

# Carefully Following Paul

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

### A. 2Tim. 3:10-11

1. Paul exhorts Timothy to remain faithful, even in persecution, using his own example which Timothy has observed for years.
2. Paul was not boasting but telling Timothy that life was open to him. He knew Paul's teaching and trials.
3. He wanted him to remember my example and continue in it after Paul passed away.

### B. Why? What was he teaching?

1. "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." (Francis of Assisi)

## I. PAUL'S MESSAGE ABOUT EXAMPLES

A. Spiritual faithfulness is not automatic, but is helped by recognizing and following godly, scriptural examples - 1Cor. 11:1; James 5:10

B. Spiritual faithfulness in the past is not an automatic guarantee of faithfulness in the future - 1Tim. 1:18-20

C. Spiritual faithfulness in the future demands a recognition and reproduction of godly, scriptural examples - Phil 3:16-18

1. Learn how to discern a godly example - 2Tim. 3:14

2. Learn the importance of being exposed to godly examples. Follow closely so as to understand and embrace their life

a. Phil. 2:29; 2Thes. 3:7, 9

3. Learn the vital need to imitate godly examples - Heb. 13:7

D. Spiritual faithfulness depends on godly, scriptural teaching

1. Paul put a premium on sound doctrine, a frequent theme in his letters to preachers - 1Tim. 1:3-5, 10; 3:3, 15; 4:6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3, 20-21; 2Tim. 1:13; 2:2, 15; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 10

2. A godly teacher will use scripture to teach and direct others - 2Tim. 3:15

D. Spiritual faithfulness demands character. No example is qualified by insisting on the subjection of followers by merely holding a title or position of authority. Paul could not have insisted that others follow his example if he had not qualified himself by means of a godly character

1. "Conduct" or manner of life. How he manages time, money, and possessions, what kind of entertainment he enjoys, and how he relates to his family, friends, fellow workers, and strangers. Is he rude or sensitive? Is he oblivious to the needs of others or kind and caring? Christianity is a way of life, not a title.

2. "Purpose" or rationale for living. Paul's purpose was to help fulfill God's purpose (Eph. 3:9-11). He did everything for the glory of God (1Cor. 10:31). Godly examples show that God and His will are the most important matters in their lives.

3. "Faith" or conviction for life. A godly example will trust God and do what is humanly impossible. Paul said (2Cor. 1:9), "indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead." Godly examples live for eternal life and not earthly life, trusting that God will keep His promises beyond the grave (2Tim. 4:8).
  4. "Patience" or steadiness in life. Godly examples do not have quick tempers when dealing with difficult people, nor do they give up easily under pressure from the Adversary.
  5. "Love" or God's nature in our lives. Biblical love is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that manifests itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved." Such love governs everything in a godly example.
  6. "Perseverance" or persistence throughout life. A godly example does not vary with circumstances, good or bad. It improves over time without reversals
- E. Spiritual faithfulness depends on how one reacts to overt opposition
1. Paul - Acts 13:50-51, 14:5-6, 19-22
  2. Jesus - 1Peter 2:19-23, 4:12-14

## II. PAUL'S LIMITS ON EXAMPLES

- A. Just as important as what one teaches is how he lives - Rom. 2:17-24
  1. "What would Jesus do" is a good thing but it would be better if we did not leave it so open and asked "What did Jesus Do?" (Chuck Bridges)
- B. Equally important as teaching truth to others is proving it to be the truth
  1. John 8:31-32; 1Thes. 2:3-4; 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Peter 1:21

### Conclusion:

- A. Two questions:
  1. First, who are the examples that you follow?
  2. Second, to whom are you an example?
- B. "A father teaches his children that the battle is not determined by the enemy that stands around them, but by the God Who stands within them. And that lesson can only be driven home as they watch their father stand around them, while God stands within their father." (Craig D. Lounsbrough)