

Examples Worth Following

TEXT: Various

THESIS: If we are being led by the right kind of examples, we need to make sure that we are setting the right examples for others to follow.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Bible speaks of all sorts of examples.
 - a. There are examples of people's lives which lead to the breaking of God's law (Isa. 24:5), ones that destroyed the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:8), ones who destroy the sanctity of the home (Sos. 6:8), ones whose examples resulted in cities being destroyed (Gen. 19) and ones whose examples resulted in the destruction of a nations (Zeph. 2:13).
 - b. There are even examples of those who destroyed the physical body of our Lord (Mk. 15:13).
2. Being an example is important.
 - a. An examples is a representation of who we are and it is something that someone else attempts to imitate or duplicate.
 - b. Therefore, we need to make sure that we are imitating those who are good examples.
 - i. Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1)
 - ii. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7)
3. We are to be good examples to others.
 - a. For as is written, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12)
4. Such scriptures should cause one to wonder:
 - a. Who is my example, my role model as a Christian?
 - b. Whose example am I as a Christian?
 - c. What kind of example do I set as a Christian?

DISCUSSION:

- I. WHO IS YOUR EXAMPLE, MY ROLE MODEL AS A CHRISTIAN?
 - A. Is the Lord Jesus Christ your example?
 1. He was for the apostle Paul.
 - a. Paul said, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I

- also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1).
- b. Christ was the example in the life of Paul.
 - c. Every Christian ought to be able to make this statement truthfully.
 - d. Christ is to be living in the Christian who lives by the system of faith of the Son of God who gave himself for us (Gal. 2:20).
2. Yet, why should Christ be our example in life?
- a. He is our example because he teaches us how we are to please one another.
 - (1) The Church in Rome was told, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” (Rom. 15:1-3)
 - b. Christ is our example because he shows us how to love one another.
 - (1) “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” (Eph. 5:1-2)
 - c. He is to be our example because he showed us to look out for one another.
 - (1) For the Bible says, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” (Phil. 2:4-5)
 - d. Christ is to be our example who suffer patiently when mistreated.
 - (1) Peter proclaimed, “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” (1 Pet. 2:20-23)
3. Jesus certainly serves as our prime example, but is He your example meaning someone you want to be like?
- B. If the answer is no in your mind, what about Paul? Is he your example?
1. Paul urged or pushed the Corinthians.
 - a. “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up

- for one against another.” (1 Cor. 4:6)
- b. He taught the Church to give no offense.
 - (1) “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:” (1 Cor. 10:32)
 - c. He taught the Church to seek the benefit of others.
 - (1) “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” (1 Cor. 10:33)
2. Paul also urged the Philippians.
- a. “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Phil. 3:17)
 - b. He taught them not to consider themselves as having attained perfection.
 - (1) “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:12)
 - c. He taught them to press on to maturity.
 - (1) “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (Phil. 3:13-15)
 - d. He taught them to live according to the level they have learned.
 - (1) “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Phil. 3:16)
 - e. He taught them to enjoy a close relationship with the God of peace.
 - (1) “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil. 4:9)
3. Paul praised and encouraged the Thessalonians.
- a. He praised them for receiving the Word despite affliction.
 - (1) “”And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:” (1 Thess. 1:6)
 - b. He praised them by avoiding being a burden to others.
 - (1) “For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable

to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” (2 Thess. 3:7-10)

4. Paul and other New Testament Christians provide wonderful examples, but is the apostle Paul your example?
- C. Was another faithful Christian your example?
 1. Titus, Timothy, John, Peter.
 2. As Paul exhorted the Philippians, he said, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Phil. 3:17)
 - a. There were those walking like Paul was walking.
 - b. Should we consider them the example to follow?
 3. As exhorted by the writer of Hebrews, we are to imitate the faith and patience of those who inherit the promises.
 - a. “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:12)
 - b. Do we follow the faith of those who rule over us (Heb. 13:7)?
 4. Many Christians today provide examples worthy of imitating.
- D. Whose example are you following?
 1. Are you imitating either Christ or some other Christian (either living or dead)?
 2. Does your life suggest that the example you are following is less than exemplary such as with the saints at Laodicea?
 - a. “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” (Rev. 3:14-16)
 - b. Laodicea certainly were not following the right examples that people set for them to follow.
- E. Closely related to this is another question...

