**The Power of an Example**

*1 Timothy 4:12-16*

**Introduction**

1. Much of scripture speaks of examples. (Old Testament/apostolic example/Christ/etc.)
2. Examples hold much power. Following them can edify, or destroy.
3. It is important for us to know the effects of example setting, and how to be a good example.
4. Good Examples/Bad Examples

*“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”* (Proverbs 13:20)

* Example – a pattern or model, as of something to be imitated or avoided.

1. An effect of a good example.

* Matthew 5:13-16 – Good works glorify God, and lead others who observe them to glorify God.
* 1 Timothy 4:16 – Timothy’s example would save those who heard him/saw him.

1. An effect of a bad example.

* 1 Corinthians 15:33 – A bad example corrupts those who witness it, for they are inclined to follow it.
* Galatians 2:11-13 – Peter’s bad example led *“a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith”* (Acts 11:24) into hypocrisy (Barnabas).

*We cannot decide to be an example or not be an example. No matter how we act we serve as an example, whether good or bad. Our choice, and responsibility, is to be the example that God would have us to be (cf. Colossians 3:17).*

1. Be a good example in…
2. Word

* Word is what he teaches, and also what he says in everyday life.
* Titus 2:1, 7-8 – Speech must be in check with the sound doctrine, both teaching what is right, and practicing what is right in speech.

1. Conduct

* Conduct is how he behaves in everyday life.
* Philippians 1:27-30 – Conduct must be in accord with the will of God. It must be firm and steadfast even in suffering. This is proof of salvation given by God.

1. Love

* Love is charity. It is doing what is right regardless of the situation. Shown toward others.
* 1 John 3:14; 4:16 – Proof of our salvation in part is our love for our brethren. If we love we are in God.

1. Faith

* Faith is the combination of trust/belief shown in obedience. This must not waiver.
* Hebrews 11:6; Ephesians 6:16 – Faith is an absolute necessity. We must possess it to please God, and defeat the devil.

1. Purity/Spirit

* *Spirit follows love in some translations, but is not present in all because it does not appear in some manuscripts. However, the concept is seen in the admonition to be an example in purity.*
* Purity is the condition of his being. Thoughts, actions, etc.
* 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1 – We cannot expect to be pleasing to God if our lives are tainted. We must cleanse ourselves, and continue in cleanliness.

*Christ is our example (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-22) and we are to follow Him. In following Him, we are to set an example for others.*

1. Be a good example as…

* Parents – Children are constantly watching their parents. What are they seeing?
* Spiritual Leaders (Elders, Teachers, Etc.) – What is taught must be practiced. Spiritual leaders are set before the eyes of the congregation. How are you leading them?
* Elders (older people) – The elderly are given as ones to look upon for examples to follow. What influence do you have on those looking up to you?
* Young People – Youth often exclude themselves from this topic. They label themselves as inexperienced, and use that as an excuse not to act properly. Your words and actions provide examples to everyone as well. (Look at young Timothy – *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers”* – 1 Timothy 4:12).

**Conclusion**

1. Whether you have been aware of it or not, you are always setting an example.
2. How are you affecting others by your example? Is it bad or good?
3. Always be aware of the example you are setting!