

Be An Example!

I Tim 4:12

Introduction:

- Our theology must be in our minds, and hearts but must also travel down to our feet! This is a very practical scripture for us this morning
- One of Paul's lessons to his son in the faith, the young preacher Timothy: Don't give anyone grounds by which they can fault your character and despise your youth.
- There was to be a concern with how he lived his life publicly- and there is application for all Christians. It is easy to talk the talk, but we must walk the walk. Paul says be an example!
- Example: mark, or imprint, impression made by a stamp; model or pattern of which others can be molded; imitate.
- Live in such a way that others can pattern their life after yours and please God.
- Pastoral question: if every church member were like you would this church continue to thrive?
- This is basically an admonition to maintain a good Christian testimony/witness
- What is a testimony?
 - Evidence in support of a fact or statement; proof.
 - A man's life is always more forcible than his speech. When men take stock of him they reckon his deeds as dollars and his words as pennies. If his life and doctrine disagree the mass of onlookers accept his practice and reject his preaching. -Spurgeon
- What is the one event that we should be witnesses of? Our salvation!
 - Our witness and evidence of the work Christ has done in our lives!
 - I Cor 1:4-6
- Does your life confirm what Jesus has done on the cross for you? (changed, forgiven, forever loved)

I. THE WORDS YOU SPEAK- V. 12 "IN WORD"

- a. We will give an account- Matt. 12:36 "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."
 - i. It matters what you say! Women speak 20,000 words/ days vs. men's 13,000 words/day!

- ii. Not only publicly, but even private conversations
- iii. Cursing, dirty jokes, gossip, scornful criticism- Col. 3:8, Eph 4:29-31
- iv. Not just in church- but everywhere you go! We are temples!
- v. Not only the words you speak, but the words you text/post on social media
- b. Are you speaking the right words? The gospel, words of encouragement, words of rebuke! The sin of silence- the words you should say but don't!
- c. Proverbs 25:11- a word fitly spoken illustr- Abigail intervenes between Nabal and David
- d. Control your tongue!- James 3:3-10

II. **THE LIFE YOU LIVE- V.12 "IN CONVERSATION"**

- a. Talk is cheap!- Jesus said: If you love me, keep my commandments!- John 14:15
- b. James 2:18-20- visible, active faith!
- c. Illustr- Enoch had this testimony that he walked with God. Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.
- d. Deeds as dollars, words as pennies- CH Spurgeon
- e. "Lamps do not talk, but they do shine!"
- f. Matt 5:16- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- g. Godly living is the only way to be for Christians- be an example of godly, clean living!
- h. No giving in, and compromising to worldliness! Illustr- John the Baptist rebuking Herod. Jesus commended him saying there was none greater!
- i. Can also apply to demeanor or dress- don't emulate the immoral pop stars and celebrities!
- j. Come out from among them and be ye separate! This is holiness!
- k. What kind of life?
 - i. Surrendered Life
 - ii. Meaningful Life
 - iii. Joyful Life
- l. Doesn't mean you never fail, but it means you never stay defeated!
- m. For many years Monterey, a California coast town, was a pelican's paradise. As the fishermen cleaned their fish, they flung the offal to the pelicans. The birds grew fat, lazy, and contented. Eventually, however the offal was utilized, and there were no longer snacks for the pelicans. When the change came the pelicans made no effort to fish for

themselves. They waited around and grew gaunt and thin. Many starved to death. They had forgotten how to fish for themselves. The problem was solved by importing new pelicans from the south, birds accustomed to foraging for themselves. They were placed among their starving cousins, and the newcomers immediately started catching fish. Before long, the hungry pelicans followed suit, and the famine was ended.

- n. Key areas:
 - i. Spiritual- church attendance; devotional life (if you're walking with Jesus it will come out)
 - ii. Family- respectful, forgiving, loving
 - iii. Society- school, work, citizens in our community.

III. YOUR ATTITUDE AND CHARACTER (LOVE, SPIRIT, FAITHFULNESS, PURITY)

- a. Love- we ought to be motivated by love for God and love for others (the greatest commandment)
- b. Spirit- your attitude in life is very important. The right actions can be done with the wrong attitudes, and motives and God is not pleased!
- c. Attitudes to avoid:
 - i. Bitterness, envy, anger
 - ii. Melancholy, discontent, anxious
- d. Faith- faithfulness, dependable. We need more examples in this area!
- e. Purity- clean, godly living
 - i. Thought life
 - ii. Viewing habits
 - iii. Behavior

Conclusion:

- Prov 22:1- A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.
- Eccl. 7:1- A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.
- How do I have/ keep a good testimony?
 - Spend time with God. You become like who you spend time with!
 - Keep short sin accounts with God
 - Avoid the appearance of evil- I Thess. 5:22
 - Develop Discernment (Bible Reading, Holy Spirit)

- Should I go to _____?
- Should I hang out with this group?
- Should I be listening to/watching this?
- What happens when we have bad testimonies?
 - Bring down God's name and glory- sadly one of the top excuses the world gives for not becoming a Christian is that they know too many bad ones!
 - We become good for nothing as Christians Matthew 5:13
- We all have a measure of influence! All we have as Christians is our influence- if we lose that we lose our ability to spread the Gospel!
- Your testimony is influential! Even what you don't do can draw someone to Christ!

Years ago the communist government in China commissioned an author to write a biography of Hudson Taylor with the purpose of distorting the facts and presenting him in a bad light. They wanted to discredit the name of this consecrated missionary of the gospel. As the author was doing his research, he was increasingly impressed by Taylor's saintly character and godly life, and he found it extremely difficult to carry out his assigned task with a clear conscience. Eventually, at the risk of losing his life, he laid aside his pen, renounced his atheism, and received Jesus as his personal Savior. Whether we realize it or not, our example leaves an impression on others.