

Leading By Example

Pastor George Stahnke, 02/18/2001

I am convinced that what people want and need to see is authentic Christianity. I am not talking about perfection, rather living a life that visibly reflects God's influence upon our lives in speech, life, love, faith, and purity.

God set the example and Jesus lived out that example. The apostle Paul in turn followed the example of Christ and was an example to the early church. They in turn became examples to the rest of the world.

The baton is now passed to you and I. Will the world in which we live see the love of the Father and receive Jesus? Will those who know us best testify to our example?

I. God's example

Ephesians 5:1-2 (The Message) Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

II. Christ's example

John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

John 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

1 Cor. 11:1 (NIV) Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

III. Our example

1 Thessalonians 1:2-7 (New Living Translation) We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. ³As we talk to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and your continual anticipation of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴We know that God loves you, dear brothers and sisters, and that he chose you to be his own people. ⁵For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know that the way we lived among you was further proof of the truth of our message. ⁶So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. ⁷As a result, you yourselves became an example to all the Christians in Greece.

Hebrews 6:12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

3 John 1:11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

IV. Church leadership's example

2 Thes. 3:7, 9 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you . . . ⁹We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

1 Tim. 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

Titus 2:7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

1 Peter 5:1-4 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

To be an elder is a heavy responsibility because God demands that church leadership represent the truths of scripture by personal example. I want to state again, I am not talking about perfection in all areas, rather living a life that visibly reflects God's influence upon our lives in speech, life, love, faith, and purity.

Philip. 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

“The kingdom of God can only expand through a congregation to the extent of the increase of qualified leaders. These leaders must relate in a quality way to God and to others.

The relational quality of a person's life is clearly the foundation for leadership. Other gifts and talents may be needed but the quality of one's relationship with God and others is the test of tests. What is the marriage like? How is the family life? What is the quality of friendships? Is this a person that can enter long term friendships? Is there stability in this? There may be many other developmental needs in a person's life, but if these things are solid, everything else will fall into place.”

—Daniel C. Juster, Relational Leadership pg. 22,23

Titus 1:6-9 (NIV) An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (NIV) Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become

RENEWAL MINISTRIES

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conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

V. The task of elders in a local congregation

1 Tim. 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Elders refers to those who occupy official positions of leadership in the church (cf. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17-38). The task of the elders is to **direct the affairs of the church**. Elders have the oversight of the affairs of the congregation, with the deacons providing their helpful support wherever appropriate.

1. General oversight involves ruling. This means presiding (1 Tim. 5:17) and leading (Heb. 13:17), not as lord and dictator, but nevertheless with control and authority (1 Peter 5:3; Heb. 13:17). A presiding officer, for example, does not even have a vote, except in case of a tie, but he does have control (over the agenda, length of discussions, whom to recognize, etc.). Desirably this aspect of the elder's ministry would involve the spiritual gift of government (1 Cor. 12:28—the different word used here has the basic idea of steering, as in Acts 27:11). Thus an elder leads, guides, rules, steers his flock, piloting it skillfully through the treacherous waters of this world.

2. General oversight also includes guarding the truth (*Titus 1:9*). This means both the positive proclamation and explanation of doctrine as well as its defense against false teaching. This is why elders must be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2). Certainly no one should ever be chosen an elder unless he knows well the doctrines of our faith and is able to explain and defend them accurately.”

—Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology