

How to Lead by Example as the Church of Jesus Christ: it applies to both shepherds and sheep as shown in v12 "be an example to the believers," and 2 Tim. 2:2, "commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others."

4 Ways that as a Christian I can lead by example:

- 1) **Feast on Truth:** V6, instruct faithfully, nourished in the faith and followed carefully. The "words of faith:" **scripture.** "Good doctrine:" understanding of scripture. Observe the text and do what it says - not make up a doctrine and twist the words for the meaning you want. A shepherd learns the word to be able to set an example. **Nourished-** like with food.
- 2) **Stop Eating Spiritual Junk Food:** V7, in the King James version: "reject profane and old wives' fables." Reject exaggeration, fictitious stories, tales, and irreverent silly myths. Hold fast to what has been given in the Scriptures. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.
- 3) **Train for Eternity:** V7, "train" or exercise for godliness. Godliness: outward evidence of obedience. The origin of the word exercise is: "exercise naked," where we get the word gymnasium from. The meaning is an unencumbered focus of godliness. V8, **godliness** is profitable for all things for now and eternity. Matt. 25:23, faithful over little now, faithful over much in heaven.

STOP: Looking for spiritual shortcuts. Examples: short devotionals, secrets to success, sermonettes. Hold fast to Bible reading, prayer, study, and fellowship with the body.

START: Pick your weakest area of obedience and attack it with prayer, study, books, and fasting if necessary.

V9; It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance- focused on godliness.

V10; Labor, toil, strive, and suffer - be deliberate in the work

- 4) **Be Worth Imitating:** V12, setting an example that people want to/would follow.
 - a) **His words:** in speech, Col. 4:6
 - b) **His conduct:** one changed by the Gospel - not being like the world.
 - c) **His care of others:** the word love is agape, or love that God has for us.
 - d) **His faith:** living by faith, not in fear or panic, confidence in God
 - e) **His purity:** working on the unseen person. The person on the inside that may be holding the tongue but thinking the thoughts. Purity is silencing the inner person whose thoughts are still sinful and unbridled.

Is my Christian life one to be imitated or a caution to avoid?

Further Discussion and Application

Why should we forsake false teaching and continue in doing and proclaiming the truth of Scripture? See 1 Tim. 4: 13-16? What blessing is found in verse 16, also the topic of a soon coming sermon in this series?

In verse 12, the word for love is agape which in the context, Timothy is told by Paul that his love should be a higher kind of love for the brethren. What is the difference between a brotherly love and an agape love?

The challenge this week was to work on the weakest points in our lives. To pray, study, read, and labor over the sin in our lives that we fall short in. What was Jesus' prayer for us in John 17:17? Will this be the time that we engage our efforts and toil to strengthen our lives in this area?

The last statement in the sermon was for us to consider if our lives was worth following or better used as a caution to others. How will study, prayer, fellowship, and obedience to God's will get us back on track to being a good example?

Under item 4, the point of purity was a gut punch. We may have stopped acting sinful, but our thoughts are still sinful. In what areas can you apply this to your life? Make a commitment to write the list down and share it with your spouse and/or a trusted friend to work towards mortifying these sins in your life.

What will it take for you to consider crucifying the flesh and engaging your energy and the work of sanctification in your life and in obedience to the Scriptures that you have heard and know? Why not start today?