

(1 Timothy) Being an Example of the Believer

by Brian Brodersen

As believers, we have a responsibility to be examples of the believer in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity, and to silence our critics by our conduct.

Duration: 51:24

Scripture: Proverbs 20:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Timothy 4:7, 1 Timothy 4:12, James 3:8, 1 Peter 2:12

Topics: "Christian Witness", "Personal Integrity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being examples of faith to others. He highlights the trust and confidence that comes from being a child of God and how it can be a powerful witness to those around us. The speaker also discusses the need to be examples of purity in a morally corrupt world, emphasizing the importance of integrity in our relationships and conduct. Ultimately, the sermon encourages believers to live a distinct and faithful life that reflects the teachings of the Scriptures and the example set by Jesus.

Transcript

All right, let's open our Bibles tonight once again to 1st Timothy chapter 4. Perhaps you remember last week we looked at verse 7 where Paul exhorted Timothy to exercise himself toward godliness. Tonight we want to look at verse 12. And here in the 12th verse, Paul writes and says, Let no one despise your youth, but be an example of the believer in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.

Public criticism of Christianity, Christian leaders, and Christians in general is becoming more and more commonplace as atheistic humanism spreads its influence through the media, the entertainment industry, and academia. In an article entitled Why Faith Doesn't Always Deserve Respect, L.A. Times columnist Sam Harris stated, Christianity, like Islam, is afflicted with dangerous literalism. Here in the U.S., fundamentalists in the White House and Congress use the Bible as justification to block condom distribution and family planning education, to choke off vital stem cell research in defiance of the public will, and to mount a mean-spirited war on gay marriage.

It's in the Bible, the literalist cry. But so is God's command that men who lie with men shall be put to death. In fact, the Bible also calls for the faithful to kill adulterers, infidels who work on the Sabbath, and children who curse their parents.

We properly ignore such nonsense, Sam Harris says, all of which was written when mankind thought the world was flat and eclipses were signs of divine displeasure. That's the L.A. Times. In another article entitled *It May Be a Design, But It's Not Intelligent*, Jane Eisner of the Philadelphia Inquirer wrote, Those pesky creationists just won't give up in school districts in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Wisconsin and elsewhere.

They are once again campaigning against the teaching of evolution. But this time, instead of breeding fire and brimstone, demanding the schools teach the story of divine creation, the forces of reaction are pretending to be reasonable without mentioning God or the Bible. They're arguing that schools should teach intelligent design.

The concept that our universe is so infinitely complex that only a supernatural omnipresent designer could have devised it. It's an appealing message driven by the innate human need to divine a purpose and meaning in life. But it's still faith masquerading as science and it has no place in a biology classroom.

With this kind of rhetoric becoming more and more common, and these were just a couple of examples we could have gone on lengthily. But with this kind of rhetoric becoming more and more common, what is a Christian to do? Well, there are a couple of things we can do. Number one, we need to take every opportunity available to us to set the record straight.

And this is where we have a need to educate ourselves, as we talked about last week. The accusations in these two articles I quoted are distortions of reality, to say the least. As you know, there's not a reputable scholar, not a reputable Christian scholar or pastor today who believes that gays, adulterers, Sabbath breakers or rebellious children should be put to death, nor does the New Testament teach any such thing at all.

But this is the kind of stuff that's going around. I read an article today. I don't know if you saw this or not, but maybe you remember recently there's been a big uproar in Colorado at the university because of this professor, this out of control liberal.

Well, liberal is too nice of a term, really just this guy's just the hardcore left left wing. This guy, Ward Churchill, and he's made all sorts of inflammatory statements, you know, praising the terrorist on 9-11, saying it was just a wonderful thing, you know, killing those Americans and likening the United States to Nazi Germany and all of these kinds of outlandish types of things. Well, the school has refused to really discipline him.

They haven't fired him. They've just, you know, he stepped down from one position, but he still retained his hundred thousand dollar a year post as a teacher. Well, I just read today, interestingly, that at that same university, there's a professor who happens to be a Christian.

