

Be An Example

INTRODUCTION

A. Read Matthew 5:13–16.

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

B. The power of example is staggering.

1. There is probably no way you will ever understand fully just how important your example is.

C. It is not enough for you to merely be right, you must also get others to think rightly about you.

1. This is why the matter of Christian example is so important, and this is precisely why the Bible has so much to say about it.

- D. For any of us to successfully influence someone else, we must live a life that is worth emulating.
1. That is where a soul-winning ministry begins, with the lifestyle of the soul-winner.
 2. And that is why your example is so crucial.
 3. Therefore, one of your primary responsibilities as a disciple is to set the right kind of example.
 4. You must teach and live the truth, expound and exemplify truth, talk and walk the truth, explain and exhibit the truth, lead by precept and practice, lead by lip and life.
 5. The spiritual principles you want to teach must first be practiced by you.

I. LET US NOTICE SOME SCRIPTURES THAT EMPHASIZE EXAMPLE.

- A. Some Scriptures are admonitions to churches.

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 7 and 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

2. Read Philippians 3:17 and 4:9.

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

B. Some Scriptures are admonitions to individuals.

1. Read 1 Timothy 4:12.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

2. Read Titus 2:6–8.

⁶ Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

3. Read 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, ^[a] not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock

C. From these passages we learn that throughout the New Testament emphasis is placed on being a good example.

II. LET US NOTICE THE VALUE OF AN EXAMPLE.

A. *An example is a powerful agent of change.*

1. Nothing in the world will bring about change in someone's conduct like an example.
2. We acquire new patterns of behavior by watching the example of others.
3. Animals acquire new behavioral patterns in the same way.
 - a. A monkey was placed in a situation in which she could observe the behavior of a woman.
 - b. Here are the interesting results:
 - (1) After about 16 months of age she began to imitate habits of household routine as dusting furniture and washing dishes and clothes.
 - (2) Before she was two years old, she learned to put on a lipstick, applied a cosmetic and powder to her face.
4. That's the powerful effect of an example.
5. The same effect is seen in a teaching relationship.

B. *We learn to follow the Lord by following the Lord's people.*

1. God has given us godly examples.
2. Sometimes people say, "Do not follow men, follow God. Keep your eyes on Christ and His pattern for living."
3. It is true that we are to follow only Christ and His pattern for life, but Christ's pattern for living is found in many Christian men and women.
4. Therefore, one way to follow God is to follow someone else through whom God is walking.

C. *Being the right example will give you credibility with others, especially to another disciple.*

1. Our example will either prove or invalidate our spoken words.
2. The way we live before others will determine our credibility.
3. First Timothy 4:12 clearly expresses this point.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

4. What about you? Do people respect you? Are you credible before others?

III. LET US CONSIDER YOUR EXAMPLE AND YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

A. We all agree that being an example is quite a responsibility.

1. Much of the direction the church takes in the future will be determined by the example of today's Christians.
2. If today's Christians are unworthy of the name of Christ, then the body of Christ will suffer.
3. It is imperative, therefore, that we should be a good example; worthy to be followed.

B. Here are some Bible examples that such is the case.

1. Abraham's lie in Genesis 20:1–7 is repeated by his son Isaac in Genesis 26:1–11.
2. Luke 6:40 says,

“The disciple is not above his teacher: but everyone when he is perfected shall be as his teacher.”

C. Since this is true, it is imperative that we should be a good example who are worthy of being followed by all who are watching us.

D. But what is the key word in being an example?

1. It is integrity.
2. You must be what you say.
3. If a disciple continually sees a difference in what you say and what you are, you have lost your integrity.

E. Look at the life of Jesus.

1. He also did what He told others to do.
2. In Matthew 10 He sent out the disciples to preach the gospel and in 11:1 we find Him doing the same thing.
3. He did exactly what He told them to do.
4. Never was there a difference in what He said and did.

CONCLUSION

A. What about you?

1. Are you living a life worthy of being emulated?
2. Can you ask or tell people to follow your example?
- 3. The truth is: you will reproduce yourself whether you like it or not.**
4. The question is, “What kind of an example are we reproducing right now?” Good example or Bad example.

B. Let us do an evaluation of our life right now.

1. Remember Luke 6:40 teaches that a disciple, after he has been fully trained, will become like the teacher.
2. If that is true, what will your student be like?
 - a. Will he come to church regularly?
 - b. Will he always be late?
 - c. Will he participate in the church’s activities?
 - d. Will he gripe and complain a lot?
 - e. Will he be a liberal giver?
 - f. Will he strive to win others?