

In what ways, to what degree, and when are Christians to resemble Jesus?

- **In what ways?**
 - **Righteousness** (Ephesians 4:20 – 24) But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus; that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
 - **Holiness** (1 Peter 1:13 – 16) Therefore gird up your loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am Holy.”
 - **Love** (1 John 2:6) He who says he abides in Him ought also to walk just as He walked.
 - **Perception and the honors that accrue to those with Jesus’ character** (2 Corinthians 3:18) But we all, with unveiled face, behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.
 - **Evangelism** (2 Corinthians 5:17) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
 - **Valuation**
 - (Galatians 6:15) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.
 - (James 2:1) My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, of glory, with partiality.
 - **Knowledge** (Colossians 3:9 – 10) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.
 - **Character** (Romans 8:29) For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
 - **Commitment** (Romans 6:4) Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
 - **Suffering** (1 Peter 2:21 – 22) For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps: “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.”
 - **Faith**
 - (Romans 3:26) ...to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus.
 - (Revelation 14:12) Here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.
- **When?**
 - Hebrews 12:22 – 24 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general

assembly and the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel.

- Past tense: the Christian audience of the first century already matched this description while living on earth.
- Breathing Christians already were in heaven, in the company of angels
- The audience was described as perfect
- Sprinkled blood, under the Law, represented sanctification and purification
- Many of the passages above have been understood as future, not paying attention to the context of each. Rather, the promises of obtaining “the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:2 – 7) have been dismissed by those who observe human behavior, failing to differentiate between unbelievers, church-goers, and the faithful; rejecting promises as impossible, unrealistic, or miraculous (which they believe no longer happen).
- **To what degree?**
 - If the promises of transformation into the character traits of Jesus lead to something less than the mirror image of Jesus, what level is acceptable?
 - Many people have been taught to substitute “behavior” for “character.” Behavior as a product of faith is important, but faith is the criterion for acceptance.
 - We are the Temple of the living God (2 Corinthians 6:16 – 7:1)
 - Unrighteousness is not “fitting” (Romans 1:28, Galatians 5:1 – 14)
 - John 17:20 – 23 “That the world may believe that Thou sent Me”
 - Malice and wickedness spoils sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8)
 - Displaying the power of God (2 Corinthians 4:7)
 - Works of the flesh are contrary to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16 – 25, Colossians (2:18 – 3:10)
 - We are no longer slaves of sin (Romans 6:1 – 18, 8:13)
 - Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as He is pure (1 John 3:3)
 - Romans 12:3 ...as God has dealt to each a measure of faith
 - God has promised faith that qualifies as “Jesus’ faith.”
 - From the context, faith manifests itself differently (all good)
- **How can we be prepared for God to provide that faith?**
 - (Romans 16:17) Note those who cause divisions...and avoid them
 - (1 Corinthians 5:11) Do not keep company with “excuse makers”
 - (1 Corinthians 6:18 – 19) Flee immorality...You are the Temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - (1 Corinthians 10:11) These things happened to them as examples...
 - (1 Corinthians 10:14) Flee idolatry
 - (Philippians 3:17) Join in following my example, and note those who so walk
 - (Philippians 4:8) Let your mind dwell on these things: true, noble, just, pure, lovely...
 - (Colossians 3:1) Seek those things which are above
 - (Colossians 3:16) Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly
 - (1 Thessalonians 5:11) Comfort one another and edify one another
 - (1 Thessalonians 5:21) Test all things; hold fast what is good
 - (Hebrews 10:25) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together
 - (Hebrews 12:14) Pursue peace with all men, and holiness.
 - (1 Peter 2:2) Long for the pure milk of the Word