He in 1998, he won the Professor of the Year Award for Excellence in Education, and he's at the top of his department, but they're forcing him out because he's been too vocal in his expression of his Christian views and opinion. So, you know, we see this kind of stuff happening and it's happening more and more and more. So, again, what do we do about it? Well, like I said, we do need to as the opportunities arise, we do need to seek to set the record straight.

But. Secondly, and this is what we want to talk about primarily tonight, we need to silence our critics by our conduct. And that's really what our text is telling us to do, to silence our critics by our conduct so that when

they make these kinds of outlandish claims and, you know, come up with this absurd view and so forth, that people around us, perhaps who would read that L.A. Times article or the Philadelphia Inquirer or whatever else, would say to themselves, you know, that's not what I see in the Christians that I know.

That's not the kind of thing that that I sense from them, that our lives would be such a witness that our very lives themselves would refute the lies that are coming against us today as believers. Now, as we look at this text for some of the four twelve. Of course, the the primary and the initial application, Paul is writing to Timothy.

Timothy is a young pastor. He's leading the ministry. And Paul is telling Timothy that as a Christian leader, he's to set an example for other believers to follow.

But I think there is a secondary application and the secondary application would be for all believers to be examples of the believer, to be an example of the believer, so that as you're going about life, as you're going about your job or, you know, you're out in the community or whatever you're doing, that you are. Consciously thinking in terms of I'm a believer and I'm going to be acting in a certain way so that when people see me, when people listen to me, when people observe my life with any sort of, you know, serious desire to find out what Christianity is all about, they're going to be able to see something that attracts them. You know, most people will meet a Christian before they'll pick up a Bible.

They'll meet a Christian before they pick up a Bible, depending on the impression that the Christian leaves that will, to a certain degree, determine whether they'll actually ultimately pick that Bible up and look at it. So we have a we have a tremendous responsibility as believers to really be an example of the believer out in the community. And so I want to just take a look at each of the areas of life that Paul admonishes Timothy and subsequently admonishes us to be examples in.

He begins with word, be an example in word, an example of the believer in word. You see, we believers, we Christians, we ought to have a language that's different than the nonbeliever. We ought to have a vocabulary that's different than the nonbeliever.

We ought to have topics of discussion that's different than the topics that would commonly be discussed among unbelievers. To be an example of the believer, of course, we would want to stay as far away from profane language as possible. Boy, we're living in a time when profanity is just becoming more and more and more common, isn't it? And, you know, just thinking back, I remember when I was younger, I remember, you know, growing up watching TV and all, you know, rarely did you ever hear any sort of a profane word or an obscene word, you know, once in a while on the late show or something they would throw in, you know, maybe a movie that had something just a little bit questionable.

My goodness, today you turn on the television of primetime, the stuff they're saying, and it's amazing how desensitized the culture has become and how this kind of profane type of speech is just becoming more and more and more the speech of the day. But we, as God's people, were to be different and people are to be able to look at us and notice a distinction in the way we speak. Now, you know, one of the things that strikes me as a bit weird is there are Christians today.

Who are, you know, sort of flirting with the world a bit, and they're wanting to really get into this whole thing of expressing their Christian liberty. And I know of Christians today, even pastors who are suggesting that it's not really a problem to use what used to be called profanity. That's the language of the culture.

We want to be relevant and they're actually encouraging. Others to, you know, just kind of let loose in this area of your language. And, you know, you can use a little profanity.

It's OK. And sometimes I'll even go back and cite certain Christian leaders in history. Martin Luther used to use profanity in his day to some extent.

He thought it was an effective way of battling against the enemies of God. Well, that was Martin Luther. There's a lot of people that would dispute him on that.

But but, you know, it just strikes me as as weird that today we have Christians who are wanting to express themselves in that way. And, you know, for me, I know I know by experience that that is not the way any Christian should express themselves with profane or obscene language. And one of the ways I know that is not only because the Bible tells us that, but I know that because when I became a Christian, that was one of the first things the Lord took away from me.

