor or a teacher to lead by example. Every conversation, every small act of kindness, every decision to stand firm in your faith—it all matters. When younger believers see you making God-honoring choices, even when it’s hard, it encourages them to do the same.

Being Available and Willing to Listen

Sometimes, mentoring isn’t about saying the right thing—it’s about being there. People don’t just need advice; they need someone who truly listens.

Younger generations are facing challenges that didn’t exist before—constant comparison on social media, confusion about identity, and pressure to meet impossible standards. Many feel lost, alone, or unsure of their faith.

That’s why simply being available can make a huge difference. When someone knows they can come to you without fear of judgment, they are more likely to open up. They need a safe space where they can ask tough questions, wrestle with doubts, and process life’s challenges.

Listening doesn’t mean you have to have all the answers. Sometimes, just knowing someone cares is enough to bring encouragement and hope.

Encouraging Growth in Faith

A good mentor doesn’t just give advice—they help others grow. That means encouraging spiritual habits like reading the Bible, spending time in prayer, and staying connected to a godly community.

Hebrews 10:24 says, “*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*”

We weren’t meant to walk this faith journey alone. We need people to challenge us, push us forward, and remind us of God’s truth when we forget. That’s what role modeling is all about—helping others stay rooted in Christ so they can grow stronger in their faith.

What makes a good role model in the context of mentorship? It’s someone who not only teaches but also leads by example, embodying the values

FIELD GUIDE

they wish to instill. A true mentor demonstrates love, patience, and a heart for God, showing others how to live out their faith in everyday actions.

This doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes, it's as simple as:

- Praying with someone who is struggling.
- Sharing a Bible verse that encouraged you.
- Checking in to see how their walk with God is going.

These small actions can have a huge impact on someone's faith.

Sharing Your Struggles and Testimonies

One of the biggest misconceptions about being a role model is that you have to be perfect. But the truth is, being real is far more impactful than pretending to have it all together.

Younger believers need to see that struggles are a normal part of faith. They need to hear stories of how God has worked in difficult times, how He has provided, and how He has brought healing. Role modeling is not about showing perfection; it's about showing how to navigate life's challenges with trust in God.

Psalm 107:2 says, "*Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story.*"

Your testimony—whether it's about overcoming fear, learning to trust God, or growing in faith—can encourage someone else to keep going. It reminds them that God is faithful, even when life is hard.

Sharing your struggles doesn't make you weak—it makes you relatable. It shows others that following Christ isn't about perfection but about trusting Him through every season.

Role models for teenagers often come from personal experiences and hardships. Your openness about challenges can be the bridge they need to walk in faith, knowing they are not alone in their struggles.

Challenging and Encouraging Others to Step Up

A great mentor doesn't just help someone grow—they challenge them to step into their calling.

Young believers need to be reminded that they have a purpose, that God has a plan for their lives, and that they can make a difference. Sometimes,

ROLE MODELS

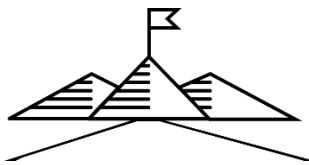
all it takes is one person saying, “I believe in you. I see God working with you. Keep going.”

Encouragement has power. It gives people the confidence to step out in faith, to serve, to lead, and to trust God’s plan for their lives

That’s what mentoring is about—helping someone see the potential God has placed in them and pushing them toward it. Role modeling is about fostering that belief in others and helping them recognize their value and mission in Christ.

Discussion: How Can You Be a Godly Example for Others?

1. Who in your life has been a godly mentor, and how did they impact you?
2. What areas of your life do you think reflect Christ well? What areas still need growth?
3. How can you intentionally invest in someone younger in faith?
4. What is one step you can take this week to encourage and uplift someone in their walk with God?



FINAL THOUGHTS

While we may admire other people, there is no denying that no role model is perfect. This is why following Jesus as a role model will always remain the most logical choice. You will be able to gain true purpose and wisdom from this relationship, along with a life that leads others towards God. In short, be careful who you choose to follow because actions have consequences.



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