

Imitation of the Best Kind

“The Sum of Christianity”

A childhood dream of mine was to become a great baseball player like Hank Aaron. I wanted to be like “Hammerin’ Hank.” In the workplace, I tried to model my work habits after well-respected people in the industry. A word for these examples is imitation. I wanted to imitate the best by incorporating their values into my own life. It wasn’t based only on what they did, but why they did it. Trying to imitate the best brought out the best in me.

An on-line dictionary provides a couple of definitions for the word “imitation:” (1) “the action of using someone or something as a model. (2) a thing intended to simulate or copy something else.”

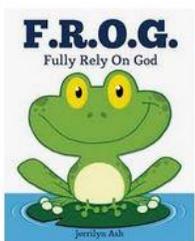
What if we aspired to live our life with the values of Jesus Christ? What if Jesus Christ was our role model and we did everything we could to be like Him? Max Lucado, in his book God Came Near, wrote “Seeing Jesus is what Christianity is all about. Christian service, in its purest form, is nothing more than imitating him whom we see. To see his majesty and to imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity.”



As Lucado implies, Christianity boils down to a relationship with and an attempt to be like Jesus. It is personal. Jesus knows us by name, and He knows what struggles we are going through. He came to live among us so that He endured the same kind of pressures that we endure in our lives. He faced disappointments, fears, temptations, oppression, and anger, as we do. He experienced human emotions similar to those that we encounter in our lives today. We have the opportunity to see how he handled all kinds of situations. While some people may think there isn’t a textbook on how to live life, there is. It is the Bible. You probably have multiple copies in your home right now. Or, just type a question in your web browser and scriptural passages and even sermon summaries on the topic will pop up on your computer screen.

In 1896 Reverend Charles Sheldon introduced the concept of “What Would Jesus Do?” He wrote a novel entitled In His Steps, which had the subtitle of What Would Jesus Do?. In his novel, Jesus was described as a “moral example and a Savior figure.” His book was described as a “social gospel,” intended to motivate Christians to help the less fortunate. Nearly a century later, WWJD had a resurgence as a 1990s grassroots movement for teenagers.

It was popular to wear bracelets with W.W.J.D. printed on it. Later a sequel bracelet was created with the acronym F.R.O.G, which stands for “Fully Rely on God.” As I researched these concepts, it seems that W.W.J.D. focused on Christian service to the needy as something Jesus modeled in His life. F.R.O.G. took a different approach. It was designed to teach young children to have a complete reliance on God during difficult times. Both have merit and appeal to youth, but nothing is better than imitating in every aspect of our lives the person that Jesus is.



The Max Lucado quote says it so simply: “To see his majesty and to imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity.” In your life, seek to imitate Jesus Christ. Jesus is the real deal. He faced real problems and overcame them. And He invites you to a faith that will lead you, for real, to where He reigns in Heaven.

The Bible Says: *I did this as an example so that you should do as I have done for you (John 13:15). Bible basis for F.R.O.G.: You are my strength, I watch for you; you, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely (Psalm 59-9-10).*

Question: What are some of the ways you imitate the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in your life?

Prayer: Dear Lord. We want to be like you in all aspects of our lives. We know we will face difficulties but you gave us an example of how to overcome them. Amen.