

The Power of a Spiritual Example

Psa 101:6 Mine eyes [shall be] upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

When we examine the power of moral examples, we need to understand that this works in two ways, for good, and also for evil.

Prov 13:20 *He that walketh with wise [men] shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

The Bible presents the picture of the son of God as a person who draws people and “pushes away” people. He should draw others who want to follow and obey God (**2Tim 2:22; Psa 119:79; 16:3**), and he should reject or push off those who are bent on doing wickedness (**Psa 119:115**).

2Cor 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you,*

Simply put, when two people live together, they transfer their moral character one to the other, therefore, we should 1) seek the company of people who have good moral character, 2) be strong moral examples to help others in their moral life, 3) never be a bad moral example ourselves.

Jesus Christ as Our Example

1Pet 2:21 *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

1John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

The power of a moral example should be very obvious for us, but most people miss it altogether. God sent Jesus into the world to be our moral example, the perfect spiritual pattern of God, and this is to set this morality in our minds and lives. When God saw the necessity to come down from heaven to live among men, it was because he

wanted to leave us a perfect moral example which the children of God can examine, study, and follow. Jesus could well have appeared at the beginning of crucifixion week as he appeared to Abraham before entering Sodom, and then lived Easter week events, and be crucified. But God wanted the events of his life to happen and be available for our meditation.

The Influence of a Bad Example

Esther 1:17 *For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. 20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.*

In this story, we see the power of a bad example. Queen Vashti refused to enter into the presence of king Ahasuerus, her king and husband, and because of this rebellion, all the wives of the kingdom would copy her example. This was an evil example (of a leader), and all would follow the spiritual example they saw in it. This rebellion would multiply like an infection.

1Cor 15:33 *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

The word “communications” is really fellowship, and “good manners” is good moral habits. The principle is clear; a single person can influence and spiritually affect another person, or many. But being in the presence of a bad example, seeing it, putting thought on it, one can be spiritually corrupted.

1Cor 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

Equally, Paul spoke of the spiritual power of a bad example in this verse, comparing it to penetrating and extending power of leaven. Through the moral influence of one person, many can be affected. This is what others see in you, your actions, your attitude, your words, and this can

spiritually influence people who have close fellowship with you, especially living in the same house. God has put parents in the family to be good examples for their children, and the children should follow their good example. From psychological studies that have been done, it is pretty clear that young boys imitate their fathers, and imitate how their fathers treated their mothers, and young girls imitate their mothers, and relate to their future husbands as their mothers treated their fathers.

We should be Good Examples

1Cor 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

The Christian has the obligation to live the example of Christ. When everybody sees your moral life, what they should see is Jesus Christ. In have contact and social company with you, they should get to know Christ living in you, through the way you talk, what you talk about, how you act, your attitudes, etcetera.

1Cor 10:33 *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

Paul proposed that his goal in life was the obtaining of salvation and spiritual benefit of others through how he lived his own life. He saw and used the influence of his own life on other people as a means to spiritually bless them, bringing them to Christ. This is being a moral leader so as to influence others into the way of God. Paul included others in the church that are spiritual leaders and moral examples.

Phil 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

There is a focus and importance to support those who are good godly leaders for God. This is so important because it is so essential and necessary in our lives. This is based on the principle that we are easily moved by moral examples in our life, whether they are good or evil.

1Tim 4:12 *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

Paul exhorted Timothy, even being a youth, to not forget that he has the obligation to be a moral example in his life.

1Thess 2:14 *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they [have] of the Jews:*

Paul well understood that the brethren would imitate him in their spiritual lives, because he was their spiritual leader. This basic principle is very biblical, and it is true that a person can profoundly influence and guide other people by their own moral example. This is why Hollywood constantly erodes our society via their unending parade of perversion and bad moral examples. First the idea is introduced, then over much exposure, the idea is accepted, and then it is imitated. If you do not personally pray, read and study Scripture, no witness, no faithfully attend nor participate in church; you are by default teaching others this same thing.

The People of God are to Reflect God's Character

Eph 5:8 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

God commanded us to walk as children of God, and this is a moral obligation. After all we cannot be a good moral example and do whatever sin we want. It is important, because we are harming others, and influencing other by the example we set by our own life.

1Pet 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

God called his people out of the world to be the instrument or means by which the unsaved world would see God. God called us to "*show forth the praises or virtues of God*". This is why the world is

not changed by hypocrites, but only by a person fully given over to God.

Follow the Faith of your Leaders

Heb 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation (conduct).*

In the N.T., God has imposed spiritual leaders over each church. This is a supervision (bishop), which is a pastor or elder. Even though at times these words are synonymous, in Heb 13:7 the word is not "pastor" but they are leaders (those who govern or are over somebody). The power of spiritual examples, a person who relieves, practices, teaches, preaches, and lives these principles of God is a person who wins others to these positions through his spiritual influence. A hypocrite only greatly harms this work of God.

The Faith of "Our Father"

Gal 3:6 *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. **7** Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

Equally God has put parents in each home to similarly influence their children, "showing them the way", because the parents are first examples of Christ. The influence that they have in the spiritual life of their children is great and powerful, for good or evil. We should always be good examples, but we should also meditate profoundly on the point that our faithfulness to God (or lack of it) in itself is being observed by others and influencing them. On judgment day in heaven, God will reveal how much we have influenced others, and may God forgive us for our failings.

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For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

John 13:15

In general, most people neither accept nor understand the strong power of an example. Even though they don't give any credence to this, they well know that personally they don't want to be the first to enter something new or difficult. This "leader" or person who does something first, or does it when few others can or are willing. God has structured things with the spiritual power of example to help us do the hard thing. It is very important to always consider what example (testimony) you are setting for others, especially parents with their children.