II. WHOSE EXAMPLE AM I AS A CHRISTIAN?

- A. Little eyes are all around who see us do everything.
- B. Are we examples for other Christians to follow?
 1. If a brother or sister in Christ was to follow our actions and be exactly like us, would we be leading them through the gates of Heaven?
 - a. The Pharisees were the examples that many followed, yet Jesus said about them, “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”

(Matt. 15:14).

- b. If we set the wrong examples as the Pharisees did, not only will we be lost, but also the one who followed us will be lost.
2. Are we being examples to the young Christians here so that they will not be led astray by what we do?
 - a. 2 Tim. 2:21-22 tells the young Christian to look at those who are honoured, sanctified, ready for every good work and have a pure heart.
3. Do older Christians look up to us as ones to follow, or do we set the example of leaving them behind and neglected?
4. Christians should be mindful of their example on one another.
 - a. Titus was told, "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity," (Tit. 2:7)
- C. Are we examples to young children?
 1. Are we example for those who naturally look up to their parents or are we letting them down?
 2. Are we pushing our children away where they seek the influence of others instead?
 3. Christians should be mindful of their example upon the young.
 - a. Jesus said, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:6)
- D. Are we an example to the thousands who are not saved in this community?
 1. What example are we setting to make sure that others see us walking the talk of being a Christian?
 2. Who gauges the value of following after Christ by our examples?
 - a. Do they even know that we are Christians?
 - b. Do they know about the church?
 3. Do we know that the church is judged by here members?
 4. Christians should be mindful of their example seen by the world.
 - a. Peter said, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2:12)
 - b. Do those who speak evil of you have reasons to glorify God because of what you do?
- E. Whether we want to be or not, we are examples to others, especially the young in years and young in faith. So let me ask...

III. WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE DO I SET AS A CHRISTIAN?

- A. Is the example that we set significant of a faithful Christian?
 1. Meaning this: are we showing others what it means to be a Christian?
 - a. Are we showing these babes in Christ here today what it means to be a disciple of our Lord?
 - b. Are we teaching them the word of righteousness and giving them that milk that they so desperately need (Heb. 5:13)?
 2. Is your example helping others to know Christ and obey Christ or are you hindering discipleship in others?
 - a. Will you salt the earth (Matt. 5:13), will you light the world (Matt. 5:14), will you shine before others (Matt. 5:16)?
- B. When you consider the example we are, are you setting the example that is contributing to church growth?
 1. Is your example offering a noble pattern of faithful church attendance or abstinence?
 2. Is the example we set providing a good example for developing one's abilities for Christ or are we hindering them?
 3. Are we providing a worthy model of involvement in the service to the Lord and his Church?
 4. Is our example helping others or hindering the progress of the Church?
- C. Is your example worthy of ambition?
 1. Would you want a child or new Christian to follow your example?
 2. If every member provided the same example as you:
 - a. Would the church be strong?
 - b. Would the church be growing?
 - c. Would the church have service on Sunday and Wednesday nights?
 - d. Would the church even exist?
 3. Is your example helping or hindering the cause of Christ?

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope these questions have prompted serious self examination on your part.
 - a. As to who is your example or role model as a Christian.
 - b. As to the sort of example or role model you are setting for others.
2. Paul told Timothy to, "be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - a. One cannot escape being an example to others.
 - b. Yet, your only choice is to determine what kind of example you will be.
 - c. Will your example be one of the many examples worth following as we read from the Word of God.
 - d. Or, will your example be unacceptable to God.