
ABSORBING THE MIND OF CHRIST

Have you ever wondered how Christ remained sinless while on earth? I have. Despite the fact that He is God, He was also man and was tempted in every way that we are. How did He do it? How did He resist temptation and trust and follow God for His entire life on earth? In order to attempt to understand Christ's sinlessness, let's begin by reading our verses for today.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

Paul instructs us in verse five to have the same attitude that Christ had. The Greek is a little more specific, saying that we should continue to follow the same thought process that Jesus had. Let's look at verses six through eight which outline the thought pattern that Christ had while on earth.

Starting in verse six Paul says that Christ continued to exist in the form of God. The Greek word for 'form' is used with reference to the inner nature or essence, not the outward appearance. This means that Jesus always existed with the essence and attributes of God and continued to exist with those attributes during His time on earth.

Paul goes on to say, according to the New American Standard Translation, that Christ did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. This makes it sound like Christ didn't have equality with God. He couldn't grab ahold of it. The Greek is a little different. It says that

Christ considered His equality with God "not an illegitimate acquisition to be clung to." In other words, Christ let go all of His Godly essence. He put aside the power of God, the righteousness of God and the sovereignty of God.

Paul then says Christ emptied Himself. Even though Christ remained part of the Godhead on earth, He denied Himself use of any of God's unique attributes. The Greek says He deprived Himself of His proper function. As part of the Godhead, Christ's natural function utilized all of God's characteristics. He was all powerful, all knowing, omnipresent, eternal, righteous, sovereign and loving, but He did not use those traits on earth. As a man, Christ used only those attributes natural to mankind.

It's important to note that even though Christ denied His proper function, He did not cease being God. His actions on earth, although He continued to exist as God, were done by a man. His sinless perfection is not attributed to the fact that He was God; instead, it is attributed to the fact that He was totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to provide whatever He needed to accomplish His earthly purpose.

How often are we totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's will for our lives?

Continuing with verse seven, Paul says that Christ took the form of a bond-servant. Again, Christ denies His Godly form. This time He willingly chose the form of a servant. Paul also says He became in the likeness of man. He became a man. This is not something He had been before, but He was the perfect man. Romans 5:15, 1 Corinthians 15:21, 1 Timothy 2:5 all harmonize Christ as God and man.

Take some time to look up these verses which reference Christ as God and Man.

Philippians 2:5, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:2-5, Romans 9:5, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 2:14.

Write your favorite here.

These verses harmonize Christ as deity, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. **Exodus 3:14, John 8:58, 10:30-38, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 Peter 1:1, Revelation 1:12-18, Revelation 22:13-16. Write the most impactful here.**

Christ was also truly human with a body, soul and spirit. He did however bypass the sin nature through His virgin birth since that is passed through the seed of man. **Look up 1 Timothy 2:14-15, Genesis 3:12-15 and Romans 5:12. Read all and then write one verse here.**

Finally, there are three basic reasons why Jesus became man:

1. To be our Savior – John 3:16-17, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 2:14-15
2. To be our Mediator – Job 9:32-33, 1 Timothy 2:5-6
3. To be our High Priest – Hebrews 7:14, 24-28, 10:5, 11-14

Our final verse, verse eight, sums up Christ's purpose as a man on earth. Paul says that Christ was a man and He humbled Himself. He did this by denying His natural function as God and when He did this, He became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now, let's look back at verse five. It told us to "have this attitude in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus." Wow! After all we just looked at, that's a tall order! Christ denied His natural function as God, emptied Himself, was perfectly dependent on the Holy Spirit, and chose to become a bond servant! That's a lot to live up to. How do we accomplish this? The power of the Holy Spirit. Just like Christ did! Let's summarize how we are to display the same attitude that Christ did.

1) An attitude of humility regarding our position in Christ – Our position in Christ gives us a place in heaven. We are the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, children of God and joint heirs with Christ, but our attitude should be that of a bond servant.

2) An attitude of humility regarding our position as joint heirs with Christ. We should balance our position as a joint heir with our duties on earth. Our service to God on earth is necessary, but our mindset should focus on things above. Balance of these two is essential.

3) An attitude of humility through self-sacrificial love – Christ humbled himself to the point of death. Now that is self-sacrificial love! Our humility should be manifested through self-sacrificial love in our service toward others.

Remember the definition of self-sacrificial love, a love that manifests itself in giving regardless of the response.

4) The final part of having the same attitude that Christ had is knowing His mind. The Bible is described as the mind of Christ. If we desire to serve God, we MUST study His Word. We MUST absorb His Mind and we can't begin to do so if we don't study it, have faith in its principles and apply it to our lives.

Isn't it amazing that our position in Christ is not due to our attempts at righteousness? The acts we perform on earth are not considered righteous by God unless they are done through His power. This takes all the pressure off of us. We can't live the life He wants without Him!

REVIEW

- ~ Our attitude should be the same as Christ's
- ~ Christ denied His natural function as God to become a bondservant and a man.
- ~ He was both God and man at the same time.
- ~ We should have the same attitude Christ had: HUMILITY because
 1. Our position in Christ
 2. We are joint heirs with Christ
 3. Christ's self-sacrificial love
 4. We know Christ's mind (the Word of God)