

Are You a Faithful Christian Example?

By Mark N. Posey

One's example is powerful! We learn, listen and live by example. People copy what they see others doing. Notice two illustrations. In the 1934 film, *It Happened One Night*, Clark Gable removed his shirt and he wasn't wearing an undershirt! Every man wore an undershirt! It is said that the sale of undershirts in the United States dropped by 75% as a result. People copy.

The makers of the 1982 film *E.T.* approached the confectionary maker Mars about having M&Ms used in the film. Mars, for some reason, said "No." So, the film makers went to Hershey's. The result was that E.T. ate Hershey's Reese's Pieces, which were relatively unknown at the time, but sales went through the roof. People copy.

Notice Great Bible examples: Abraham had great faith (Romans 4:20), Joseph was great in forgiving (Genesis 50:20), Moses was a great leader (Exodus 14), David was great at courage (1 Samuel 17) and Jesus is our perfect example (2 Corinthians 5:21). Notice seven Habits of highly effective Christians (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

1. **Model Christian Morality** (v. 12). Our words, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity must be demonstrated in our thoughts, words and deeds. The greatest message we will ever preach is the one we preach with our lives (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9).
2. **Biblical Foundation** (v. 13). "Devote yourself" (verb) is *proseko*; it is present active indicative, which means to be continually devoted to the Word.
3. **Using God-given Ability** (v. 14). Timothy had received miraculous powers by the "laying on of hands." The miraculous age ceased at the end of the first century (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Thus, it is by application we learn to use our God-given abilities. The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25) stresses using what God gives us and not squandering it. What God has given, let us use to His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31)!
4. **Purpose Driven Life** (v. 15a). We must be entirely committed to holy living. Our purpose will determine our direction and outcome. Paul was clear about his purpose by saying, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21; Galatians 2:20).
5. **Let your Light Shine** (v. 15b). Christianity is not a passive mistake but a committed determination. Christians must stand strong, shine brightly and live faithfully. Our lives must be sterling examples of holiness for others to see and copy (1 Peter 1:13-16).
6. **Dedicated Perseverance** (v. 16a). We must exercise endurance by examining the two great areas of life: self and Scripture. Thus, we will be powerful examples as we are seen to endure (Hebrews 10:32-37)!
7. **Clear Goal** (v. 16b). Salvation is our greatest need! As we examine ourselves, endure and think eternally, our focus will be right.

Thomas Jefferson, in writing to John Adams once said, "As Christians, we must realize the world is judging Christianity by us!"