

41--- Who is Your Role Model?

I grew up in a time when things were simpler. No internet, no Xbox, no satellite TV, only black and white TV with shows like Leave It to Beaver! I spent my summers flipping baseball cards, playing ball on the street corner and riding my bike (without a helmet). As a kid I looked up to our first astronauts, Mickey Mantle and Jim Brown. As I grew up my role models evolved. They were business leaders, political leaders like JFK and yes, star athletes like Wilt Chamberlain. Some of these men were men of great character. But they were all flawed. It wasn't until I entered my "second half" of life that it became clear who my role model should have been--- Jesus! As I reflect on the long list of my "heroes" it strikes me that it was not the man but his image that drew me in. All of the men I have mentioned had great flaws. Only Jesus was flawless! All these men hid behind facades! Jesus was real! Rather than building a façade He was completely transparent.

Even the greatest heroes of the Bible had flaws. Moses suffered from self doubt, David suffered from lust and Solomon, though wise, was a mess. Why mention the short comings of men of God? To illustrate that even God's best fell short but He used them anyway. God uses us despite our flaws. God also sent us a role model extraordinaire---Jesus. Jesus came as a teacher. First as a teacher to the disciples, then as a teacher to the people of Israel and finally as a teacher whose lessons live on 2000 years later. What are some of the lessons our role model taught us? Love your enemy; Be a servant leader; Be obedient even unto death; Honor your Father; Seek the Kingdom of God with all your heart. Consider the following verses:

Matthew 5:43-44 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

John 12:26 "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."

Philippians 2:8 "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"

2 Peter 1:17 "For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.'"

Luke 12:31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

He lived out each lesson to demonstrate how we can follow His example. As we strive to follow our role model we often stumble because He was Jesus and we are not! But He knew that we would fail sometimes which is why He extends grace as we fall and then picks us up and reminds us that the race is long and He will be with us each step of the way.

The greatest lesson Jesus taught us was how to connect with our Creator. He was never separated from the Father. He was so aligned with the Father that they were one. Jesus knew what was on God's mind and He was obedient---even unto death. How well do you know your Creator? Do you hide His instruction book- the Bible-in your heart? Do you speak with Him sharing your inner most thoughts and asking for His direction?

For years I tried to emulate my role models. When I played basketball I was Wilt with a flawless hook shot. When we rode our bikes I'd pretend to be a fighter pilot by pulling in close behind my buddy and shooting him down (pretend only!). I could pretend but I never was as good as my role models. Now I have a role model who is in touch with me whenever I ask. I will never be the perfect man that He was, but each day I grow closer to my role model. What a blessing!

Personal Reflection:

Who were your role models as a child or young adult? What did you admire about them? What do you admire about Jesus? How could you become more like Him?

Group Discussion:

Share your role models and what you admired in each of them. Share what you admire about Jesus. Share how you will follow Jesus as your role model.