

# 5 Ways to “Be an Example”

by Dean Ridings

When it comes to having a vibrant walk with God, we need look no further than Jesus Himself as our ultimate example. In Jesus’ life and ministry, we see a clear picture of what it looks like to live a life that glorifies, honors, and pleases the Father.

Long before Christ healed one person, cast out one demon, and ultimately went to the cross to die for the sins of the world, clearly the Father was pleased with Jesus’ character—with who He was—which is reflected in His words at the outset of Jesus’ public ministry: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17b).

The apostle Paul offers an excellent model to follow as well, yet he is sure to clarify that we are to follow him only to the extent that he follows Jesus: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). He is among many godly examples throughout the Bible we can learn from!

It is Paul who counseled his young protégé Timothy to live a life worthy of imitation, for those around him would look to Timothy to model the way. Paul put it this way: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

As in early church times, people today are looking for examples of what it looks like to be “all in” for Jesus. What about us? How might God use Jesus’ modern-day disciples to be living and breathing examples for those around them to follow? What can godly examples teach us?

Certainly the five ways Paul gave Timothy to “be an example” are an ideal target for us! Let’s look at each one. **As we do, prayerfully consider what the Holy Spirit is saying to your spirit in light of being a godly example . . .**



**In Speech** — “Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body” (Proverbs 16:24). Words can build up or tear down—which shall it be? Godly examples use words to encourage, admonish, comfort, confront, strengthen, equip, empower.

*“Words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.” —Mother Teresa*

**In Conduct** — “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). You can’t go wrong by asking, “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD)! Godly examples have come to God through Jesus, seek to be led by the Spirit, and model in action living like Jesus.

*“What we do flows from who we are.” —Chuck Colson*

**In Love** — “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7). Godly examples love by who we are, what we say, and what we do; we pursue justice, show mercy, reflect compassion for all people, and demonstrate care.

*“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” —Amy Carmichael*

**In Faith** — “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). Godly examples regularly read the Bible, pray, witness, fellowship, and seek His priorities, will, and way.

*“Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible.” —Corrie Ten Boom*

**In Purity** — “And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). Godly examples are purified by Jesus’ once-for-all sacrifice and seek to be up-to-date with Him each day. Godly examples are holy, innocent, blameless, and seek to walk humbly before God.

*“I can’t overemphasize the value of a pure life. A curiosity about evil weakens our spiritual life.” —Charles R. Swindoll*



Now more than ever, may we be godly examples—in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity! In the words of Billy Graham, “We are the Bibles the world is reading; we are the creeds the world is needing; we are the sermons the world is heeding.”

So, what is the Holy Spirit saying to your spirit? Where are you strong? What might need to be improved? What practical “action steps” will help you better live a life worthy of imitation?