I used to speak very profanely. My vocabulary was primarily obscene words. And when I came to Jesus Christ, when I became a Christian, that was taken from me by the spirit of God.

I didn't have to work on it. I didn't have to try to overcome this problem. It simply vanished.

I know the spirit of God took it away from me. Now, would I at this stage go back and start repeating those kinds of things or using that type of language again? I hope not. So as believers, we don't want to be using profanity, but there's another area that we need to be on our guard against, and it's the area of gossip.

Gossip. Gossip is a huge problem in the body of Christ today. It is amazing the stuff that goes around in the body of Christ.

I mean, sometimes I think that Christians, they live on gossip. They can't get by without it. I had this friend who used to call me all the time, and the first thing he would say when I picked up the phone is he would say, what's the gossip? You know, always looking to hear about some new thing that people were talking about.

I want to tell you, I have heard the most outrageous stories about myself. I have heard the most amazing things that are going around that I said this or I did that or I'm going here or I'm going to do that or and, you know, people will come up to me and say, hey, is it true this that and the other thing? And I'll say absolutely not. Well, where did that come from? I don't have the slightest idea, but there's this.

It's rampant, in a sense, in in the body of Christ. And, you know, we'll get we'll get calls from the East Coast. We'll get calls from the other side of the world.

Hey, we heard that, you know, and they'll go on with some gossip thing. See, well, how in the world did you hear that? Well, so-and-so, so-and-so, and they emailed them and then they, you know, went around and gossip is something that we need to be careful. And, you know, when you're when you're out in the world, when you're at work, of course, this is a human problem.

It shouldn't be what it is among Christians, but it's a human problems, a human problem. People just like to gossip. They like to talk about other people.

It's a favorite pastime of of a lot of people. So when you're out at work or when you're talking with your neighbors or something like that, there's going to be that temptation. There's going to be those

opportunities that are going to arise where people are going to try to suck you into the gossip about the other, you know, the neighbor on the other side or the guy that you work the next booth over or whatever.

And this is an area where as a believer, I've got to really be on my guard and just refuse to go in that direction because I will fail to be an example in word if I buy into that whole gossip thing. And then, of course, there's also the issue of slander, saying things about others that is that things that are not accurate, things that maybe are not even not accurate. Maybe there's some truth to it, but they're not edifying.

You see, Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, he said, Let no corrupt word proceed from your mouth, but that which is good for edification, that it may minister grace to the hearers. You know, when he says that no corrupt word, that word corrupt does not mean profanity, although we've talked about that in the Bible, I think does address it. It means a word that degrades, a word that tears down.

That's what Paul's saying not to do. Do not let degrading speech, speech that tears people down, put downs and things like that. Don't let that kind of thing proceed from your mouth.

You know, sometimes as believers, we can get in sort of a little place where we joke around a lot with each other. And sometimes part of that joking is sort of a put down thing. Have you ever had that experience at people are joking, of course, but yet they just develop this pattern of this is their humor.

It's sort of a put down humor that can be that can be harmful. And so in these areas and especially when we're out in the world among the unbeliever, we must be on our guard not to let our tongue go in that direction. You know, the Bible says that if any man can tame the tongue, that's the that's the greatest accomplishment on Earth.

But the scripture tells us no man can tame it. It's an unruly, evil, full of deadly poison. But the good news is the spirit of God can tame it.

The Lord can get control of that for us. And so be an example in word. Secondly, he says, be an example in conduct.

How do you conduct yourself out in the world? Being example in conduct, you know, the word integrity is the word that comes to mind here. We are to be men and women of integrity, integrity ought to be. A synonym for Christian.

When people think of a Christian, they ought to think of a person that's full of integrity, of course, when you think of Jesus Christ, what do you think of? You think of a person who's full of integrity. And when you look at the apostles, they were men of integrity, and hopefully when you look at Christian leaders, they're men of integrity. But every Christian ought to be a man or a woman of integrity.

