



# Imitation

We become what we desire the most

## TRUE HUMANITY: IMITATION

### What's the most important thing to being a Disciple of Jesus?

When we try to answer this question, we can break it down by answering this question first:

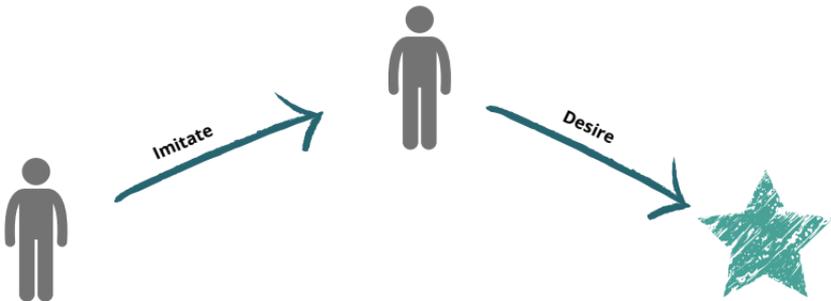
Do I have a life worth imitating?

We drew from the works of French anthropological philosopher, René Girard, whose in depth work on imitation included his own conversion to following Jesus in his personal life.

His framework was that more than what we think about or believe in, it is what we desire **that we want to most imitate**. We become what we love. And when we break down the manner in which we desire to be something or want something, it is more often than not coming out of imitating someone else — which he calls, mimetic desire.

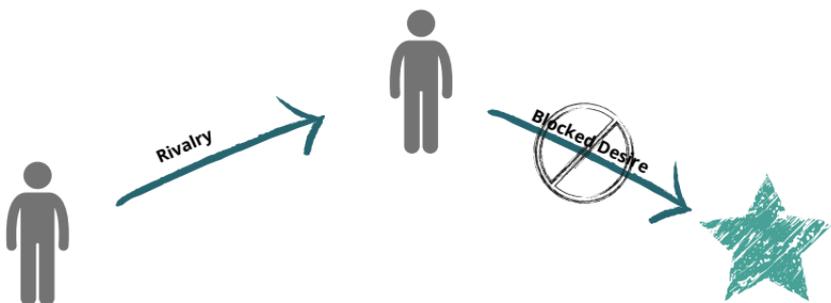
MIMETIC DESIRE : desiring something because the one you want to imitate desires the same thing

*We desire what others desire because we imitate their desires.* [R. Girard]



The problem with mimetic desire is that many times, if the one we imitate withholds information or what he/she desires from us, then the obstacle becomes a social conflict, which turns into mimetic rivalry, which turns into societal violence.

MIMETIC RIVALRY : struggle between persons who are desiring the same thing



When enough of this conflict occurs, the only way that society has been able to relieve the tension was to adopt a scapegoat that everyone agrees to place the blame on. The conflict in turn gets transferred to the scapegoat.

**SCAPEGOAT** : the person(s) (often a persecuted minority) the conflict of mimetic rivalry is transferred on to

The problem with all of this is that

1. the attempt to end violence is through violence
2. the cycle doesn't ever end with the scapegoat because mimetic rivalry continues to happen

So, how do we solve this problem?

**It is what we desire that we want to most imitate.** We become what we love.

Jesus ushered His Kingdom not through violent overthrow nor a power-play, but by telling people to imitate Him.

#### **Matthew 16:24 ESV**

*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.*

Jesus solved the problem by:

#### **1. Ending violence through love**

If we desire Jesus more than any other desire, then it is Jesus we will most want to imitate. We become whom we love. And Jesus never withholds or becomes an obstacle to that desire. We understand that His Kingdom is not resourced out of power, productivity or popularity or violence, wealth or sexual gain; it is resourced out of His great community of love.

#### **2. Ending the cycle by being the last scapegoat**

The cycle of persecuting the marginalized or the minority or blaming the social tension on the "other" ends because we don't participate in that belief anymore. Because we desire Jesus more than anything else, we participate in the powerful work that He has done on the cross — he became the willing scapegoat so that there will no longer be scapegoats.

**So, do we live lives worth imitating because we imitate Jesus? The most important thing about being a Disciple of Jesus is not about what we think about or believe in — it's about whom we love.**

What part(s) of your life do you know that you imitate Jesus in because you desire Him more than anything or anyone else?

What part(s) of your life do you know that you imitate something/someone else in because you desire that more than Jesus?