

(1 Timothy) Leading by Example

by Brian Brodersen

To lead effectively, one must lead by example, demonstrating spiritual maturity, integrity, and love in their words, conduct, and attitude.

Duration: 48:40

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Timothy 4:12

Topics: "Christian Leadership", "Spiritual Example"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on 1st Timothy chapter 4, specifically verse 12. The speaker shares a personal experience of feeling led to speak on a different topic than originally planned. The main message is about living a life that silences critics and being an example to believers. The speaker emphasizes the importance of conducting oneself in an exemplary manner in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. The sermon also highlights the significance of demonstrating love through actions rather than just words, using Jesus as an example.

Transcript

Let's go ahead and turn to 1st Timothy chapter 4, and tonight we are going to be concentrating on verse 12. I had a really interesting experience today. I spent a large part of the day in preparation for the message tonight, and got a nice message typed up and laid out, and then I just felt like I should leave it at home and speak on something else.

So here we are. It was a funny experience, really, but I trust the Lord is leading. So now we've been looking at Paul's instruction to Timothy.

Just to remind you, Timothy is a young man, and he's really an associate of Paul. Paul is grooming him, basically, for the ministry in the future, and Timothy will, in a sense, sort of take over Paul's ministry, ultimately. And Paul says concerning Timothy, many wonderful things, but one of the things he said was, I have no man like minded like Timothy who will sincerely care for your estate.

So in Timothy, Paul had a real kindred spirit and someone that Paul felt confident that he could ultimately entrust the ministry to. And so, as you know, the epistle is instruction to Timothy as a leader in the church on how church life is to look and how he and other leaders are to conduct themselves. And last in our last study, we looked at chapter four, the remainder of chapter four, and we briefly touched on verse 12.

But I wanted to save it and come back to it tonight. So let me read it to you here. Paul says to Timothy, let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers.

Let no one despise your youth. Now, Timothy was a young man, and I am just speculating on this because we don't really know how old he was, but I'm speculating that he was probably in his 20s. Many commentators want to put him closer to the age of 40.

I don't consider 40 a young man, and I don't think most people have done throughout history. He was, I think, much younger than that. And so here he is, regardless of exactly how old he was.

He was young. He was much younger than Paul. And Paul wanted to make sure that Timothy understood the responsibility of Christian leadership.

And so Paul exhorts him here to not let anyone despise his youth or in other words, Timothy, don't conduct yourself in an immature manner that would ultimately bring reproach to the ministry. You know, youth is a is a great time in life. It's an interesting time, but it's a time that is, you know, marked in many ways by childishness still and sometimes recklessness and things of that nature.

And a younger person in the ministry has to really be conscious that there is need of a level of maturity when you're ministering to people, because when you come into the ministry, it's not just that you're going to minister to your peers. God is going to have you ministering to people of all ages, you know, in the Christian ministry. Leadership is not contingent upon age, it's contingent upon spiritual maturity.

And so God will oftentimes take a person who's actually quite young in the literal physical sense, but because they've grown mature spiritually, he will put them in a position of leadership over people that are much older than he is. I remember when I first began in the ministry here and I'll never forget this couple that God allowed me to have some great ministry times with. They were in their 80s.

They had been married 60 years and I was 23 years old. And I remember them coming to me and saying, oh, pastor, we're just struggling a little bit in our marriage and and we need you to counsel with us and pray for us. And, you know, here I am at 23 and I've been married a few months and I'm thinking you got to be kidding me.

You want me to advise you? Why don't you tell me how to do it? You've been at it a lot longer than I have. But but I remember back in those days just, you know, that that sense of responsibility coming upon me and thinking, wow, I'm young, but I can't behave myself in a childish or a reckless or an immature manner because God is calling me to leadership among his people. And I remember a few years later when God sent us out to to pastor.

And at the time I was, I think when we went out, I was 26 and Cheryl was 23. And there we were. And we found ourselves in a church where the average age was probably mid 40s.

And there we were, as you know, a real young couple, really. But God called us to the position. And it was amazing how the church would look to us for leadership and respect us and all of those things, which is what does indeed happen when you conduct yourself in a proper manner.