That's how we should be conducting ourselves in the world so that when people look at us, they see that that person's genuine, that person's totally honest, that person's a man or a woman of their word. That's a person who's takes their business seriously. That's a person that you can trust.

See, that's what a Christian is in the mind of a person in the world. That's what they think of when they think of a Christian. That's what they think a Christian ought to be.

Now, if I fail and I'm not a person of integrity, then it just completely blows that witness. You know, it's funny because the world has a standard and a perception of Christians. They expect us to live up to a certain standard, even though they themselves aren't doing it.

But they expect us to do it. You know, once you say to your fellow employees, you're a Christian, all eyes are on you. They're watching you and they have an expectation.

There are certain things that they expect from you now that you said you're a Christian like integrity. And there are other things that they do not expect from your life, like profanity and things like that. They're watching you because even though they're not necessarily living a Christian lifestyle or even desiring to move in that direction, still in their minds are thinking, OK, we're going to watch now we're going to see.

And so we are on display. And we have got to be. Wise in these areas, so we're to conduct ourselves as people who are full of integrity.

On the job, you know, real basic stuff. Do you do you put in a full day's work? Are you honest in your dealings? Are you a man or a woman of your word in your relationships with people? Is there integrity in those relationships? Can you be trusted in your relationships in regard to the family? Is there integrity there as a man? Are you faithful to your wife? Are you faithful to your children as a woman? Are you faithful to your husband and to your children? See, these are all issues of integrity and we are to be an example in conduct. We're to conduct ourselves in a way that would reflect Jesus Christ to people.

The next thing he says, we are to be examples in love. You know, this, of course, is the. The great mark of the Christian.

This is the great apologetic, as Francis Schaeffer referred to it. Francis Schaeffer was a great apologist himself. Wrote many books on the topic of apologetics, lectured on it, taught on the importance of educating ourselves so we could give an answer to people and so forth.

But he referred to the commandment to love one another. He referred to that as the great apologetic, because his conviction was this. And I think he was absolutely right.

At the end of the day, you can beat people in arguments. You can outdo them with knowledge. You can refute their ideas and theories.

You can show the superiority of the Christian worldview over the non-Christian worldview. But if you do not have love. Then, as Paul said, really, it's a sounding brass and a clanging cymbal.

Love is the great apologetic. That's the thing that gives force and impact to everything you're saying. And sometimes that's the thing that, you know, nothing else really matters.

Nothing else really matters. People see the genuine love and that's the thing that draws them to Christ or or moves them in the direction of having an interest in Christ. But, you know, when we talk about love and we talk about love quite often, the Bible is full of exhortations to love.

But, you know, sometimes we need to see a picture of it. You know what I mean? You can you can just throw the you know, you can throw that out there. I love you, man, or, you know, whatever.

But yet, you know, we need sometimes we need a visual of it. You know, there's an interesting thing to me in the scripture. Jesus never really said.

I love you. He didn't so much say that I can't think of any place where he specifically said to his disciples, I really love you guys. What Jesus did was he demonstrated it.

And then at a certain point, he could say to them, he said, here's my new commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Now, how did he love them by going around going, hey, I love you, bro. Hey, I love you, man.

You know, we can do that, can't we? You know, you can walk by somebody and, you know, say, hey, I love you. And then you're thinking in your mind, oh, I hope they don't want to talk. You know, they're just they're such a drain, you know, and oh, man.

Oh, but but I love you. Well, Jesus, Jesus did it. He acted it out.

And so he says, now I want you to love one another as I loved you. And of course, the greatest demonstration of that he would say is greater love has no man than this, than to lay down his life for his friends. So what does love look like? Well, on a real practical level, you know, love is kind.

Love is kind. Love is friendly. You know, Jesus, he made things so practical.

