“Teens, Be Thou An EXAMPLE”

Introduction:

Being an example is a vital element to influencing others for God:

Joh 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you

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

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

2Th 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us

1Th 1:7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

1Pe 5:3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

I Thess.1:6 ¶ And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:
7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

“Despise” - To think down upon; to under-rate; to think slightly of.

Some might think: “what does he know about God, spiritual matters, about fathering, etc. He’s but a young man, inexperienced, etc.

“Youth” - <u>not</u> necessarily someone who is a teenager or pre-adolescent.

“In the ancient world a person between 30 and 40 years old could be considered young (Kelly). One Rabbi said that a person at 30 was fit for authority and at 40 he was fit for discernment (M, Aboth V, 21) (cited by Reinecker, p. 627).

Paul writes to Timothy, who is the pastor at Ephesus. He is not a boy, but a young man in charge of the spiritual leadership of this important area of Asia Minor. So Timothy

must be somewhere between 25 and 35 years old (just about where most Dads are with young, impressionable children).

Being young is no excuse for a bad testimony, language (“word”), lifestyle (“conversation”), relationships (“love”), attitude (“spirit”), convictions (“faith”), morals (“purity”).

“Be thou an example” (present, middle, imperative - *ginou* from *ginomai*) - Become thou. Regardless of your past, start setting a good example. Perhaps you have been a failure in your past; this word points to a new beginning.

The present tense implies a continual (lifelong) example.

The middle voice implies choice and determination (an act of the will) that you will decide to be exemplary.

The imperative mood implies that it is an obligation not an option for you to be the right example.

“Example” - *tupos* from which we translate “type.”

Tupos primarily denoted "a blow" (from a root tup--, seen also in tupto, "to strike"), hence,
(a) an impression, the mark of a "blow," <John 20:25>;
(b) the "impress" of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image, <Acts 7:43>;
(c) a "form" or mold, <Rom. 6:17> (see RV);
(d) the sense or substance of a letter, <Acts 23:25>;
(e) "an ensample," pattern, <Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5>, "pattern"; in an ethical sense, <1 Cor. 10:6; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thes. 1:7; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12>,
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
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Men, we need to be . . .

--a mold worth duplicating.
--a pattern worth copying
--a model worth imitating

“Of the believers” - God is not calling upon us to model the world (TV examples), but what a believer should be.

--He has unique standards for His children.

--He is not calling upon the lost to be an example (they cannot be).

Example . . .

1) Example plays an important part in th formation of character; and its influence is felt more than that of precept.

> "Children possess an imitative disposition. They look up to their parents as the pattern or model of their character, and conclude what they do is right and worthy of their imitation." (Rev. S. Phillips, 1858, The Christian Home, cited in Teaching and Learning America's Christian History, the Principle Approach, by Rosalie J. Slater).

2) Example may be good or bad (it is never neutral).

3) Example is teaching by action
Thus, the child is a living commentary upon his/her home and his/her parents. The child is the moral reproduction of the parent (whatever you sow will be reaped).

4) Example instructs a child before he/she can learn to speak and understand words (Phillips)

(Children from birth are like "walking camcorders" recording everything they see visually and audibly in your life and home)

**** Dad, your family needs you to be an example worth following!***

I. Be an example worth copying in your LANGUAGE

(Can your family model how you **TALK**?)

Your tongue is very small, but very influential (Ja. 3:1-12).

We sin with our tongue when we:

--gossip
--lie
--use foul language (curse words, vulgarity)
--speak idle talk (vanity)
--sing the devil's song (beware of the music you hear and sing)
--tear others down

"In word" - in speech; refers here to what you say and how you say it. The content of your words and the manner in which you say them.

Inflection, tone, pitch, etc., communicate more than the actual words you say!

How did you talk to your wife and children on the way to church this morning?

Do your words hurt or help? Build up or tear down? Edify or mortify?

If walls had ears (and could gossip), what would the walls of your home say you said?

Eph. 4:29 - Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

II. Be an example worth copying in your <u>LIFESTYLE</u>

(Can your family model how you **<u>ACT</u>**?)

"Conversation" - An old English word which meant <u>behavior</u>, <u>conduct</u>, <u>manner of living</u>, or <u>lifestyle</u>.

What behavioral traits do your children see in you?

Do they see . . .

--<u>laziness</u>
--<u>materialism</u>
--<u>gluttony</u>
--<u>self-centeredness</u>

"Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks."

What you do speaks so loudly that (if your kids see inconsistency in you), they will not hear what you say!

Is your home a haven or rest or a war zone? (a scene of fighting, arguing, clamoring – each selfishly out for their own interests)

Much of what a child learns about the nature and character of God, he/she learns from Father.

If a child has a dad who is <u>not</u> just, he may view God as unjust.
If a child has a dad who is <u>not</u> trustworthy, he may view God as not trustworthy.

If a child has a dad who is not loving, he may view God as unloving.

NOTE: However, salvation can correct this.

Your children are looking up to you, Dad!

ILLUS: of a little boy trying to walk in Daddy's shoes.