And so Paul is reminding Timothy of this not to let anyone despise him because he's young. Now, of course, you in some ways you can't stop people from despising you if they're going to choose to do so. But what Paul's saying is don't give them any opportunity to do it or if they do despise you, let it be something

that's a problem with them, not because you have lent to it yourself.

Now, we can elaborate on this a little bit further and we can say that as a leader within the church, we're not to give occasion for anyone to despise us over anything, really. Leadership, Christian leadership, we have a great responsibility, those who are in leadership, and we need to guard against stumbling people. And, you know, quite honestly, many pastors have not conducted themselves in a proper way and have at times stumbled people.

One of the things that I've seen in the ministry that is probably the most troubling thing to me of all is a tendency for the pastor to turn the church into sort of a kingdom over which he rules and the church is there for the pastor, ultimately, and to give him a lifestyle that is comfortable and to give him all kinds of perks and things of that nature. And I'll tell you what, that kind of thing stumbles people. Because people see it, they see what's going on and they scratch their heads and think, wait a second, you know, the pastor is up there teaching about being a servant and he's teaching about not loving the world and he's teaching about, you know, not being materialistic and all of that.

But man, look at his life. You know, he seems to be contradicting everything he's telling us. And this is one of the things that I think we have to constantly be on our guard against.

I was with Pastor Chuck last Monday night. We were he was speaking at a conference up in L.A. and I drove up with him and he was addressing the folks there at the conference. And he was talking about the pitfalls in ministry, different things to watch out for and the the way the devil tries to attack those in leadership and bring them down and stumble others.

And he talked about the the person in ministry who lives above the people. And he said, you know, I disagree with that. I think that's wrong that a person who's ministering to people ought to live among them, not above them.

And I agree, I concur with him. And this is an area where I think there has been an occasion for people to despise those in the ministry. People have not been careful in this area.

And so those in leadership have a different standard and we must live according to that standard. Of course, any kind of hypocrisy whatsoever will be an occasion for people to stumble, will be an occasion for people to despise the church or the ministry. So those in Christian leadership are to be free from hypocrisy and they are to be servants, not there to be served by everybody else, but there to serve.

That, of course, is the example that Jesus set for us. And so Paul says to Timothy, he says to be an example to the believers, you know, the best way to lead somebody is to lead them by example. Like I'm saying, you can get up and you can preach the most wonderful sermons and you can really come down heavy on people and you shouldn't do this and you shouldn't be involved in that.

And, you know, you can do all of that, but if they don't see it in your life, then it doesn't go that far. We need to lead by example, when Peter writes his first epistle and he's speaking to the elders in the church, he says to shepherd the church of God. And there he says, not as lords over the flock, but as examples.

So that's how a pastor is to lead by example. You want people to be spiritual, then you need to be spiritual. You want people to grow in humility.

You need to be humble. You want people to know the word of God and love the Lord, then you've got to know the word of God and love the Lord and all of those things. The best way to communicate that to others is to live it before them, to model it so they can see it.

And that's what Paul is saying to Timothy here. You see, what we are called to do is we are called to silence criticism by our conduct. You see, when people criticize and there's a lot of criticism of ministers today, isn't there? And quite honestly, there are many have done things that call for criticism.

But we are to silence the critics, not by telling them, hey, you shouldn't say that again. I'm the Lord's anointed. You better watch it, buddy.

God's going to zap you. That's not how we silence the critics. You know, I've seen that, though.

You know, some of these so-called televangelists, you you point out that their lifestyles are extravagant and their teachings outlandish and all of that. And they say you're speaking against the Lord's anointed brother. You better watch out.

You know, that's nonsense. That's no way to rebut those things. The way to rebut that is to live the right life.

That's how we are to silence the critics by conducting ourselves in the proper manner. And so Paul now goes on and he lists a number of areas where he says to Timothy that he is to be an example to the believers. The first thing he says is in word.

In word, the pastor, the leader, and, you know, I'm not just talking to pastors because I don't think there are too many pastors out here in the congregation tonight. I'm talking to anybody who's aspiring to Christian leadership of any sort. If you're going to be in leadership, there are standards and we have got to conform to the standards.