Remember, he said at one point, he said, now, if you love those who love you, what's so great about that? He said, even the heathen do that. He said, if you greet those who greet you, what is so great about that? Even the heathen do that. So he's calling us to to take the initiative to to be the the person who steps out and demonstrates kindness, the person who is friendly toward others rather than waiting to see how they're going to react to us.

You know, sometimes we do that. Do you ever find yourself doing that? You're sort of going along and you're kind of looking at somebody and you're kind of wondering out what's up with that guy, you know, and and you're not about to say anything friendly or kind. And all of a sudden they go, hi, how are you doing? And then you feel like an idiot and you go, oh, yeah, I'm doing great.

You know, hi, how are you, too? And then you walk by thinking, I'm the Christian, I was supposed to do that, but I let the heathen do it instead. So, you know, it's real practical stuff, it's being kind to people, it's being friendly to people. It's being concerned about people genuinely concerned.

Not that, hey, I love you, man, but in sincerity, how are you doing? Are you all right? Can we talk for a bit? Can I pray with you? Is there something I can do to help you? Is there a way that I can encourage you? You know, a lot of people come into church. We have a large church, a lot of people come in and they're lost. They don't know anybody.

I remember when I first came to church here back in nineteen seventy six or seven. And I remember when I first came and I came to the kind of the youth night, you know, and quite honestly, there were a lot of little cliques and little groups and everybody had their. Their group that they were connected with, and I remember coming in and I felt really weird, I felt awkward, I felt like I've never been in a place like this before, and quite frankly, I didn't feel real welcome.

But that stuck with me and I thought, you know, I don't want to be that way, I don't want other people to have that experience. When people come into church, if we haven't seen them before, we ought to reach out in a loving way by being friendly, by being kind, by being concerned, by by caring. But of course, out in the world, too, because as we've seen initially, there's this there's a propaganda machine that's working

overtime trying to bring.

A bad. Light. Upon Christians, and so we've got to work against that.

And one of the things that I think sometimes, unfortunately, does happen is we add. We give a little bit of ammunition to our enemies by not showing the love that we ought to be showing. You see, as a Christian, I shouldn't be marked primarily by all the things that I'm against.

Sometimes as Christians, that's sort of the way we can come off. We are against everything. I think sometimes if we get into a legalistic.

Understanding of Christ instead of a grace oriented understanding of Christ, then we get into this fortress sort of a mentality and we're against the world because the world's evil and the world's horrible and these sinners and all of this sort of thing. And then we get this reputation. But that's not the reputation that God wants us to have.

He wants us to have a reputation of love. You read some of the documentation from the earliest stages of the church and the one thing that stands out. Above everything else was the love that was demonstrated in the Christian community.

There was just a tremendous amount of love. And there ought to be love, of course, among us. But that love among us is to shine out from us to the world as well.

So we're to be examples loving each other. You know, love is patient. It's kind.

You know, another thing the scripture tells us about love. It says that love covers a multitude of sins. Peter said that, you know, I think sometimes we really fail as Christians with one another.

And subsequently, we fail to be the witness to the world because we don't cover sins. We expose sins. We get angry.

We divide over petty, non-essential and unimportant kinds of things. You know, one of the worst witnesses to the world coming from the church is all the divisions in the church. Christians are divided up against each other.

They're fighting over this and that and the other thing they're arguing about this. And, you know, sometimes it's a petty doctrinal thing. That's not it doesn't change anything in regard to the, you know, the the real big issues.

The people are all divided up over it and fighting about it and and it's a horrible witness. Right now, one of the new things that's kind of taking hold in the Christian community, there's some guys out there promoting this idea known as preterism. Preterism is it's an opposite view of in times.

It's a view that says, you know, all that's going on in Israel, all that's going on in Europe, all of those kinds of things. The things that we're anticipating are leading up to the second coming of Christ. The preterist view says none of these things mean any of that.

You know, there is no rapture and all of that sort of thing. That's that's all a misinterpretation. They say the correct interpretation of, say, Matthew 24 is that all of that was fulfilled back in the Roman era.

