

WOMEN OF WITNESS

TIPS TO BETTER YOURSELF



What Happens When We've Been with Jesus

By Karen Ehman

“When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13 (CSB)

When our oldest son, Mitchell, was a tiny tot, we purchased a plastic toy lawn mower for him at a local yard sale. Using that lawn mower became one of his favorite pastimes. But he didn't want to propel it just anywhere — he wanted to follow along right behind his dad as he mowed the lawn.

Of course, this wasn't safe; the lawn mower blade might throw a rock or worse. So my husband disengaged the blade and pushed his lawn mower around our backyard just so my son could follow behind and imitate him.

Often in my spiritual life, I've thought it a worthy goal to try to be more like Jesus in this way: to imitate His behavior, to try to behave as He does. But the older I get, the more I have discovered it isn't enough just to *try to be like* Jesus. First, we should want to be *with Jesus*. Godliness can't just be imitated; it needs to be developed. And the best way to develop it is not just by doing good deeds but by growing in our relationship with the Lord.

Acts 4:13 gives us a glimpse of this truth: *“When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.”*

A certain phrase pops out at me: ***“They had been with Jesus.”***

How this verse both challenges and inspires us! Do others recognize from our behavior that we have been with Jesus? Might they be amazed at the qualities we possess because of Him, even though we aren't anybody special? In our walk with the King, are we focusing on copying His behavior in a perfunctory way or on being in His presence, allowing the Holy Spirit to convict, change, and embolden us, helping us trust God more and live out our faith?



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My son Mitchell did love mimicking his dad, but mostly he just constantly wanted to be where his father was, whether spending time outside, working in the garage, or putting his feet up inside the house after finishing his chores. Similarly, we should stick close by the Lord's side, loving the time spent in His presence.

Spending deliberate time with Jesus in prayer and Bible study — however that works into our schedule and season — shows a seriousness about our faith and strengthens our trust in Him. May the words of James 4:8a be our continual ambition: *“Come close to God, and God will come close to you”* (NLT).

Looking and sounding like Jesus will be the natural result of spending time with Him so often. Let's focus on that.

Prayer: Gracious Father, I long to put unhurried time with You at the top of my priority list. Help me to carve out space in my schedule to deepen my walk with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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