

An Open Letter to Justin Bieber About Living Like Jesus

Justin,

I read excerpts of your new interview in *Complex* magazine, and like many others, what jumped to my attention was that you want to live like Jesus—and you weren't ashamed to say it.

Those are powerful words, and I believe you sincerely mean it.

I'm just wondering, though, if you understand what it really means to live like Jesus.

Can I take a moment and share some of my personal story? You might find it helpful on your own journey.

I became a follower of Jesus at the age of 16 in 1971.

At that time I was a long-haired, LSD-using, heroin-shooting, hippie rock drummer (hey, we're both drummers!), and Jesus completely rocked my world.

It wasn't just a matter of getting rid of drugs and drinking.

It wasn't just a matter of cleaning up my filthy mouth and saying no to fleshly desires.

The old Mike Brown died—not just my outward sins but me myself—and from that moment on, Jesus was my Lord and Master and I lived to do His will.

That was almost 44 years ago, and I've never regretted it for a split second. What an incredible adventure! What an amazing life!

You see, when you find Jesus—I mean really find Him—everything

changes.

You just don't add Him in to make things better.

You just don't follow His example and try to be nice to people.

You yourself are transformed.

The old Justin Bieber dies and a new Justin Bieber lives, and the new version of you is so much different than the old one that it's hard to believe you were ever that other person.

Not only so, but there's a change in ownership too.

You are no longer your own; you have been bought with a price; you now belong to God, and you live to please Him.

Unfortunately, a lot of preachers in America have this all wrong.

The way they preach you'd think that God is here to please us. They've turned the whole thing upside down.

We are here to please Him, and I can tell you based on 44 years of experience that there is no greater joy, no greater inner harmony, no greater fulfillment, no greater peace than living to please God.

And living to please God is where you'll find your real purpose, which is not to be famous or have beautiful girls throwing themselves at you or having access to the world's best drugs or putting out another viral video or lighting up social media with your latest post.

No, God's purpose for you is to be a world-changer, to use the gifts and talents He has given you and to really live like Jesus, which means a radical, revolutionary, holy lifestyle.

Of course, you could try to live like the contemporary version of Jesus—a really nice guy who loved everybody (except the

religious people) and who was super “tolerant” and “inclusive.”

Or you could take out your Bible and spend a few months reading through the gospels over and over again. Talk about a radical leader!

You’d hear Him say, “Enter at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who are going through it, because small is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

(I know this might sound narrow, but I’ll give you an example. You mention wanting to live like Jesus, which, you say, would mean you wouldn’t cheat on your girlfriend. It would also mean you wouldn’t sleep with your girlfriend either—did you realize that?—and she wouldn’t even be your girlfriend if she didn’t love Jesus too.)

You’d hear Jesus say, “If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 16:24-25).

That’s pretty extreme too, since the person who took up His cross was never coming back.

Are you ready to take that one-way trip, never to return to the old life, living that radically new life in Him?

From the outside, it looks like drudgery—a bunch of religious traditions put together by religious people who just want to make everybody else as miserable as themselves.

I hate that form of religion too.

But from the inside—when you really come to know the Lord—you’re exploding with life. Love so amazing you want to pinch yourself to see if it’s real. Joy so intense you feel

like you're going to burst. And a sense of purpose and destiny beyond anything you've ever known.

Have you ever experienced what I'm talking about?

Have you ever known beyond any possible doubt that your sins are forgiven because of what Jesus did on the cross—the guilt is totally gone!—and you stand absolutely clean in God's sight?

Have you ever been so overwhelmed by God's love that all you can do is love Him back with tears of gratitude?

Justin, I'm sure you have a lot of yes-men surrounding you—after all, you're one of the most famous people in the world—and you probably have some "Christians" who will tell you what you want to hear.

But a real Christian will tell you the truth even if it hurts.

That's what love does, and that's what you need to hear more than anything: the truth.

So let me leave you with this (if you're actually reading this letter, that will be a miracle already).

Get alone one day when no one is around.

Turn off your cell phone and every other distraction.

And say this prayer to God from the depths of your heart: "Heavenly Father, whatever it takes, whatever it means, whatever the cost or consequence, I want to be your son and live like Jesus all the days of my life. If you show me the way, I will follow."

If you really mean it, you'll never be the same, and you'll never look back.