And there's a big thrust that's starting to. Kind of move along in the Christian community in regard to this, this view of preterism. And, you know, I sense from the people that are in that camp, you know, it's sort of like they're picking a fight with other Christians.

They're sort of saying, you know, come on, you know, let's go toe to toe right here in the center of the ring. You people think there's a rapture. We're going to show you and we're going to show you publicly.

We're going to defeat your ideas. Now, I don't agree with preterism. I think it's the wrong interpretation.

But, you know, somebody asked me a question about it the other day and. You know, it's nothing to start a holy war over. But these are the kinds of things that happen so often.

These are the kinds of things that happen if you go back in the history of the church, there's some really unfortunate things. I mean, people people used to literally fight wars over doctrinal issues. They would kill each other at times.

You believe Christians killing other Christians because, hey, that guy's got some bad doctrine. Burn him at the stake. You know, we we've mellowed out a little bit, but sometimes you wonder if somebody had the opportunity, if they would perhaps maybe go, you know, go through with it.

But this is this obviously is the completely opposite attitude of what we're supposed to display because we're to be an example in love. And then he said in spirit. Spirit, I believe here he's referring to our attitudes were to be examples in our attitude.

Do we have the critical condemning attitude? We shouldn't. Rather, we should have an attitude full of grace, graciousness and encouragement. You know, looking for the best in a person.

Wanting to help them along, not coming along with that condemning word or, you know, that critical spirit. I've seen so many people get caught up in that critical thing, and it's it really is it's like a spirit. It takes people over.

And I've seen it happen over and over again over some of these things, these doctrinal things, they get involved in a certain doctrine and they embrace it, and then they get hypercritical of everybody that doesn't agree with that doctrine. I know people today who are Christians who used to be part of Calvary Chapel, who embraced like a reformed position or something like that, and now they spend all of their time putting down Calvary Chapel. That's all they want to talk about is how dumb the Calvary pastors are.

They're not theologically oriented. They don't really know the facts there, you know, and they just spend their all their time doing that. There's just this hypercritical thing that comes upon them.

But this is the opposite of the attitude that Paul says we're to have. We're to have an attitude that's full of grace. And, you know, even when people are attacking us, we have to guard against wanting to attack them back.

The natural thing is to want to respond and attack back. But, you know, we have to. We have to do our best and by the grace of God to be gracious, to be encouraging.

That's the spirit that we're to manifest. You see, this is the thing that's going to be attractive to the nonbeliever because the world is full of condemnation and criticism. The world is full of bad attitudes and all of this kind of stuff.

This is what the world is. If they look at the church and they see the same thing, then what's the attraction? See, there isn't one. This is why we have to we have to silence their criticism by our conduct.

And then he said faith, being an example in faith. What are we talking about here? Well, a person who's an example in faith is a person who is manifesting a trust in God. It's a person who's resting in the Lord.

Versus the opposite attitude of being overwhelmed with fear and bogged down with worry and anxiety. You know, you you go to work, you're telling everybody you're a Christian and then, you know, something happens, you get a cut in pay or you don't get the promotion or something like that or, you know, some kind of difficulty comes into your life and then all of a sudden you're fretting over it. You're worried about it.

You're full of anxiety here. You've been telling these people about God. You're telling them, you know, you ought to trust the Lord.

And then the situation comes upon you and you don't trust the Lord. What kind of an example is that? It's not a good example. See, we're to be examples in faith.

We're to show other people. What it's like to be a child of God. One of the wonderful benefits of being a child of God is I trust him.

He takes care of me. He's my father. He's committed to my well-being.

And it's that that attitude of trust in him, that confidence that we would display in times of difficulty, in times of crisis. This is this is the kind of thing that's a powerful witness to people. You know, I went to see my brother in law, Greg, today.

And I must say I was very touched by his faith. And I will say I commend him that he is being an example in faith right now. You know, we went over today with a group of guys.

