

Be an Example to the Believers

Introduction

1 Timothy 4:12-16

1. This passage of scripture speaks loudly of how every preacher of the gospel of Christ should be in their life's character.
 - A. But not only every preacher, but every Christian!
 - 1) Preachers and teachers will incur a stricter judgment because God will hold us accountable for those we instruct.

James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

2. C. H. Spurgeon once said:

"A man's life is always more forcible than his speech. When men take stock of him they reckon his deeds as dollars and his words as pennies. If his life and doctrine disagree, the mass of onlookers accept his practice and reject his preaching."

A. Also, this quote from an unknown source:

"I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine."

B. The bottom line:

**"Your talk talks, and your walk talks,
but your walk talks, more than your talk talks."**

Let No One Despise Your Youth

1. Timothy was a young evangelist and needed to set a good example so that no one would be able to despise him as being too immature to discharge his duties as a preacher of the gospel.
 - A. If they didn't respect Timothy, then they certainly would NOT respect his message.
2. In the same way, setting the proper example will cause others to respect us and our message.
 - A. How can anyone believe that we are living "lights for Christ" if they do not see us following in His steps, being the right example?

Be an Example to the Believers

1. Paul was telling Timothy that he should set a godly example to other brethren in the body of Christ.
 - A. While there certainly is a need to always have a good influence before those outside of Christ, it is also so very important to have a good influence toward those in the church.
 - 1) It is often the case that we must earn respect before it is given.

2. **There is a great power in a good example.**
 - A. **One does not have to reflect too far back to recall those who have been led away because of the bad influence of a preacher.**
 - 1) **How we conduct ourselves in EVERY aspect of our lives does matter!**
 - a. **Are we setting examples of pure behavior, clean lives, and righteous moral conduct?**
 - 2) **The scriptures clearly tell us that our influence is either good or bad:**

Light – seen by others:

Matthew 5:14-16 "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.

Leaven – influencing others:

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Matthew 13:33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

3. **The way we conduct ourselves will either lead souls TO Christ, or drive them away from Him.**
 - A. **May we manifest the sweet fragrance of God in every place.**
2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Areas in Which Timothy Was to be an Example

1. “In Word” – In his speech.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

- A. **This would include profanity, evil speaking, or gossip**
Matthew 12:33-37
- B. **Let our “reasoning expressed by words” be representative of our life in Christ.**

2. “In Conduct” – In his manner of life.

- A. **His life in general must be worthy of the Gospel.**

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 (21) Test all things; hold fast what is good. (22) Abstain from every form of evil.

- B. **We must continually be asking ourselves, “are we living like we have been born again into the family of God, or are we living like we are part of the world?”**

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- 1) **Men, we can't effectively preach how we are not to be like those in the world – if the believers see us involved in those very things!**

3. “In Love”

- A. He should exhibit a genuine love for every soul – friend or foe.**

Mark 12:30-31 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' This is the first commandment. (31) And the second, like it, is this: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

4. “In Spirit” – He must be zealous for the Lord.

- A. Christians should provide an example of enthusiasm in their service, not laziness.**

Romans 12:11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

5. “In Faith” – In every way.

- A. Possessing an unswerving trust and confidence in God**

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- B. Having fidelity and trustworthiness in all aspects of life.**

- C. Everyone of us must incorporate this in our lives.**

6. "In Purity" – He must be morally pure and chaste in his conduct.

A. Jesus' words:

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

Matthew 5:28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

B. We should be a reflection of our Savior! How pure do you picture Him?

1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (3) And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

C. We cannot make any provision for our flesh. We are living for God, not man. We preach it – and we therefore must live it!

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Conclusion

1. Brethren, RESPECT is something that is earned.

A. It comes when we have integrity in our hearts.

2. We can't set an example for what's right if we don't follow our own standards on Biblical issues.

3. Let's ensure that we all live lives that other brethren, and the world can respect us for. Live for GOD fully and completely!

