



THE
SAYINGS

vGroup Study

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The Sayings: vGroup Study

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EXAMPLE

Do you have any role models? Perhaps this role model is a parent, sibling, friend, or some other person in your life like a pastor, teacher, or famous leader. We all have role-models we try to emulate, either because we want to be successful like them, or we want to take on their characteristics. Many of us know how transformative a role model can be, especially if we had one in our younger years. Many of us can think of how this role model influenced us, and perhaps some of us are who we are today because of their direct involvement. Role models transform us through their example. Over the past several weeks, our vGroups have been looking at the effects of Jesus' death, and how his death benefits us. This week we will look at how Jesus' example transforms us.

The idea that Jesus' death is an example for us can be found in several places in the New Testament. In Titus 2:14, Paul writes that Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." In Philippians 2:5–8, Paul looks at Jesus' death as an example of humility. He writes, "Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant. . . . He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death" (CSB). One theologian sums up Paul's message like this: "because Christ did this for you, now go and live obediently for him."¹ Jesus' death is an example for us to follow, and in this way he is our greatest role model.

- Did you have any role models as a kid/young-adult, and if so, who were they and what did you admire about them?

- How did this role-model influence you?

- Have any of these role models made a lasting impact on who you are today, and if so, how?

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:1–4

- In this passage, Paul asks a simple question: "now that we belong to Christ, should we continue sinning?" What was Paul's answer to this question? (Hint: Look at v. 2)
- According to verses 3–4, why should we not continue sinning?
- What does Paul mean by saying "we were buried therefore with him" and that we would "walk in newness of life?"

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:5–11

What does it mean to be "united" with Christ? In what sense can we say our old self was crucified "with" Christ? We weren't around back then, and we certainly did not literally hang on the cross with Jesus. How can we make sense of this passage? Think about the transformative value of role models—role models instill in us ideals, values, and moral sensitivities, shaping our character so that our role model's qualities become our own. In a sense, we "take on" or "unite" ourselves to their qualities.² In the same way, the gospel invites us to take on Christ's qualities, which is why the apostle Paul could write, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me (Galatians 2:20).

- According to verses 5–7, what is the "old self," what has happened to it, and why?

- According to verses 8–9, why does death not have dominion over Christ?
- According to verses 10–11, what does Christ's death and resurrection mean for believers?

¹²*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.*

¹³*Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

Romans 6:12–14

- What do you think it means to "let sin reign in your mortal body?"
- Why should we not "let sin reign in your mortal body?"
- In contrast, what does it mean to "present yourselves to God?"
- Why can we present ourselves to God? (Hint: Who is our example?)

Because of Jesus' death on the cross, we have an example of what the Christian life is to look like. By dying and by raising back to life, Jesus illustrates what it looks like for the Christian to die to oneself and to live a new life. Of course, Jesus' death is much more than simply an example, but it is also more than just covering our sin. Jesus covered our sin and conquered sin, death, and hell, so that we might live a new life. His death has practical importance for how we live our life today.

- Share with the group what your “old self” used to look like before you met Jesus. What ideals, values, and moral sensitivities did you have before you were changed by the gospel?

- What does being united to Jesus mean for you today? What values, qualities, and characteristics would you like to have now that you live for Christ?

- How are you going to follow Jesus’s example this week? Think of concrete examples and discuss.

REFERENCES

¹Michael Bird, *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 401.

²Eric L. Johnson, *God and Soul Care: The Therapeutic Resources of the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 351.