We anointed him with oil. We laid hands on him. We prayed for him.

We asked God to heal him. And we're trusting that the Lord has heard our prayer and he's going to do what's right. And, you know, as we prayed for Greg, he said, he said, you know, thank you and amen.

And I embraced that and I I received that prayer. But. He said, what I want ultimately is what God wants, whatever that is.

And, you know, he he was absolutely sincere and I looked at him and I thought, here's a man who's being an example in faith right now. He's got the worst possible diagnosis and he's just trusting the Lord, just saying, Lord, whatever you have, I trust it's the best. So I want your will.

I want the best. And I thought that that's an example right there. Of what it is to trust God, to be a person of faith.

And so we need to rest in the Lord. A few weeks ago. We found out, well, we we found out that we might possibly owe the IRS lots and lots of money.

There's been a mix up. Some form that I filled out 25 years ago, they can't find it. That form I filled out 25 years ago gave me an exemption.

So now they're saying we don't have any record of this form. So basically what they're saying is you owe us 25 years worth of back taxes. Now, when I heard that for one brief moment, I was tempted to stress out big time.

Now, my wife, she was even more tempted than I am because she she struggles with the money issues that I do. You know, I just don't think about it. I guess we've got money.

I don't know. I went to the ATM today and money came out, so evidently we're we're doing OK. I'm not that bad.

I'm just joking. But anyway, when you know, when I heard about this, I just thought, oh, my, what are we going to do? And, you know, instantly the Lord just I just remembered, wait, I am God's servant. You know, a bond slave, a bond slave was a person who was.

His will was swallowed up in the will of his master. And a bond slave, one of the wonderful things about the bond slave was that he was the responsibility of the master. And I thought, you know, I'm a bond slave of Jesus Christ.

God, I'm your responsibility. This is your problem, not mine. So I've had peace ever since.

I don't know what the outcome is going to be yet, but I trust that, you know, the Lord's led me thus far. He's going to take care of this. And even in the worst case scenario, he's going to take care of that, too, because he's not going to let me go wonder because I'm his servant and he's my God and he's committed to taking care of me.

That's his obligation. He's our father. You know, you fathers that are in here, you know, with your children, what's your responsibility? Your responsibility is to take care of them.

Well, we have a heavenly father and he has obligated himself to take care of us as well so we can trust him. And we must be examples in this area of faith. And when those things come along that we can't explain or doesn't seem like this is, you know, the way it ought to be right now or whatever, we just have to fall back and say, Lord, I'm resting in you.

I'm trusting in you. A great verse. God has encouraged me with over and over and over again over the past few years is this rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

You know, I get a visual picture in my mind. I just it's like this thing of just sort of falling back in the Lord's arms or like a hammock and just just resting there. I'm just resting in the Lord and waiting patiently for him.

He's going to come through. He's going to take care of it. The last thing Paul says here, he says that.

We are to be examples in purity. Examples in purity. We live in a filthy, filthy world, morally speaking, there are forces at work in our land that are seeking to further corrupt the culture.

Do you know there are people in this country who are in positions of influence and power who believe that the worst thing. In our society is a Judeo Christian type of immorality, they believe that's the that's the cause of all of the ills in our society. They're in position high positions in education, they're in high positions politically, and they're doing their best to undo.

The values that have been dear to us as a people for our entire history, they're doing their best to undo that and. As they're working on it, we see the the moral fabric of the country is just unraveling right before our eyes and we are inundated with impurity, with licentiousness, with with sexually perverse images and ideas and all of that sort of thing. You know, we have this weird thing in America.

We have this funny sort of a Europe envy. A lot of people want to be just like Europe. You go into Europe today and to a large degree, the moral standards that we're familiar with here, they just simply do not exist in those cultures.

And they have an agenda to bring us right into that as well. We are bombarded with this stuff. As you know, I don't have to give you any real illustration because you know it and you're bombarded with it in the workplace.

