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PREFACE

CHRISTIANS INTUITIVELY UNDERSTAND that their lives should reflect the character and conduct of Jesus. This makes sense, not only because we believe Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience and love, but because God is at work conforming us “to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). So if you ask any Christian—and perhaps many non-Christians—to summarize their vision for spiritual maturity, they will likely include something along these lines:

“I want to reflect the image of Christ in my daily life.”

“I want to grow in likeness to Christ.”

“I want to be more like Jesus.”

Most people who have such goals know that Jesus is more than an example, and that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are not merely collections of “be like Jesus” stories. Still, we have a deep longing to be “imitators . . . of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1) and to base our imitation on biblical accounts of his life. And so we turn to the Gospels, believing that as we read we can identify patterns in Jesus’ life that we should mirror in our own.

If the previous paragraph describes you at all, I have good news—and bad. The good news is that this book aims to help you grow as an imitator of Christ by enabling you to see and respond to Jesus’ example as it is presented in Luke’s Gospel. The bad news is that this is not as simple as it might seem, for two reasons. First, the Gospels themselves don’t give us much