And so here, Paul says that we're to be an example in word. Now, I think Paul's primary reference here would be to the minister not being a slanderous person, not being given over to gossip or backbiting or those kinds of things, but but rather being a person who speaks things that build others up rather than tear others down. As Paul would say in his epistle to the Ephesians, he says, let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouth.

The word corrupt does not mean what we usually think it means in our cultural context. We think don't let corrupt language or corrupt word proceed from your mouth. We think, oh, don't use that language.

That's not what it means, although we don't use bad language either. I'll talk about that in a minute. But corrupt means language that brings decay or destructive language.

That's what we're not to do. Don't let any destructive speech proceed from your mouth, but only that which builds up edifies the hearers. You see, as a as a leader within the church, I'm not to go around backbiting people.

I'm not to go around slandering people. I'm not to be anxious to talk about people's faults and things that happens all too often in the ministry. Many times a person will.

Talk somebody else down in order to build themselves up, and that's something that we must. Avoid, we must stay away from that, and Paul is saying to Timothy that he's to be an example in word, the words of

his mouth, the meditation of his heart should be acceptable in God's sight. And of course, if it's acceptable in God's sight, it's going to be acceptable in the sight of man.

Now, I would say that, of course, this would also have reference to obscene language or vulgar language. Now, I don't know what kinds of vulgarities they used back in those times. I would imagine that they were similar to today.

And of course, that seems to be like a no brainer, right? Like, hey, the pastor shouldn't be using vulgar language or obscenity. Now, it seems like anybody would know that, but, you know, in our brave new world that we're living in and in our brave new churches, we've got some young pastors today that are actually using profanity from the pulpit. They're using obscenities and vulgarities and they're saying, oh, well, you know, it doesn't really matter because this whole language thing, you know, they've kind of gone into this deconstructionist philosophy.

Or this postmodern philosophy that, well, you know, those words, they're not really that bad. They don't mean, you know, it's all just depends on the culture. And people use this language today anyway.

It's it's common to everybody. And man, we want to relate to the people. So so they're using profanity from the pulpit.

How absurd, how ridiculous, you know, one way that I know for sure that that's not to be happening in the life of a Christian, especially a Christian leader, is because I know in a subjective way. I know from experience, because when I got saved, the Lord delivered me from that kind of speech. I used to I used to talk like that.

I used to talk just like everybody else does now. I didn't even try. I didn't get saved and say, oh, now I've got to clean up my language.

I got to stop speaking this way. I got saved and it was gone. I know God took it from me.

Why would he take it from me? Because it's displeasing to him, because it's not something that's becoming a believer. And so in our confused church world today, we've got these guys that are promoting this sort of thing. But this is certainly what the apostle is referring to here as well as a leader, as a minister, as a servant, as a pastor.

We are to be examples in word. We're not to be slanderous. We're not to be back biters or gossipers.

We're not to be using profane and vulgar language. And of course, because our world is so saturated with this stuff, you know, you will be an example. You will stand out.

You will look radically different than the world around you because the world is steeped in this kind of thing. So to be an example in word. Secondly, Paul says to Timothy, be an example in conduct.

Conduct here, I think the primary reference is that Timothy is to be a man of integrity. Integrity, a genuine person, a person who's who's real and what you see is what you get. There's no there's nothing hidden there.

There's no hypocritical kind of thing going on. There's there's an honesty and integrity. That's what a Christian leader is to possess integrity so that even if somebody tried to come up with some sort of a. Slanderous thing against them, it could never stick.

Because the guy just know, man, he lives above reproach. There's integrity in that person's life. We need to be truthful, we need to be men of our word, we need to.

What you see is what you get, that's what Paul is saying to Timothy, be an example in your conduct, conduct yourself in. A way that is becoming the gospel, Jesus, of course, is our great example, and you remember they could not find anything against Jesus. He even said to him at one point, he said, which of you can convict me of sin? None of them could.

Now, of course, we're not Jesus and that we all have our faults and things like that, but I don't think it's at all an impossibility to be a person of integrity. I don't think it's at all an impossibility to be the kind of person that Paul is calling us to be here. And, you know, this kind of person also is the person who, when they fall short, when they fail to live up to the standard, they admit that they failed and they repent and they turn in the other direction.

