

Jesus, Unleashed

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Chapter Three:

Like Father, Like Sons

Years ago I read a little book called *Jesus, the Pattern Son*, by Bill Britton, which in many ways started me on this fanatical journey into Jesus Christ. Since that time, seeing Jesus as the only true “pattern” for all that he is doing in me, in his people, and in this world has changed the way I think about every area of my life. There are so many “voices” that we have allowed to speak into our lives, and the sad thing is that we have in many ways given them a platform right beside Christ, in our hearts, to influence our choices. Some of these “voices” are standing in front of him, drowning him out entirely, while other “voices” are standing slightly behind him, just over his shoulder, poking their heads in every once in awhile to put in their two-cents while he is trying to talk to us.

Jesus was “our Father’s son” and still is, but we often behave like we have a different daddy or even many daddies who fill our heads and hearts with all kinds of nonsense, which the world calls “good advice.” We go to the doctor, to the pastor, to our spouse, to a friend, or to our parents *before* we’ve given our Father a chance to tell us what He thinks and feels about our situation. As Joyce Meyer once said, “We pick up the phone before we go to the throne.” Why is that? Do we not know who we are and who our Daddy is? Do we not know how much He loves us? Why do we not honor Him? Is there anyone wiser than Him? Are we “too cool” to need Him? Are we “beyond” Him?

Ask yourself: Who do you look up to? Who do you want to be like? Who is your idol? Who do you go to for “good advice” or “wise counsel”? Who is your standard? Can we continue to call ourselves Christians while we have so many “gods” in our lives that are blurring or entirely blocking the Lord from our eyes?

Ephesians 4:13 speaks of a people who will “[...arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him.” (Amplified) But this “measure” cannot exist where there is a mixture.

When God told Moses to build the tabernacle after the pattern of the tabernacle in Heaven, it was done as a prophetic type of the Word who later became a human being named Jesus and reflected our Father in this world (Exodus 25:40; John 1:14, 18; Luke 10:22; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; Hebrews 1:3; 8:5). As our Father lived, he lived. As our Father spoke, he spoke. As our Father worked, he worked. And when he made a judgment-call, he was always right because he never chose his own will. He had no desire to meet his own needs but sought only his Father’s pleasure (John 5:30). This is why anyone who saw and knew Jesus saw and knew our Father as well (John 1:18; 8:19b; 12:45; 13:20b; 14:7-11; 15:23-24; 17:4, 6).

There are many who do not believe this kind of life is possible. But, as someone once said, “The Christian life isn’t hard, it’s impossible,” which is why Christ is the only one who can help us; he

is the only one who has the power to make us just like himself. And yet, I am the only one who can keep Him from transforming me by reducing me to the simplicity of Christ, that is in Christ (no one else is responsible for my choices). I am the only one who has the power to promote or prevent His work in my life. The true Christian life is not for the faint of heart but for those who are willing to run boldly into their own demise, into the end of themselves, into Christ.

Jesus' life defines what Watchman Nee called "the normal Christian life." Everything about him reflected our Father and reflects the kind of life we were born to live. Are we ready to be like our Father too? How about you?

His Words

Every word Jesus spoke was not his own, but his Father's. How do we know this? Because he said, "He Who sent Me is true (reliable), and I tell the world [only] the things that I have heard from Him...I tell the things which I have seen and learned at My Father's side...I have never spoken on My own authority or of My own accord or as self-appointed, but the Father Who sent Me has Himself given Me orders [concerning] what to say and what to tell. And I know that His commandment is (means) eternal life. So whatever I speak, I am saying [exactly] what My Father has told Me to say and in accordance with His instructions...What I am telling you I do not say on My own authority and of My own accord." (John 8:26, 38; 12:49-50; 14:10, Amp. See also John 7:16; 8:28)

When people asked him questions, he didn't give "pat-answers" off the top of his head; nor did he rely on the religious training he received as a boy. And yet, he spoke like one who had learning far beyond his years. Of course, this mystified the religious leaders of his day who said, "How is it that this Man has learning [is so versed in the sacred Scriptures and in theology] when He has never studied?" (John 7:15, Amp)

When Jesus finished his Sermon on the Mount "the crowds were astonished and overwhelmed with bewildered wonder at His teaching, for He was teaching as one Who had [and was] authority, and not as [did] the scribes." (Matthew 7:28-29, Amp) They were amazed and at times terrified, saying, "What is this? What new (fresh) teaching!" (Mark 1:27, Amp); while, at other times, they said his teachings were "too tough to swallow." (John 6:60, Message) But, in general, "they were amazed...for His word was with authority and ability and weight and power." (Luke 4:32, Amp)

What Jesus heard "in the dark...in the ear" he spoke "in the light...on the housetops" (Matthew 10:27). He spoke mysteries in mysterious ways, and only those who loved and desired God's will could discern for themselves whether his teachings were from God or from himself (Matthew 13:34-35; Mark 4:2, 33; John 7:17). So when he was misunderstood, which happened all the time, he didn't take it personally because he knew his words weren't for everyone (John 8:43). In the end, his only responsibility was to give what he was given, despite the results (John 14:24).

