With the advances in technology over the last half-a-century, the word “mimeograph” and the whole history of mimeograph technology is being lost as a relic of the past. Before photocopy machines, there were mimeograph systems, which created a stencil through which ink was forced onto paper. Using that stencil, numerous copies could be made over and over, which would match the stencil. Look at the word “mimeograph” and recognize that the copies that were made from a stencil would actually “mimic” (look like) the stencil.

What does all of this have to do with us? The Greek word, from which we get our English words “mimic” and “mimeograph,” is found a handful of times in the New Testament. Keeping in mind the mimicking nature of a mimeograph machine duplicating the original stencil, consider how God uses this word to instruct Christians.

As Christians, we must mimic the Lord! “Therefore be imitators of God” (Eph. 5:1). “Become imitators...of the Lord” (1 Thess. 1:6). He is the stencil; we are the blank sheets of paper onto which His image must be stamped and exhibited! When others look at you, can they see the imprint of the original stencil? Do they recognize whose image you bear?

As Christians, we must mimic the faithful of the past! “Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12). Lives of faithful imitators of God are detailed in Scripture “for our learning” (Rom. 15:4) and “as an example” to mimic (1 Cor. 10:11). We must strive to look like them, duplicating their faithfulness in our own lives!

As Christians, we must mimic the faith of our leaders! “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7). Look back at the lives of faithful elders and mimic their faith in your own life, as they mimicked the image of Christ!

As Christians, we must mimic good and not evil! As the apostle John contrasted the divisive, self-centered nature of Diotrephes with the proven, faithful character of Demetrius, John urged his readers, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God” (3 John 11). Which stencil are we using—evil or good? One stencil is “of God” and the other has never been in the presence of God! Does your life mimic what is good (to look like God) or what is evil (to look like the world?
Mimeographs technology may be a thing of the past, but Christians are still called upon to mimic the stencils provided to us by God and the faithful who have gone before us!