You know, one big problem that you see over and over again with people is that they they don't conduct themselves the way they ought to, and then certain consequences result from that and they find themselves in trouble. And then instead of. Saying, you know what I said, I was wrong, forgive me, and instead they kind of live in denial.

Oh, it wasn't me, you know, it was those other people. It was their fault. And that's not integrity, a person of integrity isn't a perfect person, but it's a person who, when they make mistakes, when they fail, when they are inconsistent.

They say, yeah, this was wrong, I was wrong, I'm sorry, please forgive me. That's what Paul's talking about here. Conduct yourself in an exemplary way, and then he said, thirdly, to be an example in love.

To be an example in love, what does this mean? Practically, you know, love is one of those things. It's so it's so hard to get your fingers on it, you know, and to really what is. You know, how do you explain love? Well, really, the best way to explain it is just to act it out, to do it.

Love isn't so much something you write the definition of it up on the board and say, OK, this is love. Forget writing the definition, you just you go out and you do it. You say, well, this is love right here.

You know, Jesus, interestingly. To me, Jesus didn't go around to the apostles saying, hey, I love you guys, man, I love you. Boy, do I love you guys.

You don't really find Jesus doing that. What do you find him doing? You find him loving them. And then at a certain point he says, I want you to love each other like I have loved you.

You see, they had a living example right there before him. So what does love look like? Well, love is kind. A person who's walking in love is a person who's kind.

A person who's friendly, you know, there are far too many. People in the church who are not kind, they're not friendly. That's a bad witness, that's a terrible witness.

Because people who love are to be kind. They're to be friendly. That's what love looks like.

I remember when I was a kid and I was. As I've mentioned before, grew up in Roman Catholicism and. And we had this priest.

At the church, he was the scariest man in the world to me. I mean, you just looked at him and you started shaking. He was so grumpy.

He was so mean. And literally, as kids, you'd walk by and he'd just sort of bark at you, you know. And I remember thinking, oh, boy, get me out of here, man.

This is scary. Now, this guy was ostensibly a minister. He was a priest.

He was a representative of God. And for, you know, a seven or eight year old, which I was at the time. Man, this guy scared me to death.

If that's what God is like, boy, I don't think I'll try to get too close to him. But of course, that's not what God is like. There's kindness.

There's a tenderness. There's a friendliness and there's a caring and a compassion. You know, it's easy for us to say, hey, love you, bro.

But don't ask me to do anything for you because I'm real busy, you know, can't help you out. I've got other things going. It's easy for us to to give lip service to things like love, isn't it? But but real love is it's caring.

It's compassionate love. It's real practical stuff. Love is helpful.

Somebody has a need. You say, hey, let me help you with that. You don't say, God bless you, man, I'm going to pray for you.

You know, that's tough. Your situation there. We'll see you later.

You know, then you go off. Love is a real practical thing. And then he said to be an example in spirit, spirit.

Now, many commentators say spirit should not be in here because it's not in the. Certain manuscripts, it's not in the. What they believe to be the the oldest manuscripts, but it's in the majority of the manuscripts, and I personally think it ought to be here.

What's he talking about when he says in spirit? He's talking about I think he's talking about our attitudes. What is our attitude to be? Our attitude is to be an attitude of great graciousness. You know, there's there's a lot of criticism, negativism, a lot of condemnation sometimes that come, you know, from.

Others. But the servants of God are to be examples in spirit to have a gracious spirit, an encouraging spirit, you know, when somebody has failed, when somebody's sinned and they've recognized that and they've repented when they come to you. You know what? God does not want you to kick them in the teeth.

He doesn't want you to tell them you idiot. Can't believe you did that. You know, God wants you to be gracious.

Of course, because that's how we would like God to to be to us if we were in that situation. And remember, the scriptures tell us that if we see someone overtaken in a fault, the one who's spiritual, they need to restore that person in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. And, you know, many times what happens is there's not this exemplification of of a gracious, encouraging spirit, but a lot of times it's more of a of a condemning thing that comes down.

I have seen something that. It hasn't happened just once, it's happened numerous times over. And it's been devastating and it's a weird thing, that's why I'm bringing it up.

I have seen situations where a person. Is being sinned against. They go to the leadership of the church for encouragement because somebody sitting against them and somehow the leadership turns it around and makes it their fault, in a sense.