You're bombarded with it when you're out just in, you know, wherever you're at. And it's an area where we really have to work hard and be disciplined to resist that temptation to just get sucked into all of that. We're to be examples in purity when you're at work and somebody comes with the filthy joke.

That's the time to step away from that conversation. That's the time to just demonstrate that you don't want to be part of that. When there's a movie that comes out that has that sort of element to it or those connotations in it, that's the thing that as a Christian, you know what? I'm not going there.

I don't participate in that. If there's a TV program that's on. Oh, it might be a great program in a lot of ways, but it's laced with all of this innuendo and this other stuff, you know, again, as a believer, these are things where I need to discipline myself and refrain from that.

And that's an example. It's an example of people now. They might initially think it's you're just a prudish person or you're just out of touch or whatever.

But, you know, God uses these things and they go deep into people's lives and they begin to work on people. I have a dear friend who's in the ministry and for many years he worked at a at a particular company before he went into the ministry. He was not your ultra outspoken evangelist type of a guy, you know, giving the heavy verbal witness.

But man, the guy lived his faith. He was an example of the believer. He worked there for I think seven or eight years.

And I'll never forget when he left that job to go into the ministry. They had a huge party for him and the entire staff, these these men that were, you know, rough, rugged guys that, you know, you would have never dreamed that they were even looking at him or thinking in terms of him being a witness. They came weeping to him because he was leaving and they began to tell stories about how he had just impacted them so powerfully by his witness.

In some ways, a silent witness, but it was a powerful witness. And one of the areas was impurity. He made sure that he stayed clear completely of any of that kind of stuff.

And where maybe in the early days they mocked him or ridiculed him or told jokes about him behind his back in the long run, it moved them, it impacted them. You see, the attack against Christianity is not going to get it's not going to lessen. It's only going to increase as the days pass.

We can put forth our arguments and we should. We ought to, as we said before, equip ourselves and be ready to give an answer to those who ask us a reason. But.

We better make sure of this, we better make sure we have a life to back up. Our talk. Because that is what is going to make the real difference right there.

You might give the most eloquent. Argument. In support of the faith.

But if your life doesn't match up with your profession, your argument drops to the ground. Back in the days of the Third Reich and the havoc that they were wreaking upon. Europe, there was a Christian.

Man. Theologian who was caught up in that whole thing. He survived it, he lived through it.

And he said this at a later point, he said in those days, integrity. The refusal to compromise morally in any way to even to the point of refusing to just slightly alter the truth, he said in those days that was a more powerful witness than the most eloquent. Theological presentation that one could give.

It was the life. And of course, that's always been what. The Christian faith is ultimately about, and of course, the Christian faith is based in the scriptures.

It's about a life, a life that's lived, a life that's distinct, a life that you can look at and say, hey, that person's different. That's what Paul says to Timothy. He says, silence your critics by your conduct.

Be an example of the believer. May God help us to do that. Father, we thank you that.

Lord, you've given us the privilege of being in your representatives to this lost and dying world. Lord, we realize how important it is to go beyond just words. But Lord, to have a life that matches the doctrine.

And oh, how we thank you for the example you set for us, Jesus. But Lord, we thank you, too, that there have been men. That have exemplified this for us as well, just showing us that it's not an impossibility.

We thank you that by your grace and through the power of your Holy Spirit, we can indeed live. An exemplary life in these days. So Lord, help us to do that, we pray.

As the days grow darker. May we shine brighter and brighter. Lord, I know that that's your desire for us, so help us.

And I would pray tonight, Lord, for anyone among us who's maybe caught in compromises in different areas. Maybe faltering when it comes to. Integrity.

Maybe compromised in regard to purity, maybe been overcome by a critical spirit or gossip or whatever, Lord. Just pray tonight for that convicting power of your spirit and that grace that flows to deliver us the blood that cleanses us and the grace that empowers us to move ahead. So do that in our hearts tonight, we pray and we thank you in Jesus name.

Amen.

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