His Works

Every action Jesus took was not his own, but his Father's, for he said, "The Son is able to do nothing of Himself (of His own accord); but He is able to do only what He sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does is what the Son does in the same way [in His turn]...I am able to do nothing from Myself [independently, of My own accord--but only as I am taught by God and as I get His orders]...I do nothing of Myself (of My own accord or on My own authority)...He Who sent Me is ever with Me; My Father has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him...the Father Who lives continually in Me does...(His) works (His own miracles, deeds of power)...I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know (be convinced) that I love the Father and that I do only what the Father has instructed Me to do. [I act in full agreement with His orders]." (John 5:19, 30; 8:28, 29; 14:10, 31, Amp)

For Jesus to live like this, he had to be aware of what our Father was doing, which he admitted when he said, "We must work the works of Him Who sent Me and be busy with His business while it is daylight; night is coming on when no man can work." (John 9:4, Amp) What did he mean by this? Well, if "light" in the Scriptures often speaks of understanding or enlightenment, and "night" refers to darkness which often speaks of disorientation or confusion, then he was saying, "We must do what our Father is doing while we can see what He is doing because there will be times when we will be 'in the dark'."

Jesus walked in the light – that is, he walked when he could see – which is why he never stumbled (John 11:9-10). He never "did his own thing" or made things up "as he went," because he never left room for creative or poetic license or an independent thought. He didn't allow men to steer his decisions, and he certainly didn't care about maintaining cultural relevance or being PC (politically correct).

He Struggled Too

Of course, just like us, Jesus had times, as in Gethsemane, when he wrestled with rebellion, between doing his will or his Father's. His soul – his mind, emotions, and will – was filled with sorrow, grief, and severe mental and physical anguish, so much so that his skin perspired great drops of blood on the ground as he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will [not what I desire], but as You will and desire." And he didn't pray this once but three times, enduring severe pressure as he fought to submit his "will and desire" to his Father's (See Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 14:32-41; Luke 22:39-46; Amp).

Jesus wasn't a machine that involuntarily obeyed its programming. Instead, he was a person like you and me who had the freedom to disobey at any time during his life. And yet he developed such a love for our Father that he said, "My food (nourishment) is to do the will (pleasure) of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish and completely finish His work...I do not seek or consult My own will [I have no desire to do what is pleasing to Myself, My own aim, My own purpose] but only the will and pleasure of the Father Who sent Me...I do nothing of Myself (of My own accord or on My own authority)." (John 4:34; 5:30; 8:28. Amp)

I like the way the Message Bible paraphrases these verses: "The food that keeps me going is that I do the will of the One who sent me, finishing the work he started...I can't do a solitary thing on my own: I listen, then I decide...I'm not out to get my own way but only to carry out orders...I'm

not making this up, but speaking only what the Father taught me.” [See also Job 23:12; John 4:32; 6:38]

Roots & Fruits

Jesus said to his disciples, “I am the True Vine...My Father is the Vinedresser...you are the branches.” (John 15:1, 5b, Amp) By saying this, he was linking his need for our Father with our need for him and our Father, revealing the culture of trust and dependence that has always existed within the Godhead. Of course, we often think Jesus was self-sufficient because he was God, but this simply isn’t true as all the Scripture we’ve covered in the chapter so far has shown. Besides, a vine needs a vinedresser, *just like* the branches; both *need* a gardener to take care of them. Jesus wasn’t able to do anything “independently” because he loved our Father’s will more than anyone else’s (see John 5:19, 30; 8:28, 29; 14:10, 31, Amp). Sure, he could have done many “good things” on his own without our Father, as we so often do today, and he could have met everyone’s approval in the process, but he knew he had to depend on his Father 100% in order to fulfill his Kingdom assignment.

