

A Good Example

By Roger Rush

The apostle Paul wrote to two young preachers. Both were encouraged to set good examples. Timothy was admonished: "Let no man despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Titus was challenged: "In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say to you" (Titus 2:7-8).

The challenge of the Gospel is to live life imitating the example of Jesus Christ. He left us an example that we should follow in his steps (1 Peter 2:21). We are to walk as he walked (1 John 2:6). A mature disciple is one who can say with Paul: "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:19-20).

The effects of a good sermon are destroyed by bad living. The best parental advice is overruled by a bad example. Children imitate what they see and hear. Imagine the frustration of a child who is punished for smoking the cigarette butt his father threw away, or has his mouth washed out for saying a word he learned from his mother. Jesus warned regarding the Pharisees: "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" (Matthew 23:3). Sadly, the Pharisees are not the only ones to have their influence destroyed by a bad example.

It's impossible to place too much emphasis on the importance of a good example. What we do says more about us than what we say. Edgar Guest wrote: "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day. I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way. The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear. Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear. And best of all the preachers are the men who live their creed. For to see good put in action is what everybody needs."



Make the Most Of Today

By Roger Rush

Dale Carnegie observed, "One of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today." In a sense, the Psalmist said the same thing. He wrote: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24, KJV).

Someone else has written: "Today is the day I have been looking for. All my life has been spent in preparation for it. Yesterday and tomorrow are faraway nothings -- the one a faint memory, the other a vague promise. But this is my day. It offers all that God has to give, and I'm a laggard or a coward if I fail to make the most of it." We cannot afford to spend all of our time regretting the past or daydreaming about the future. If we do, we will miss out on the present. Nor can we afford to live today in fear. Life is too brief and time too precious for us to do that.

Yet, there is a sense in which all of us must be vitally concerned about both the past and the future. A relationship with Christ will take care of both and enable us to live today. Through obedience to the demands of Jesus Christ, we can have all our past sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

In this new relationship with him, we can also live with heaven before us (John 14:1-3). As long as we walk in the steps of Jesus, our future will remain secure (1 John 1:7). With the past forgiven, and the future secured, the present takes on greater significance. Jesus came so that we could live an abundant life (John 10:10). As Christians, we can face each day with confidence. With a smile on our faces and a song in our hearts, life becomes an adventure. Each day offers new joys, rewards, pleasures and opportunities. Life is worth living.

But, if we remove Christ from the picture, there is no hope and no forgiveness. The past will haunt us and the future will frighten us. The good news is that Jesus can make a difference, if we will let him.