Hey, you know, you need to love that guy. And I'm thinking right now in my mind about a particular woman I know who whose husband basically just left her for another woman. And when she went in to get encouragement and counsel from church leaders, they sort of turned around and said, well, what did you do? I mean, you know, you probably made a contribution to it as well.

And if you would have done this or that or the other thing, you probably would have kept your husband and he wouldn't have left you. And and you need to pray for him. You know, you shouldn't be condemning him over this.

You know, God loves him. And, you know, the poor lady went in to get encouragement. She came out beat to death.

Not only did her husband leave her for another woman, but her church leaders kind of turned it around and made it her fault. I have seen that more than once. That's why I bring it up.

It's a totally backward approach to things. It's the wrong approach. When somebody is in trouble, our attitude toward them is to be one of grace, one of compassion, one of mercy and an attitude of encouragement.

I had someone come to see me recently who's in a problem as a serious situation. They have made a huge mistake. And as I sat there and just sat with them.

You know, I just really felt from the Lord. They know they're guilty. They know what they're doing is wrong.

I don't have to say, do you know that you're going to hell? If you should die in this state, you know, you want to have that demonstration of grace. That's how God is. Remember, Jesus, his example is so wonderful over and over again.

Think of that woman who was caught in the very act of adultery, they said. I didn't bring the guy, but they caught her in the very act and they bring her to Jesus and they say to him, they say, Moses in the law commanded that she should be stoned. What do you say? Now, I would imagine because she had been brought there by the Pharisees, actually, she probably thought this is it.

I'm history, it's over. But what did Jesus do? Well, he said to those guys that were suggesting she be stoned. He said, he that is without sin among you, you throw the first stone at her.

Everybody dropped their stones and walked away. And then Jesus said to the woman, he said, woman, where are your accusers? Is there no man left to continue? She said, no, Lord, they're all gone. And he said, neither do I condemn you.

Go and sin no more. That's what Paul's talking about here with Timothy. Timothy, be an example in spirit.

Have a gracious spirit. Have an encouraging spirit. Come alongside and help.

We need to come alongside each other and help each other in our relationship with the Lord. Now, there's a time for correction. There's a time now, you know, the time for that is when a person is in denial, resistance, hurting their heart, hardening their heart, not repenting, not taking responsibility.

That's when you have to say, look, you're in trouble and you need to get things right. But when somebody's already come to that place. God doesn't want us to go ahead and beat them up a little more.

The spirit of God has done that work. So we are called to be gracious and encouraging. And then Paul said, Timothy, be an example in faith.

Be an example in faith, Timothy, show other people that God is faithful. That God is trustworthy. Timothy, inspire people to believe God against all the odds.

That's what this is all about. You know, we serve the living God. We pray tonight about serious, serious problems that no human being can really resolve.

But you know what? We can we can do that and we can do it with confidence and we can say, you know what? I believe that these people will be healed. That's faith and we're to encourage each other in faith. A lot of times I think what happens is, you know, we don't want to be.

Categorized as one of those whacked out faith people like we see on TV who have taken faith and elevated it and sort of replaced God with faith, and it's all about your faith. So we see that and we understand that that's not the right perspective. But sometimes it's almost like we swing all the way over to the other side.

And we don't express any faith at all. We don't have an anticipation that God is going to do something. We're not really expecting it sort of like, well, Lord, I know you can do this.

I know you can do this. Well, you know what? That is not faith. Knowing God can do something that is.

That's common sense. That's elementary stuff. Of course, God can do that.

He's God. God, I've got a great amount of faith, I believe you can do this. No faith is God.

I believe you will do this. And the Bible says that without faith, it's impossible to please God, for he that comes to God must believe that he is. What does that mean? Believe that he is.

Does it mean that he must believe that God exists? I don't think so, because Paul's writing to people who know God exists. But when he says he must believe that he is, I think what he means is that we are to believe that God is present. He's here.

He wants to work. He he's going to do something. Remember, Jesus went into the city of Nazareth where he was raised.

And they said, oh, this is a carpenter's son. You know, what is he? Who is he? He and they didn't have any faith. They didn't believe.