According to Philippians 2:5-8, Jesus stripped himself of his deity and became a flesh and blood human being, just like you and me. He laid down his omniscience (unlimited knowledge), omnipotence (unlimited power), and omnipresence (unlimited ability to be everywhere at once). Therefore, he said and did nothing as God but rather lived his whole natural life out of the overflow of his relationship with our Father, fully yielded and dependent on Him for everything, everyday (John 3:2; 10:32). This is where his strength and confidence came from. This is why he was such a fruitful vine.

Like any good son who looks up to his dad, Jesus looked up to our Father and followed his lead. Doing his Father’s will and hearing every word that proceeded from His mouth was his bread-and-butter (John 4:34; Matthew 4:4). If he had a “methodology” or “formula,” per se, for his life and ministry, it had to be that of simple, utter dependence on our Father with one possible, practical motto: *pray, hear, obey...period!*

This explains why the Dove of the Holy Spirit landed on Jesus at the Jordan River and never flew away (John 1:32-33). He lived every day, with the presence of the Dove in mind, ever sensitive to his needs. He lived carefully, faithfully, and obediently toward our Father, “timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God.” (Philippians 2:12, Amp; Hebrews 5:7, Amp) [For more on this, read *The Sensitivity of the Spirit* by R.T. Kendall]

When Jesus was questioned by the Jews about where he came from and who his Father was, he said, “...I come from His [very] presence.” (John 7:29, Amp) In other words, “I am from Him,” (KJV) or literally, “I exist from Him.” This not only means that Jesus came from his Father as a child comes from a parent or water comes from a well, but that he also lived out of and existed from our Father in the same way a house is powered by electricity or a plant is strengthened by the sun. This was his way of life, his “root-system.”

And when Jesus said, “...I come from His [very] presence,” he didn’t say, “I came from His presence,” as if he left his Father to “come to earth,” hoping to return to his Father at a later date.

Instead, he lived, moment by moment, “from” or out of his Father’s presence and gave to the world what he received from that place. And whenever he climbed a mountain to pray, he ascended in more ways than one, through personal interaction with our Father, so that when he descended the mountain, he, in a sense, re-entered the natural realm with fresh manna from Heaven for those in need. Then, when he had given what he had, he returned to the Secret Place, which could be done at *any* time to re-charge and re-tool for his next assignment.

Jesus lived with his Father and never left (John 8:38). This is why he said to the guards who were sent to arrest him, “. . .Where I *am* you cannot come.” (John 7:34, KJV) Then again, while conversing with Nicodemus, he said, “No one has ever gone up to heaven, but there is one Who *has* come down from heaven--the Son of Man [Himself] Who *is* (*dwells, has* His home) in heaven.” (John 3:13, Amp) So, when he was with the guards, he was somewhere they couldn’t come even though they were in his physical presence. Then, when he was chatting with “Nick,” he was in heaven even though he had already “come down from heaven.”

How did he do that? Well, in Luke 17:21, Jesus said, “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you [in your hearts] and among you [surrounding you].” (Amp) This is how Jesus lived in Heaven, while on the earth. He lived in the world while a greater World was in him. He did “come down from heaven” because heaven is in a “higher” dimension of life and yet he also lived in heaven because heaven was in him and he was in our Father.

On one occasion, in John 17, Jesus seemed to transcend his natural environment while spending time with his Father in prayer for his disciples. We know this because in verse 11 he prayed, “And *now* I am no more in the world but these *are* in the world, and I *come* to thee...” (KJV) Then, in verses 12 and 13, he prayed, “While I *was* with them in the world, I kept them in thy name...And *now* come I to thee.” (KJV) Jesus was in the world but not of it (John 17:16, 18). He lived in Heaven and on earth at the same time by walking with our Father every day. [Read Brother Lawrence’s book called *Practicing the Presence of God* to see how one friend of God experienced this kind of life for himself.]

Jesus lived in our Father and our Father lived in him, so much so that the Father did His works through his son (John 14:10-11; Acts 2:22). However, if Jesus hadn’t given himself fully to this union, which he always had a choice to do (as do we), he would not have been able to live so fruitfully the way he did.

But what motivated Jesus to live like this? Well, in John 14:31, Jesus said, “. . .I do as the Father has commanded Me, *so that* the world may know (be convinced) that I love the Father...” (Amp) Jesus obeyed His Father and refused his own way (Proverbs 14:12) for one reason: because He loved Him. This was his incentive, his source of inspiration, his reason for living. He laid down his will, sacrificed his life and gave everything away for love, and now he is calling us to follow his lead.

How Shall We Then Live?

