

Paul the Pattern

Introduction

1. Many people today are looking for someone to pattern their life after. Teens try to dress and act like their favorite singer, ladies imitate the hair styles of Hollywood, men attempt to look like their favorite T.V. or sports star.
2. But who could be a pattern for the believer living in this present age of grace? There are many great men and women in the Bible. Who is our pattern?
3. What does the word “pattern” actually mean?
 - Webster’s Dictionary – “a form or model proposed for imitation.”
 - Strong’s Bible Concordance – “a sketch for imitation.”
4. Someone may say, “Christ is our pattern. Did He not say, ‘Follow me?’” Yes, He did, but instead of following, the people cried, “*Away with him,*” and nailed Him to a cross.
5. What did our rejected Lord do after He rose again? Did He send wrath and judgment to this world? No, He did not. Instead, He saved Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners and set him forth as a pattern for other believers in this age of grace. 1 Timothy 1:16
6. The apostle Paul was a sinner like everyone else, yet his life is said to be a pattern to those who believe on Christ. How is Paul a pattern to us today?

Paul is our pattern in salvation.

1. Obviously, Christ could not be our pattern in salvation. Christ lived a perfect, sinless life. His sinlessness calls attention to our sinfulness.
2. Jesus Christ as the Son of God, therefore He had no need of salvation, but rather came to be our Savior.
3. But Paul is a wonderful pattern for anyone who desires God’s salvation.
1 Timothy 1:13-16
 - Paul was a wicked, blasphemous sinner. vs. 13
 - Yet because of the grace of our Lord, Paul was gloriously saved. vs. 14-15
 - Paul simply believed on Christ and received everlasting life. vs. 16

4. Anyone who is saved should be able to give the exact same testimony. The details may differ, but these three basic points must be present. Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-9
5. The apostle Paul is our pattern in regards to salvation. He was a vile sinner, yet saved by the grace of God, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. cf. Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-9; Romans 5:20-21

Paul is our pattern in service.

1. When it comes to serving Jesus Christ, there is no one that provides a better pattern for the Christian than the apostle Paul.
2. Over and over again, Paul unashamedly declared himself to being a servant of Christ. Before salvation, Paul was a man dedicated to destroying the work of Christ (Acts 9:1-2), but after salvation, Paul was totally committed to serving Jesus Christ (Acts 9:20-29).
3. Within the heart of every believer should be a desire to serve Christ. But how do we serve Christ? Paul's life provides an excellent pattern for anyone desiring to serve Christ.
4. In Acts 20:17-38, Paul meets with the elders of the church at Ephesus. Paul established this church and spent three years serving the Lord in Ephesus. In this passage, Paul recalls his service for the Lord in this place (vs. 17-18). What a pattern for the believer today!
5. How did Paul serve the Lord?
 - He served the Lord with humility. vs. 19a
 - He continued serving God even in the hard times. vs. 19b
 - He served the Lord by witnessing to others of Christ. vs. 20-21, 25-26
 - He served the Lord, regardless of personal expense. vs. 22-24
 - He served the Lord by studying the Word of God and possessing a steadfast confidence in God's Word. Vs. 27-28, 32
 - He served the Lord by caring about people and giving unselfishly to others. vs. 29-31, 35
 - He served the Lord by refusing to be materialistic. vs. 33-34

- He served the Lord by possessing a vibrant prayer life. vs. 36; cf. Romans 1:9; 2 Timothy 1:3
 - He served the Lord by loving the people of God. vs. 37-38
6. Here we have a true role model for the Christian today. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write two things about himself.
- He calls himself the chief of sinners in 1 Timothy 1:15.
 - He calls himself *“less than the least of all saints”* in Ephesians 3:8.
7. Why is this?
- To show us that God will save the vilest sinner.
 - To show us that God will use anyone who yields his life to Him.

Paul is our pattern in conduct.

1. Christ is our example of absolute morality and total obedience, yet much of Christ's life we do not imitate because Christ lived under a different dispensation. For example:
 - Christ lived under the Old Testament law. Galatians 4:4
 - Christ had to be circumcised the eighth day in a religious ritual.
 - Christ attended the synagogue every Sabbath day (Saturday).
 - Christ kept the feast days of the Old Testament law.
 - Christ did not preach to Gentiles, but rather to Israel exclusively. Matthew 10:5-6, 15:24
2. Christ saved the apostle Paul and raised him up as a pattern for the Christian in their age.
3. This is why Paul says:
 - *“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”* **1 Corinthians 4:16**
 - *“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”* **1 Corinthians 11:1**
 - *“Brethren, be followers together of me.”* **Philippians 3:17**
4. In 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7 we see this principle again.
 - Paul led these people to Jesus Christ. vs. 5a
 - They observed Paul's conduct. vs. 5b
 - They followed Paul's pattern. vs. 6
 - They themselves became examples to others. vs. 7

5. In Philippians 3:12-14, Paul says several things about himself and his conduct.
 - He acknowledges his own failure to have fully “apprehended” or to reach perfection. vs. 12
 - He knew he could not dwell on the past. vs. 13a
 - He was determined to look forward and keep pressing on until Christ returned. vs. 13b-14
6. After this, Paul says in verse 17, “*Brethren, be followers together of me...*” Every Christian would be wise to obey God’s command and follow the pattern that Paul set for us through the grace of Jesus Christ.