And it says an interesting thing about that, it says, and he could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief. The unbelief of those people hindered the great works that God wanted to do. And, you know, unbelief in our lives can hinder things that God wants to do in our lives and in the lives of others.

And unbelief in leadership within the church can be devastating. If the leaders of the church don't believe that there's any blessing coming from God, that's that's a pitiful situation. I have had people tell me people tell me in Britain, actually, I've had people in Christian leadership tell me in the UK that there is no future blessing for this country.

God is not going to bless this place again. We've had as many blessings and outpourings. We've already had it all.

It's it's all past. And now we're just sitting here waiting for the judgment to come. Most of them are post-tribulationists, so they're waiting for the tribulation to come and destroy them.

You know, that's tragic. That's pathetic. Because the church leadership there to be the ones who are full of faith.

To inspire faith in others, hey, God's going to work. He's going to do this for you. Just trust him.

Just believe him. Now, you know, I don't know the particulars of what God's going to do about something. Sometimes, though, God gives you faith to know that he's going to do this thing right here.

But we don't know the particulars. But here's what we do know. And this is what you can always rest on.

You can rest on this. God will do something and whatever he does will be the right thing. That's what you can rest on.

When you're praying about something, you can believe with all your heart God is going to do something about this situation. Now, it's what he's going to do that is there's still the mysterious element in that. But to just know that he's going to do something that to me, that's good enough.

If God's going to do something, whatever he does, I know it's going to be right. I know it's going to be great. I know it's going to be the perfect thing that should have been done.

So I can rest in that. You know, this this exhortation to be an example in faith reminds me of a story back in Nehemiah's time and in his experience. Maybe you remember reading through Nehemiah.

He was he had gone back to rebuild Jerusalem because the place was still in rubble and many years after the Jews had been released from the Babylonian captivity. And so when he goes back to rebuild it, there's a tremendous amount of opposition. And these guys are fighting against him every step of the way.

And they're trying to, you know, hinder the work from going on. And they're slandering him and maligning him and accusing him of all kinds of things that he was not guilty of. And and they tried to get him to fear as well.

They tried to get the work to stop by making him afraid. And so one man comes to him and says, they're going to come and kill you. Tonight, they're going to come and kill you.

You need to flee. You need to hide. You need to go into the temple to protect yourself.

And Nehemiah said, can such a man as I flee? Nehemiah, he was doing a work for God. Nehemiah had been telling everybody else to trust God. He had been encouraging everybody.

God is with us. He's going to bless this thing is going to be restored. These adversaries are not going to be victorious.

He had been telling everybody that what if he would have turned around and said, oh, no, they're going to get me. Oh, I better hide. What would that have done to everybody else's faith? You see, it's so vital in leadership that there's faith.

Ezra is another example. They were contemporaries. Ezra was there talking to the leadership of the Persian Empire, and he was telling them all about how great his God was and he was wanting to go back and do this rebuilding thing as well.

And he was telling him how great God is and all of these things. And they said, great, go. We'll give you the supplies and you can go.

But then Ezra heard that there was an ambush that had been set for him and he found himself in a dilemma. And this was a dilemma. How can I go back to the king and say, hey, can you send some of your soldiers to protect me? He'd just been telling the king how great his God was and how his God could do anything and all these things.

And he's going to go back and say, oh, king, I'm I'm afraid. Can you send some soldiers to protect me? Ezra realized that that would have been a contradiction that would have undermined. The faith that he was demonstrating to go back and say, well, you know, our God is great, but he can't really help us with this.

Can some of your guys help us instead? You see, we have got to. Encourage others to trust God, to believe God and guess what God does to get us to be able to do that, he makes us live it. He makes us live by faith.

He puts us in situations where we have to depend on him and he comes through and then somebody comes and says, oh, I've got this crisis going on in my life. There's nothing like it. I don't know what I'm going to do.

I'm sinking. I'm going down. Oh, pastor, what can you tell me? And you say, you know what? Let me tell you what God did for me.

And what he did for me, he's going to do for you, too. So Paul says to Timothy, be an example in faith. And then finally, he says, be an example in purity, be an example in purity.

And this is a reference specifically to sexual purity. Timothy lived in a time that was very similar to the time that we live in. There were obvious there obviously differences.