If you are “born from above,” then God is your Father, Jesus is your big brother, and you have everything you need – by the Spirit – to follow him as he followed our Father (John 1:14, 17;

3:6; 1 Corinthians 1:4; 5:10; 2 Corinthians 9:8). The blood of our Father, His essence, His DNA, is in Jesus and us, because we are His children, His offspring and are, therefore, His heirs and co-heirs with Jesus (2 Peter 1:4; Romans 8:15-17).

“Out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favor upon favor and gift [heaped] upon gift.” (John 1:16, Amp)

We can receive nothing except as it has been given to us from Heaven and we’ve received “His fullness,” His abundance, “His unspeakable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:14) and “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8). As John the Baptist said, “..Don't think he rations out the Spirit in bits and pieces. The Father loves the Son extravagantly. He turned everything over to him so he could give it away — a lavish distribution of gifts. That is why whoever accepts and trusts the Son gets in on everything, life complete and forever!” (John 3:34-36, Message). This is a loaded promise. Everything that belongs to our Father belongs to Jesus, and everything that belongs to Jesus belongs to our Father, and we have been grafted into Them (John 13:3; 17:10, 21, 22).

But how can this be? Because Jesus is in our Father and we are in him and he is in us (John 14:20). Think about that very carefully. Let it sink in. Can you imagine anything more wonderful than that? What if we actually believed this? How different would our lives be?

Remember, Jesus is the Vine, and we are his branches (John 15:1-6). His life, his sap, his blood, is flowing through us even now if we are intimately joined to him. And if we stay yielded to our Daddy, surrendered in His hand, He will use us to show Himself to the world speaking His words through our lips and living His life through our bodies.

As Jesus followed and reflected our Father, so we must wake up to who we are, to follow and reflect him as well, walking in the Light as he is in the Light (John 8:12; 17:10; Galatians 1:15-16; 1 John 1:7). As the Father sent Jesus, Jesus is also now sending us (John 17:18; 20:21). As the Father loved the world through His Son, He wants to continue to show the power and purity of His love through us (John 13:34). Everything Jesus meant for his disciples, he means for us who follow him wherever he goes (John 17:20). As the Father was in the Son and the Son was in the Father, They have called us to be one with Them so the world will believe. Jesus has given us the glory he received from his Father to make us one even as they are one (John 17:22). He is in us and our Father is in him, and as the Father loves his firstborn Son, He, in the same way, loves us and has freely given us all things (Matthew 11:27; 19:26; 21:22; John 3:35; 14:26; 15:15; 15:15; 17:23; Romans 8:32).

Everything Jesus did was meant to show us our Father, so that the love he received from his Father would be in us and he would be in us (John 17:26). And now the world – and the church, whether they know it or not – is waiting for those who will believe Christ and live His life out loud, reflecting Him in everything they say and do every day (Romans 8:19).

Jesus hung his credibility as God’s son upon his Father’s works worked through him (John 5:36; 10:25, 37-38). So, think about it: should the world believe we belong to the Lord and that He has

sent us if we do not do His works? No! And yet, Jesus himself said we would do the things he did and even “greater works.” (John 14:12) And now he lives within us, by his Spirit, along with his Father and all the divine fullness of their Kingdom to aid us in the fulfillment of this promise (See Matthew 28:30; Luke 17:20-21; John 14:16-18, 23, 26; 16:7, 13; Acts 17:27-28; Romans 8:15-19; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 13:5; Galatians 4:6-7; Ephesians 2:19-22; 3:17, 19; Colossians 1:19, 26-27; 1 John 4:4). So, how can we say we don’t “have what it takes”? How can we say we aren’t ready or able? How long can we continue to blame our inadequacies or make excuses? He who is in us is greater than all our flaws, faults, and failings. The only question is: where does our faith rest? In his power or our weakness, in his wisdom or ours, in his Truth or what we think?

Discovering who Jesus is, what he is like, being changed into his likeness and living like him out of the overflow of our intimacy with him, is the great journey of every true believer. It is time for the love and power of the Father to invade this world through yielded believers who are as He is, for love’s sake (1 John 4:17).

So follow him. Live like he lived. Pray like he prayed. Hear like he heard. Obey like he obeyed. Study his life. Devour the four Gospels. Let the Holy Spirit show you who Jesus really is and who you really are because of who he is and what he’s done. Jesus wants you to be with him where he is, so that you can see his glory and goodness, which surpasses your highest hopes and dreams (John 12:26; 17:24). Then, when you see him, you will be changed by him and you will never settle for anything less ever again.