As believers, we are to "walk as Christ walked" (I Jn. 2:6), and to "follow in His steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

God said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

God would never ask us to be something that He is not.

We should never be hypocrites and command something of our children that we don't do. If you do, your children may comply (they will listen to you) until they become teenagers.

Don't set double standards.

If you impress upon your sons the need for diligence, truthfulness, respect for the "golden rule" but are a quitter (jobs, serving Christ, etc.), boast of shady business conquest, or boast of your own getting even with others - don't be shocked at the children you produce!

Joshua didn't just say, "My house will serve the Lord." He didn't just send the wife and kids off to church. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

Dad, don't let Satan get a foothold in your life; if he does, he has the main entrance to the whole home!

How do you conduct yourself when tired or under pressure? (Times like these are the real test of sterling character!)

III. Be an example worth copying in your RELATIONSHIPS

(Can your family model how you **LOVE**?)

What is your relationship to your family?

Love is measured by the time and attention you give to them; by the unselfish sacrifice you make for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being

(Eph. 5:25-29 - 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

IV. Be an example worth copying in your <u>ATTITUDE</u>

(Can your family model your **<u>ZEAL FOR GOD</u>**?)

The first three words ("word, conduct, and charity") emphasize our <u>outward</u> example, while the next three words ("spirit, faith, purity") emphasize our <u>inward</u> example (the manifestation of a Godly inward disposition).

"In Spirit" - (T.R. & KJV) - to be an example "in Spirit") means to have a <u>zest</u> (zeal) for spiritual things; to have an enthusiastic <u>attitude</u> about God and the things of God.

This person is not dull, drab, or depressed, but is excited about Christ and the new and abundant life He gives.

Mom and Dad set the <u>mood</u> for the home. A child's display of emotions is often a reflection of the frustration he/she feels over the mood of his parents.

"Let your light so shine before your children..."

Note: In setting the example, this does not mean that you never admit the wrong

you commit. You must. Parents need to be real and transparent in front of their children. They need to see that you make mistakes, seek forgiveness when needed, admit fault.

V. Be an example worth copying in your <u>CONVICTIONS</u>

(Can your family model what you **<u>BELIEVE</u>**?)

A conviction is a belief you would be willing to die for.

Do you have “Sunday morning only” convictions?

Sooner or later, fathers, your children will need to understand what motivates our speech, conduct, and love. What drives our outward actions? What fuels our behavior? It must be <u>faith</u>.

Does your faith drive you to <u>action</u>? Does it influence your behavior?

If it produces no works, then it is surely dead and useless (you really don’t believe).

--when was the last time your son or daughter saw you on your knees?

--when was the last time your children witnessed you reading God’s Word? (you don’t do it to be seen by them, but if you do walk with God within your house, they will see it).

Deut. 6:5 - Half-hearted devotion is unacceptable. Verse 6 - Love must come from the <u>inner self</u>

It is only after personally appropriating truth, after internalizing it ourselves , that we can teach our children.

ILLUS: A child said, "Dad, what is God like?" The reply: "I don't know - go ask your mother."

No dad knows all the answers, but he should know the elementary doctrines of the Christian faith - for we are responsible to God to teach our children!

A family without a father is like a teach without a coach; like a plane without a pilot; like a ship without a navigator.

When a home is without a father, God promises to step in as our Heavenly Father.

"He relieveth the fatherless [children] and the widow" (Ps. 146:9; cp. Hos. 14:3)

However, a family with a father who fails in his God-given roles is worse than no father at all!

ILLUS: of a boy in the snow trying to step into his father's giant tracks, and saying, "Look, Mom, I'm walking in Daddy's footsteps!"

VI. Be an example worth copying in your <u>HOLINESS</u>

(Can your family model your **<u>MORALITY</u>**?)

"Purity" - Holiness or sanctity. The word refers to purity of act and thought (Lock).

The word covers not only chastity in matters of sex, but also the innocent and integrity of heart (cp. II Cor. 6:6) (Kelly) (cited by Reinecker, p. 627)

You can't say "Son, keep yourself pure . . . remain a virgin, etc." when you are slouched down on your couch watching porn and sleaze on your TV set!

Your moral purity (or lack thereof) (to a degree) will be reaped in your children.

EX: David's adultery and his household's subsequent problems with sexual debauchery.

"Be ye followers of god as dear children"

Conclusion:

Fathers, can you say to your family: "Watch me, I am your model."

Can you say to your children: "follow in my steps." "Do as I do."

Fundamental, eternal principle: Like produces like.

If you sow potatoes, you don't reap tomatoes.

What is there about you worth copying?

Whatever you do, will be exaggerated in your children.

"Like Father, like Son" is true.

However, your sons will not merely tend to copy your faults, but will magnify them!

Are you the kind of person you would want your son to become?

Would you want your daughter to marry someone like you, Dad?

When you die, will you leave behind memories that point to God?

Will you leave your children a faith and example that will guide them when your voice speaks no more?

SEE POEM "To Any Daddy"

"Be Thou An EXAMPLE"

A Father's Day Message

I Timothy 4:12

6/15/97

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