We have access to sexually impure things today at the tip of the fingers that you had to, you know, put a little more effort forth back in those days to get yourself involved in. So in some ways, it's probably actually worse today than it was then. But the same mentality existed among the people that Paul and the apostles brought the gospel to it was a mentality of anything goes.

Most of the ancient religions were in some way, shape or form connected to some sort of sexual idea, and most of the ancient religions involved a ritual that had to do with some sort of a sex act. And remember, the ancient world was riddled with idolatrous religions. That's what it was.

It was all about that. Now, today, we don't have at least it doesn't appear that we have idolatrous religion, but we really do. You know, the religion of the United States of America is humanism.

And what does humanism do? It elevates man and makes man God. And isn't it interesting that amongst the humanists, there is a preoccupation with sex? You know, so many things today that are going on in our culture under the banner of academics or intellectualism or multiculturalism, all this kind of stuff. You know, the underlying issue is sex.

Sexual politics are probably the hottest topic in the country today and in the Western world, for that matter. So things really haven't changed much. And of course, we are inundated by this stuff.

It just comes at us from every conceivable angle. And here's the call. You've got to be an example in purity.

You've got to be an example in purity as a leader. And there have been many leaders who have fallen in this area. Some have been.

You know, it's tragic what's happened in some cases. I have seen young men in the ministry use the ministry as. A place to lure young women into more relationships with them.

I've seen it happen in churches. It's a horrific thing, but it goes on. And then, of course, it goes on on a different level where people just sort of stumble into it.

Not as aggressively pursuing it, but just get led into it. And Paul says to Timothy, be an example in purity. You know, he said to Timothy, he said, treat the younger women as sisters and treat the older women as mothers.

And that rule stands today, men and women. That rule stands to treat the younger guys as brothers and the older men as fathers. You do that and you'll you'll stay clear of this.

But this is something that's so vital because this will this will wreck the ministry. This will bring it down quicker than you can snap your fingers. And so Paul says, Timothy, be an example.

Be an example in these areas. And we all of us, this doesn't just apply, as I said, to pastors or even to leaders. Of course, it applies to all of us.

We all need to be examples to one another. And then beyond that, we need to be examples to the world around us. Now, the other message that I was going to give tonight was the one that related more to being an example to the world around us.

It's interesting because my new King James Version says, be an example to the believer. The the the actual King James Version says, be an example of the believer. And you can translate the word either way to or of.

But when I think of being an example of the believer, I think of it more in the context of our witness to the world. Because it's a twofold thing that's going on, we want to encourage one another, we want to set a great example for one another. But we also want to let our light shine out in the world so that people will be drawn.

And the best way to do that is to be an example of a true believer. And so as we close tonight, may God help us to be an example in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity. It's not.

Beyond our reach. The grace of God is here to give us all we need. To be able to do that, you know, sometimes people look at these things here and maybe some other places in the Bible where it sets forth a standard or, you know, something we looked at chapter three where Paul lays out the the the qualifications for the ministry.

And some people look at it and say, well, that that's the ideal. But of course, none of us can live up to it. No, that's not true.

You think we just throw out these ideals and then everybody says, well, yeah, it's a great ideal, but we can't know. We can live up to it by the grace of God, through the power of the spirit of God. We're supposed to live up to it.

That's what the whole exhortation is about. So may God help us to be examples to the believers. Lord, we want to exemplify you to others.

And so, Lord, in word and in conduct, in love and spirit, faith and purity. May we be examples to others. Lord, we pray for Christian leaders.

We pray for the leadership here in our church. We pray for the leadership in our movement, Calvary Chapel. We pray, Lord, for the leadership in the Church of Jesus all over the world.

Lord, that you would strengthen. Those who are leading and help us, Lord. Cause us by your grace, through your power to be an example to the believer, Lord, that we would not give anyone an opportunity to despise you or to despise your work, to despise the church.

Lord, that's happened so many times historically. Lord, help us not to contribute to that. So, Lord, here we are working our hearts by your spirit.

Cleanse us, Lord, in the areas where we've failed, we've sinned, we've fallen short. Help us, Lord, to just admit when we've sinned, not to deny it or rationalize it, try to justify it, but simply just to confess it and forsake it. That we might be examples to one another and, Lord, to the world out there as well.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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