**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.
* **Hebrews 11:4** – Abel gave an example of how to follow God. By faith (**cf. Romans 10:17** – he did what God told him to do. This remains true to this day, and those who follow Abel’s example are blessed for doing so.)
	+ **Hebrews 12:1-2** – All the examples of faithful men in chapter 11 serve as a motivating factor for present Christians to remain faithful!
* **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.
	+ Jude described the false teachers of his time as those who followed others examples– **Jude 11**
* **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, 6-8** – Speech must be in check with the sound doctrine, both teaching what is right, and practicing what is right in speech.
	+ ***“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29).***
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.
	+ When we are treated wrong for doing good we must continue to do good – ***“For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” – 1 Peter 3:17***
	+ **Previous chapter gave Jesus as the perfect example for maintaining good conduct in that situation.**
1. Love
* Love is charity. It is doing what is right regardless of the situation. Shown toward others.
* **1 John 4:11** – We are to love each other!
	+ Gaius was a good example of exhibiting love – **3 John 5-8** ***“who have borne witness of your love”***.
	+ **1 John 3:16-18** – Love is something shown, and we need to be examples of such.
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.
	+ We must remain faithful even in the most testing circumstances– ***“If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10).***
	+ **Job 2:9-10 – Job was an example to his wife, but also served as an example to Satan that the power of God on an honest heart can transcend trivial temporary matters!**
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.
* **James 4:4-10 – Our hearts must be pure before God. We cannot have a fondness of worldliness.**
	+ **Philippians 4:8 – We must only desire those things which pertain to God!**
	+ **We can be a good example to others by choosing not to watch the inappropriate movie, or not to listen to an inappropriate song, etc.**

*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!